



Australian Government



Becoming an Australian citizen

AUGUST 2007 DRAFT



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The draft has been released before the resource book is finalised to give people an indication of what the citizenship test will cover. Everything a person needs to know to pass the citizenship test will be contained in the final resource book.

August 2007

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INTRODUCTION

You have chosen to live in Australia and to make a contribution to its future by seeking to become an Australian citizen. Becoming a citizen gives you the opportunity to call yourself an Australian. It is the final and most important step in the migration journey.

Australian citizenship is a common bond for all Australians, whether by birth or by choice. Becoming an Australian citizen is about joining a distinct national community. With that comes responsibilities and privileges and the opportunity to participate fully in Australian life.

An ancient land and a young nation, Australia has welcomed settlers and new citizens from more than 200 countries. Few countries have combined ethnic and cultural diversity with national unity as successfully as Australia.

When citizenship is conferred, new citizens are asked to pledge loyalty to Australia and its people, to share their democratic beliefs, to respect their rights and liberties and to uphold and obey Australia's laws.

Australia is a liberal democracy in the Western political tradition. The civic values of Australia include respect for the equal worth, dignity and freedom of the individual, religious tolerance and the equality of men and women. Australian citizenship is about living out these values in everyday life and in local communities.

Modern citizenship also rests on sentiments of nationhood and enduring attachment to what Australians hold in common. With this in mind, and with support from government, new citizens are expected to have a basic knowledge of English.

They are also expected to know something of Australia's history and heritage, our land and its people, and of the unique national culture which has evolved in Australia over time.

This knowledge will help new citizens to embrace education, employment and other opportunities in Australia. It also helps to foster a cohesive and integrated society with a sense of shared destiny and, should the need arise, shared sacrifice for the common good.

Australian citizenship provides for an overriding commitment to Australia. The different experiences we bring, our diverse backgrounds and cultures, can all serve to enrich that shared commitment.

Australian citizenship is a privilege that offers enormous rewards to all who strive to uphold its obligations. The Australian Government welcomes your desire to join our national community. We want new citizens to participate fully in our national life so that each individual can make the most of his or her abilities and help to build an even stronger and more united Australia.

This book will help you prepare to become an Australian citizen.

For further information about citizenship go to: www.citizenship.gov.au

WHAT DOES BEING AN AUSTRALIAN MEAN?

Responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship

*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

Australian Citizenship Pledge

*A person may choose whether or not to use the words 'under God'

With these words, new citizens become part of the Australian community. They become part of the Australian experience. They promise loyalty, respect and obedience to the law. They share freedoms, responsibilities and privileges.

Becoming an Australian citizen will mean that you will have the right to live in Australia. Permanent residents, on the other hand, have permission to live in Australia, provided they remain of good character. An Australian citizen can travel overseas and cannot be denied return entry to Australia provided they have proof of their citizenship, usually an Australian passport.

Australian citizens have certain privileges. They are:

To vote

The right to vote is one of the most important liberties held by Australian citizens. A person's vote is secret so everyone is free and safe to vote as they wish. The voting process is independently and carefully monitored by the Australian Electoral Commission to ensure openness and fairness.

To seek election to parliament

The freedom to seek election to parliament is an important privilege of Australian citizenship, and serving in an Australian parliament is both an honour and a heavy responsibility. To stand for election, a candidate who is also a citizen of another country must show that they have done everything possible to renounce that citizenship.

To apply for an Australian passport and to enter Australia freely

Only Australian citizens are able to apply for an Australian passport, and only Australian citizens have the right to enter and stay in Australia freely.

To register children born overseas as Australian citizens by descent

Australian citizens who are living outside Australia when their children are born are able to register those children as Australian citizens at any Australian diplomatic mission overseas. This means that their children will also have access to all the privileges of Australian citizenship, even though they were not born in Australia.

To seek full consular assistance from Australian diplomatic representatives while overseas

Australian citizens must obey the laws of the countries in which they are travelling. In the event of accident, injury or mishap, however, all Australian citizens have access to full consular assistance from Australian diplomatic missions overseas.

To seek the full range of employment opportunities in the Australian Defence Forces and the Australian Public Service

Public service is a worthy endeavour and can lead to an extremely rewarding career working on behalf of the Australian community. Most positions in the Australian Public Service and the Australian Defence Force require applicants to be, or be about to become, Australian citizens.

Australian citizens also have specific responsibilities. They are:

To vote in federal, state and territory elections and at a referendum

Participating in the democratic process through enrolling and voting is an important responsibility of all eligible Australian citizens. Voting is compulsory in Australian federal, state and territory elections. All citizens aged 18 years or over are required to register to vote.

To serve on a jury if called on to do so

A jury is a group of ordinary men and women who listen to all the evidence in a case that comes before a court and decide the result. Jury service is a key role that all Australians can play in ensuring that the exercise of justice in our court system is fair, balanced and equitable for all.

To defend Australia should the need arise (subject to the same rights and exemptions as Australian-born citizens)

While service in the Australian Defence Force is voluntary, 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.

Consistent with the pledge of loyalty that all new citizens make, Australian citizenship also involves broader obligations.

The responsibilities and privileges of citizenship provide the everyday guideposts for living in Australia, for participating fully in our national life and for making the most of the opportunities that Australia has to offer. New citizens are also asked to embrace the values of Australia.

Australian values

Values which are important in modern Australia include:

- respect for the equal worth, dignity and freedom of the individual
- freedom of speech
- freedom of religion and secular government
- freedom of association
- support for parliamentary democracy and the rule of law
- equality under the law
- equality of men and women
- equality of opportunity
- peacefulness
- tolerance, mutual respect and compassion for those in need.

These values and principles are central to Australia remaining a stable, prosperous and peaceful community. They provide the common reference points for our free and democratic society.

While shared to some extent by all liberal democracies, they have been adapted to Australia's unique setting, moulded and modernised through waves of settlement by people from all over the world.

These values and principles reflect strong influences on Australia's history and culture. These include Judeo-Christian ethics, a British political heritage and the spirit of the European Enlightenment. Distinct Irish and non-conformist attitudes and sentiments have also been important.

This statement of values and principles should not be seen as a quest for conformity or a common set of beliefs. On the contrary, respect for the free-thinking individual and the right to be different are foundations of Australian democracy.

The goal here is to help new citizens understand the core values that have helped to create a society that is stable yet dynamic, cohesive yet diverse. The values both define and symbolise why so many people want to become Australians.

Respect for the equal worth, dignity and freedom of the individual

Individual Australians are free and equal and should be treated with dignity and respect. They enjoy basic freedoms – such as freedom of belief and speech, religion, peaceful assembly and association – subject to the law and as long as one person's freedoms do not harm others.

Australians reject the use of violence, intimidation and humiliation as ways to settle conflict in our society.

Freedom of speech

All Australians are free to say or write what they think about any subject or issue or person, so long as they do not endanger people, defame anyone or obstruct the free speech of others. The same applies to Australian newspapers, radio, television and other forms of media. Australians are free to protest the actions of government and to campaign to change laws.

Freedom of speech allows people to express themselves and to discuss ideas. There are laws that protect an individual's good name against false information or lies.

Freedom of religion and secular government

All Australians are free to follow any religion they choose, so long as its practices do not break any Australian law. Australians are also free not to follow a religion. Religious intolerance is unacceptable in Australian society.

Australia has secular government with no official or state religion. Governments treat all citizens as equal regardless of religion. Religious laws have no legal status in Australia.

The divorce laws, for example, are those laws enacted by the Parliament. The process of divorce and related matters, such as ongoing parental responsibilities and the settlement of property can only be done in accordance with the laws passed by the Australian Parliament. All Australians are entitled to the protection of these laws. Some religious or cultural practices, such as bigamy, are illegal.

Freedom of association

Subject to the law, Australians are free to gather together and to protest against the government or any other organisation, so long as the protest is peaceful and does not damage or injure any people or property. The freedom to associate includes the freedom to join or not to join any organisation or group, provided it is legal, including political parties, trade unions and social groups.

Support for parliamentary democracy and the rule of law

Parliamentary democracy means that Australians participate in how the country is run and how Australian society is represented.

Through regular elections and through open parliamentary debate, governments are accountable to all Australians. Elected parliaments are the only bodies able to make our laws or delegate the authority to make laws.

