



# AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL Symbols

The story of Australia's symbols is rich and colourful. Our symbols represent what is unique about our country and reflect aspects of our cultural life and history.

## HISTORY OF OUR SYMBOLS

**1901** A world-wide competition to find a new Australian flag was announced by the government when the six colonies united as the Commonwealth of Australia. The Commonwealth Blue Ensign (later to become the Australian National Flag) was developed from the winning entries.

**1908** Australia's first national Coat of Arms was granted by King Edward VII. This showed the kangaroo and the emu supporting the shield and standing on a grassy mound. At this time a seventh point was added to Commonwealth Star on the Commonwealth Blue Ensign.

**1912** Australia's current grant of arms was made by King George V. This changed the original national Coat of Arms to include the symbols of the states - and the Commonwealth (Federation) Star is shown with seven points. Six of the seven points represent the Australian states, and the seventh its territories. The golden wattle surrounds the new Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

**1953** The Australian National Flag officially declared through the *Flags Act 1953*.

**1975** Blue and gold chosen for the ribbon colours for the Order of Australia.

**1977** In a referendum to find the National Anthem, three million Australians vote for "Advance Australia Fair".

**1984** Green and gold proclaimed as Australia's national colours.  
"Advance Australia Fair" officially proclaimed as Australia's National Anthem.

**1988** The golden wattle proclaimed as Australia's floral emblem.

**1993** Opal proclaimed Australia's national gemstone.

**1995** The Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag were proclaimed on 14 July 1995.

**1996** Australian National Flag Day (3 September each year) proclaimed.

**2021** On 1 January 2021, the words of the second line of the Australian National Anthem were amended from 'For we are young and free' to 'For we are one and free'.



**Australia's national floral emblem** is the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha* Benth.). The golden wattle is a symbol of unity and its colours reflect our national colours, green and gold.



**The national colours**, green and gold, hold a treasured place in the Australian imagination. Gold inspires images of Australia's beaches, mineral wealth, grain harvests and the fleece of Australian wool. Green evokes the forests, eucalyptus trees and pastures of the Australian landscape.



**Australia's national gemstone is the opal**, a stone famous for its brilliant colours. In Indigenous stories, a rainbow created the colours of the opal when it touched the earth.



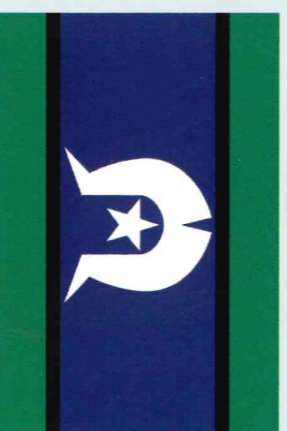
**The Australian National Anthem** identifies Australia at home and overseas and is used at official and public ceremonies, and sporting and community events.



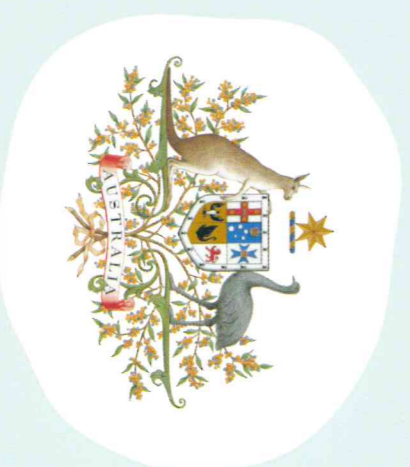
**The Australian National Flag** is a symbol of the entire nation. Australians also recognise other important flags, such as the state and territory flags, the Australian Aboriginal Flag, the Torres Strait Islander Flag, and the ensigns of the Australian Defence Force.



Australian Aboriginal Flag



Torres Strait Islander Flag



**The Commonwealth Coat of Arms** is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia and conveys Commonwealth authority and ownership.