

# The Commonwealth Coat of Arms



The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia. It is used to identify the authority and property of the Australian Government, the Australian Parliament and Commonwealth courts. For example, it appears on the cover of Australian passports, government buildings and some 50 cent coins.

The first Commonwealth Coat of Arms was introduced on 7 May 1908. The second was introduced on 19 September 1912 and is still used today.

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms contains a shield with the symbols of the six Australian states. These symbols are enclosed in a border to represent federation in 1901, when the states united to form a nation.

The shield is held by two native Australian animals, a kangaroo to the left and an emu to the right.



The gold Commonwealth Star above the shield has seven points. One point represents each of the six states and the seventh point represents all the territories. There is a scroll displaying the word 'Australia' beneath the shield. The national floral emblem, golden wattle, forms the background.

# National Colours



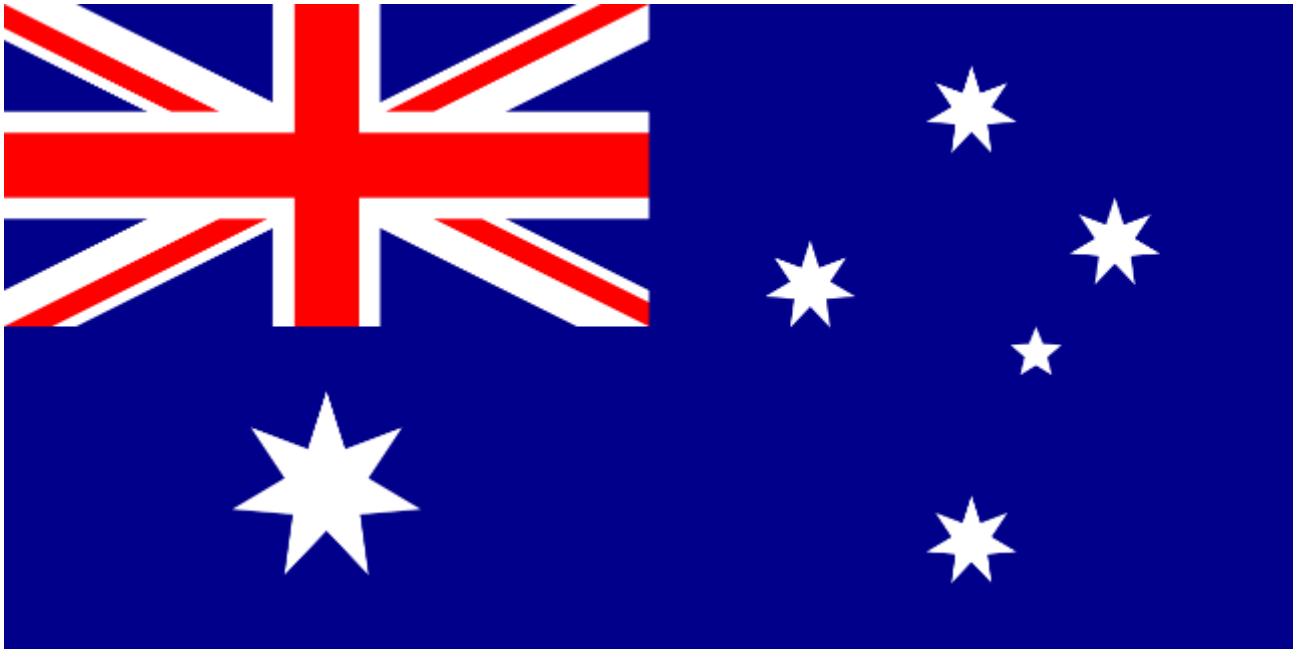
The national colours of Australia are green and gold. These colours have strong environmental connections. Gold represents Australia's beaches, minerals that are found in the ground, grain such as wheat and the fleece of Australian wool. Green represents the forests, eucalyptus trees and pastures of the Australian landscape.

Green and gold are also the colours of Australia's national floral emblem – the golden wattle.

Since the late 1800s, green and gold have been Australia's national sporting colours. In 1984, green and gold were formally recognised as the national colours.



# Flag Of Australia



The Australian National Flag was first flown in 1901. It is Australia's foremost national symbol and has become an expression of Australian identity and pride.

The flag is used by the navy, army and air force. It is flown around the country at sporting events and by service organisations, schools, community groups and private citizens.

## Symbolism

The flag has three elements on a blue background: the Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross.

The Union Jack in the upper left corner represents the history of British settlement.

Below the Union Jack is a white Commonwealth, or Federation, star. It has seven points representing the unity of the six states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. The star is also featured on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

The Southern Cross is shown on the flag in white. It is a constellation of five stars that can only be seen from the southern hemisphere and is a reminder of Australia's geography.