Australians recognise the value of laws as rules of conduct that are established by elected governments and followed by the community to maintain an orderly and free society. Everyone in Australia must obey laws established by governments. Equally, all Australians are protected by the rule of law. This means that no one is 'above the law', even if they hold a position of power, like politicians or the police.

Equality under the law

All Australians are equal under the law. This means that nobody should be treated worse than anybody else because of their race, ethnicity or country of origin; because of their age, gender, marital status or disability; or because of their political or religious beliefs. Government agencies and independent courts must treat everyone fairly.

Being treated the same means that getting a job or being promoted is based on a worker's skills, ability and experience, and not on their cultural background or political beliefs. It also means that people cannot be refused service in a shop or hotel because of their race, colour, religion, gender or marital status.

Equality of men and women

Men and women have equal rights in Australia. Jobs and professions are equally open to both women and men. Both men and women can serve in the military. Both men and women can hold positions in government.

Equality of opportunity

Australians value equality of opportunity and what is often called a 'fair go'. This means that what a person achieves in life should be a product of their talents, work and effort rather than an accident of birth.

This does not mean that everyone is the same or that everybody has equal wealth or property. The aim is to ensure there are no formal or entrenched class distinctions in Australian society.

Peacefulness

We are proud of our peaceful society. We believe that change should occur by discussion, peaceful persuasion and the democratic process. We reject violence as a means of changing a person's mind or the law.

Tolerance, mutual respect and compassion for those in need

On the whole, Australians support the principle of 'live and let live'. Tolerance and mutual respect towards all people, whatever their background, is valued as a result. Australia prides itself on being an egalitarian society where no one is regarded as better than anyone else by virtue of who they are or where they were born.

Australia has a strong tradition of 'mateship' – where people help and receive help from others voluntarily, especially in times of adversity. A mate can be a spouse, partner, brother, sister, daughter, son or a friend. A mate can also be a total stranger.

Government support in the form of a social safety net for those who struggle through life through no fault of their own is part of Australia's egalitarian ethos. There is also a strong tradition of community service and volunteering.

These values have been promoted and discussed by Australians over many years. They have helped Australia to absorb and integrate successfully millions of people from many ethnic groups and cultural traditions.

Australia's cultural diversity is a strength which makes for a dynamic society. Within a framework of laws, all Australians have the right to express their culture and beliefs.

What is asked is that Australian citizens make an overriding commitment to Australia – its laws, its values and its people.

Australian citizenship is more than a ceremony. It is at the heart of Australia's national identity in the 21st century, as a nation at ease with the world and with itself.

Introducing Australia

Australia is a nation of migrants. Throughout Australia's history, millions of immigrants have helped build our country. We welcome people from some 200 countries to Australia. Twenty-two percent of our population was born overseas.

Indigenous Australians have been here for between 40 000 and 60 000 years. Their culture is one of the oldest in the world.

Australia has been very successful at integrating millions of people with diverse backgrounds from over 200 countries. We have embraced and drawn from that diversity to build a successful nation.

Immigration has always been an important element in Australia's nation building. Migrants started arriving in Australia from 1788, the first year of Australia's European settlement.

An average of 50 000 free settlers arrived in Australia each year during the gold rush era in the mid-19th century. Migration to Australia continued in subsequent years, reflecting the economic and social conditions in Australia and elsewhere.

Most were from Britain and Ireland. Their Anglo-Celtic heritage was the basis of the new nation.

At the end of World War II, millions of people in Europe were displaced from their homelands. At the same time, there was an acute shortage of labour in Australia and a growing belief that significant population growth was

essential for the country's future.

By 1947, an immigration boom was under way, with a large and growing number of arrivals, including many who had arrived on government-assisted passages.

Many of the 6.5 million people who have come to Australia since 1945 were motivated by a commitment to family, or a desire to escape poverty, war or persecution. They were determined to establish a new life for themselves and their families and were willing to work hard to make the most of their opportunities.

More than 100 000 migrants from 30 countries worked on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, a huge hydro-electric power generating project in the Australian Alps. The project took 25 years to complete, from 1949 until 1974.

Migrants have added to the rich tapestry of Australia. They have become a vital part of our society and share our common values. The Father of Federation, Sir Henry Parkes once said we shall become 'one people, with one destiny'.

The Australian people today

Population

21 million

Indigenous

483 000 (2.3 per cent of the population)

Birthplace

Born overseas 22 per cent

Of those born overseas:

United Kingdom 19.4 per cent

New Zealand 8.8 per cent

China 4.7 per cent

Italy 4.5 per cent

Vietnam 3.6 per cent

Median age 37 years

Religion

Christianity 63.9 per cent

Buddhism 2.1 per cent

Islam 1.7 per cent

Hinduism 0.7 per cent

Judaism 0.4 per cent

(Source: ABS Population Census 2006)

Australia's national language

English is the national language of Australia. It is an important part of our national identity. Being able to communicate in English is important for making the most of living and working in Australia.

Since 1949, people seeking to become Australian citizens have generally been required to have a knowledge of English.

Everyone in Australia is encouraged to learn and use English, which is an important unifying element of Australian society. Being able to speak English allows people the best opportunity to achieve their aspirations in Australia. However, languages other than English are also valued. In fact, more than 15 per cent of Australians speak languages other than English at home, something which is a strong reflection of Australia's diverse nature.

Indigenous Australia

Australia's Indigenous population comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They are ethnically and culturally different from one another. Historically, Aboriginal people are from mainland Australia and Tasmania. Torres Strait Islanders come from the islands between the tip of Queensland and Papua New Guinea. They share many cultural similarities with the people of Papua New Guinea and other Pacific islands.

It is estimated there were some 750 000 Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia at the start of European settlement in 1788.

This population declined dramatically during the 19th and early 20th centuries due to a number of factors, including conflict with the new settlers and especially the impact of new diseases.

At the time of the 2006 Census, Australia's Indigenous population was about 483 000.

Indigenous cultures today are diverse and a vital part of Australia's national identity. Indigenous people contribute significantly across many fields, including the arts, media, academia, sport and business.

The land and the environment

Australia is a unique land, full of contrasts.

Australia is one of the world's oldest land masses. It is the Earth's biggest island and the sixth largest country in area in the world. It is also one of the driest, with just 6 per cent of its land considered suitable for agriculture.

Australia's landmass stretches 4000 kilometres from east to west and 3700 kilometres from north to south. In total area, it is about the same size as the United States (not including Alaska), more than double the size of India and 32 times the size of the United Kingdom.

Much of Australia's interior is flat, barren and sparsely populated. Australia's remote inland areas, often referred to as the 'outback', are an important part of Australia's history and mythology.

Yet much of northern Australia has a tropical climate and parts of Queensland, the north of Western Australia and the Northern Territory experience monsoon-type rain during the wet season.

In fact, Australia is so large that it experiences most climatic conditions, ranging from snow and frost to searing heat.

The coldest areas are in Tasmania and the alpine areas in the south-east highlands of mainland Australia.

Australia has a great diversity of landscapes with an unusual array of flora and fauna and is committed to protecting and conserving its environment and rich, unique biodiversity.

More than 10 per cent of continental Australia - about 77 million hectares - is protected. Another 65 million hectares of marine areas are also protected, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park off the North Queensland coast.

Seventeen parts of Australia are on the World Heritage List, including the Great Barrier Reef, the Tasmanian Wilderness, the Wet Tropics of Queensland, Kakadu National Park, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory, the Lord Howe Island Group and the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia.

States and territories

Australia has six states and two mainland territories.

The Australian Capital Territory is situated between Sydney and Melbourne. It was established in 1911 as the site of Canberra, the nation's capital. It is home to important national institutions, including the Australian Parliament, the High Court of Australia, the National Library, the National Gallery and the Australian War Memorial. An American architect, Walter Burley Griffin, designed the city of Canberra. The name Canberra comes from a local Aboriginal word meaning 'meeting place'.

Sydney, the nation's largest city, is the capital of New South Wales. Sydney's Harbour Bridge and Opera House are national icons, and Sydney Airport is the country's major international gateway. Sydney is the base for the largest number of Rugby League clubs, one of Australia's most popular sports. New South Wales is characterised by its famous beaches, such as Bondi and Manly and its natural features such as the Blue Mountains.

