Australian Citizenship
Our Common Bond
All of the information you need to sit the Australian citizenship test is in this book. You are not required to purchase or obtain other citizenship packages from any individuals or organisations in order to pass the citizenship test. The Department does not endorse or recommend any package that claims it will assist you to pass the citizenship test.
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A message to you

Congratulations on choosing to become an Australian citizen. It takes courage, endeavour and commitment to live in a new country and participate fully as a citizen. We value your contribution to our peaceful and democratic society.

Australian citizenship is an important step in your migration story. Becoming an Australian citizen means that you are making an ongoing commitment to Australia and our shared values. It is also the beginning of your formal membership of the Australian community. It is the step that will enable you to say ‘I am Australian’.

Australian citizenship is a privilege offering enormous rewards. By becoming an Australian citizen, you are joining a unique national community. Our country has been built on the contributions of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the democratic institutions we inherited from Britain, and migrants from all over the world. We celebrate our diversity, and at the same time strive for a unified and harmonious nation.

A strength of the Australian community is that we work together to solve problems and shape Australia’s future. We have a stable system of government, and Australians respect the authority and laws of the government. Our stability, our culture and our laws have been shaped by our history. By joining the Australian community, you will add to Australia’s story and you will be in a position to help shape it.

Australia is an ancient land. It is vast and unique. It is a country of rainforests and woodlands; of beaches and deserts; and of cities and farms. Our Indigenous cultures are the oldest continuous cultures in the world. We are also a young nation; a nation of migrants. European settlement in Australia began in 1788 and we continue to welcome new migrants today.

People from more than 200 countries have made Australia their home. As a result, our society is one of the most diverse in the world. Australia successfully combines ethnic and cultural diversity with national unity. Citizenship is the common bond uniting us all.

Australia is a democracy. Citizenship gives you the opportunity to participate fully in building our democratic nation. It means that you are ready to fulfil your responsibilities as a formal member of the Australian community. Australians believe in shared values such as the dignity and freedom of each person, equal opportunity for men and women, and the Rule of Law. Australian citizenship is about living out these values in everyday life.
Becoming an Australian citizen

Becoming an Australian citizen is an important process where a person pledges their loyalty to Australia and its people, and is then entitled to exercise their rights and responsibilities as a citizen of our nation.

The Australian citizenship test

The Australian citizenship test is designed to assess whether you have an adequate knowledge of Australia, its democratic system, beliefs and values, and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

The citizenship test is a computer-based, multiple choice test in English. It consists of 20 randomly selected questions; and as of 15 November 2020, it will also include five questions on Australian values.

To pass the test, you must answer all five of the values questions correctly, with a mark of at least 75 per cent overall.

Citizenship tests are conducted in Department of Home Affairs’ offices around Australia. Tests are also scheduled in a number of locations throughout regional Australia and in some overseas missions.

Preparing for the Australian citizenship test

To prepare for the citizenship test you will need to read this resource book, Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond.

This resource book has a testable and a non-testable section.

Testable section

All the information you need to know to pass the citizenship test is in the first four parts of this book:

• Part 1—Australia and its people
• Part 2—Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties
• Part 3—Government and the law in Australia
• Part 4—Australian values

You will need to know and understand the information in the testable section to answer the questions in the citizenship test.

Non-testable section

The non-testable section has important information to help you understand the history and culture of Australia. You will not be tested on this information.

• Part 5—Australia today
• Part 6—Our Australian story

Practice questions

At the end of the testable section, there are 20 practice questions to help you prepare for the citizenship test.

Glossaries

There is a glossary (list of key words and their meanings) at the end of both the testable and the non-testable sections.

More information

At the back of the resource book, you can find advice about where to get to further information.
Assistance during the citizenship test
We expect that most prospective Australian citizens will have the literacy skills necessary to complete the citizenship test without help. Text-to-speech technology, which you can use to listen to the questions and choice of answers, is also available.

After the Australian citizenship test
If you pass the test, we will continue to process your application. If your application is approved and you are required to attend a citizenship ceremony, you will receive a letter of invitation to attend the ceremony. Generally, your ceremony will be held within six months from the time your application is approved.

The Australian Citizenship Pledge
It is important for all Australian citizens to understand our responsibilities and privileges and what it means to be a citizen, whether we are Australian by birth or by choice. This is critical to the continuing success of our nation.

When you attend your Australian citizenship ceremony, you will make the Australian Citizenship Pledge.

In doing so, you are making a public commitment to Australia and accepting the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

This is the pledge you will make:

From this time forward, under God,*
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

* A person may choose whether or not to use the words ‘under God’.

As you read this book, you will gain a better understanding of the meaning behind the Pledge and how you can enhance your role in Australian society.
The Australian citizenship ceremony

Australian citizenship ceremonies can be small, involving just a few people, or they can be very large, involving hundreds or even thousands of people. The depth of feeling and pride among new citizens and officials makes it a very joyful celebration.

At the beginning of a citizenship ceremony, you may be welcomed by a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are the traditional owners of the land in your area. This Welcome to Country protocol has been practiced by Indigenous Australians on their traditional homelands for thousands of years. You will hear words of welcome and encouragement from other leaders of your local community or government representatives.

You will read or repeat the Australian Citizenship Pledge aloud with other people who have chosen to become Australian citizens. This is the most important part of the ceremony. You do not become an Australian citizen until you have made your pledge of commitment to Australia.

You are welcome to bring a holy book or scripture to hold while you make the Pledge, but you do not have to do so.

Leaders from your community or government representatives will make short speeches on the meaning of citizenship. You will receive your Certificate of Australian Citizenship and you may also receive a small gift from the community. Everyone will sing ‘Advance Australia Fair’, the Australian national anthem.

After the citizenship ceremony, you will have the chance to meet and celebrate with your fellow Australians.

We wish you every success in becoming an Australian citizen, and in pursuing a peaceful and productive life in Australia.

For more information
Visit the Australian citizenship website at www.citizenship.gov.au.
The start of the testable section
PART ONE

Australia and its people
Australia and its people

At the citizenship ceremony, you pledge your loyalty to Australia and its people. It is therefore important for you to have an understanding of Australia’s community and population, including our Indigenous heritage. It is also important for you to understand Australia’s history and how we have developed into a stable and successful multicultural nation.

In this section, you will read about some of the events that have contributed to our story. There is information about our states and territories, and the traditions and symbols that we proudly identify as being distinctly Australian.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Australia’s first inhabitants are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have the oldest continuous cultures and traditions in the world.

Historically, Aboriginal people are from mainland Australia and Tasmania. The archaeological record indicates that Aboriginal peoples arrived in Australia between 65,000 and 40,000 years ago; however, the Aboriginal peoples believe they are central to the creation stories of this land, and their creation stories commence with the beginning of time. Torres Strait Islander people are from islands between the northern tip of Queensland and Papua New Guinea.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have age-old beliefs and traditions that still guide them today. They have a deep connection with the land, which is expressed in their stories, art and dance. Indigenous cultures are diverse and an important part of Australia’s national identity.

More information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can be found in Part 5, Australia today and Part 6, Our Australian story.

Early days of European settlement

European settlement started when the first 11 convict ships, which became known as the ‘First Fleet’, arrived from Great Britain on 26 January 1788.

At this time British laws were harsh and the jails could not hold the large number of people imprisoned for their crimes. To manage this problem, the British Government decided to transport convicts to the other side of the world: to the new colony of New South Wales.

The first Governor of the colony of New South Wales was Captain Arthur Phillip. The colony survived, and as more convicts and free settlers arrived, it grew and developed. More colonies were established in other parts of Australia.

Early free settlers came from Great Britain and Ireland. This British and Irish heritage has had a major influence on Australia’s recent history, culture and politics.

In 1851, a ‘gold rush’ began when gold was discovered in the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria. People from all around the world came to these colonies to try to make their fortunes. Chinese people arriving at this time were the first large group of migrants not from Europe. In 10 years, Australia’s population more than doubled.
The nation of Australia

In 1901, the separate colonies were united into a federation of states called the Commonwealth of Australia. It was at this time that our national democratic institutions, including our national parliament, government and the High Court were established under the new Australian Constitution. In 1901, Australia’s population was about four million. This number did not include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as it was not until after a Referendum in 1967 that they were included in official estimates of the Australian population.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, migration levels rose and fell. There were programs to actively encourage British migrants to settle here, and many did.

A wave of non-British migration came after World War II, when millions of people in Europe had to leave their homelands. Large numbers of Europeans came to Australia to build a new life.

In recent years, our migration and refugee programs have brought people to Australia from all over the world. People have come here to join family, to make a new life, or to escape poverty, war or persecution.

The diversity of Australia’s population has increased over the last two centuries. This diverse and prosperous society enhances Australia’s connection to the world. While we celebrate the diversity of Australia’s people, we also aim to build a cohesive and unified nation.

Australia’s national language is English. It is part of our national identity. In keeping with Australian values, migrants should learn and use English to help them participate in Australian society. Communicating in English is important for making the most of living and working in Australia.

Other languages are also valued, including more than 100 distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.
Australia’s states and territories

The Commonwealth of Australia is a federation of states and territories. There are six states and two mainland territories. Canberra is Australia’s capital city, and each state and mainland territory has its own capital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Capital city</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales (NSW)</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria (Vic.)</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland (Qld)</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Australia (WA)</td>
<td>Perth</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Australia (SA)</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasmania (Tas.)</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Capital city</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory (NT)</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The states

**New South Wales** was the first colony established by the British. Sydney is the capital city of New South Wales and is the nation’s largest city. The Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House are national icons.

**Victoria** is the smallest of the mainland states. Victoria’s capital city is Melbourne. Many fine buildings in Victoria were built from the wealth created by the gold rush of the 1850s. Victoria’s icons include the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the 12 Apostles, and the Royal Exhibition Building.

**Queensland** is the second largest state. Queensland’s capital city is Brisbane. The Torres Strait Islands lie to the north of the state and the world-famous Great Barrier Reef runs along its eastern coast. Queensland has tropical rainforests, temperate coastal areas and an often dry inland.

**Western Australia** is the largest state. Perth is the capital city of Western Australia. The east of the state is mostly desert, while the south-west is a rich agricultural and wine-growing area. The state is home to many large mining projects. Western Australia’s icons include the Ningaloo Coast, Margaret River, and the Kimberley region.

**South Australia** has a rugged coastline and many famous wine regions. Adelaide, the capital city, has many examples of fine colonial architecture. South Australia’s icons include the Barossa Valley and the Flinders Ranges.

**Tasmania** is the smallest state, separated from the mainland by the Bass Strait. Tasmania’s capital city is Hobart. Much of the island has unspoilt wilderness landscapes. Tasmanian icons include Cradle Mountain, Port Arthur, and the Bay of Fires.

### The territories

The **Australian Capital Territory** is located between Sydney and Melbourne. It is home to the nation’s capital city, Canberra. Several national institutions are located in Canberra, including Parliament House and the High Court of Australia.

The **Northern Territory** has a tropical environment in the north of the state and dry red desert in the south. Darwin is the capital city. Northern Territory icons include Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Kings Canyon.
Traditions

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols

A Welcome to Country is a cultural practice performed by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodian of the local region, welcoming visitors to their traditional land. This was traditionally performed to ensure visitors had a safe and protected journey during their time on that land.

A Welcome to Country can take place through many forms, including songs, dances, smoking ceremonies or speeches in traditional language or English.

A Welcome to Country is usually the first item of proceedings to open an event.

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity to recognise that the gathering is on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land; pay respect to Traditional Custodians, particularly Elders past and present; and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in attendance.

An Acknowledgement of Country is usually delivered as part of the Welcome and Housekeeping at meetings and events. Anyone can deliver an Acknowledgement of Country. At meetings/events, this would generally be done by the Chair or Master of Ceremonies.

These practices are performed to show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Important days for Australians

Australia Day

On 26 January each year, we celebrate Australia Day. Australia Day is a public holiday in every state and territory in Australia. It is the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet from Great Britain in 1788.

On Australia Day, communities across Australia reflect on our history, and the people who have contributed to our shared achievements. It is the biggest annual public holiday in Australia.

Australia Day is about acknowledging and celebrating the contribution that every Australian makes to our contemporary and dynamic nation: from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—who have been here for approximately 65,000 years—to those who have lived here for generations, and those who have come from all corners of the globe to call our country home. Australia Day is marked by events across Australia, including special citizenship ceremonies.

During Australia Day celebrations, the Prime Minister announces the Australian of the Year Awards in Canberra.

Anzac Day

Anzac Day is commemorated on 25 April each year. Anzac Day is named after the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, which landed at Gallipoli in Turkey during World War I on 25 April 1915.

Anzac Day is a solemn day when we remember the sacrifice of all Australians who served and died in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. We also honour the courage and commitment of all servicemen and women and reflect on the many different meanings of war.

Information about other important national days and celebrations can be found in Part 5, Australia today.
Australia’s flags

The Australian National Flag is the official flag of our nation. Other flags that are officially recognised and may be flown in the community include the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

Each state and territory also has its own flag, which can be viewed on page 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Australian National Flag</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Australian National Flag is blue, white and red.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The ‘Union Jack’, which is the flag of the United Kingdom is in the top left corner. It represents our history of British settlement and the laws and institutions we inherited as a result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Commonwealth Star is under the Union Jack. This star has seven points, each point representing one of the six states and one point for the territories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Southern Cross, on the right, is a group of stars that can be seen in the southern sky.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Australian Aboriginal Flag</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Australian Aboriginal Flag is black, red and yellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The top half is black and represents the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The bottom half is red and represents the earth, which has ceremonial significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The yellow circle represents the sun.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Torres Strait Islander Flag</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Torres Strait Islander Flag is green, blue, black and white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The green stripes represent the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The blue panel in the centre represents the sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The black lines represent the Torres Strait Islander people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The white dancer’s headdress in the centre is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The points of the white star represent the island groups in the Torres Strait, and the colour white symbolises peace.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Australia’s symbols

**Commonwealth Coat of Arms**

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the official symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia. It represents our national unity. It identifies the authority and property of the Commonwealth of Australia.