## History

In 1901 Australia's first Prime Minister, Sir Edmund Barton, announced an international competition to design a flag for the new Commonwealth of Australia. There were over 30,000 entries and five nearly-identical entries were awarded equal first.

The flag was flown for the first time in September 1901 at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. In this original design the stars of the Southern Cross had different numbers of points to signify their brightness.



# Australian Aboriginal Flag



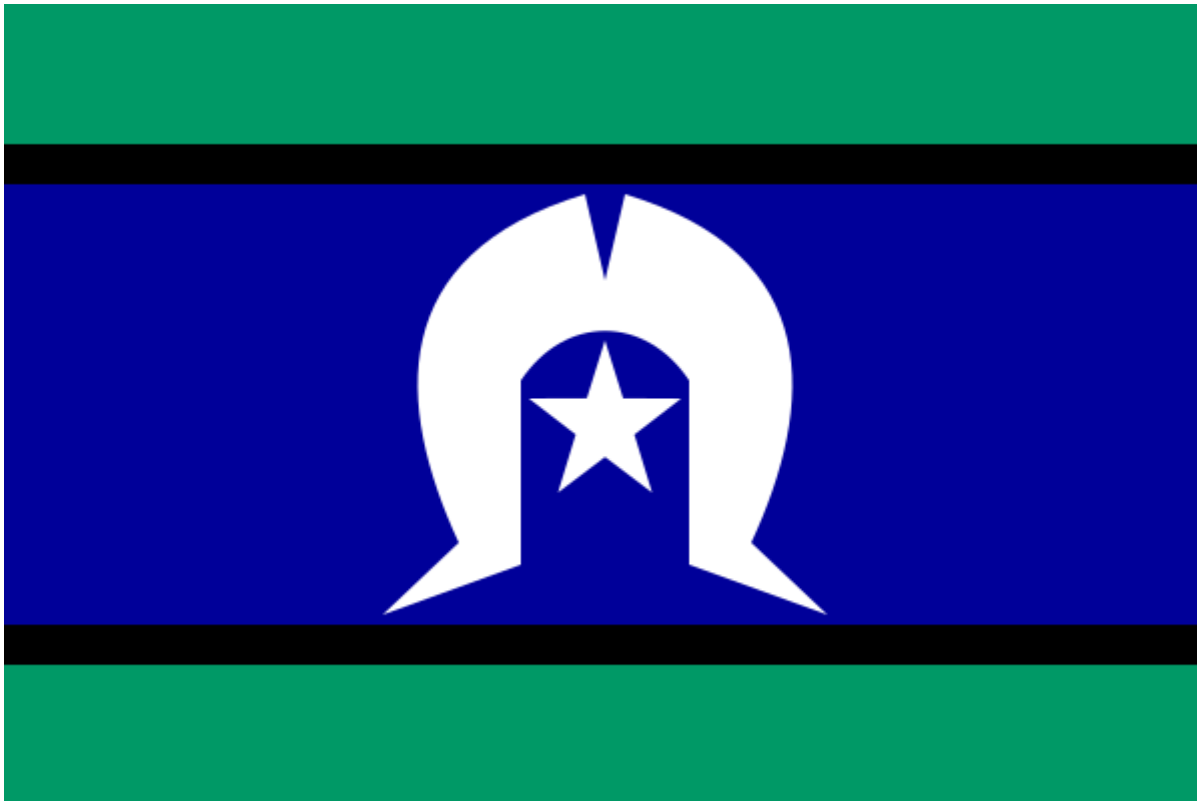
The top half of the flag is black to symbolise Indigenous people. The red in the lower half stands for the earth and the colour of ochre, which has ceremonial significance. The circle of yellow in the centre of the flag represents the sun.

The Australian Aboriginal Flag is a flag that represents Indigenous Australians. It is one of the official flags of Australia, and holds special legal and political status. It is often flown with the national flag and with the Torres Strait Islander Flag, which is also an official flag of Australia.

The Australian Aboriginal Flag was designed in 1971 by Aboriginal artist Harold Thomas, who is descended from the Luritja people of Central Australia. The flag was originally designed for the land rights movement, and it became a symbol of the Aboriginal people of Australia.



# Torres Strait Island Flag



The Torres Strait Islander Flag was adopted in May 1992 during the Torres Strait Islands Cultural Festival.

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.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag is flown during NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week.

The design of the Torres Strait Islander Flag was the winning entry in a competition organised by the Island Coordinating Council.



# Kangaroo

The kangaroo first appeared as a symbol of Australia in 1773 with the publication of an account of Captain Cook's first voyage to the Pacific. By the 1880s the picture of a kangaroo, was used to sell products ranging from bicycles to Billy Tea.