Victoria is the smallest of the mainland states in area but the second most populous and the most densely populated. The boom years of the 19th century left Victoria with a legacy of fine architecture and 'Marvellous Melbourne' was renowned as one of the great cities of the southern hemisphere. Victorians' enthusiasm for sport is legendary and the nation stops each November for the Melbourne Cup, Australia's premier horse race. It is also the home of Australian Rules football.

Queensland, the second-largest state, stretches from the tropical rainforests of Cape York in the far north to the more temperate areas in the south-east of the state. The world-famous Great Barrier Reef runs along its north-eastern coast. The capital of Queensland is Brisbane. Mining, agriculture and farming are central to the Queensland economy.

South Australia is known as the 'Festival State' with many festivals taking place there every year. The state has 13 wine regions and is a hub for Australia's food and wine gourmets. Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is probably the best preserved of Australia's capital cities, with many fine examples of colonial architecture.

Western Australia, the largest state in area, is about the same size as all of Western Europe. The east of the state is mostly desert while to the west the state is bound by 12 500 kilometres of unspoilt coastline. About three-quarters of the state's population live in Perth, the capital. It is the home to many of the large mining developments of the past 40 years. The South West is a rich agriculture and wine region.

Tasmania is separated from mainland Australia by Bass Strait and is the smallest state in Australia. With its unspoilt wilderness landscapes, it is one of Australia's most popular tourist destinations for both Australians and overseas visitors. Every year on 26 December the keenest of sailors race their yachts from Sydney to Hobart, Tasmania's capital, in the nation's most hotly contested sailing event.

The Northern Territory is twice as big as France but has a population of about 200 000 people. Darwin, on the northern coast, is the capital and Alice Springs the principal inland town. The Northern Territory is home to the famous Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu national parks.

The Australian Government also administers Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the Coral Sea Islands, Heard Islands, the McDonald Islands, Norfolk Island and the Australian Antarctic Territory as territories.

Religions

Australia has no official or state religion and all Australians are free to practice any religion they wish. Australia has a Judeo-Christian heritage, and two-thirds of Australians describe themselves as Christians. Religions practiced in Australia also include Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and many others. People can practice religious customs and rituals as long as they are not in conflict with Australian laws. Religious laws are not recognised and have no legal status in Australia. Australia uses a Christian calendar. This means that days like Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day are public holidays.

The Australian economy

Australia's economy is strong, open and competitive. Its average standard of living is among the top 10 in the world and higher than most of the world's large industrialised economies.

Along with significant agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, Australia has developed a sophisticated, knowledge-based economy with services accounting for about 80 per cent of economic activity.

Australian agriculture is largely based on extensive grazing and farming activities. Much of this produce is exported, with Australian wool, beef, wheat, dairy products, sugar and cotton contributing significantly to global markets.

Australia continues to rank as one of the world's leading mining nations with large deposits of bauxite, coal, mineral sands, uranium and zinc. Trade in natural resources is an important part of the economy.

Australia boasts a highly productive, skilled and multilingual workforce. Stable and transparent institutions mean that it is relatively easy to start a business in Australia.

Strong trade and investment links mean that Australia is well positioned to take advantage of future growth in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia's top four trading partners are Japan, China, the United States and South Korea.

Australia's name and symbols

Australia

The name Australia derives from the Latin word *Australis*, meaning 'of the south'. For centuries, it was legend that there was an unknown great south land – *Terra Australis Incognita*. This description was used in writings about exploration to the region.

The name 'Australia' gained popular use following the publication in 1814 of Matthew Flinders' account of his circumnavigation of the continent, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*. Flinders used the name 'Australia'. Governor Lachlan Macquarie subsequently used it in his official reports and recommended it be adopted. In 1824, the British Admiralty agreed that the continent be officially named 'Australia'.

Australia's flags

Australia has three official flags: the Australian flag and special flags for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Australian flag

The design of the Australian flag was chosen after a world-wide competition in 1900. In all, over 32 000 entries were received. The judges chose five designs that were almost identical. The flag was first flown on 3 September 1901.

The Australian flag comprises three parts:

- Southern Cross – the five white stars that represent the star constellation that can be seen in the southern hemisphere

- Union Jack – acknowledging the history of British settlement of Australia
- Commonwealth Star – the seven point star under the Union Jack, which represents the states and territories.

In addition, each state and territory has its own flag.

Aboriginal flag

The Aboriginal flag was first displayed on 12 July 1971 on National Aborigine's Day in Adelaide, South Australia. It has been an official Australian flag since 14 July 1995. The flag is divided horizontally into two halves. The top is black, representing the Indigenous peoples of Australia, and the bottom is red, representing the earth. It has a yellow circle in the centre, representing the sun.

Torres Strait Islander flag

The Torres Strait Islander flag was adopted in May 1992 during the Torres Strait Islands Cultural Festival. It has been an official Australian flag since 14 July 1995. The green panels at the top and bottom of the flag represent the land and the central blue panel represents the sea. The black lines dividing the panels represent the Torres Strait Islander people.

The centre of the flag shows a white *dhari* (dancer's headdress) and is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders. Underneath the *dhari* is a white five-pointed star. The star is an important symbol for navigating the sea. The points of the star represent the island groups in the Torres Strait and white symbolises peace.

National anthem

Advance Australia Fair is Australia's National Anthem. It was composed by Peter Dodds McCormick in 1878. It was proclaimed the national anthem by the Governor-General on 19 April 1984.

Other popular national songs include Waltzing Matilda, I still call Australia home, and I am Australian.

National day

Australia Day is celebrated every year on 26 January. This commemorates the landing of the first governor Arthur Phillip at Sydney Cove in 1788.

Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms is used by the Commonwealth to identify its authority and property. The emblem represents the national unity of Australia.

Australia's Coat of Arms was granted in 1912 by King George V (a previous Coat of Arms had been created in 1908).

The Coat of Arms comprises:

- a shield representing the six states, with a border representing federation
- a kangaroo and an emu supporting the shield on either side
- a Gold Commonwealth Star sitting on a wreath of gold and blue
- a background of Australian wattle
- the name 'Australia'.

It is unusual for private people or organisations to use the Coat of Arms.

However, the Australian Government grants permission to use the Coat of Arms, for example, to Australian national sporting teams for use on their official team uniforms.

Australian floral emblem

The wattle was chosen as Australia's national flower in 1912.

It was later incorporated into Australia's Coat of Arms, though it was not until 1988 that the golden wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, was declared the national floral emblem of Australia.

The golden wattle is a small hardy tree which grows mainly in south-eastern Australia. It has bright green leaves and in spring produces a great many golden yellow flower heads.

Wattle Day is celebrated on 1 September each year – the first day of spring.

In addition each state and territory has its own floral emblem.

National colours

Australia's national colours are green and gold. They feature on the uniforms of our national sporting teams.

Australia's national gemstone

The opal is the national gemstone. In Aboriginal legend, the opal was a gift from the sky – *the fire of the desert* – a rainbow that had touched the earth and created the colours of the opal.

Currency

Australia's currency is the Australian dollar. One dollar comprises 100 cents.

Australian National Anthem

*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.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Fixed dates

New Year's Day 1 January

Marking the start of the new year.

Australia Day 26 January

Commemorates the landing at Sydney

Cove in 1788.

Anzac Day 25 April

Commemorating the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli in 1915 during World War I.

Queen's Birthday 11 June

Celebrating the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II. (1 October in WA)

Christmas Day 25 December

Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Boxing Day 26 December

There are various explanations of the origin of Boxing Day. Some suggest it was a day on which boxing matches were held. Others suggest it was a day of giving gifts in boxes. For most people today, Boxing Day is considered part of the celebration of Christmas.

Variable dates

Labour Day

Celebrating the eight hour day (eight hours work, eight hours sleep, eight hours recreation).

Easter

Commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Other public holidays

Other public holidays are held in different states and cities. For example, the ACT has Canberra Day, South Australia has Volunteer's Day, Western Australia has Foundation Day.

Melbourne has Melbourne Cup Day which is held on the first Tuesday in November.

A story of Australia

Early Australia

Humans have inhabited Australia for at least 40 000 to 60 000 years. The Aboriginal people lived as hunters and gatherers. They existed in language and clan groups which occupied different parts of the vast land. They came to Australia through what is now Indonesia sailing across the seas between the islands and the last 100-kilometre gap to Australia.