- The shield in the centre represents the six states and federation.
- A kangaroo and an emu support the shield on each side. Both are native Australian animals.
- A gold Commonwealth Star sits above the shield.
- The background is the golden wattle, Australia’s national flower.

**Australia’s national flower**

Australia’s national flower is the golden wattle. This small tree grows mainly in south-eastern Australia. It has bright green leaves and many golden yellow flowers in spring. Each of the states and territories of Australia also has its own floral emblem.

**Australia’s national colours**

Australia’s national colours are green and gold—the colours of the golden wattle. The uniforms of our national sports teams are usually green and gold.

**Australia’s national gemstone**

The opal is Australia’s national gemstone. According to Aboriginal legend, a rainbow touched the earth and created the colours of the opal.
Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free;
We’ve golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature’s gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history’s page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross
We’ll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who’ve come across the seas
We’ve boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

‘Advance Australia Fair’ is Australia’s national anthem. It is sung on occasions of national importance, including at Australian citizenship ceremonies and major sporting events.
PART TWO

Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties
Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties

At the citizenship ceremony, you pledge that you will share Australia’s democratic beliefs and respect its rights and liberties. It is very important that you understand Australia’s democratic beliefs, and the rights and liberties shared by Australians.

This part of the booklet lists these beliefs, rights and liberties. For more information see Part 4, Australian values.

Our democratic beliefs

Parliamentary democracy
Australia’s system of government is a parliamentary democracy. As part of this system, the power of the government comes from the Australian people because Australian citizens vote for people to represent them in parliament. The representatives in parliament must answer to the people, through elections, for the decisions they make.

The Rule of Law
All Australians are equal under the law. The Rule of Law means that no person, group or religious rule is above the law. Everyone, including people who hold positions of power in the Australian community, must obey Australia’s laws. This includes government, community and religious leaders, as well as business people and the police.

Living peacefully
Australians are proud to live in a peaceful country with a stable system of government. Australians believe that change should occur through discussion, peaceful persuasion, and the democratic process. We reject violence as a way to change a person’s mind or the law.

Respect for all individuals regardless of background
Australia’s democratic system is based on the principle that every individual, regardless of their background, has rights and equality under Australian law. All Australians are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, heritage, culture, politics, wealth or religion.
Our freedoms

Freedom of speech and freedom of expression
Freedom of speech is a core Australian value and underpins our democratic system. Freedom of speech means people can say and write what they think, and discuss their ideas with others. For example, people can criticise the government, protest peacefully against government decisions and campaign to change laws, so long as at all times they are still obeying Australian laws.

Freedom of expression means people can express their views, including through art, film, music and literature. People are free to meet in public or private places for social or political discussion.

At all times, even while engaging in freedom of speech and freedom of expression, the laws of Australia must be obeyed. We must also respect other people’s freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

Freedom of association
Freedom of association is the right to form and join associations to pursue common goals. For example, in Australia people are free to join any legal organisation, such as a political party, trade union, religious, cultural or social group. People can also decide not to join, and cannot be forced into doing so.

Australians can gather with others to protest against a government action or an organisation. At all times, however, the laws of Australia must be obeyed. This means that such gatherings must be peaceful, and must not injure any person or damage property.

Freedom of religion
Australia has a Judaeo-Christian heritage, and many Australians describe themselves as Christians, but there are people in Australia from all the large religions. Australia has public holidays on Christian days such as Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day.

The government and the law treat all citizens equally, whatever their religion or beliefs. The government in Australia is secular, which means it operates separately from churches or other religious entities. Australia has no official national religion. People in Australia are free to follow any religion they choose. They may also not choose to follow a religion.

At all times, even while engaging in religious practices, the laws of Australia must be obeyed. Where there is a conflict between an Australian law and a religious practice, Australian law prevails.
Our equalities

There are a number of laws in Australia that ensure a person is not treated differently to others because of their gender, race, disability or age.

Gender equality

Men and women have equal rights in Australia. It is against the law to discriminate against a person because of their gender.

Equality of opportunity and a ‘fair go’

Australians value equal opportunity in our society; what is often called a ‘fair go’. This means that what someone achieves in life should be as a result of their talents, work and effort, rather than their wealth or background. This is to ensure that there are no formal class distinctions in Australian society.

Responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship

When you become an Australian citizen, you will have additional responsibilities and privileges.

Responsibilities—what you will give Australia

As an Australian citizen you must:
- obey the laws of Australia
- vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
- defend Australia should the need arise
- serve on a jury if called to do so.

Privileges—what Australia will give you

As an Australian citizen you can:
- vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
- apply for children born overseas to become Australian citizens by descent
- apply for a job in the Australian Public Service or in the Australian Defence Force
- seek election to parliament
- apply for an Australian passport and re-enter Australia freely
- ask for consular assistance from an Australian official while overseas.
Responsibilities

Obey the laws of Australia
Our representatives in government make laws to maintain an orderly, free and safe society and to protect our rights. All Australian citizens and other people in Australia must obey the laws of Australia.

More information about some important laws in Australia can be found in Part 3, Government and the law in Australia.

Voting in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
Voting is an important responsibility, right and privilege for all Australian citizens aged 18 years or over.

It is a responsibility for Australian citizens aged 18 years or over to vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum, which is a vote to change the Australian Constitution. By doing this, Australian citizens have a say in how Australia is governed and contribute to its future.

Voting is compulsory in federal and state or territory elections. It may not be compulsory to vote in local government elections in some states.

More information about the Australian Constitution can be found in Part 3, Government and the law in Australia.

Defend Australia should the need arise
While service in the Australian Defence Force is voluntary, a responsibility for Australian citizens is to defend Australia should the need arise. It is vital that all Australian citizens be committed to joining together to defend the nation and its way of life if necessary.

Serve on a jury if called to do so
Jury service, if requested, is a responsibility for Australian citizens aged 18 years or over. A jury is a group of ordinary Australian men and women who listen to the evidence in a court case and decide if a person is guilty or not guilty.

Australian citizens who are on the electoral roll can be called to serve on a jury. Jury service helps to ensure that the court system is open and fair.
Privileges

Apply for work in the Australian Public Service and the Australian Defence Force
A privilege of Australian citizenship is to apply for a job in the Australian Public Service and work for the Australian Government, for example, in Services Australia or the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Australian citizens also have the right to apply for a job in the Australian Defence Force (the Army, Navy and Air Force).

Seek election to parliament
Australian citizens who are aged 18 years or over, and who are not dual citizens, can seek election to parliament at the federal, state or territory level. It is an honour and a serious responsibility to serve in an Australian parliament.

Apply for an Australian passport and re-enter Australia freely
When you become an Australian citizen, you have the right to live freely in Australia. You also have the privilege to apply for an Australian passport. If you travel overseas as an Australian citizen, you are free to return to Australia without the need for a visa.

Ask for consular assistance from an Australian official while overseas
In many countries, Australia has an embassy, high commission or consulate. While you are overseas, you can ask for help from an Australian government official in times of need. This includes in the case of emergencies such as civil unrest and natural disasters.

Australian officials can also help Australian citizens overseas with the issue of an emergency passport, and advice and support in the case of an accident, serious illness or death.

When in another country, you must obey the laws of that country.

Apply for children born overseas to become Australian citizens by descent
Australian citizens can apply for their child born overseas to become an Australian citizen by descent.

Participating in Australian society

Australia encourages all citizens to actively participate in society. Active citizens take on the responsibility and privilege of shaping Australia’s future. For example, you can join neighbourhood and local community organisations, volunteer to do social and community work, join an arts or cultural organisation, and actively participate in political life.

Paying tax is another important way you directly contribute to the Australian community and is required by law. Tax is paid out of the money you earn, whether it is from a job, a business or investments, and is collected by the ATO. There are also taxes on many goods and services. The ATO works to ensure all citizens are aware of their tax rights and obligations to pay the correct amount of tax.

Many of the benefits that Australians enjoy are made possible through taxes. Taxes are spent on services including government-funded healthcare and education, defence, roads and railways, and social security.

By working and paying taxes, you support the government to provide these important services to the Australian community. State and territory governments and local councils also collect taxes to pay for services. These services help make Australia the peaceful and prosperous country it is today.
PART THREE

Government and the law in Australia
Government and the law in Australia

At the citizenship ceremony, you pledge to uphold and obey the laws of Australia. Australia’s system of government is a parliamentary democracy. It is important for you to understand this system of government, how laws are made in our parliamentary democracy and how they are administered. It is also important to understand how you, as a citizen, will have a say in running the country.

How do I have my say?

Voting

As outlined in Part 2, in Australia, citizens aged 18 years or over must enrol to vote in federal, state and territory elections and referenda on constitutional change.

In Australia’s parliamentary democracy, citizens have a say on how Australia is governed by voting for a person to represent them in parliament. If you are not correctly enrolled, you are not able to vote in an election.

Voting is compulsory in Australian elections, or if there are referenda on constitutional change.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is a Commonwealth agency responsible for conducting federal elections and referendums, and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll. The AEC is independent of the government. Political parties or people in government cannot influence the decisions of the AEC.

In Australia, voting in an election is by secret ballot, so you are free and safe to vote for any candidate. No one is allowed to know whom you have voted for, unless you choose to tell them. If you do not vote in an election and do not have a good reason for not voting, you may have to pay a fine. Compulsory voting is a way to make sure that the people have a say in who will govern and represent them in parliament.

Raising matters with your representatives

Australian citizens can contact their elected representative to raise their concerns about government policy. In this way, all Australians can have a say in forming the laws and policies of a government. If a citizen tells his or her elected representative a law needs to be changed, the elected representative should consider what has been suggested.
How did we establish our system of government?

Federation

After British settlement and before 1901, Australia was made up of six separate, self-governing British colonies. Each colony had its own constitution and laws relating to defence, immigration, postage, trade and transport. However, this created difficulties between the colonies. For example, trade and transport between the colonies was expensive and slow, and enforcing the law across borders was difficult. The separate colonies also had weak systems of defence.

As a result, people wanted to unite the colonies to form a single nation. More importantly, Australia’s national identity was beginning to form. Sporting teams were representing Australia internationally and an Australian culture was developing in popular songs, poems, stories and art.

Uniting the nation was a difficult task, but over time, the idea of one Australian nation became a reality. On 1 January 1901, the colonies were united into a federation of states called the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Australian Constitution

The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (Australian Constitution) is the legal document that sets out the basic rules for the government of Australia. The Australian Constitution was originally passed as part of a British Act of Parliament in 1900. On 1 January 1901, the Australian Constitution came into effect and the Australian colonies became one independent nation: the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Australian Constitution established the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Constitution also established the High Court of Australia, which has the ultimate power to apply and interpret the laws of Australia.

The Australian people can change the Australian Constitution by voting in a referendum, such as the 1967 Referendum where more than 90 per cent of Australians voted ‘Yes’ to allow Aboriginal peoples to be counted in the Census.

In a referendum, there needs to be a ‘double majority’ for the Australian Constitution to be changed. That is, both the majority of voters in a majority of states and a majority of voters across the nation must vote for the change.
How is the power of government controlled?

The Australian Constitution divides the power of government between the legislative (Parliament), executive (for example the Prime Minister and the Cabinet) and judicial powers (judges), to stop one person, or one group, from holding all the power.

Legislative power
Legislative power is the power to make laws. Parliament has the power to make and change the laws in Australia. Parliament is made up of representatives who are elected by the people of Australia.

Executive power
Executive power is the power to put the laws into practice. The Executive includes the Prime Minister, Australian government ministers and the Governor-General. Ministers are responsible for government departments.

Judicial power
Judges have the power to interpret and apply the law. Courts and judges are independent of parliament and government.

These powers are written into the Australian Constitution.

Who is Australia’s Head of State?

Australia’s Head of State is the Queen of Australia, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Queen of Australia appoints the Governor-General as her representative in Australia, on advice from the Australian Prime Minister. The Governor-General acts independently of all political parties. The Queen does not have a day-to-day role in government.

In each of the states there is a governor who represents the Queen in a role that is similar to the Governor-General.

Constitutional monarchy
Australia is a constitutional monarchy, which means that the Queen is Australia’s Head of State, but has to act in accordance with the Constitution. As the Queen does not live in Australia, her powers are delegated to the Governor-General in Australia.

The Australian system of parliamentary democracy reflects British and North American traditions combined in a way that is uniquely Australian. In the Australian system, the leader of the Australian Government is the Prime Minister.
The role of the Governor-General

The Governor-General is not part of the government and must remain neutral.

The Governor-General’s role includes:
- signing all Bills passed by the Australian Parliament into law (this is called Royal Assent)
- performing ceremonial duties
- approving the appointment of the Australian Government and its ministers, federal judges and other officials
- starting the process for a federal election
- acting as Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Defence Force.

The Governor-General also has special powers known as ‘reserve powers’ that can only be used in specific circumstances.

Who are some of Australia’s leaders?

Head of State
The Queen of Australia

Governor-General
The representative of the Head of State in Australia

Governor
The representative of the Head of State in each Australian state

Prime Minister
The leader of the Australian Government

Premier
The leader of a state government

Chief Minister
The leader of a territory government

Government minister
A Member of Parliament chosen by a government leader to be responsible for an area of government

Member of Parliament (MP)
An elected representative of the people in the Australian Parliament or a state parliament

Senator
An elected representative of a state or territory in the Australian Parliament

Mayor or Shire President
The leader of a local government

Councillor
An elected member of a local council

How is Australia governed?

The Australian Government

The Australian Government is also called the Federal Government or the Commonwealth Government. The Government is made up of members of the Australian Parliament, which has two Houses:
- the House of Representatives
- the Senate.

In a federal election, Australian citizens vote to elect representatives to each House of Parliament.
The House of Representatives

The House of Representatives is one of the Houses in the Australian Parliament. Other names for the House of Representatives are the Lower House or the People’s House.

Australia is divided into federal electorates. Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the people in their electorate.

The number of MPs for each state and territory is based on the number of people in that state or territory. Overall, there are over 150 members elected to the House of Representatives.