Hunted for meat and for sport, and used as a subject in art work, the kangaroo finally achieved official recognition with its inclusion on Australia's coat of arms in 1908.

## History

When Captain Cook's HMB Endeavour arrived back in England in 1771, it carried a large number of specimens of plants and animals previously unknown to Europeans. One of the strangest was a kangaroo. The kangaroo was taken back to England for voyage naturalist Joseph Banks, who arranged for artist George Stubbs to paint its 'portrait'.



The story of the Endeavour's voyage was published in 1773 and was illustrated with an engraving of Stubbs' kangaroo. The kangaroo quickly came to symbolise the Australian continent.

Since Federation in 1901, the kangaroo has appeared on money and stamps, on Royal Australian Air Force planes and as a mascot at sporting events.

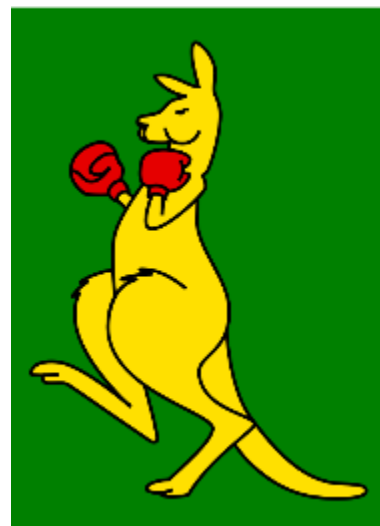
The kangaroo also appears as a logo for Qantas, Australian Made and Tourism Australia, and is the nicknames given to Australian sporting teams.

## The boxing kangaroo

The boxing kangaroo first appeared in a cartoon in 1891. It is an image inspired by travelling sideshows in which men and kangaroos fought with boxing gloves.

During the Second World War, members of the Australian air force painted boxing kangaroos on the sides of their aircraft to distinguish themselves from British troops.

More recently, the boxing kangaroo has been associated with Australian sport, firstly as the mascot of the America's Cup winning yacht, Australia II, and later as an official Olympic mascot.





# Uluru



Uluru is a giant sandstone monolith in Central Australia. This is an aerial view of Uluru, a reddish-brown roughly oval-shaped rock which rises high above the surrounding plains.

For Aboriginal Australians, Uluru forms a part of Dreaming stories. According to Uluru dreamtime, the world was a flat and featureless place until ancestors of Indigenous Australians created the places like Uluru. Uluru represents the time on the earth and is seen as one of their most dramatic and inspiring creations.



Uluru remains one of Australia's most popular tourist destinations and is visited by about half a million people from around the world each year. Climbing the rock is discouraged by traditional owners for whom Uluru is a sacred site of great spiritual significance.

In 1985, after long negotiations, Uluru was handed back to Indigenous Australians. Uluru is a symbol of Indigenous rights and, for many, a source of spiritual connectedness with the land.



# Sydney Harbour Bridge



Construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge took almost a decade, starting in 1923 and ending in 1932. It was opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1932 by New South Wales Premier Jack Lang.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge opened to traffic in 1932. The bridge linked the northern and southern shores of Sydney Harbour. The bridge became a major symbol used to promote tourism and immigration to Australia. The Harbour Bridge and the nearby Sydney Opera House are some of Australia's most important structures.