Early European exploration

In the 17th century, Portuguese and Dutch explorers discovered parts of what was called *Terra Australis Incognita* – the unknown land of the south. In 1606, the Dutchman William Jansz landed on the western side of Cape York Peninsula, the northern tip of Australia, and Luis Vaez de Torres, a Portuguese in charge of a Spanish expedition, sailed through the strait to the north of the continent. Later in the 1600s Dutch sailors explored the coast of Western Australia; Dutch ships were regularly wrecked on this coast on their way to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). The Dutch called this land 'New Holland'. In 1642, Abel Tasman found the coast of what he named 'Van Diemen's Land' (now Tasmania) after the Governor-General of the East Indies.

Captain James Cook

The east coast was not explored by Europeans until James Cook reached it in 1770. Cook had been sent by the British government on a voyage of discovery to the South Pacific. He charted the east coast for over four months, landing twice, at Botany Bay just south of modern Sydney, and near what is now Cooktown in north Queensland, where he repaired

his ship, the *Endeavour*, which had been damaged on the Great Barrier Reef.

On Possession Island in Torres Strait he claimed this land for King George III. The botanist in his exploring party was Joseph Banks, who collected specimens and observed the native flora and fauna of the continent. The native Australian plant, the banksia, is named after him.

Convict settlers

Australia is unique in that most of its first European settlers were convicts. Britain used to send its convicts to America but after the American colonies declared their independence in 1776 they refused to accept them. Convicts then had to be kept in Britain in the gaols and on old ships (hulks) moored in rivers. The numbers kept mounting so that a new place had to be found for them. In 1786 Britain decided to send them to New South Wales, the land Captain Cook had claimed for Britain in 1770. As the possessor of a great empire, Britain also had an eye to the commercial and strategic advantages of having a base in this part of the world. Historians argue about how much this new colony was just a solution to the problem of convicts and how much a strengthening of Britain's empire.

The first governor was Captain Arthur Phillip, a firm yet humane man. He was responsible for bringing the First Fleet of 11 ships safely to the other side of the globe. He took great care over the feeding and welfare of the convicts and very few died on the voyage.

When starvation loomed in the early years of the colony, he put the whole settlement, including himself and the military officers, on the same ration. It was his determination and vision that saw the colony through its perilous first years. Australia's National Day, 26 January, commemorates the landing of Phillip at Sydney Cove in 1788.

The hard work of the early settlement was done by the forced labour of the convicts. They were flogged if they did not work to their masters' satisfaction or if they ran away or got drunk. If they again committed a serious crime, they were sent to a remote settlement or hanged. But, from the first, convicts and ex-convicts found new opportunities in this strange colony. The military officers used their time to make money by trading. They employed convicts and ex-convicts to assist them. Soon some of the assistants were setting up in business on their own as merchants. Other ex-convicts got a good living as farmers, tradesmen, shop and pub keepers. Ex-convict women were prominent among these businesspeople and enjoyed more freedom than married women in England. Convicts and ex-convicts also occupied professional positions; they were lawyers, architects, engineers, newspaper reporters and editors, and school teachers.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie (1810-1821) is remembered with great affection because he treated reformed convicts as if they had never offended. He invited rich ex-convicts to government house and expected the free settlers to accept them as equals.

He was a great builder using the services of an ex-convict architect Francis Greenway. The convict barracks and St James' Church, two of his buildings, still stand opposite each other in Macquarie Street, Sydney.

After Macquarie's time Britain tried to remake the colony to ensure that convicts were properly punished and that they did not live too well, but it never succeeded in shutting off all the opportunities. The government eventually decided to stop sending convicts here. The convicts stopped coming to mainland Australia in 1840 and to Tasmania in 1853. Western Australia received convicts at its own request from 1850 to 1868. More than 160 000 convicts were transported to Australia.

Instead of the convicts, Britain sent free working men and women to Australia, paying most of the cost of the voyage since it was so expensive to come so far. Then in the 1850s, with the discovery of gold, there was a rush of people from all round the globe who were happy to pay their own fares. The convict and ex-convict element in the population rapidly diminished. The children of the convicts had always been free.

From the 1850s the colonists were governing themselves and wanting to build prosperous and respectable societies. The colonists became ashamed of their convict past and did not talk about it, though the rest of the world did not forget Australia's strange origins.

From about the 1960s, after years of shame and denial, Australians began to be proud of their convict past and many people are now pleased to find a convict ancestor.

By embracing their convict past, Australians have shown they believe that this is a better place than the old world; people driven to crime in Britain could make a fresh start here. Australians have also become a people who don't care much about a person's family background or past behaviour, people are judged by who they are now.

A harsh country

Very little of Australia is fertile country. It is a hostile environment for humankind. The Aboriginal people had learnt to manage and live in this environment though they too could suffer in hard times of drought and their population had to remain small.

Australians are reminded of the difficulties of their country by the stories of the hardships and disasters of explorers and pioneers.

The first great barrier the Sydney settlers faced was the mountain range only 50 kilometres to the west—the Blue Mountains. This is not so much a mountain range as a great table-land cut into deep valleys. Explorers trying to get through it would go up the valleys and then face sheer cliffs. In 1813 three men, Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson, got across by going up to the plateau and following the ridges. The road and railway across the Blue Mountains still follows their route.

Beyond the mountains was good open country suitable for sheep and cattle.

But soon the explorers were into dry and desert country. They 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 Burke and Wills set out from Melbourne to cross the continent from south to north. They led a large, well equipped expedition but they still struck disaster and died. Burke and Wills were not experienced bushmen. Only very late did they seek and accept help from Aboriginal people. Other explorers took Aboriginal guides and took care to stay on good terms with the Aboriginal people on their route. Often they were following Aboriginal paths and Aboriginal directions. But the failure of Burke and Wills, though easy to explain, can't easily be forgotten. Their story has inspired great writing and art. It remains a symbol of a country that can destroy you.

After the explorers came the first settlers or pioneers. Even when they had large tracts of good country they faced great difficulties. The climate in Australia is very uncertain. After drought can come flood. Even if the seasons are good, the prices for wheat or wool might fall. Going broke or starting again from scratch are regular Australian experiences on the land. People battle on, and a battler, a man who survives even if he does not prosper, is an admired figure. Women too have been honoured for their part in pioneering, often keeping the business or farm going when the man was away, or died.

The tradition of mateship—of helping each other out—owes a lot to the harshness of the country. It was strong among the working men who travelled through the outback doing the work of shearing or droving. But it became also the practice of settlers to help each other out in difficulty, which is still done in country areas when volunteers fight bush fires.

In a dry continent, storing and moving water has required great effort. Gold was discovered in Kalgoorlie in Western Australia in the 1890s in semi-desert country. The miners had to use the wind to separate out the gold from the soil they had dug. Mining could only become a settled industry if there was a regular water supply. The government engineer Charles O'Connor designed a scheme to dam water near Perth and pump it over 500 kilometres to the goldfields, then the longest pipeline running uphill in the world. The critics said the scheme would fail. It succeeded but not before O'Connor, worn down by work and criticism, had taken his own life.

To revitalise Australia after World War II the Australian Government developed a bold scheme to catch the waters of the Snowy River before they flowed quickly to the sea in eastern Victoria; divert them to flow inland for irrigation along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, and as they fell into the rivers generate electric power. It was a massive undertaking which took 25 years to complete. Most of the workers were new migrants to Australia. The Snowy Mountains Scheme is a lasting legacy of their contribution.

Diggers

Except for small scale battles between settlers and Aboriginal people, Australia has been a remarkably peaceful country. There have been no civil wars or revolutions. It is strange, then, that it has a very strong military tradition and that the ordinary soldier, the digger, is a national hero.

The first settlers were very loyal to the British Empire. As a European outpost on the edge of Asia they also felt they were in danger, especially after Japan became a great power. They needed the Empire and its great fleet to defend them. Australia fought with Britain in both World Wars to keep the Empire strong and so protect itself.

Australian soldiers entered World War I in 1915 with an attack on Germany's ally, Turkey. They were part of a large contingent of British and French troops but the Australians and New Zealanders were given their own sector of the Gallipoli Peninsula to attack. They were put ashore in the wrong place and had to scale almost perpendicular cliffs under enemy fire. They got up the cliffs and dug in. This was acknowledged as an amazing feat of arms. Australians at home took tremendous pride in their soldiers. The soldiers had laid to rest the doubts that British colonists had gone soft in sunny Australia, or were infected with bad convict blood, or were too ill-disciplined to be good soldiers.