Members of Parliament and senators debate proposals for new laws in the Australian Parliament. The role of the House of Representatives is to consider, debate, and vote on proposals for new laws or changes to the laws, and discuss matters of national importance.

The Senate

The Senate is the other House in the Australian Parliament. The Senate is sometimes called the Upper House, the House of Review or the States’ House. Voters from each state also elect senators to represent them in the Senate. All states are equally represented in the Senate regardless of their size or population. There is a total of 76 senators. Each state elects 12 senators, and the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory elect two senators each.

Senators also consider, debate and vote on new laws or changes to the laws, and discuss matters of national importance.

State and territory government

There are six states and two mainland territories in Australia. Each state government has its own parliament and constitution. State and territory governments are based in their capital cities. The leader of a state government is the Premier and the leader of a territory government is the Chief Minister.

State governments operate in a similar way to the Australian Government. In each state, a Governor represents the Queen of Australia. In the Northern Territory, an Administrator is appointed by the Governor-General. The role and responsibilities of the Administrator are similar to those of a state Governor.

States have rights recognised by the Constitution while territories do not. States have the power to pass laws in their own right while self-governing territory laws can be altered or revoked by the Australian Government at any time.

In state and territory elections, Australian citizens vote to elect a representative for their area. These representatives become members of the relevant state or territory parliament.

Local government

The states and the Northern Territory are divided into local government areas which may be called cities, shires, towns or municipalities. Each area has its own local council. Councils are responsible for planning and delivering services to their local community. Citizens in each local government area vote to elect their local councillors.
### What do the three levels of government do?

The main difference between the three levels of government is that, although some responsibilities may overlap, generally each level of government provides different services.

#### The Australian Government is responsible for:

- taxation
- national economic management
- immigration and citizenship
- employment assistance
- postal services and the communications network
- social security (pensions and family support)
- defence
- trade and commerce
- airports and air safety
- foreign affairs (relations with other countries).

#### State and territory governments are primarily responsible for:

- hospitals and health services
- schools
- roads and railways
- forestry
- police and ambulance services
- public transport.

#### Local governments (and the Australian Capital Territory Government) are responsible for:

- street signs, traffic controls
- local roads, footpaths, bridges
- drains
- parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, sports grounds
- camping grounds and caravan parks
- food and meat inspection
- noise and animal control
- rubbish collection
- local libraries, halls and community centres
- certain child-care and aged-care issues
- building permits
- social planning
- local environmental issues.
What role do political parties play in the way Australia is governed?

A political party is a group of people who share similar ideas about how a country should be governed. They work together to have the party’s ideas turned into laws. The main political parties in Australia are the Liberal Party of Australia, the Australian Labor Party, the Nationals and the Australian Greens.

Most parliamentarians belong to political parties. Some do not belong to any political party, and they are called ‘independents’.

In Australia, people are free to join a political party if they choose.

How is the Australian Government formed?

After a federal election, the Australian Government is generally formed by the party or coalition of parties with the majority of members in the Houses of Representatives. The leader of this party becomes the leader of the Australian Government: the Prime Minister.

After a federal election, the party or coalition of parties with the second largest number of members in the House of Representatives forms the Opposition. Its leader is called the Leader of the Opposition.

The Prime Minister recommends members of the House of Representatives or Senators to become ministers in the Australian Government. The Governor-General approves the appointment of the Prime Minister and ministers.

Government ministers are responsible for an area of government (called a portfolio), such as employment, Indigenous Affairs or the Treasury. Ministers with the most important portfolios make up the Cabinet, which is the key decision making body of government.

How are laws made?

The Australian Parliament has the power to make or change laws in Australia to benefit the nation.

If a member of the Australian Parliament proposes to introduce a new law or change an existing one, this proposal is called a ‘Bill’.

The House of Representatives and the Senate consider, debate and vote on whether they agree with the Bill.

If the majority of members in each House of Parliament agree to the Bill, it goes to the Governor-General.

The Governor-General signs a Bill so that it becomes law. This is called ‘Royal Assent’.

State and territory parliaments make their own laws in a similar way.
How are laws enforced?

The courts
The courts in Australia are independent. A court will decide if a person has or has not broken the law and decide the penalty. Courts can only base their decision on the evidence before them.

Judges and magistrates
The judge or magistrate is the highest authority in a court. They are independent and no one can tell them what to decide.

Judges and magistrates are appointed by the government, but the government cannot take their jobs away if it disagrees with their decisions.

Juries
In Australia’s court system, people are considered innocent until they are found guilty in a court. Every person has the right to be represented by a lawyer in court.

A court will use a jury in some cases to decide if a person has broken the law. The role of a jury is to decide in court if a person is innocent or guilty. A jury is a group of ordinary Australian citizens randomly chosen from the general population. The judge explains the law to the jury. In a criminal trial, if the jury finds a person guilty, the judge decides the penalty.

The police
The police maintain peace and order in the community. It is their job to protect life and property. They are independent of the government. If the police believe that someone has broken the law, they can arrest them and bring them before a court of law. The police may give evidence in court, but the court decides if a person is guilty or not.

The states and the Northern Territory have their own police forces. They deal with crimes under state and territory laws.

Australia also has a national police force called the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The AFP investigates crimes against federal laws, for example, drug trafficking, crimes against national security and crimes against the environment. The AFP is also responsible for general police work in the Australian Capital Territory.

The police and the community have a good relationship in Australia. You can report crimes and seek assistance from your local police.

In Australia, it is a serious crime to bribe the police. It is a crime to even offer a bribe to a police officer.
Criminal offences in Australia

It is important for you to be familiar with the laws in Australia. If you break an Australian law that you did not know about, you could be charged, as not knowing the law is no excuse.

Some of the most serious crimes include murder, assault, sexual assault, violence against people or property, armed robbery or theft, having sexual relations with children or young people who are aged below the legal age of consent, dangerous driving of a motor car, possession of illegal drugs, and fraud.

Everyone has the right to experience positive and safe relationships with their families, friends and loved ones. As in other countries, violence towards another person is illegal in Australia and is a very serious crime. This includes violence within the home and within marriage, known as domestic or family violence. Domestic and family violence includes behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner by causing fear or threatening their safety. Domestic and family violence can include hitting, isolating a family member from friends and family, or threatening children or pets. Domestic and family violence is not accepted and is against the law.

A person who commits these crimes can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman. No one should accept being treated badly or harmed.

If you or someone you know is in danger you should contact the police. More information is available at www.respect.gov.au and www.1800respect.org.au

Traffic offences

Road and traffic rules are controlled by state and territory governments. People can be fined or sent to prison for breaking traffic laws. To drive a car in Australia, you must have a local driver’s licence and the car must be registered.

Everybody travelling in a car must wear a seatbelt. Babies and young children must be in an approved car seat. Traffic laws are very strict. It is illegal to drive after taking drugs or if you are above the blood alcohol limit. It is also against the law to use a hand-held mobile device while driving.
PART FOUR

Australian values
Australian values

Australian values based on freedom, respect, fairness and equality of opportunity are central to our community remaining a secure, prosperous and peaceful place to live.

Our values define and shape our country and they are a reason why so many people want to become Australian citizens.

Australian citizenship is about living out these values in your everyday life and in your local community. It is therefore very important that you understand the values that all Australian people are expected to respect, share and uphold.

Our values

Commitment to the Rule of Law

All Australians are protected by our laws and legal systems. Australians recognise the importance of laws in maintaining a peaceful and orderly society.

Under the Rule of Law, all Australians are equal in relation to the law and no person or group is above the law. In Australia, everybody should obey the law and not break it at any time, otherwise you will face penalties. You should follow the law even if no one is watching.

Australian laws apply to all people in Australia. This means regardless of your background or culture, you must follow Australian laws.

Parliamentary democracy

Australia’s system of government is a parliamentary democracy. Our laws are determined by parliaments elected by the people. This means that Australian citizens are involved in how the country is governed. The power of the government comes from the Australian people because Australian citizens vote for people to represent them in parliament.

Voting is compulsory in Australia. This shows the importance of participating in elections.
Freedom of speech

People in Australia should be able to express their ideas freely, so long as it is within the law. In Australia, people are free to meet in public or private places for social or political discussion. People are also free to say and write what they think about any topic and to discuss their ideas with others. Newspapers, television and radio outlets have the same freedom.

Australians are allowed to peacefully protest against the actions of the government, because tolerance of peaceful public protest is an essential part of democracy.

It is never acceptable to promote violence against another person or group of people (such as because of their culture, ethnicity, religion or background) because it is against Australian values and law. It is also illegal to make false allegations or encourage others to break the law. Other people’s freedom of speech and freedom of expression must be respected, as long as such expression is lawful.

Freedom of association

In Australia, people are free to join or leave any group voluntarily as long as it is within the law. People are free to join any legal organisation, such as a political party, trade union, religious, cultural or social group. Individuals cannot be compelled to join an organisation or forced to leave it.

Australians can gather freely with others, including to protest against a government action or an organisation. However, all protests must be within the law. This means they must be peaceful, and must not injure any person or damage property.

Freedom of religion

Australia has no official national religion and people in Australia are free to follow any religion they choose. The government treats all citizens equally, whatever their religion or beliefs. However, religious practices must not break Australian laws.

Religious laws have no legal status in Australia. Australian law must be followed by everyone in Australia, including where it is different from religious laws. Some religious or cultural practices, such as polygamy (being married to more than one person at the same time) and forced marriage, are against the law in Australia and can result in severe legal penalties, including imprisonment.

Religious intolerance is not acceptable in Australian society. All people should be provided equal opportunity to pursue their goals and interests regardless of their ethnicity or religion as long as they are obeying Australian law.
Equality of all people under the law

Australian society values the equal rights of all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, race, or national or ethnic origin. There are a number of laws in Australia that protect a person from being treated differently from others.

The law is applied in Australia so that people from different backgrounds are not given preferential treatment, nor discriminated against. For example, Buddhists and people of all other faiths receive the same treatment as Christians. Under our laws, two people can marry each other, including marriage between two men or two women.

Men and women have equal rights in Australia and should be provided equality of opportunity to pursue their goals and interests. Both men and women have equal access to education and employment, can vote at elections, stand for parliament, join the Australian Defence Force and the police force, and are treated equally in courts of law.

It is against the law to discriminate against a person because of their gender. In Australia, it is a right for a woman to get a job ahead of a man, if she has better qualifications and skills.

Both men and women have the right to make their own independent choices about personal matters, such as marriage and religion, and are protected by the law from intimidation or violence. Physical violence against a spouse or partner is never acceptable and it is a criminal offence in Australia.

Divorce is acceptable in Australia. Either a husband or a wife may apply for a divorce to the courts, even if the other spouse wishes to continue the marriage.

Equality of opportunity and a ‘fair go’

We believe that everyone deserves a ‘fair go’ and people should not be limited by any kind of class distinction. Everyone, regardless of their background, is given an equal opportunity to achieve success in life, and ensuring that everyone has the same legal rights is an important aspect of fairness in Australian society.

What someone achieves in life should be a result of their hard work and talents. This means a person should get a job based on their skills and experience, not because of their gender, wealth or ethnicity.

When an organisation needs to fill a job, the law supports that they select the person with the best skills and experience for the job.

Many new migrants in Australia have become leaders in business, their profession, the arts, public service and sport through their hard work and enterprise.
Mutual respect and tolerance for others

In Australia, individuals must respect the freedom and dignity of others, and their opinions and choices.

It is against the law to be violent towards another person. Violence of any kind, including verbal and physical abuse, is illegal. Australians believe in peaceful disagreement and above all the right to be safe and free from violence and intimidation.

In Australia, there are very strict laws concerning the age of sexual consent, which is 16 or 17 depending on which state or territory you reside in. For example, in Australia, a 20 year old man cannot have sexual relations with a 15 year old girl, because that is against the law in all Australian states and territories.

In Australia, the lawful actions of the police should be supported. You should obey a lawful request from the police, because all Australians commit to following the law.

Australia values the principles of mutual respect and tolerance. This means listening to others and respecting their views and opinions, even when they are different from your own. People should be tolerant of each other where they find that they disagree.

Racism has no place in Australia. This includes creating or sharing racially offensive material on the internet or other publications and making racially abusive comments in a public place or at a sporting event.
Our community

Making a contribution
Citizenship gives you the opportunity to fully participate in our nation’s life and community. It means that you are ready to fulfil your responsibilities as an Australian citizen. Australians expect everyone living in Australia to participate in our society and make a contribution to our community. Everyone has a responsibility to try and support themselves and their families when they are able to do so.

Compassion for those in need
Australians value ‘mateship’. We help each other in times of need. For example, this might mean taking a meal to an elderly neighbour, driving a friend to a medical appointment, or visiting someone who is sick, frail or lonely.

In this spirit of mateship, Australia has a strong tradition of community service and volunteering – to look out for each other and strengthen the community. Volunteering is a great opportunity to share knowledge, learn new skills, and increase your integration into and sense of belonging to the Australian community. There are many opportunities for you to volunteer in Australia.

English as the national language
Australian society values the English language as the national language of Australia, and as an important unifying element of society. People living in Australia should make an effort to learn English.

It is important to learn to speak English because it helps to get an education, a job, and better integrate into the community. It is essential for economic participation and social cohesion. Applicants for Australian citizenship must undertake to make reasonable efforts to learn the English language, if it is not their native language.

Helping to keep our society safe
In Australia, we each have responsibilities to help protect Australian society. For example, if people in Australia suspect their friend or neighbour may be planning to commit a serious crime, they should report this to Australian government authorities as soon as possible. In this way, we can help to protect the safety of our community.

Similarly, if a person in Australia sees or has knowledge of a child being abused, they should report this to the police to investigate.

Online abuse is not accepted in Australia. This is sometimes called cyber abuse. Examples include sharing sexual photos or videos online without consent, stalking a person online, or making racially abusive comments about a person online. Many forms of cyber abuse are illegal in Australia.