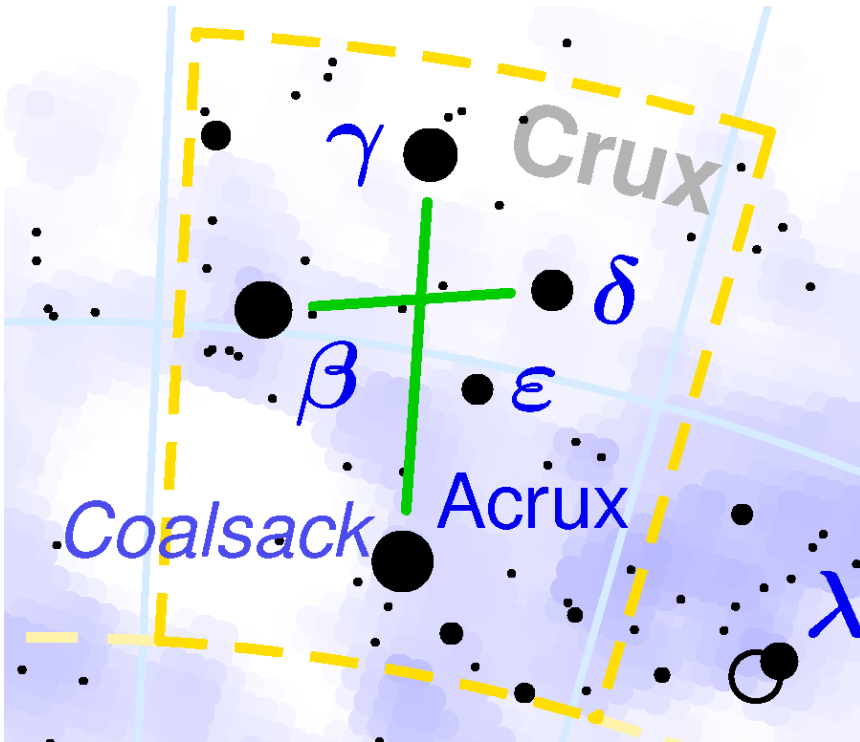


Since Sydney's 1998 New Year's Eve celebrations, fireworks have been displayed from the bridge.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge also became a symbolic bridge when crossed by an estimated 250,000 people during the People's Walk for Reconciliation on 28 May 2000. The bridge was closed to commuters to allow people to walk across in a show of support for Aboriginal reconciliation.



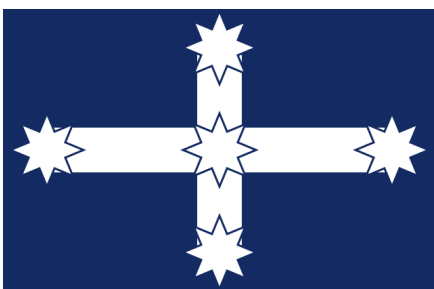
# Southern Cross



The Southern Cross is a constellation (collection of stars) that can be seen from the Southern Hemisphere. It points to the directions of north, south, east and west.

It has been used by Indigenous Australians for thousands of years. The Southern Cross constellation was seen by European voyagers in the late 15th century and considered to be a sign of God blessing for their actions.

Named 'CruX Australis' and identified it is considered Australia's oldest symbol. Since 1823, the Southern Cross has appeared on flags representing Australia.



During the gold rush in 1854, miners fighting for the rights flew the 'Eureka flag' as a symbol of freedom and of loyalty to Australia.

Since then, it has been used as a symbol for Australian workers in their battles for better working conditions.

The stars of the Southern Cross were known to the ancient Greeks, who regarded them as part of the Centaurus constellation.

Aboriginal people also formed images with the stars, and some groups saw the Southern Cross as the footprint of a giant wedge-tailed eagle, with the pointer stars as a throwing stick used to hunt it.

# Wattle



Australia's national floral emblem is the golden wattle. When it is flowering, it displays the national colours; green and gold.

Wattle is suited to Australia's climate; it can survive drought, wind and bushfire. It represents that resilience of the Australian people.

The golden wattle grows throughout Australia. It symbolises unity and harmony.

## National wattle day

The 1<sup>st</sup> of September is National Wattle Day. Australians can celebrate each Wattle Day by planting wattles.

The golden wattle has been used as a symbol of remembrance and reflection. On national days of mourning, Australians are invited to wear a sprig of wattle.

## History

Indigenous peoples of Australia soaked the gum of the golden wattle in water and honey to produce a sweet, toffee-like substance.

Colonial settlers grew the golden wattle and used the plant to make glue and honey.

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The golden wattle was unofficially accepted as the national floral emblem to mark Federation in 1901.



# Slouch hat and Rising Sun badge



A slouch hat is a wide-brimmed felt or cloth hat most commonly worn as part of a military. Australia and New Zealand has had a slouch hat as part of their military uniform since the late 1800's.

The Australian slouch hat, sometimes called an 'Australian bush hat' or 'digger hat', has one side of the brim turned up to allow a rifle to be slung over the shoulder.

The other side of the brim has a Rising Sun Badge. The Rising Sun badge, is the official emblem of the Australian Army.

Rising sun designs appeared on early Australian colonial coins and symbolised Australia as 'a young nation'.

The badge now symbolises the spirit of ANZAC, the stories of Australian soldiers (or diggers) during the landings at Gallipoli in 1915.



# Boomerang



A boomerang is a flying tool that is best known for its ability to return to the thrower. Boomerangs have played an important role in Aboriginal culture as objects of work and leisure.

Boomerang badges were presented to servicemen and servicewomen before they left for war to symbolise their safe return home.

The appeal of the boomerang could be its recognisability as Australian, its ingenuity, or the idea of something coming back.

They have also been used in designs for sweetheart badges, which were worn by relatives of those serving in wartime as a symbol of hope for the safe return of their loved ones.



When Europeans arrived they collected the boomerang as a souvenir. The boomerang's popularity as a souvenir transformed it into a national symbol. Many Australian brands have used the boomerang to symbolise their products as 'Australian'.