THE ANZAC LEGEND

The ANZAC tradition was forged on 25 April 1915 when the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey.

It marked the start of a campaign which lasted eight months and resulted in some 25 000 Australian casualties, including 8700 who were killed in action or later died of wounds or disease. The bravery and spirit of those who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula shaped a legend, and so 'ANZAC' became part of the Australian and New Zealand lexicon.

In 1916, the first anniversary of the landing was observed in Australia, New Zealand, England and by troops in Egypt. In that year, 25 April was named '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 cenotaphs in cities and towns across the nation recall the young men and women killed in that and later conflicts.

Today, Anzac Day is commemorated at Gallipoli and the site of the Thai-Burma Railway during the construction of which, under the Japanese during World War II, thousands of Australian and British prisoners-of-war and Thais died.

Over the ensuing decades, returned Australian servicemen and women from World War II, and from conflicts in Malaya, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and elsewhere, as well as peacekeepers and veterans from allied countries proudly march in Anzac Day parades.

The anniversary of the date of the landing (25 April) is the unofficial national day; it is called 'Anzac Day' after the initials of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. It now honours all those who have died in war. Anzac Day is a military celebration only in a limited sense. It does not honour victories - the Gallipoli campaign was a failure; it honours the qualities of the ordinary soldier: his mateship, endurance, his humour in the face of adversity. One individual soldier on Gallipoli has come to stand for all the qualities, John Simpson who worked in the field ambulance. He acquired a donkey and was allowed to work on his own carrying the wounded back to the shore. He and his donkey were killed one month after the landing. There are statues to Simpson and his donkey at the War Memorials in Canberra and Melbourne.

After withdrawing from Gallipoli the Australian soldiers fought on the western front in France. Here they acquired the name diggers allegedly because a soldier said to an officer we are not soldiers we are diggers—because they spent so much time digging and repairing trenches. John Monash became the commander of the Australian forces. He was one of the most creative generals in the war and the only Australian general who has come close to having heroic status. He carefully planned advances to ensure his men were well protected and with his care and with the dash and daring of his troops he won great victories in the last battles against Germany. Monash was a part-time soldier and a Jew; before the war he had been an engineer.

In World War II Australians fought in the desert of North Africa and many other theatres. In North Africa, they withstood a long siege by the Germans and Italians in the town of Tobruk. The enemy called them the 'Rats of Tobruk' because they were cornered and scavenging for food, but they held out in appalling conditions and adopted this name for themselves. The siege confirmed that these soldiers had the fighting spirit of the World War I diggers; the soldiers themselves knew they had a great tradition to live up to.

After Japan launched its war in the Pacific the Australian soldiers came home. But before these battle-hardened troops could arrive, the defence of Papua and New Guinea fell to a limited number of regular soldiers and to young conscript soldiers poorly trained and equipped. Their battlefield was the jungle and the way to the enemy was up a steep muddy trail known as the Kokoda Track. The Australian troops did stop the Japanese advance and the Kokoda Track has joined Anzac Cove on Gallipoli as a place of pilgrimage.

When the Japanese took the great British base at Singapore, 15 000 Australian troops were among those taken into captivity and to work on the infamous Thai-Burma railway. One of the sharpest Australian memories of the war is the cruel treatment meted out to these men by the Japanese. Many died but Australians looked after each other better than the other captives and made less distinction between officers and men.

The hero of this dreadful captivity was a doctor, Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, who protected his men at the risk of his own life and who ran the makeshift operating room that helped keep men alive.

As well as the Anzac Day ceremonies, Remembrance Day is also a day on which Australians remember those who have served and died in war. At 11am on 11 November each year Australians pause to remember the sacrifice of those men and women who died or suffered in wars and conflicts and all those who served during the past 100 years.

Australian soldiers off the battlefield had a tendency to be larrikins, as Australians term it. Yet in recent years they have gained a high reputation as peacekeepers. This can be explained because they are regular soldiers under tight discipline, not volunteers for a particular war, but retaining their Australian character and style. They get closer to the people they are protecting. They will pitch in and help out in rebuilding communities.

Economy and politics

The first British settlers came to Australia just as Britain was changing rapidly into the first industrialised country in the world. Australia became a prosperous country very quickly because it could grow wool to supply the English woollen mills. The wool industry provided work at high wages in the bush and in the cities, which processed and exported the fleece as it quickly became the biggest wool exporter in the world. Then in the 1850s the discovery of gold gave Australia a new source of wealth and attracted people from around the world. Gold gave ordinary men the chance to become rich.

Some did, though most made not much more than wages and were soon looking for work again. Gold digging soon shifted into a business organised by companies. By around 1890 it is possible that Australia had the highest standard of living in the world.

The goldfields are remembered as the great democratic moment in Australia's past. Men of every sort were digging and calling each other 'mate', the term that would eventually be used everywhere. At the Ballarat goldfield in 1854 the gold diggers staged a large protest at the harsh way the government officials ran the gold field, especially the collection of the licence fee to dig for gold. They called for the end to the licence and a democratic and republican government. A small group built a stockade on the site of the Eureka mining lead and flew their rebel flag with the Southern Cross on it. The government officials sent soldiers to attack the stockade on the morning of 3 December 1854 and the gold diggers were soon overpowered and about 30 killed. The gaining of democratic reforms would have happened without the Eureka rebellion but over the years it has become a symbol of protest and popular rights.

After the first gold rushes were over there was a great struggle in the 1860s to take land away from the big men who ran sheep and cattle (the squatters) and open it up as farms for the working man. The political battle was won but farming did not make much inroad into the squatters' territory.

The farmers faced a difficult environment and, until the railways were built, were far from markets. The opportunity to earn high wages in the cities always made a hard life on the land for little reward unattractive.

Farming did do well in South Australia and here the Australian tradition of inventing labour-saving devices for farming began – the stripper harvester (1840s) and the stump-jump plough (1870s).

Australia enjoyed a long period of prosperity from the gold rushes until the 1890s. Wool was still the staple but manufacturing for local consumption (clothing, footwear, food and drink) and building were important parts of the economy in a society where cities had always been large. The living standard was the highest in the world. Australian workers were the first to enjoy an eight-hour working day. It was possible for working men in the cities to become homeowners in the suburbs, something unheard of in Britain, Ireland and the other countries migrants had come from.

Then depression and drought struck. Working men who, in good times, had built up strong trade unions called strikes to protect their wages and conditions and were defeated in disputes more bitter than Australia had seen. The workers turned to politics and in 1891 created the Labor Party whose first task was to restore and improve the workers' wages and conditions. There was a degree of sympathy from many middle class people for the plight of the workers, for everyone believed that in Australia there should be no poverty and no harsh conflicts. This led to the creation of official boards and commissions which

set wages and attempted to prevent strikes. The Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1907 set a minimum wage so that a working man, his wife and three children could live in decent comfort (the Harvester judgement).

About 1900 Australia became known as the social laboratory of the world. Political rights were widespread. Most men had had the vote from the 1850s; women then gained the vote, in South Australia first in 1894 and in the new Commonwealth in 1902. Governments were active in protecting wages and living conditions, giving help to farmers and pensions to the old.

As the Labor Party grew, all other parties combined into a Liberal Party in 1910. This party has had many names. Between the wars it became the Nationalist Party and the United Australia Party before emerging again as the Liberal Party in 1944.

One difference between the parties was that Labor was more ready to use the government to help the workers and small farmers while its more radical members wanted government to take over industries so they were not run for profit. The Liberals were suspicious of government and encouraged individual enterprise while the more radical wanted to roll back the level of government activity.

Despite these party differences, the amount of government activity in the economy in the first 70 years of the 20th century was very high. If wages were to be kept high, manufacturers had to be protected from foreign competition so that they could pay them. Farmers who sold their produce in world markets could only pay high wages and afford the

high cost of manufactured goods if the government assisted in the marketing of their crops. The Country Party, formed after World War I, at first wanted to reduce protection for local industry, but failing that, it argued that farmers, as the earners of export income, should get every possible assistance. In the 1980s the Country Party changed its name to the National Party. Usually it acts in coalition with the Liberal Party.

From the 1980s more and more experts argued that the economy would grow more strongly if it was not protected in so many ways by the government. During the 1980s and 1990s Australian governments took this advice. They opened up the economy by floating the dollar, cutting back on tariff protection, selling off government enterprises and abandoning the central control of wages. Both major parties now see Australia's future in a global economy with prosperity depending on leaving industries to the discipline of the market.