Loyalty to Australia
In the citizenship pledge, Australian citizens pledge their loyalty to Australia and its people. Australian citizens may also hold the citizenship of another country or countries if the laws of those countries allow. This is known as dual, or multiple, citizenship. However, even if a person is also a citizen of another country, an Australian citizen within Australia must follow all Australian laws at all times. Some Australian laws must also be followed by Australian citizens even when they are overseas. For example, it’s illegal for Australians to be involved in any sexual activity, here or overseas, with a child under 16 years of age.

Australian society is based on our shared obligations not to undermine Australia’s interests and security. For example, using social media to share official government secrets would be undermining Australia’s interests. Similarly, promoting distrust in and fear of an ethnic community would damage Australian community relations.
In Australia, we come together in times of crisis and take care of each other in good times and bad. During Australia’s devastating bushfire season of 2019-20, which resulted in the loss of life, property and wildlife, and environmental destruction, many multicultural communities worked to collect money, clothes and food donations to help people affected by the bushfires. For example, members of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian communities in Victoria collected donations at shopping centres and fundraised through local community group events, and members of the Sikh community donated thousands of bottles of water to communities and firefighters in Queensland.

In conclusion

Our democratic institutions and shared Australian values have created our peaceful and stable society. We have a rich and unique culture to share. As an Australian citizen, you will become part of our nation’s story and will contribute to our future. Australia welcomes you. Citizenship is our common bond.

In preparation for the citizenship test, try the practice test questions on pages 44–46.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original inhabitants of the land in Australia
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia make up approximately three per cent of the Australian population.

Australian Human Rights Commission
an independent Commission which investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches
Incidents of racism can be reported to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Australian Public Service
government departments and people employed by them
Paul got a job in the Australian Public Service as an employee of Services Australia.

civil unrest
demonstrations and riots by large numbers of people, usually protesting against a government decision or policy
There was civil unrest when the government passed the unpopular laws.

coalition
the joining of two or more political parties, usually to form a government or opposition
After the election, there was no party with a majority in the House of Representatives, so two parties with similar ideas joined to form a coalition.

commission
a group of people with an official responsibility
An independent commission organises the elections.

Constitution
the supreme law of Australia by which the government must abide
The Constitution sets out the legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

constitutional monarchy
a country in which a king or queen is the head of state, whose powers are limited by the Constitution
Our Constitution established the Commonwealth of Australia as a constitutional monarchy, with the King or Queen of the United Kingdom as our Head of State.

court
a place where legal cases are heard by a judge or magistrate
When people break the law, they may go to court.

criminal trial
a hearing of facts by a court to decide if a person is guilty or not guilty of a crime
After the criminal trial, the bank robber was sent to jail.

cyber abuse
behaviour that uses technology to threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate someone with the intent to hurt them
Many types of cyber abuse are against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police and the online service, such as social media platform, that it occurred on.

democracy
government by the people through elected representatives
Grace was happy to live in a democracy where she could vote for her representative in parliament.
Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond

**domestic and family violence**
Behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner by causing fear or threatening their safety. Domestic and family violence is not accepted and is against the law.

*Domestic and family violence is against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police.*

**drug trafficking**
carrying or buying drugs to sell illegally

*Jess was sent to jail for drug trafficking.*

**election**
a process through which citizens choose people to represent them in Parliament

*Australian citizens aged 18 years or over must vote in an election.*

**electoral roll**
the list of people registered to vote in an election or referendum

*When Jan arrived at the voting centre, the official looked for her name on the electoral roll.*

**electorate**
districts made up of voters who vote to elect politicians in the House of Representatives

*Electorates are called electoral districts, divisions, or seats.*

**enforce the law**
to make sure that people follow the law

*Police enforce the law and keep the peace.*

**equality**
the same in status

*Australians believe in the equality of all people.*

**executive power**
the power and authority to administer the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution

*Australian Government ministers and the Governor-General have executive power to administer the laws made by the Australian Parliament.*

**fair go**
everyone, regardless of their background, is given an equal opportunity to achieve success in life

*In Australia, we believe everyone deserves a ‘fair go’.*

**federation**
the union of colonies into one nation with the colonies retaining certain powers

*In 1901, the colonies were united into a federation called the Commonwealth of Australia.*

**First Fleet**
the group of 11 ships that set out from Britain under Captain Arthur Phillip to establish a convict settlement in New South Wales

*The First Fleet landed at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788.*

**floral emblem**
national flower

*Australia’s floral emblem is the golden wattle.*

**forced marriage**
a marriage where one or both of the couple did not have a free choice

*She was never happy about her forced marriage and always wanted to leave it.*

**from this time forward**
from now and in the future

*At the citizenship ceremony, you promise to be loyal to Australia from this time forward.*
The Opera House is a famous Sydney icon.

Indigenous
The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia
Indigenous Australians are the First Peoples of this country.

integration
the process of adaptation by migrants so that they can participate in and contribute to their new, evolving society
Over time, migrants benefit from their integration into Australia and the local community.

judicial power
the power and authority to interpret and apply the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution
The courts in Australia have judicial power.

legislative power
the power and authority to make and change the laws, one of the three powers under the Australian Constitution
Under the Constitution, Parliament has legislative power.

 liberties (liberty)
personal freedom and independence
In our democratic society, people have freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of association. We value these liberties.

magistrate
a judge of a lower court
The magistrate found the thief guilty and sent him to jail.

mateship
helping and receiving help from others, especially in difficult times
When my car broke down, the other drivers helped to push it in the spirit of mateship.

national anthem
national song
Australia’s national anthem is ‘Advance Australia Fair’.

parliamentary democracy
a system of government based on the regular election of representatives to parliament by the citizens
In a parliamentary democracy, the people vote for their representatives.

political party
a group of people who share similar ideas about how a country should be governed and usually seek to be elected
Members of a political party meet regularly, for example, to discuss improvements to public transport.

racism
prejudice, discrimination, harassment or hatred directed at someone because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin
Racism is against the law in Australia and should be reported to the police. Complaints can also be made to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

referendum
a vote by all voters on a proposed change to the Australian Constitution
In a 1967 referendum, the people voted to count Aboriginal peoples in the census.
representative
a person who acts or speaks for others

My local council representative liked my idea and presented it at the council meeting.

respect
show consideration for someone as a person, or a decision they have made

Emily was glad her family were able to respect her decision to become a Buddhist.

Rule of Law
all people, including citizens and the government, are bound by the law

Everyone in Australia, including the Prime Minister, are bound by all Australian laws under the Rule of Law.

Services Australia
an Australian Government agency that delivers a range of health, social and welfare payments and services through Medicare, Centrelink, and Child Support

Services Australia delivers support payments through Centrelink and other services.

secret ballot
a system of voting where people vote privately, so no one can influence or pressure them to vote in a certain way

In a secret ballot, no one watches while you write your vote.

secular
separate from religion

In a secular society, there is no official religion.

self-sufficient
able to provide for your own needs, without the help of other people

Having a job meant that he was able to buy his own food and pay his own rent. He was self-sufficient.

set up
to build, establish, start

Governor Phillip set up the first colony in New South Wales.

shire
a local government area

The roads in my shire are very safe.

social security
government pensions or benefits to help unemployed people, disabled people, elderly people and others in need

When Trang lost her job, she applied for social security benefits.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
an Australian Government agency that manages the tax and superannuation systems that support and fund services for Australians

Every year most Australians submit a tax return to the Australian Taxation Office.

values
the principles that help a person decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations

Australia has a shared set of values, which we call Australian values.

volunteer
a person who gives their time to a person or organisation without expecting payment

Raza is a volunteer who teaches people English in their homes.
Practice test questions

Australia and its people

1. What do we commemorate on Anzac Day?
   a. The landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli, Turkey during World War I
   b. The arrival of the first free settlers from Great Britain
   c. The landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove

2. What are the colours of the Australian Aboriginal Flag?
   a. Black, red and yellow
   b. Green, white and black
   c. Blue, white and green

3. What is the Commonwealth Coat of Arms?
   a. The national anthem
   b. Australia’s national flower
   c. The official symbol of Australia, which identifies Commonwealth property

4. What happened in Australia on 1 January 1901?
   a. The Australian Constitution was changed by a referendum
   b. The separate colonies were united into a federation of states called the Commonwealth of Australia
   c. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was formed

5. What is the capital city of Australia?
   a. Brisbane
   b. Canberra
   c. Perth

Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties

6. Which of these is an example of freedom of speech?
   a. People can peacefully protest against a government action
   b. Men and women are treated equally in a court of law
   c. Australians are free to not follow a religion

7. Which of these statements about government in Australia is correct?
   a. The government does not allow some religions
   b. The government in Australia is secular
   c. Religious laws are passed by Parliament
8. Which of these is an example of equality in Australia?
   a. Everyone follows the same religion
   b. Men and women have equal rights
   c. Everyone belongs to the same political party

9. Which of these is a responsibility of Australian citizens aged 18 years or over?
   a. To attend local council meetings
   b. To vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
   c. To have a current Australian passport

10. Which of these statements about passports is correct?
    a. Australian citizens can apply for an Australian passport
    b. Permanent residents can hold an Australian passport
    c. Australian citizens need a passport and visa to return to Australia

Government and the law in Australia

11. Which of these statements about voting in Australian elections is correct?
    a. People are free and safe to vote for any candidate
    b. Voting is by a show of hands
    c. People must write their name on their vote

12. What is the name of the legal document that sets out the basic rules for the government of Australia?
    a. The Australian Federation
    b. The Australian Commonwealth
    c. The Australian Constitution

13. What is a referendum?
    a. A vote to change the government
    b. A vote to change the Australian Constitution
    c. A vote to change the Prime Minister

14. Which arm of government has the power to interpret and apply laws?
    a. Legislative
    b. Executive
    c. Judicial

15. Which of these is a role of the Governor-General?
    a. The appointment of state premiers
    b. Signing all Bills passed by the Australian Parliament into law
    c. The appointment of the Head of State
Australian values

16. Which of these statements best demonstrates Australian values about freedom of expression?
   a. Everyone can peacefully express their opinions within the law
   b. People with different views from me need to keep quiet
   c. Only approved topics can be discussed

17. Should people in Australia make an effort to learn English?
   a. People in Australia should speak whichever language is most commonly spoken in their local neighbourhood
   b. There is no expectation to learn any particular language in Australia
   c. Yes, English is the national language of Australia and it helps to get an education, a job, and to integrate into the community

18. In Australia, can you encourage violence against a person or group of people if you have been insulted?
   a. Yes, if you do not intend to carry out the violence
   b. No, it is against Australian values and the law
   c. Sometimes, if I feel very offended

19. Should people tolerate one another where they find that they disagree?
   a. It is against the law to disagree with one another
   b. No, people only need to treat each other with respect if they agree with one another
   c. Yes, peaceful disagreement reflects Australian values in relation to mutual respect

20. Which of the following is an example of contributing to the Australian community?
   a. Volunteering or fundraising for a charity is a great opportunity to strengthen our community
   b. I should not make any effort to get to know other people
   c. People in Australia should not contribute to the community because Australia is a free country

Answers
1a, 2a, 3c, 4b, 5a, 6a, 7b, 8b, 10a, 11a, 12c, 13b, 14c, 15b, 16a, 17c, 18b, 19c, 20a
The end of the testable section
PART FIVE

Australia today
Australia today

In this section, you will learn about Australia’s culture, innovators and national identity. Australia is a dynamic business and trade partner and a respected global citizen. Australians value the contribution of new migrants to the country’s constant growth and renewal.

The land

Australia is one of the world’s oldest land masses. It is the sixth largest country in the world and the largest island nation. It is also the flattest and the driest inhabited land mass. Much of Australia has poor soil and low rainfall, making it hard to farm. The dry inland areas are called ‘the outback’, and are particularly remote and harsh environments. In Australia, water is a very precious resource.

Being such a large country, Australia has regions with quite different climates. There are tropical regions in the north of Australia and deserts in the centre. In the south, the temperatures can change from cool winters with mountain snow, to dry heatwaves in summer.

In addition to the six states and two mainland territories, the Australian Government also administers the following territories:

- Ashmore and Cartier Islands
- Christmas Island
- the Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Jervis Bay Territory
- the Coral Sea Islands
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands in the Australian Antarctic Territory
- Norfolk Island.

World Heritage sites

The following Australian sites are listed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List.

Cultural

- Australian Convict Sites
- Budj Bim Cultural Landscape
- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens in Melbourne
- Sydney Opera House.
Natural
- Australian Fossil Mammal Sites in South Australia and Queensland (Riversleigh/Naracoorte)
- Fraser Island
- Gondwana Rainforests in Australia
- Great Barrier Reef
- Greater Blue Mountains Area
- Heard and McDonald Islands
- Lord Howe Island Group
- Macquarie Island
- Ningaloo Coast
- Purmululu National Park
- Shark Bay, Western Australia
- Wet Tropics of Queensland.

Mixed
- Kakadu National Park
- Tasmanian Wilderness
- Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park
- Willandra Lakes Region.

In addition to the western iconography and natural wonders listed above, there are thousands of sacred sites across the country that are of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These sites are an important part of Australia’s cultural fabric and are important to all Australians. Sacred sites are usually linked to stories of ancestral beings and their role in creating the vast landscape, embedding cultural values, kinship relationships and social order.

A vast country
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship with the land. They have always valued contact with their neighbours and travel large distances to meet. The ‘song-lines’ of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are stories that link traditional law, history and culture with geography, stretching across different cultural and language groups right across Australia. They have been maintained and practised for thousands of years.

In many parts of Australia, people have limited access to services, such as schools, health services and shops, that other Australians take for granted. We work together to support people living in remote communities. Notable Australians have helped solve problems of remoteness through ingenuity and innovation.
The pedal radio

In 1929, Alfred Traegar, from Adelaide, designed the first pedal-powered radio. Users could keep a two-way radio going by pushing the pedals with their feet. Lonely homesteads, remote mission stations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities all benefited from this invention. The pedal radio helped to establish two great Australian institutions, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the School of the Air.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service

Reverend John Flynn lived and worked with people in remote communities. He had an idea to bring doctors by air to patients in the outback as quickly as possible. To make this happen, he received help from the government, the airline Qantas and charitable donations. The Royal Flying Doctor Service began in 1928, but there were still people in remote places who could not call the service. The introduction of the pedal radio ensured that people in more isolated communities could call for a doctor as soon as possible.