Sport

Australia was noted and criticised for being a sports-crazy nation very early in its history.

The English were a keen sporting people but in Australia more people could watch and participate in sport. This was partly because people had more leisure time and earned more money and partly because the climate was good and there was plenty of open spaces to play in, even within the cities. What outsiders also noted was that nearly everyone followed the great sporting events.

The Melbourne Cup, starting in 1861, was the horse race with the richest prize. It was a national event. The day of the race was a public holiday in Melbourne and by the new invention of the telegraph the whole country could know the result and collect their winnings within a few minutes of the race being won. It is still known as the race that stops the nation. Many Australians count the years by the name of the horse that won the Cup. The great winners have become national heroes. Phar Lap, the most famous of them, won the Melbourne Cup in 1930 in the depth of the Depression. He started as favourite, won easily and made many people happy in dark days. Phar Lap was taken to the United States to race and died soon afterwards. Phar Lap's body is in the Melbourne Museum and his great heart in the National Museum in Canberra.

Sporting was national in another sense. Australians became proud of themselves because of their achievements in sport and this was particularly so in regard to cricket. When the Australian cricketers first beat the English in England in 1882, the enthusiasm in Australia was immense. As a joke, an English newspaper said English cricket was dead, the body was to be burned and the ashes sent to Australia. The competition for 'The Ashes' – the test matches between the two countries – is still the international sporting event in which Australians take most interest.

Sir Donald Bradman was the greatest cricket batsman of all time. He was small and slight but amazingly quick on his feet, playing his shots almost like a machine. On his first tour of England in 1930 he broke nearly all the batting records. The team he led in England in 1948 is known as the 'Invincibles' because they did not lose a single match. Among all Australian sporting heroes, Bradman is the best known.

Other sportspeople also excelled: Sir Hubert Opperman as a long-distance cyclist, Walter Lindrum on the billiards table.

In the 1950s it was tennis in which Australia were world beaters. Here the chief opponent was not England but the United States and again a small nation gained in pride by beating a great one. Sedgman and McGregor, Hoad and Rosewall carried Australia to victories in the international competition, the Davis Cup. In the 1960s and 1970s two women players, Margaret Court and Evonne Goolagong, won all the great international competitions and Rod Laver became the first player to twice win the Australian, French, United States Opens and Wimbledon, in the one year.

Australians invented one game of their own, Australian Rules Football, which was developed in Melbourne in the late 1850s. Its rules were a mixture of the rules of the various codes of football in England but perhaps with a local element. The Aboriginal people played a game of football and it may have been their games that influenced the Australian game to be open and fast, with long kicking and high marks.

While Australian Rules became the dominant game of football in four states

— Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania — Rugby League and Rugby Union (originally an amateur game) were popular in New South Wales and Queensland. More recently Soccer has attracted a large following among young people.

Staging the Olympic Games has been a great boost to Australian pride. When Melbourne staged the Games in 1956, Australians felt that they were for this moment not a small isolated country a long way away from the great centres of the globe. For the first time the world's athletes were gathering in the southern hemisphere. When Sydney staged the games in 2000 the nation was more self-confident. The opening ceremony displayed Australian cultural icons in a light-hearted way, Aboriginal culture was celebrated and an Aboriginal athlete, Cathy Freeman, lit the torch. The volunteers who assisted the smooth running of the Games were another way that Australia demonstrated its character to the world.

Nation

The founding population of Australia was made up of the English, Scots and Irish. They were different people with different traditions and had been in the past at war with each other. The Irish were the most distinct group, separated by their Catholic religion and their bitterness at rule by the English. In this new country the three groups mixed in with each other and did not live in separate communities.

On the whole they did not want old-world disputes and bitterness to take root here. Both the Scots and Irish did not want the English to rule over them and the Church of England soon lost its privileged place in Australia. The Scots were prominent in education and business. The Irish, less well educated, took unskilled jobs but some flourished in small businesses. Their lively spirit made its mark on the emerging Australian identity.

The six self-governing colonies of Australia came together in a federation in 1901. Before then a common sense of national belonging had already grown up. The feeling is caught in the motto 'Advance Australia Fair' and the song of that name written by Peter Dodds McCormick and first sung in Sydney in 1878. It is now the national anthem. The song depicts Australia as a young and free land, kept safe by the encircling sea, where there is opportunity for all.

From the 1880s a new popular Australian literature emerged. Henry Lawson and A B (Banjo) Paterson wrote verse and stories about ordinary life with a great respect for ordinary people. They brought tales of bush life to the city where most of the people lived. One of Paterson's verses *Waltzing Matilda* is an unofficial national anthem. Outsiders wonder at a nation that celebrates a tramp who steals a sheep and then kills himself rather than being taken by the police.

At the same time a group of young artists began to paint in the new impressionist way. They are known as the Heidelberg School because that village outside Melbourne was one of the places where they set up camp.

At first, like the French impressionists, they painted every-day scenes and were not interested in pictures with a message. But then in the 1890s they reached for an art that would embody the nation. Arthur Streeton flooded his pictures with light; Tom Roberts painted shearers at work; Fred McCubbin depicted that regular nightmare, a child lost in the bush.

Australians had also become conscious of the need to keep out the people who seemed to threaten their new way of life. The colonies took common action in 1888 to limit severely Chinese migration even though the numbers arriving were relatively small. The colonists, like most people then, believed that there were differences between races and that the Chinese were inferior; but they also did not want a society with deep divisions or where foreign outcasts worked for low wages and lowered the dignity of all labour.

The colonies had developed separately and, in the absence of a strong outside threat, it would be difficult to bring them together. It took two attempts. In 1889 the grand old man of New South Wales politics, Sir Henry Parkes, issued a call for a strong new nation to be formed. He gave his speech at Tenterfield near the Queensland border. He managed to assemble a convention of all the colonies in 1891 and for a constitution to be written. But there was too much opposition to it, especially in Parkes's own colony of New South Wales and it lapsed.

The federal movement revived in 1893 and was run on a novel basis. The electors chose the members of the next constitutional convention and they voted at referendum on whether to accept the constitution it drafted or not. After two rounds of referendums the constitution was accepted. This was another sign of how progressive Australia was, basing the new nation on the wishes of the people.

The first Australian government was sworn in before a huge crowd in Sydney's Centennial Park on 1 January 1901, the first day of the new century. The Prime Minister of the new nation was Edmund Barton, who had led the movement for federation in New South Wales; his deputy Alfred Deakin, had led the movement in Victoria and became the second Prime Minister when Barton retired in 1903. Sir Henry Parkes 'the Father of Federation' had died in 1896.

Australia was now a nation but still within the British Empire. It did not acquire full powers over defence and foreign affairs until 1931. Though national feeling had grown, the sense of being British as well as Australian was still strong. Parkes had appealed to this feeling to bring the colonists together by saying that the crimson thread of kinship ran through them all. Migrants still came overwhelmingly from Britain. The new nation also declared that it was to be white; the exclusion of Chinese and other Asians was to continue.

World War II called into question Australia's British identity. The British Empire could not defend Australia against the Japanese and the government looked to the United States for assistance. After the war, to build up its population,

Australia operated a large-scale programme to bring migrants from the countries of Europe, not just Britain. In 1951 the ANZUS Treaty with the United States was signed. Still the Britishness of Australia did not disappear until Britain itself abandoned its leadership of the British Commonwealth by applying to join the European Union in the 1960s. Australia was on its own. Already its trade with Britain had become less important; by 1967 Japan had become Australia's leading trading partner.

The new migration programme worked well and the new migrants were giving a new variety and vigour to Australian life. In 1967 the dismantling of the White Australia policy began and in 1973 migration was placed on a totally non-discriminatory basis. Vietnamese, Chinese and Indians arrived and then migrants and refugees from the Middle-East and Africa. Australia became a nation of all the lands, one of the great successes of the modern world, and has taken in a high proportion of newcomers in a short space of time. Twenty-two percent of Australians are born overseas.

The influence of Britain survives in Australia's institutions, in many of its values and, of course, in its common language—English. The formal ties with Britain have diminished over time. The Queen still appoints the Governor-General on the advice of the Australian Prime Minister. An attempt to make Australia a republic was defeated in 1999.

Aboriginal people

The success of Australia was built on lands taken from Aboriginal people after European settlement in 1788.