The School of the Air

Until the 1950s, children living in isolated places had to attend boarding school or complete their lessons by mail (pictured above). Adelaide Miethke, Vice-President of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in South Australia, realised that the Flying Doctor radio service could also help children at home talk with their teachers. The Alice Springs service began to air two-way lessons in 1948. The School of the Air was formally established a few years later. Australia’s experience has helped many other countries to set up their own similar programs. The old pedal radio was replaced with high-frequency radio receivers and is now replaced by the internet. The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia and the School of the Air continue to serve and benefit the people in Australia’s remote communities.
Australia’s identity

Australia’s identity has been shaped by many factors, including our Indigenous heritage and cultures, our British foundations, the diversity of our people, our history, the values that guide everyday life, our lifestyles and the Australians we admire.

Part 6, Our Australian story looks at our history. It highlights issues relating to Australia’s colonial past, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ recent and present day circumstances. The story also includes the origins and nature of Australia’s diverse, multicultural society, and the challenges, such as wars, that we have faced together as a nation.

The remainder of this chapter looks at some of the lifestyles we follow and people we admire.

Sport and recreation

Many Australians love sport and Australian sportspeople have achieved impressive results at an international level.

Throughout our history, sport has both characterised and united the Australian people. From early settlement, sport provided an escape from the realities of a harsh existence. Even during wartime, members of the Australian Defence Force organised sporting competitions to help relieve the stress of the battleground.

Sport also provides a common ground that allows both players and spectators to feel included and a part of something that is important to Australian society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant Australians are among the country’s most successful sportspeople.

Many Australians participate in team sports such as cricket, basketball, netball and hockey. The football codes of soccer, rugby league, rugby union and the uniquely Australian game of Australian Rules Football (‘Aussie Rules’) are very popular sports in Australia to play and watch. Swimming, tennis, athletics, golf, cycling, bushwalking, surfing and skiing are also popular recreational activities.

Australia is especially proud of its international success in the game of cricket. Australian and English cricket teams have been intense rivals since the late 19th century.

The Melbourne Cup, ‘the race that stops the nation’, is one of the biggest horse races in the world. The first Melbourne Cup was held in 1861. The Melbourne Cup is held on the first Tuesday in November, and has been a public holiday in Victoria since 1877.

Sir Donald Bradman (1908–2001)

Sir Donald Bradman, the greatest cricket batsmen of all-time, is an Australian sporting legend. He was raised in Bowral, New South Wales, and played his first game of cricket for the Australian team in 1928.

He was amazingly quick on his feet. On his first tour of England in 1930, he broke nearly all the batting records. By the age of 21, he was already an Australian legend. On his final tour in 1948, his team became known as ‘The Invincibles’, as they did not lose a single match they played against England.
The arts
Australia has a vibrant arts scene that includes the nation’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultural traditions. Australian visual and performing artists, including in film, art, theatre, music and dance, are widely acclaimed both in Australia and overseas.

Literature
Australia has a strong tradition in literature. This started with the storytelling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and continued with the oral stories of the convicts arriving in the late 18th century.

Much of Australia’s early writing is about the bush and the difficulties of life in such a harsh environment. Writers such as Henry Lawson and Miles Franklin wrote poems and stories about the bush and the Australian way of life.

An Australian novelist, Patrick White, received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973. Other popular Australian authors include Peter Carey, Colleen McCullough, Sally Morgan, Tim Winton, Tom Keneally and Bryce Courtenay.

Judith Wright (1915–2000)
Judith Wright was an outstanding poet, conservationist and campaigner for the rights of Aboriginal peoples. She expressed her love for Australia and its people in her poetry. She was awarded many prizes, including the Encyclopaedia Britannica Prize for literature and the Queen’s Gold Medal for Poetry. She was also a member of the Australian Conservation Committee and the Aboriginal Treaty Committee.

Judith Wright is remembered for her skill as a poet and for advancing Australian literature and social and environmental reform.

Theatre and film
Australian plays, films and filmmakers are recognised in Australia and overseas. Australian actors such as Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman and filmmakers such as Peter Weir and Baz Luhrmann have won many international awards for their excellence in film.

Visual art
The most recognised Australian works of visual art are the iconic Indigenous paintings and the 19th century bush scenes of painters such as Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Arthur Streeton. In the mid-20th century, artists Russell Drysdale and Sidney Nolan depicted the harshness of the outback in bold colour. More recently, Brett Whiteley gained international acclaim for his unique and vivid style. Indigenous art, including by Albert Namatjira, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Gloria Petyarre, Rover Thomas and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, is increasingly sought after in Australia and overseas.
Music and dance
The most immediately recognised Australian musical sound is that of the didgeridoo, the ancient Indigenous instrument.

Australians have embraced and excelled in all areas of music and are internationally recognised for their contributions to classical, country and rock music.

Well-recognised Australian musicians include Kylie Minogue, Jimmy Barnes, Paul Kelly, Olivia Newton-John, John Farnham, Nick Cave, and Indigenous artists Archie Roach, Gurrumul and Jessica Mauboy. Australian bands such as AC/DC and INXS have gained followers around the world.

Australian dance has flourished due to the efforts of great dancers and choreographers such as Sir Robert Helpmann, Meryl Tankard, Stephen Page, and Li Cunxin. Bangarra is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance company, widely acclaimed nationally and around the world for its distinctive style in dance, soundscapes, music and design.

Scientific achievement and invention
Australians have a strong record of scientific achievements in the fields of medicine, technology, agriculture, mining and manufacturing.

A number of Australians have been awarded the Nobel Prize for scientific and medical discoveries.

Scientific achievers have also received Australian of the Year Awards. In 2005, the award went to Professor Fiona Wood, who developed a spray-on skin for burns victims. In 2006, the award went to Professor Ian Frazer, who developed the cervical cancer vaccine. In 2007, Professor Tim Flannery, a leading environmental scientist, received the award.

Professor Wood and Professor Frazer both migrated to Australia from Britain. Professor Frazer’s co-inventor was the late Dr Jian Zhou, who migrated from China and also became an Australian citizen.

Dr Fiona Wood AM (born 1958)
Dr Wood is one of Australia’s most innovative and respected surgeons and researchers. A highly skilled plastic and reconstructive surgeon and world leading burns specialist, she has pioneered research and technology development in burns medicine.

Following her work with victims of the 2002 Bali bombings, Dr Wood was named a Member of the Order of Australia in 2003. Her contribution to burns care was recognised when she was named Australian of the Year in 2005.
Professor Fred Hollows (1929–1993)

Professor Fred Hollows was a passionate ophthalmologist (eye doctor) who helped restore eyesight to more than one million people in Australia and developing countries. Fred Hollows was born in New Zealand. In 1965, he moved to Australia and later became the head of an eye department at a Sydney hospital.

He believed strongly in equality for all people and helped set up the first Aboriginal Medical Service, of which there are now many around Australia.

By 1980, Fred Hollows was travelling all over the world to help set up eye health programs in developing countries. In April 1989, he became an Australian citizen.

Professor Hollows’ good work continues through The Fred Hollows Foundation.
# Australian of the Year

Since 1960, the Australian of the Year Awards have celebrated the achievement and contribution of leading Australians. Anyone can nominate an Australian from any walk of life for an award.

Australians of the Year are people who have excelled in their work and served the nation. They inspire and challenge us to make our own contribution to creating a better Australia.

The awards include Young Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year and Australia’s Local Hero.

A list of the current and former recipients is available at www.australianoftheyear.org.au.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr James Muecke AM</th>
<th>Eye surgeon and blindness prevention pioneer 2020 Australian of the Year</th>
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<td>Dr Muecke is a co-founder of Sight For All, a charity that aims to eliminate blindness through research, education, infrastructure and the training of colleagues in partner countries.</td>
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<td>Dr Muecke believes blindness is a human rights issue and is working to create a world where everyone can see.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Professor Michelle Simmons (born 1967)</th>
<th>Professor in quantum physics 2018 Australian of the Year</th>
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<td>Professor Simmons is a pioneer in atomic electronics and quantum computing. At the forefront of what she calls the “space race of the computing era”, Professor Simmons aims to build a quantum computer able to solve problems in minutes that would otherwise take thousands of years. Such a discovery has the potential to revolutionise drug design, weather forecasting, self-driving vehicles, artificial intelligence and more.</td>
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<td>In 2018, Professor Simmons was named as the Australian of the Year for her work and dedication to quantum information science. In 2019, she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of her “distinguished service to science education as a leader in quantum and atomic electronics and as a role model”.</td>
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Australian currency

The illustrations on our currency depict people and symbols that are important to Australia.

The people chosen to appear on our currency are people who have shown initiative and great talent in the areas of social reform, science, politics, military accomplishment and the arts.

Queen Elizabeth II (born 1926)
Queen Elizabeth II is Australia’s Head of State. She is the Queen of Australia and of the United Kingdom. She has been a strong, stable presence throughout her long and popular reign.

Parliament House and the Forecourt Mosaic
The schematic plan of Parliament House was based on the Design Development Landscape Plan, which was provided by the Parliament House Construction Authority. The Forecourt Mosaic is based on a Central Desert dot-style painting by Michael Nelson Jagamara titled ‘Possum and Wallaby Dreaming’.

Dame Mary Gilmore (1865–1962)
Dame Mary Gilmore was an author, journalist, poet and campaigner for social reform. She is remembered for her writing and for speaking out on behalf of women, poor people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson (1864–1941)
Andrew Barton Paterson was a poet, songwriter and journalist. He wrote under the name ‘Banjo’ Paterson and is remembered in particular for writing the words of ‘Waltzing Matilda’, the most famous folk song in Australia.

Reverend John Flynn (1880–1951)
Reverend John Flynn began the world’s first airborne medical service, the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. He is remembered for saving many lives by bringing health services to remote areas of Australia.
Mary Reibey (1777–1855)
Mary Reibey was a pioneer businesswoman in the colony of New South Wales. After arriving in Australia as a teenage convict settler, she became a respected leader in the community.

Edith Cowan (1861–1932)
Edith Cowan was a social worker, politician and feminist. She was the first woman elected to any Australian parliament.

David Unaipon (1872–1967)
David Unaipon was a writer, public speaker and inventor. He is remembered for his contributions to science and literature, and for improving the conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Sir John Monash (1865–1931)
Sir John Monash was an engineer, administrator and one of Australia’s greatest military commanders. He is remembered for his leadership, intelligence and eloquence.

Dame Nellie Melba (1861–1931)
Dame Nellie Melba was a world famous soprano. Known around the world as the ‘Queen of Song’, she was the first Australian singer to become internationally renowned.
National days and celebrations

Australia's national holidays reflect the celebrations and milestones of our history since European settlement.

Fixed dates

- **New Year’s Day on 1 January** celebrates the start of the new year.
- **Australia Day on 26 January** is a time to reflect on what it means to be Australian, to celebrate contemporary Australia and to acknowledge our shared history. The date marks the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove in 1788.
- **Anzac Day on 25 April** marks the anniversary of the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) at Gallipoli during World War I. It is a solemn day when we remember the sacrifice of all Australians who served and died in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. We also honour the courage and commitment of all servicemen and women, and reflect on the many different meanings of war.
- **Christmas Day on 25 December** is a gift-giving day based on the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.
- **Boxing Day on 26 December** is part of the Christmas celebration.

Variable dates

- **Labour Day or Eight Hour Day** celebrates Australian workers’ achievement of the eight-hour work day—a world first.
- **Easter** commemorates the Christian account of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Queen’s Birthday** celebrates the birth of Australia’s head of state, Queen Elizabeth II. This celebration is held on the second Monday in June in every state and territory except Western Australia and Queensland.

Other public holidays

Other public holidays are held in different states, territories and cities. For example, the Australian Capital Territory has Canberra Day, South Australia has Volunteers Day, and Western Australia has Foundation Day.

Other important dates (not public holidays)

- **Harmony Week** is held in the week including 21 March and is a celebration of our cultural diversity.
- **Australian Citizenship Day on 17 September** is a day on which we celebrate the common bond represented by Australian citizenship and reflect on the role we play in shaping our country’s future.
- **National Reconciliation Week on 27 May to 3 June** is a week in which we strive towards a more just, equal nation by championing unity and mutual respect.

Australian people

Australia is one of the most diverse societies in the world. Approximately three per cent of the population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. More than one quarter of Australia’s residents were born overseas, having migrated from more than 200 countries. The diversity of the population provides Australia with a rich variety of languages, beliefs, traditions and cultures.

As a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Australia still has close ties with the United Kingdom.

Australian people take pride in Australian citizenship, which is an important unifying bond in our diverse society. Australian Citizenship Day is celebrated on 17 September each year. It is a day for all Australian citizens to reflect on the role we play in building our nation and shaping our country’s future.
Australia’s economy

Australia has a stable and competitive economy, and values its vibrant and skilled workforce. The quality of life enjoyed by people in Australia is one of the highest in the world.

Dick Smith (born 1944)

Dick Smith is an Australian businessman, adventurer and philanthropist. He made his fortune in his electronics business and has used his wealth to advance Australia. He started an Australian-only food company and has invested millions of dollars to help keep companies Australian-owned.

He was named Australian of the Year in 1986 and has won an award for technical advancement and environmental preservation. He was the first person to cross Australia and the Tasman Sea in a hot air balloon. He is known for his adventurous spirit, his success in business and his patriotism.

The market

Australia’s stable modern financial institutions and tax and trading regulations give certainty to business activity. Service industries, including tourism, education and financial services, generate a significant amount of Australia’s gross domestic product.

Australia’s economic stability makes it an appealing destination for investment. Australia’s stock market is one of the largest in the Asia-Pacific region.

Trade

Australia’s largest trading partners are China, Japan, the United States, South Korea, Singapore, India, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Australia’s main exports are coal, iron ore, natural gas, and education and tourism services. The economy is open and trade has always been a vital contributor to Australia’s economic prosperity.

Mining

Australia is rich in natural resources such as coal, copper, liquefied natural gas and mineral sands. They are in high demand around the world.
Australia as a global citizen

Australia is proud of its role as a good global citizen. Australians show this by helping those less fortunate around the world.

International aid and humanitarian efforts

The Australian Government’s international aid program supports developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. This support is provided in the region and around the world through assisting people and governments.

Australians show enormous generosity when disasters occur in our country or overseas. We also donate regularly to countries that experience ongoing suffering through personal donations and Australia’s aid program.

In 2018, Dr Richard Harris and Dr Craig Challen were awarded the second-highest Australian bravery decoration, the Star of Courage, along with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), for their efforts in the rescue of 12 teenagers and their soccer coach from a flooded cave system in Thailand.

Active participation in international forums

Australia has been an active member of the United Nations (UN) from its beginning in 1945. Australia provides protection for people who have been identified as refugees under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. It also contributes to UN peacekeeping efforts and humanitarian and emergency responses for developing countries, and has a strong involvement in the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In 1971, Australia became a full member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD aims to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world while expanding world trade.

Australia strongly supports closer cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. It is an active member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the East Asia Summit, and the Pacific Islands Forum. It is an Association of Southeast Asian Nations dialogue partner and participates in its Regional Forum.

Dr Catherine Hamlin AC
(born 1924–2020)

Dr Catherine Hamlin was a gynaecologist, renowned for saving young Ethiopian women from a life of suffering. Since 1959, Dr Hamlin worked in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia helping women with the childbirth injury known as ‘obstetric fistula’. Women with this internal injury cannot control their bodily functions and are left humiliated and made outcasts from their communities.

Dr Hamlin and her husband established the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Their efforts have meant thousands of women are able to return home to lead full, healthy lives.

In 1995, Dr Hamlin was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, the highest Australian award.
Australian Nobel Laureates

Australia is renowned for scientific and medical research. The following Australians have won a Nobel Prize in these fields.

• **Professor William Bragg (1862–1942) and Lawrence Bragg (1890–1971), physicists**
  William Bragg (father) and Lawrence Bragg (son) were joint winners of the Nobel Prize in Physics 1915, ‘for their services in the analysis of crystal structure by means of X-rays’.

• **Sir Howard Walter Florey (1898–1968), pathologist**
  Born in Adelaide, South Australia, Howard Florey received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1945 (jointly) ‘for the discovery of penicillin and its curative effect in various infectious diseases’.

• **Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet (1899–1985), medical scientist and biologist**
  Born in Victoria, Frank Burnet was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1960 (jointly) ‘for discovery of acquired immunological tolerance’.

• **Sir John Carew Eccles (1903–97), physiologist**
  John Eccles was born in Melbourne and received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1963 (jointly) ‘for discoveries concerning the ionic mechanisms involved in excitation and inhibition in the peripheral and central portions of the nerve cell membrane’.

• **Sir Bernard Katz (1911–2003), physician and biophysicist**
  Born in Germany, Bernard Katz became an Australian citizen in 1941. He received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1970 for ‘discoveries concerning the humoral transmitters in the nerve terminals and the mechanism for their storage, release and inactivation’.

• **Professor John Warcup Cornforth (1917–2007), chemist**
  John Cornforth was born in Sydney and received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1975 (jointly) ‘for his work on the stereochemistry of enzyme-catalysed reactions’.

• **Professor Peter Doherty (born 1940), immunologist**
  Peter Doherty was born in Queensland and received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1996 (jointly) ‘for discoveries concerning the specificity of the cell mediated immune defence’.

• **Professor Barry Marshall (born 1951), gastroenterologist, and Doctor Robin Warren (born 1937), pathologist**
  Barry Marshall and Robin Warren were joint winners of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2005 for their discovery of ‘the bacterium Helicobacter pylori and its role in gastritis and peptic ulcer disease’.

• **Professor Elizabeth Helen Blackburn (born 1948), biologist**
  Elizabeth Blackburn was born in Hobart and received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2009 (jointly) ‘for the discovery of how chromosomes are protected by telomeres and the enzyme telomerase’.

• **Professor Brian P. Schmidt (born 1967), astronomer**
  Brian P. Schmidt received the Nobel Prize in Physics 2011 (jointly) ‘for the discovery of the accelerating expansion of the universe through observations of distant supernovae’.

The following Australian has received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

• **Patrick White (1912–90), novelist and playwright**
  Born in London to Australian parents, Patrick White was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973 ‘for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature’.
PART SIX

Our Australian story
Our Australian story

Australia’s story has been shaped by many people and events.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Australia’s first inhabitants are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have the oldest continuous cultures and traditions in the world.

The archaeological record indicates that Aboriginal peoples arrived in Australia between 65,000 and 40,000 years ago; however, the Aboriginal peoples believe they are central to the creation stories of this land, and their creation stories commence with the beginning of time.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have age-old beliefs and traditions that still guide them today. They have a deep connection with the land that is expressed in their stories, art and dance.

Languages

Before British settlement, more than 700 languages and dialects were used in Australia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. More than 100 of these languages are still used today, although less than twenty are still being passed on to children. The oral histories of the Indigenous cultures are extremely important because they tell the story of the people and the land.

The Dreaming

The Dreaming is a western term often used to describe the system of knowledge, faith and practice that guides the life of Aboriginal peoples.

The stories of the Dreaming are told to children by their parents and elders. These stories teach the children how their land came to be shaped and inhabited. The stories also give the children valuable practical lessons, such as where to find food in the bush.

Stories of the Dreaming are told using music, song and dance. When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples sing and dance, they feel a very deep connection to their ancestors.

The original forms of Indigenous art were rock carvings or paintings and ground designs. People from Central Australia typically created visual art representations using dots, circles and specific cultural symbols to represent the land or stories from the Dreaming, while those in the northern parts of Australia painted figures of humans, animals, symbols and spirits.

The Dreaming continues to be important to Aboriginal peoples today.
The first Europeans in Australia

Early European exploration

In the 17th century, European explorers discovered parts of what they called ‘Terra Australis Incognita’—the unknown land of the south. In 1606, a Dutchman, Willem Janszoon, charted the western side of Cape York Peninsula at the northern tip of Australia. Around this time, a Spanish ship captained by Luis Vaez de Torres sailed through the strait to the north of Australia.

Later in the 1600s, Dutch sailors explored the coast of Western Australia, and called this land ‘New Holland’.

In 1642, Abel Tasman discovered the coast of a new land that he named ‘Van Diemen’s Land’ (now Tasmania). He also charted thousands of miles of Australian coast. His incomplete map of New Holland shows that he believed the land was joined to Papua New Guinea in the north.

William Dampier was the first English person to set foot on Australian soil. In 1684, he landed on the north-west coast. Given how dry and dusty the land was, he did not consider it useful for trade or settlement.

Captain James Cook

Until Englishman James Cook reached the east coast of Australia in 1770, it had not been explored by Europeans. Cook had been sent by the British Government on a voyage of discovery to the South Pacific. He charted the east coast and landed his ship, the Endeavour, at Botany Bay, just south of modern Sydney. James Cook called this land ‘New South Wales’, and claimed it for King George III.

Convict transportation

Australia is unique, in that most of its first European settlers were convicts. After the United States of America achieved independence, Great Britain could no longer send its convicts there and British prisons became very crowded. In 1786, Great Britain decided to transport some of the convicts to the new colony of New South Wales.

The first colony

The first Governor of the colony of New South Wales was Captain Arthur Phillip. He brought 11 ships safely from Britain to the other side of the world, leading the ‘First Fleet’ into Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788. It is on the anniversary of this day that we mark Australia Day each year.

The early years of settlement

The early years of colonial settlement were very hard. To make sure that people didn’t starve, Governor Phillip put everyone on the same rations, including himself and his officers. His common sense and determination helped the colony survive those first difficult years.

Convicts worked hard in the early settlement. Those who completed their sentences became free men and women and moved into the community to work and raise families.
New opportunities
Australia’s early European population was made up largely of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish people. The Scottish, Welsh and Irish had often been at war with the English, but in Australia, the four groups lived and worked closely together.

Convicts and ex-convicts began to find new opportunities in the colony. Some ex-convicts set up businesses on their own as merchants. Others did well as farmers, tradesmen, shopkeepers and publicans.

Caroline Chisholm (1808–77)
Caroline Chisholm was a leading social reformer who improved the situation of single women in the early colonies. She came to Australia with her army officer husband and five children in 1838. She helped the migrant women who were living on the streets of Sydney. Within a few years, she set up 16 migrant women’s hostels around the colony.

Caroline worked hard to improve life on the ships for the people travelling to the colonies. She also arranged a loan plan for destitute people to help break the cycle of dependence and poverty.

Today, many of Australia’s schools are named after Caroline Chisholm. She was known as ‘the migrant’s friend’ and is remembered for her tireless efforts to help people to start a new life.

Governor Macquarie
Along with Governor Phillip, Governor Lachlan Macquarie holds an important place in our early history. He governed the colony of New South Wales between 1810 and 1821, developing it as a free settlement, not a convict colony. He improved farming practices, built new roads and public facilities, and encouraged the exploration of Australia.

Governor Macquarie also put money into education and respected the rights of former convicts. He gave some former convicts jobs as judges and public servants.

Governor Macquarie is honoured in history for the positive changes he made to the colony. Macquarie University in New South Wales is named after him.

Convict heritage
It was thought that the Governor’s position was too powerful for one man, so in 1823, the New South Wales Legislative Council was formed to advise the next Governor and reform the colony.

Great Britain stopped sending convicts to New South Wales in 1840, to Tasmania in 1852 and to Western Australia in 1868. In total, more than 160,000 convicts were transported to Australia. The divisions between ex-convicts and the settlers gradually disappeared. From the 1850s, the colonists were governing themselves and wanted to build respectable societies. Many Australians have come to be proud of their convict heritage.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples after European settlement

In 1788, at the start of European settlement, it is estimated that there were between 750,000 and 1.4 million Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. This included about 250 individual nations and more than 700 language groups.

When setting up its colonies in Australia, the British Government did not make a treaty with the Aboriginal people. The British authorities believed they were legally entitled to occupy the land.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had their own economies and an ancient and enduring connection to the land. Where they had once lived under their own rule, they were now forced to accept the laws of the newcomers. The newcomers had not been invited and they were generally not welcomed.

The lives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were profoundly changed by the arrival of British colonists. Lives were lost and land taken as the colonisers attempted to impose new social, economic and religious orders. New animals, plants and diseases were introduced.

The early governors were told not to harm the Aboriginal people, but the British settlers moved onto their land and many Aboriginal people were killed. Settlers were usually not punished for committing such crimes.

Some Aboriginal people and European settlers were able to live peacefully together. Some settlers employed Aboriginal people on sheep and cattle farms. Governor Macquarie offered Aboriginal people their own land for farming and set up a school for Aboriginal children. However, very few Aboriginal people wanted to live the way the settlers lived, as they did not want to lose their cultural traditions.

Many Aboriginal people were killed in the battles over land. While the exact number is unknown, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people died. An even greater number of Aboriginal people died from the diseases that the Europeans brought to the country. The loss of Aboriginal life was catastrophic.

Historical milestones

Inland exploration

In New South Wales, the early colonists faced extreme hardship. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had learned to manage and live in this dry environment, although they too suffered in times of drought.

The Blue Mountains (approximately 50 kilometres to the west of Sydney) posed a great challenge to Sydney’s early inland explorers. In 1813, three men, Gregory Blaxland, William Charles Wentworth and William Lawson, finally managed to cross this mountain range. Today, the road and railway across the Blue Mountains still follows the route they took.

On the other side of these mountains, the explorers discovered open country that was good for raising sheep and cattle. Further inland they came across dry, desert country.

European explorers had trouble finding water and carrying enough food to survive. The German-born explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, disappeared while trying to cross the continent from east to west in 1848.

In 1860, Robert O’Hara Burke and William John Wills set out from Melbourne to cross Australia from south to north. They led a large expedition, but their crossing was very difficult. Burke and Wills were not experienced bushmen. They received expert help from the Aboriginal Yandruwandha people, but both explorers died on their way back. Although they failed to complete their expedition, their story is remembered in art and literature. It is a tragic example of the harshness of our land.
Settlers and pioneers

Even when the settlers had good land, life was still hard. After periods of flood or drought, settlers could lose their livelihood and farmers would often need to start again. However, people picked themselves up and battled on. The term ‘Aussie battler’ represents the Australian fighting spirit and resilience. Pioneers are honoured for their courage during these hard times. Women often had to keep the business or farm going when the men were away or had died.

It was during these harsh early years that Australia’s spirit of mateship began. It was strong among the men who travelled through the outback, shearing and droving. Settlers also helped each other out during difficult times. This tradition is still very much a part of Australian life.

The gold rush

The discovery of gold in New South Wales in early 1851 has been described as the ‘discovery that changed a nation’. Shortly after, gold was also found in the newly-independent colony of Victoria.

By the end of 1852, approximately 90,000 people had travelled to Victoria from all parts of Australia and around the world to search for gold.

The Eureka rebellion is remembered as a great democratic moment in Australia’s history. Government troops could be very rough with the gold diggers when collecting licence fees to dig for gold. On 11 November 1854, approximately 10,000 people gathered at Bakery Hill, Ballarat, to adopt a charter of basic democratic rights, including the removal of expensive gold licences, and the ability to vote for representatives to the Victorian Parliament.
Following this, the ‘Eureka Stockade’ was built at the Eureka diggings. It was here that the diggers swore by a rebel flag (featuring the Southern Cross) to stand by each other and fight to defend their rights and liberties. On the morning of 3 December 1854, government officials sent soldiers to attack the stockade. Following a short battle, the gold diggers were overpowered and about 30 were killed.