The British government did not consider that it had to make a treaty with the Aboriginal tribes, who seemed to them to have no firm attachment to the land and did not cultivate it. In the United States and New Zealand it did make treaties with Indigenous people.

The early governors were nevertheless told to ensure that Aboriginals were not to be harmed. Of course the taking of their land and the arrival of thousands of foreigners harmed them. This contradiction made it impossible for governments to effectively protect Aboriginals.

Officially the Aboriginals had the protection of British law, but it was extremely rare for white settlers on the frontier to be brought to court or punished for killing Aboriginals. Occasionally the governors themselves authorised punitive expeditions against Aboriginals who had speared settlers or taken sheep and cattle. In the second half of the 19th century in Queensland, when the settlers controlled the government, a force of native police was ruthless in killing Aboriginals who resisted the taking of their land.

The Aboriginals were not without friends. Some squatters were able to maintain good relations with them and employed them on their sheep runs. Missionaries attempted to convert them to Christianity but with only very limited success.

Governor Macquarie (1810-1821) took a special interest in them, running a school for their children and offering them land for farming. But very few Aboriginals were willing to move into European society; they were not very interested in what the Europeans had to offer.

There has been great debate about how many Aboriginals were killed in the frontier battles. Many more Aboriginals than settlers were killed. Everyone agrees that the greatest killer of Aboriginals was disease. The fall in population was immense, and where white settlement was dense, catastrophic. In Victoria an original population of 10 000 in the 1830s was reduced to a mere 1907 in 1853.

After the frontier battles were over, Aboriginals survived on the edges of society, taking casual work or begging; on the remote cattle stations they became the labour force (with no wages). Governments provided handouts of food and set aside small reserves in recognition of the great losses they had suffered. On some mission stations and reserves, settled communities began to emerge. This worried the governments for a growing proportion of the people on the reserves were mixed blood. Though full-blood Aboriginals were disappearing fast, it looked as if there would be an ongoing separate group of Aboriginal people.

In the years around 1900 the colonial and state governments moved to a policy of firmly confining Aboriginals on their reserves or ensuring that they disappeared into the wider society.

'There is no other way for true federation of this Australasia than to unite under one great government. It will be a fatal mistake to curtail the power of the government we shall create when we are one as an Australian nation, as brave and as powerful as any other nation on the face of the earth, when we shall have become 'one people, with one destiny', and when we shall be bound together by that crimson thread of kinship that can never perish.'

- Sir Henry Parkes, 1891

To manage this process they took away their civil rights. Aboriginals could be told where to live, had to seek permission to marry and could have their children taken from them. There has been a great debate too on the intent of these policies, particularly over the forcible removal of children from their parents.

By the 1920s small Aboriginal groups were protesting at the policy of protection and in 1938, the 150th anniversary of white settlement, Aboriginals staged a day of mourning in Sydney. Policy changed, but more because after World War II world opinion had changed; racism was condemned and the new United Nations issued its *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In the 1940s and 1950s Government policy changed to the assimilation of Aboriginals and in the 1960s to the integration of Aboriginals into white society. Their civil rights and the right to vote were restored to them.

The Australian people showed their willingness to see Aboriginals become full members of Australian society when in 1967 they gave an overwhelming YES vote (90 per cent) to a proposal to change the Aboriginal sections of the Constitution. Aboriginals were now to be counted in the census and the Australian Government was given power to pass laws on Aboriginal affairs.

However, just at this time, Aboriginal leaders, with the support of many white supporters, adopted a more separatist policy: Aboriginals should own their traditional lands and on them maintain their traditional culture.

The High Court in its 1992 *Mabo* decision restored unsold land to Aboriginals if they had maintained their traditional ties to it. As a result Aboriginals have become owners of vast areas of outback Australia. Here aspects of traditional society do survive. Aboriginal art and dance flourish and are widely admired in the broader community. But many of the Aboriginals in these remote locations do not live well. This is a great dilemma facing Australian society.

Australia faces an ongoing challenge to ensure that the Aboriginals fully share in the life and prosperity of the nation.

Government in Australia

As a citizen you can personally make a difference to Australia by voting for a suitable person to represent you in Parliament. Every vote counts.

As an Australian citizen you have your say in how the country is run. Voting in elections means you can personally make a difference to Australia by freely voting for a suitable person to represent you in Parliament (a group of people elected by voters to make laws on their behalf).

Your local member is there to serve you in the Parliament. This means you, and your fellow Australians, are able to influence the administration, laws and policies of government.

You have both a right and responsibility to vote in federal, state (or territory) parliamentary and council elections. If you are over 18, and an Australian citizen, it is compulsory to enrol to vote. If you don't attend a polling booth to vote in an election you will have to pay a fine, unless you can give a good reason for not doing so.

Voting is by secret ballot. Voters put their votes into a sealed box (a ballot box) so that no one can know how they have voted. Impartial electoral officers check that the election is conducted correctly and that the counting of votes is honest.

Standing for public office in an Australian parliament is another way you can participate in running the country as an Australian citizen. This means you can stand as a candidate to represent other Australians in any of the three levels of

government: federal, state and territory Parliaments, or on local councils.

The Australian Constitution

Australia is an independent nation. The Australian Constitution was originally passed as part of a British Act of Parliament in 1900 and took effect on 1 January 1901. However, the Constitution was drafted at a series of conventions attended by representatives of the Australian colonies and approved by the people of those colonies at a series of referendums. It sets out the basic rules for the government of Australia.

Australia is a federal nation. The Constitution establishes a federal system which involves a national government and state governments. It is also a parliamentary democracy. The Constitution establishes a national parliament which is elected by the Australian people on a regular basis. Australia is a constitutional monarchy. The Queen's role is established by the Constitution. However, the Queen does not play a day-to-day role in Australian government. The Governor-General, appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister, is the Queen's representative in Australia.

The Governor-General normally acts on the advice of the Prime Minister and other ministers of the Australian Government.

Australian national government also draws on American democratic traditions. Australia has a written Constitution which establishes a 'separation of powers' at the national level. This means that the Constitution establishes three separate arms of national government – a legislative arm, an executive arm and a judicial arm – and distributes powers between them.

The Prime Minister is the head of the Australian Government, which has as its principal decision-making body a group of ministers known collectively as the Cabinet.

The Commonwealth Parliament is the national law-making body and is at the heart of Australian national government. The Parliament has two 'Houses', the House of Representatives and the Senate, in which elected members and senators sit to consider proposed laws and conduct the other business of the Parliament.

The Executive Government encompasses not only government ministers, but also the Australian Public Service and other Australian Government agencies. Ministers are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister, who is always the parliamentary leader of the party or coalition of parties with a majority of parliamentarians in the House of Representatives. Ministers, with the assistance of their 'departments', develop government policy. They also administer the laws made by parliament with the assistance of government departments and other agencies.

Departments are the main administrative agencies and are staffed by public servants. A change of government at a federal election may lead to changes. New departments may be formed or existing departments merged.

The Judiciary encompasses the federal court system, which includes the High Court of Australia, the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court. The High Court is the highest court in Australia.

When the Australian Constitution came into effect on 1 January 1901, the six colonies became the six *states* of Australia. The Constitution allows each state to make laws with respect to the affairs of that state. However, laws of the Commonwealth Parliament prevail over state laws if there is any inconsistency.

The Constitution also provides for Commonwealth *territories*, of which there are now a number. In the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and the Territory of Norfolk Island the Commonwealth parliament has established governmental arrangements which are similar to state governmental arrangements. State parliaments have also established bodies, generally known as *local governments*, with responsibilities in relation to particular cities or regions. Local governments have only limited law-making powers.

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

The Australian (federal) Government is responsible for national laws including:

- taxation
- the economy
- immigration and citizenship
- employment
- postal services and telecommunications
- social security (pensions and family support)
- defence forces
- trade
- airports and air safety
- relations with other countries (foreign affairs)

The state and territory governments are primarily responsible in their state or territory for carrying out the laws passed by their Parliaments in relation to:

- hospitals
- schools
- railways
- roads
- forestry
- police

Local governments (or councils) are responsible for local, town or city matters including: street signs and traffic controls

- drains
- child immunisation
- parks, playgrounds, swimming pools and sports grounds
- food and meat inspection
- noise and animal control
- libraries and halls
- rubbish collection
- building permits
- local roads, bridges and footpaths
- local environmental issues

Forming the Commonwealth Parliament

All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over are required to enrol to vote.