The rebel leaders were put on trial for high treason, but no jury would convict them. A Royal Commission found the government was at fault and many of the miners’ demands were met, including their wish for political representation. Within a year, Peter Lalor, the leader of the rebels, became a member of the Victorian Parliament.

Over the years, the Eureka rebellion has become a symbol of protest and belief in a ‘fair go’.

The gold rush changed Australia in many ways. During the gold rush years, the non-Indigenous population of Australia increased from approximately 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871. The first railways and telegraphs were built in the 1850s to link the growing populations.

Large gold deposits were found in all colonies except South Australia. The economy was flourishing and gold overtook wool as Australia’s most valuable export. By around 1890, Australia had one of the highest standards of living in the world.

The squatters and the farmers

In the early days of the colonies, people known as ‘squatters’ took over vast areas of land to farm. Although they had not paid for this land, the squatters considered it their own. After the first gold rushes were over, the government struggled to take this land back from the squatters.

In the 1860s, the government wanted to sell the squatters’ land to working men and their families to farm. But the squatters tried to keep as much land as possible for themselves.

Until the railways were built, the new farmers whose farms were far from the markets faced a difficult environment. The opportunity to earn high wages in the cities made life on the land and working for little reward unappealing.

The Australian tradition of inventing machinery to make farming easier began in South Australia. For example, the stump-jump plough (1870s) allowed rough land to be easily cleared for crop farming.

Migration in the 1800s

In the early 1800s, the main groups in the colonies were of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish heritage. Many of Australia’s pastimes, cultural activities and religious practices reflected those of Great Britain. There were also small groups of migrants from Europe and Asia. European arrivals in the 1800s included Italians, Greeks, Poles, Maltese, and Russians, as well as French settlers working in the wine industry. They were mostly young men seeking work and fortune, or seamen who had deserted their ships.

After 1842, Chinese migrants began arriving in Australia, and their numbers grew after the discovery of gold. There were racial tensions on the goldfields, which sometimes led to riots against the Chinese, such as those in Bendigo in 1854. These racial tensions resulted in the first restrictions on immigration in Victoria in 1855 and New South Wales in 1861.
After the gold rushes of the 1850s, many Chinese returned home. Among those who stayed were the market gardeners who supplied much needed fresh fruit and vegetables in areas where water was scarce.

From the 1860s, people from Iran, Egypt and Turkey came to operate camel ‘trains’ through outback Australia. Along with the Indian cameleers, they were loosely referred to as ‘Afghans’, largely because of their similar dress and common Islamic religious beliefs. These cameleers were regarded as ‘pioneers of the inland’.

There were also Indians and Pacific Islanders who worked in the sugar and banana industries in Queensland, often for very low wages and in poor conditions.

From the 1880s, workers from Lebanon arrived in Australia. Many were involved in the fabric and clothing industries, and Lebanese families came to own most of the draperies in country Australia.

Aboriginal reserves

After the early battles over land between the Aboriginal people and settlers, the Aboriginal peoples were made to live on the edges of society. Some worked on outback sheep and cattle stations for very low wages, which in many cases were never paid. The colonial governments set up reserves where Aboriginal people could live, but these areas did not allow them to live their traditional lives. For example, they were not free to hunt and gather as they wished.

In the late 1800s, the colonial governments took away Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights. They controlled where Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders could live and who they could marry. They took many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children away from their parents, sending them to ‘white’ families or government orphanages. Such policies persisted until the mid-20th century. The issue of these ‘stolen generations’ remains a cause of deep sadness for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and other Australians, and was the subject of a national apology in the Australian Parliament in 2008.

Suffrage

‘Suffragettes’ was the term used around the world for women who campaigned for the right to vote in elections. During the 1880s and 1890s, every colony had at least one suffrage society. Suffragettes collected thousands of signatures on petitions to present to their colonial parliaments.

In 1895, women in South Australia won the right to vote and seek election to Parliament. In 1899, women in Western Australia won the right to vote.

In 1902, Australia was the first country to give women both the right to vote and the right to be elected to Parliament. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not granted the right to vote until 1962.

In 1923, Edith Cowan became the first female parliamentarian when she was elected to the Western Australian Parliament. In 1943, Enid Lyons was the first woman elected to the Australian Parliament.
Catherine Spence (1825–1910)

Catherine Spence was a writer, preacher, feminist and suffragette. She migrated to Australia from Scotland and wrote school books and prize-winning novels about Australian life.

She helped set up an organisation to help homeless children, and supported new kindergartens and government secondary schools for girls.

She was the first woman to stand for parliament. Although she received many votes, she did not win the seat. In 1891, she became the Vice-President of the Women’s Suffrage League of South Australia.

Catherine Spence is a symbol of what a woman can achieve, even in restrictive times.

Federation

Although the colonies had developed separately, by the late 19th century, a common sense of national belonging had developed.

Towards the end of the 19th century, two attempts were made to bring the colonies together. In 1889, Sir Henry Parkes called for the formation of a strong new nation. The Australasian Federation Conference was held in 1890 to discuss the idea of an Australian federation.

In 1893, the move towards federation gathered speed after some delays. Electors chose the members of the next constitutional convention. Electors voted in two rounds of referendums to accept a new Australian Constitution.

The British Government agreed that Australia could govern itself. On 1 January 1901, Edmund Barton, who had led the movement for federation in New South Wales, became Australia’s first Prime Minister. His government was sworn in before a huge crowd in Sydney’s Centennial Park.

Australia was now a nation within the British Empire. It did not acquire full powers over defence and foreign affairs until 1931. Until the 1948 Australian Citizenship Act, Australians were still British subjects rather than Australian citizens. Although national feeling had grown, the sense of being British was still strong.
Edith Cowan (1861–1932)

Edith Cowan was the first woman elected into an Australian Parliament and is featured on Australia’s fifty-dollar note.

Edith was prominent in the women’s suffrage movement, and was a leading advocate for public education and the rights of children. Edith was made a magistrate in 1915 and a justice of the peace in 1920. In 1921, Edith was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia as a member of the Nationalist Party.

The birth of political parties

By the 1880s, workers in Australia had built up strong trade unions. In times of economic depression and drought, these unions held strikes to protect wages and working conditions.

In 1891, these workers created a political party, the Labor Party. Its main focus was to improve workers’ wages and conditions. Middle-class people lived more comfortably than the workers but they understood the workers’ situation. Official boards were created to set wages and to prevent strikes. In 1907, the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration determined a minimum wage at a level at which a working man, his wife and three children could live in simple comfort.

In 1910, the first version of a Liberal Party was formed. This party had many names over the years, including the Nationalist Party and the United Australia Party. In 1944, the Liberal Party as we know it today was founded by Robert Menzies, who went on to become Australia’s longest serving Prime Minister.

After World War I, the Country Party was formed to advance the cause of farmers. It is now known as the National Party, and usually acts in coalition with the Liberal Party.

The 1901 Immigration Restrictions Act

A ‘White Australia’ policy became law when the Immigration Restrictions Act was passed in December 1901. It restricted immigrants from working in Australia and restricted the immigration of ‘non-white’ people.

People with a non-European background had to sit a dictation test of 50 words in a European language. Members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the barrister William Ah Ket and leading Chinese businessmen made public protests, but this did not succeed in changing this law.

Migrants from Europe were prominent in the newly federated Australia. However, the cultural contributions of Chinese, Indians, Pacific Islanders and peoples from the Middle East were already part of Australia’s social identity.
Dorothea Mackellar (1885–1968)

Dorothea Mackellar is a poet who is best known for her poem *My Country*, first published in 1908, which immortalised the line ‘I love a sunburnt country’. Her poetry is regarded as quintessential bush poetry, inspired by her experience on her brothers’ farms near Gunnedah, North-West New South Wales.

In 1968, Dorothea was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her contribution to Australian literature.

World War I (1914–18)

Apart from conflict between settlers and the Aboriginal people, Australia has had a remarkably peaceful history. There have been no civil wars or revolutions.

Generations of Australians remained very loyal to the British Empire.

As a European outpost close to Asia, Australia historically felt vulnerable, especially after Japan became a great power. We relied on the British Empire and its naval strength to defend Australia. Australia fought in both world wars to keep the British Empire strong and to protect Australia.

Australia entered World War I in August 1914, and in 1915 took part in an attack on Germany’s ally, Turkey. The men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzacs) were given their own part of the Gallipoli Peninsula to attack.

They had to climb steep cliffs while being shot at by Turkish troops. Somehow, they got up the cliffs and dug in, although many young men died. Australians at home took tremendous pride in the spirit of the Anzacs.

After Gallipoli, the Australian forces fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium. It was here that they got the name ‘diggers’ because they spent so much time digging and fixing trenches. Led by their commander, Lieutenant General Sir John Monash, the Australian diggers won great victories in the last battles against Germany and won the enduring gratitude of the French, whom they were helping.

Australian servicemen and women also served in the Middle East, participating in the defence of the Suez Canal, and the Allied conquest of the Sinai Peninsula and Palestine.
Private John Simpson served at Gallipoli in the ambulance medical corps as a stretcher bearer. It was difficult to carry stretchers through the hills and the valleys. Against army orders, he used a donkey, named Duffy, to help transport the wounded soldiers back to safety.

Day and night, hour after hour, Simpson and his donkey would risk their lives travelling between the fighting and the beach camp.

Private John Simpson had arrived at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He was killed just four weeks later by enemy machine guns. Servicemen at the beach camp watched in silent sadness as Duffy, still carrying an injured soldier, trotted towards the beach without his young master by his side. John Simpson Kirkpatrick is an Australian legend.
The Anzac legend

The Anzac tradition was forged on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey.

The landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 marked the start of a campaign that lasted eight months and resulted in more than 26,000 Australian casualties, including more than 8000 who were killed or died of disease. The bravery and spirit of those who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula shaped a legend, and the term ‘Anzac’ became part of the Australian and New Zealand language.

On 25 April 1916, Australia, New Zealand, England and troops in Egypt observed the first anniversary of this landing. From then onwards, 25 April was known as Anzac Day.

By the 1920s, Anzac Day ceremonies were held throughout Australia and the states had designated Anzac Day as a public holiday.

Major war memorials were built in the capital cities, and monuments in cities and towns across the nation are tributes to the young men and women killed in that and later conflicts.

Anzac Day is a day on which to honour all those who have served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, and their mateship, endurance in the face of adversity and sacrifices made for our future. It is also a day for reflecting on the many different meanings of war.

Today, Anzac Day is commemorated in Australia and around the world. Returned Australian servicemen and women, peacekeepers and veterans from other countries, all march proudly in Anzac Day parades.
The Great Depression (1929–32)

The Great Depression was a time of extreme hardship for the Australian people. It started at the same time as the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. Other factors that contributed to the Depression in Australia included falls in the prices of Australian commodities and industrial unrest as employers cut jobs and wages. By the middle of 1932, almost 32 per cent of Australians were out of work.

The Depression’s impact on Australian society was devastating. Without work and a steady income, many people lost their homes. They were forced to live in makeshift shelters with no heating or sanitation. Some fathers deserted their families or turned to alcohol. Many working-class children left school at 13 or 14 years of age. Many women worked in basic jobs as well as looking after their children and homes on their own.

At the time leading up to the Depression, the government did not have a central unemployment program. Apart from charities and some private organisations, poor people had to rely on public works and employment projects. The economy started to improve in 1932, but in many cases, the damage to families could not be repaired.

During the Great Depression, the vital role of Australian charities and volunteers was emphasised.

Sir Charles Kingsford Smith (1897–1935)

Sir Charles Kingsford Smith was an early Australian aviator. In World War I, he fought at Gallipoli and flew with Britain’s Royal Flying Corps.

His greatest achievement was making the first crossing over the Pacific Ocean from California to Queensland in 1928. His plane, the Southern Cross, arrived in Australia to 25,000 adoring people cheering for their hero ‘Smithy’. In 1932, he was knighted for his services to aviation.

In 1935, he tragically went down with his plane on a flight from England to Australia and was never found.

Sir Charles Kingsford Smith has been called the world’s greatest aviator and is remembered for giving the people, in the midst of the Depression, a true Australian hero to look up to.
World War II (1939–45)

In World War II, Australians fought with the Allies against Germany in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa. They also fought against Japan in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

In the deserts of North Africa, Australian troops resisted a long siege by the Germans and Italians in the town of Tobruk, the last defence against the Germans’ march on Egypt. For eight long months, these men (mostly Australians) withstood fierce attacks and harsh conditions, living in caves and crevasses. Their determination, bravery and humour, combined with the aggressive tactics of their commanders, became a source of inspiration during some of the war’s darkest days. In doing so, they achieved lasting fame as the ‘Rats of Tobruk’.

In 1941, Japan launched its war in the Pacific. Australian servicemen and women went to defend Papua New Guinea. This task was handed to regular soldiers and young conscript soldiers who were poorly-trained. They fought the enemy in the jungle, along a steep, muddy trail known as the Kokoda Track. The Australian troops stopped the Japanese advance. Like Anzac Cove at Gallipoli, the Kokoda Track has become a place of pilgrimage for some Australians.

In 1942, the Japanese took the British base in Singapore. Approximately 15,000 Australian troops were among those who were captured and taken to work on the Thai-Burma Railway. During its construction, many Australian troops were subjected to cruel treatment by the Japanese. Although Australian prisoners of war did their best to look after each other, it was here that more than 2700 Australian prisoners of war died.

**Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop (1907–93)**

Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop was a brave and caring surgeon and an Australian war hero. During World War II he was captured by the Japanese and taken to Burma to work on the Thai-Burma Railway. This was very hard work.

As a commander, Weary spoke up for his men, and as their surgeon, he spent long hours healing them. He was tortured in the camp but defiantly continued to serve.

In 1969, he was knighted for his contribution to medicine. When he died, more than 10,000 people lined the streets of Melbourne for the state funeral of the hero they called ‘The Surgeon of the Railway’.
Other conflicts
Soon after World War II, from 1950 to 1953, Australian armed forces were sent as part of a United Nations multinational force to defend South Korea from communist forces of the north.

Not long after, Australia joined the United States of America in supporting the South Vietnamese government against Vietnamese communist forces seeking to reunite the country. The Vietnam War remains Australia’s largest armed force commitment since World War II. Lasting from 1962 until 1973, it was also, at that time, the longest war in which Australia had fought. It was a controversial involvement, with many Australians taking to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to the cause and, in particular, the conscription of young Australian men into the war.

The Australian Defence Force has also been engaged in conflicts in East Timor, Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan and has taken part in United Nations’ peacekeeping operations in many parts of the world, including Africa, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region.

Remembrance Day
As well as on Anzac Day, Australians reflect on those who have served and died in war on Remembrance Day. At 11am on 11 November (the 11th month) each year, Australians pause to remember the sacrifice of the men and women who died or suffered in wars and conflicts, as well as all those who have served. We wear a red poppy on this day.

Migration in the early 1900s
In the period between World Wars I and II, restrictive conditions for entry into Australia remained. However, there was a growth in the migration of people, especially men, from southern Europe. They brought with them many skills, education and their own cultural values. They helped develop Australia’s rural industries, and built roads and railways. Skilled Italian stonemasons made a significant contribution to the construction of public buildings and residences.

At the end of the 1930s, Jewish refugees began to arrive from Europe. They were escaping from the threat of Nazi Germany. They came from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. Many were highly educated and they contributed greatly to Australia’s economy and cultural life.

Approximately 18,000 Italian soldiers captured in the Second World War were held in prisoner of war camps in Australia. They only stayed a short time in the camps, but they were treated fairly and many learned something about the land and the people. After the war, many returned to Australia as immigrants.

Post-war refugees
After the war, Australia encouraged migration from other European countries to increase the population. Millions of people had fled Nazi Germany or were unable to return to their homelands now occupied by Soviet Russia. Approximately 170,000 of these displaced persons were accepted into Australia to begin a new life.

There was also an acute shortage of labour in Australia. The government at the time believed that population growth was essential for the country’s future. Healthy adult migrants under the age of 45 years could travel to Australia for £10 and their children could travel for free. Migrants were, however, still restricted to those of British or European nationalities.
In 1949, the government started work on a bold scheme to catch the waters of the Snowy River before they flowed to the sea in eastern Victoria. These waters were diverted to flow inland for irrigation and to be used to generate electric power. It was a massive project that took 25 years to complete.

It is the largest engineering project in Australia. It is also one of the largest hydro-electric schemes in the world and is recognised as one of the modern civil engineering wonders of the world.

The Snowy Mountains Scheme is situated in Kosciusko National Park, New South Wales. It consists of 16 major dams, seven power stations, a pumping station and 225 kilometres of tunnels, pipelines and aqueducts. Most of it is underground.

The scheme supplies vital water to the farms of inland New South Wales and Victoria. Its power stations also produce up to 10 per cent of New South Wales' electricity.

Work on the scheme began in 1949 and was finished in 1974. More than 100,000 people from more than 30 countries worked on the project. Seventy per cent of these workers were migrants. After the project was completed, most of the European workers remained in Australia, continuing their valuable contribution to Australia's multicultural society.

The Snowy Mountains Scheme is an important symbol of Australia's identity as an independent, multicultural and resourceful country.
Treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

In the 1940s and 1950s, the government’s policy towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was one of assimilation. This meant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were told to live in the same way as the non-Indigenous population. This did not work because they did not want to lose their traditional cultures.

In the 1960s, the policy changed to one of integration. Most men in Australia gained the right to vote in the 1850s, but Commonwealth voting rights were not extended to all Aboriginal peoples until 1962. As part of this integration, Aboriginal peoples were given civil liberties but they were still expected to adapt to non-Indigenous Australian culture.

In 1967, more than 90 per cent of Australians voted ‘Yes’ in a historic referendum that allowed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be counted in Australia’s five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. This showed that, at the time, the vast majority of Australians thought Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be given the same rights as everyone else.

This broadening of society’s values and strong Aboriginal protest led to the introduction of self-determination as a key guiding principle for policy-making in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The government recognised the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having a say in their own political, economic, social and cultural development.

Protests over land rights gained public attention in the 1960s with the Gurindji Strike at Wave Hill in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal stockmen, led by Vincent Lingiari, walked off the job at the cattle station in protest of pay and working conditions. Their actions led the way for Eddie Mabo and others to fight for land rights.

Under the 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, Aboriginal peoples were granted areas of land in outback Australia. In the early 1990s, the High Court’s Mabo decision and the Native Title Act 1993 recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had a claim to land based on their own traditional laws and customs.

A growing proportion of Australia is covered by native title determinations. In these areas, aspects of traditional society continue.

In May 1997, the ‘Bringing them home’ report was presented to the Australian Parliament. The report was the result of an inquiry into the removal of large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. These children came to be known as the ‘Stolen Generations’. As a result of the report, thousands of Australians showed support for their Indigenous fellow Australians by marching together on the first national ‘Sorry Day’ in 1998.

The National Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008)

On 13 February 2008, the Australian Prime Minister made a national apology to the Stolen Generations in the Australian Parliament, speaking on behalf of all Australians. The Prime Minister said sorry for the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had been treated in the past, and especially for the way that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children had been taken from their parents.

The speech was aired on television and radio stations. Thousands of Australians gathered together in public places and in their workplaces to listen to the ‘Sorry’ speech. The speech officially listed and apologised for past injustices. This was an important step towards the healing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to ensure that these injustices would never happen again. The ‘Sorry’ speech was an important step forward for all Australians.
Today, the invaluable contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Australian identity is recognised and celebrated widely. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold leading positions across Australian society, including in the justice system, politics, the arts and sports.

**Albert Namatjira (1902–59)**

Albert Namatjira was a great Australian artist who pioneered a whole new way of painting Australian landscapes. As a young Arrernte man, Albert showed a natural gift for painting. He had very limited formal training, but his watercolour paintings of the Australian country were very popular and sold very quickly.

He and his wife were the first Aboriginal people in Australia allowed to become citizens. This meant they could vote, enter a hotel and build a house wherever they liked. Albert’s Australian citizenship highlighted the fact that other Indigenous Australians did not have these rights.

His life showed non-Indigenous Australians the injustice of racist laws and contributed to changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Eddie Mabo (1936–92)**

Eddie Koiki Mabo was an activist and spokesperson on Indigenous land rights. He was born on Murray Island, on the traditional land of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait.

From an early age, he was taught exactly which trees and rocks marked the boundaries of his family’s land.

It was not until many years later that Eddie learnt that his homeland was considered Crown land under Australian law and did not belong to his family. He turned his anger into action and took his case to court on behalf of the people of Murray Island.

In 1992, after many years, Eddie’s case was won in the High Court. The Mabo decision ruled that if Aboriginal people could prove that they had a historic and ongoing traditional connection to their land, they could claim ownership of that land if it was otherwise unclaimed. This decision has seen the return of large areas of land to their original owners.

Eddie Mabo is remembered for his courage and for gaining land rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Multicultural migration

In the 1950s and 1960s, a growing movement including many Asian, church and other groups, sought to end the ‘White Australia’ policy.

In 1958, the government removed the dictation test and in 1966, Australia began selective non-European and skilled Asian migration. Eventually, Australians everywhere recognised the value of including all nations in Australia’s migration program.

In 1973, the ‘White Australia’ policy ended, and Australia was on the path to multiculturalism. From this time, the government removed all racial criteria for immigration. In 1975, after the Vietnam War, Australia accepted record numbers of Asian refugees and migrants, mostly from Vietnam, China and India.

Since 1945, millions of people have come to live in Australia, including many refugees from war-torn countries. Today, Australia’s migrants come from all over the world.

Australia has an active policy of inclusion, where every person of every race, ethnicity or culture can feel part of our society. This policy runs through all aspects of Australian society, including government policies. It is reflected in our educational curriculum from early childhood through to university, and is practised in every workplace.

The right of every individual to be treated equally and without discrimination is defended by the Australian Human Rights Commission and government anti-discrimination agencies in every state and territory. Racial discrimination is publicly condemned and is a crime under the law.

Australia has become a multicultural society of harmony and acceptance. It is a country where migrants, Indigenous Australians and everyone born in Australia can feel free to pursue their goals in peace.

Dr Victor Chang (1936–91)

Dr Victor Chang was one of Australia’s best heart surgeons. Victor Peter Chang Yam Him was born in China in 1936 and came to Australia when he was 15 years old.

He worked at St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney and in 1984 he set up the first centre in Australia specialising in heart transplants. In 1986, Victor was made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

Victor became concerned about a shortage of donors so he started designing an artificial heart, which was almost finished when he was tragically killed in 1991.

A new research centre has been set up in his memory. He is remembered for his expertise, optimism and innovation.
In conclusion

These pages have given you just a glimpse into our Australian story. We welcome you to Australian citizenship and invite your full participation in our peaceful democratic country.

As a citizen, you will share all the same responsibilities and privileges as other Australian citizens, and take your place as a full member of the Australian community. You will share the responsibility for helping to shape Australia’s future and we look forward to your active participation in that national project.
ambassador
a person who represents or promotes a country or an activity

board
a group of people chosen to make decisions, for example about how a company should be run

boarding school
a school where students live at the school and do not return home for the whole school term

bush
the Australian countryside still in its natural state

cattle station
a large farm where cattle are raised

charter
a formal written statement of rights and responsibilities

common ground
a shared area of interest

conscript soldier
a soldier who did not choose to join the defence force, but had to join in a time of war

Crown land
land belonging to the government

curriculum
the subjects and topics within a course of study

destitute
not having money or a way of getting money

didgeridoo
a musical instrument of the Aboriginal Australian peoples made from a long hollow branch

fair play
following the rules and not having an unfair advantage; fair and honest treatment of people

fallen servicemen and women
servicemen and women killed in war or battle

forge
to build or create

gross domestic product (GDP)
the value of all goods and services made within a country in a year

heatwave
very hot weather that lasts for more than two days in a row

high treason
a serious criminal offence that involves an attempt to overthrow the government
icon
a well-known and representative image

iconic Indigenous paintings
art that is unique to and representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Indigenous
the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia

land mass
a large area of land

milestone
an important event in history

native title
the traditional rights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to land and waters, decided within the Australian legal system

oral history
people’s spoken memories of what happened in the past

pioneer
one of the first settlers, an achiever in the early days of colonial settlement

political representation
being represented by a politician in the parliament

sentence
the punishment decided by a judge, such as a length of time in jail, for someone found guilty of a crime

set wages
to decide on how much employees must be paid for their work

social reform
making improvements to society gradually, rather than by revolution

state funeral
a funeral paid for by the government to honour a citizen who has made an important contribution to the nation

stockade
a defensive enclosure made with wooden posts and stakes

stockmen
men employed to look after cattle

strike
when employees stop working, for example, to protest against their pay or work conditions

suffrage
the right to vote in public elections

sworn in
to be accepted into public office in a formal ceremony

walk of life
social class or background, job, position
For more information

Australian citizenship
For more information about how to become an Australian citizen, visit www.citizenship.gov.au.

Australia
You can obtain more information about Australia at your local library. The following websites may also have useful information:
- About Australia www.australia.gov.au
- Australia in Brief www.dfat.gov.au

Australian Government programs and services
For more information about Australian Government programs and services visit www.australia.gov.au

Federal MP or Senator
Your local federal MP or a Senator for your state or territory has a range of information about Australian Government programs and services.
A list of MPs and senators is at www.aph.gov.au.

Australian Government organisations
For more information about Australian Government organisations referred to in the resource book visit the following websites:
- Australian Defence Force www.defence.gov.au
- Australian Electoral Commission www.aec.gov.au
- Australian Federal Police www.afp.gov.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission www.humanrights.gov.au
- Australian Sports Commission www.sportaus.gov.au
- Australian Taxation Office www.ato.gov.au
- Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au
- Reserve Bank of Australia www.rba.gov.au
Non-government organisations

For more information about non-government organisations referred to in the resource book visit the following websites:

- Bradman Foundation Australia www.bradman.com.au
- Hamlin Fistula www.hamlinfistula.org
- Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia www.flyingdoctor.org.au
- School of the Air www.schoolair-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
- Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority www.snowyhydro.com.au
- The Fred Hollows Foundation www.hollows.org
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre whc.unesco.org
- Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute www.victorchang.edu.au
- Volunteering Australia www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Other

Search the following websites for more information on the following topics:

- Australian Constitution www.aph.gov.au
- Australian of the Year Awards www.australianoftheyear.org.au
- ‘Bringing them home’ report www.humanrights.gov.au
- Commonwealth parks and reserves www.environment.gov.au
- Cyber safety www.esafety.gov.au
- Famous Australians: The Australian Dictionary of Biography adb.anu.edu.au
- List of Bills currently before parliament www.aph.gov.au
- Parliament of Australia www.aph.gov.au
- Parliamentary Education Office www.peo.gov.au
- Public Holidays www.australia.gov.au
- Racism humanrights.gov.au
- Apology to Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples www.australia.gov.au
Acknowledgments

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p50  Tasmanian Wilderness

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p5   Citizenship Ceremony at Albert Hall, Canberra
p5   Certificate of Australian Citizenship
p11  Smoking Ceremony, Canberra
p34  Family at an Australian Citizenship Ceremony, Canberra

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p51  Children on sheep property NSW – School of the Air, photograph taken in 1962 (ref: A1200:L42511)
p60  Dick Smith, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority, 1991(ref: A6135:K23/5/91/1)
p65  Abel Tasman’s map of New Holland, 1644 (ref: A1200:L13381)
p68  Historical image of the gold rush in Australia in 1851 (ref: A1200:L84868)
p70  ‘Afghan’ cameleers in outback Australia (ref: A6180:25/5/78/62)
p77  Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop in his office, 1986 (ref: A6180:1/9/86/12)

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p65  The First Fleet in Sydney Cove, January 27, 1788, created by John Allcot 1888 – 1973 (ref: nla.pic-an7891482)
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p74  John Simpson Kirkpatrick and his donkey, Gallipoli, 1915 (ref: nla.pic-an24601465)
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