A general election is held

The Government is formed

The leader of the party (or parties) that wins the majority of seats in the House of Representatives becomes the head of the Government, or Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the leader of the whole nation and the spokesperson for Australia at international meetings and events.

The political party that wins the second largest number of seats is known as the Opposition. Its leader is known as the Leader of the Opposition whose role is to check what the Government is doing and to present other ideas on how to run the country.

Ministers are appointed

The Prime Minister chooses members or senators to become ministers whose role is to administer portfolios, for example health or education. Ministers are chosen from all states and territories.

The Cabinet is formed

Ministers with the most senior portfolios make up the Cabinet, which is the key decision making body of the government.

The Australian Constitution can be changed only by a law passed by the Commonwealth Parliament and approved by a majority of voters across Australia and in a majority of states. This process is called a referendum. Since Federation in 1901 only eight out of 44 proposals to amend the Constitution have been approved.

Laws are the end result of government policy and may result from:

- particular community needs
- political party policy
- pressure for change
- administrative improvement.

A Bill (a proposed law that has not yet passed through Parliament) must go through certain steps before it becomes a national law. The Bill is debated in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and may be referred to a parliamentary committee for detailed examination. Before any new law can be passed, or a change to existing laws made, a majority of Members of the House of Representatives and of Senators must agree. It must also be signed by the Governor-General. The process of signing by the Governor-General is known as Royal Assent.

Our Head of State

Australia's constitutional Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen appoints the Governor-General as her representative in Australia. She does so on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governor-General is not aligned to any political party and is Australia's effective Head of State.

On the Queen's behalf, and on the advice of government ministers, the Governor-General:

- signs all laws passed by the Parliament (Royal Assent)
- signs delegated legislation (regulations)
- performs ceremonial duties
- approves the appointment of ministers, senior judges and other officials.

The two Houses of Parliament

The House of Representatives has 150 Members each of whom represents about 80 000 voters living in one particular area (their electorate). Since Victoria and New South Wales have the largest populations, most of the members of the House of Representatives come from there. This is balanced by the Senate, where all states, no matter what their population, have the same number of senators.

Members of the House of Representatives get to know the people and local issues in their electorate. When in Parliament, they speak on behalf of the people in their electorate, discuss proposals for new laws (Bills) and important national matters.

The Senate has 76 senators – 12 are elected for each of the six states, and two each for the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

Senators debate current issues, consider Bills (proposed new laws), committee reports and papers presented (or tabled) by ministers in Parliament.

They travel to meet people in their state or territory and take their views back to Parliament.

Parliament has members and senators from different political parties (a group of people who share similar ideas and philosophies about how a country should be managed). The major political parties in Australia are the Liberal Party and National Party, which often join forces to form a coalition, and the Australian Labor Party. Minor parties are the Australian Greens, Australian Democrats and Family First Party.

Political parties help strengthen governments and make them more stable. In Australia, anyone can join a political party if he or she wants to participate in setting goals and party policy, or help party candidates in their election campaigns.

State and territory government

Each state and territory has its own parliament. State and territory governments are based in the capital city of each state or territory.

As with the Commonwealth Parliament, people vote to elect a representative for their area who is then a member of state parliament. In each state, the Premier is the leader of the state government. In each territory, the Chief Minister is the leader of the government.

Like the Commonwealth Parliament, each state, except for Queensland, has two Houses of Parliament.

The Lower House, known as the Legislative Assembly or the House of Assembly, and the Upper House, known as the Legislative Council.

The Queensland Parliament and the Parliaments of each territory have one House known as the Legislative Assembly.

Local government

Local government areas (councils or shires) are made up of a group of suburbs, a town, a town and its surrounding countryside, or a rural area. There are about 850 local council areas in Australia. The people in each area elect members, known as councillors. Councils are led by the Mayor or Shire President.

Your elected representatives

Australian Government:

Head of Government - The Prime Minister _____

The party/parties in government _____

The Leader of the Opposition _____

The party/parties in Opposition _____

The member of the House of Representatives _____

The federal electorate where I live _____

The senators from my state or territory are _____

State government

Head of government – The Premier _____

The party/parties in government _____

The Leader of the Opposition _____

The party/parties in Opposition _____

My state representative(s) _____

Territory government

Head of government – The Chief Minister _____

The party/parties in government _____

The Leader of the Opposition _____

The party/parties in Opposition _____

My territory representative(s) _____

Local government

The name of my municipality _____

Mayor or Shire President _____

Becoming an Australian Citizen

Further information on becoming an Australian citizen is available at www.citizenship.gov.au or by calling the Citizenship Information Line on 131 880.

How to use this book

This book will help you prepare for the citizenship test. You should:

- study this book
- ask a friend or family member to help you practice answering questions about Australia
- take language classes if you need to learn to speak English
- use the guide at the back of this book as to the areas you will be asked about
- take the sample test on the website at www.citizenship.gov.au

About the citizenship test

The citizenship test is a computer based written multiple-choice test. The test is designed to assess whether you have a basic knowledge of the English language. It is also used to test your knowledge of Australia and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

The test consists of 20 questions drawn at random from a pool of 200 questions. To pass the test, you must correctly answer 60 per cent of the questions, including answering three questions on the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship correctly.

Citizenship tests are conducted in every office of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Tests are also regularly scheduled in a number of locations throughout regional Australia.

The questions in a citizenship test are based on the information contained in this book.

The test includes questions about:

- Australia's history
- Australia's geography
- the Australian people
- Australian values
- the system of government
- the right to vote and stand for public office in Australia.

For further information, and to find the test centre nearest to you, please visit the department's citizenship website at www.citizenship.gov.au or by calling the Citizenship Information Line on 131 880.

If you have special needs

It is expected that most people will have the literacy skills necessary to complete the citizenship test unassisted. For those who require some assistance because of low literacy skills, an officer will provide assistance by reading the questions and possible answers. This will still require you to have the understanding and knowledge to meet the requirements for citizenship.

To be eligible for this assistance, you will need to have completed a minimum of 400 hours of English language tuition under the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP), and be assessed by the AMEP provider as not having the reading skills at the competency level used in the development of the test.

**Australian
Citizenship
Pledge**

*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*

**You may choose
whether or not to use the
words 'under God'.*

After the test

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship will tell you the results of your test. If you pass, you will be given information about how to apply for citizenship. If you fail the test, you will be given feedback on your results and information about how to prepare to take the test again.

After passing the test, you will then be able to lodge your citizenship application electronically over the Internet www.citizenship.gov.au, by post, or in person at any office of the department.

Australian Citizenship Pledge

After you have successfully completed the test, and if your application for citizenship has been approved, you need to make a pledge of commitment. This is usually a public event to celebrate your acceptance as a formal member of the Australian community.

At the ceremony you will be asked to make the Pledge of Commitment as a Citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia, usually called the Australian Citizenship Pledge.

Sample questions

1. In what year did Federation take place?
2. Which day of the year is Australia Day?
3. Who was the first Prime Minister of Australia?
4. What is the first line of Australia's national anthem?
5. What is the floral emblem of Australia?
6. What is the population of Australia?
7. In what city is the Parliament House of the Commonwealth Parliament located?
8. Who is the Queen's representative in Australia?
9. How are Members of Parliament chosen?
10. Who do members of Parliament represent?
11. After a federal election, who forms the new government?
12. What are the colours on the Australian flag?
13. Who is the head of the Australian Government?
14. What are the three levels of government in Australia?
15. In what year did the European settlement of Australia start?
16. Serving on a jury if required is a responsibility of Australian citizenship: true or false?
17. In Australia, everyone is free to practice the religion of their choice, or practice no religion: true or false?
18. To be elected to the Commonwealth Parliament you must be an Australian citizen: true or false?
19. As an Australian citizen, I have the right to register my baby born overseas as an Australian citizen: true or false?
20. Australian citizens aged 18 years or over are required to enrol on the electoral register: true or false?

For more information

Australian citizenship

To obtain more information about how to become an Australian citizen visit the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's website at: www.citizenship.gov.au

Australia

You can obtain more information about Australia at your local library.

Australian Government programmes and services

You can obtain information about Australian government programmes and services from www.australia.gov.au

Federal member or senator

Your local federal member or a senator for your state or territory has a range of information about Australian Government programmes and services.

A listing of members and senators can be found at: www.aph.gov.au