

Newsletter - August 2000

President's Message

This has been a year of achievement and consolidation, and considerable expenditure, with the major project - the new video Our National Flag ... Since 1901 - being completed. This new video, based on our original production, Making Our Flags will be launched on the 99th Birthday of the Australian National Flag, at the historic Holy Trinity (Garrison) Church, at the Rocks on 3 September 2000. The Reverend Brian Seers has granted special permission for the video to be screened in the Church at midday on Sunday, Australian National Flag Day. All members are welcome to attend and are encouraged to bring their friends. The new video, with teaching aid prepared by Educator Toni Field, will soon be available for purchase or sponsorship at \$25.00 per kit (including postage).

Preparations for the vitally important celebrations of the centenary of our National Flag of Stars and Crosses are well in-hand as detailed in this newsletter.

Recently the State ANFA branch Presidents met for extended discussions, which addressed the issues that affect the future direction of the Association. It was a highly successful gathering, resulting in major upgrade of our Internet homepage, which should soon be implemented.

There are still disturbing developments occurring, including the effective demotion of the Australian White and RAAF ensigns. The Commonwealth Government's recent proclamation of the Australian Defence Force Ensign (formerly the Tri-Service flag) as an official Australian flag under the Flags Act, has downgraded the Australian White and RAAF ensigns. ANFA is at "Action Stations" on this matter and we are calling all members "To Arms".

On a happier note, I am delighted to commend in particular our unflinching and totally dedicated Office Manager, Ted Eggins and Gwen Carruthers for maintaining and developing the ANFA office. Sincere thanks for a job well done!

The Governor-General's Flag Day Message 2000, is a fitting reminder of the values of our chief national symbol:

"In the 99 years that have passed since the first raising of our flag Australia has grown as a nation and as a people. But the values and the principles, which our flag symbolises and which inspired our forebears to found the nation are unchanged".

Hope to see you and your friends on Australian National Flag Day at the Garrison Church.

John Christian Vaughan
President

ANFA (NSW) Inc - 1999-00 Review

The Y2K months are rushing by towards the real millennium year 2001 bringing with it the important centenary of Federation for Australia and on 3 September 2001, the centenary of the first official raising of our Australian Flag - ie. the 100th birthday of our historic national symbol. But now, with the departure of July 2000 already, its time to report to our membership and the community at large.

One must begin by stating it has been an extremely busy, yet interesting, 12 months - even if on the surface it would seem to have been relatively quiet regarding the Flag. A number of outbreaks threatened but were quietly extinguished, only one having been referred to the Australian Press Council for a satisfactory conclusion.

Of course it must be recorded that those swaggering, overconfident, overbearing, top level republicans ("any republic will do") were soundly jolted back to reality on November 6 last year. That was national referendum day when ordinary Australians demonstrated they would not be fooled by relentless, arrogant publicity and propaganda, financially supported by some rich and powerful, while pushed (rammed) by a vast majority of the main media resources, press, radio, television and other visible means. It appeared the words fairness and democracy were not in their vocabulary. But fortunately those attributes are enshrouded within our trusty Australian Constitution, while our Australian flag is the visible national proclamation of our history and heritage, above and beyond politics.

A big thank you to all those members who supported our donation appeal 1999 which enabled your Association to carry on while meeting administration costs and to complete some projects and embark on others - projects aimed at education and promotion relative to our chief national symbol. Our President's report will refer to those major activities. While it is understood that some donors require receipts posted out, we do appreciate the time saved by those who accept them being filed at the office, but available at any time. It is a very busy period following the newsletter so please expect possible delays in response times.

On the 26th January 2000 we noted that Harold Scruby (for Ausflag Ltd.) had chosen "The Australian" newspaper this year for his Australia Day lecture (serve) to all Australians. He should have realised that the vast majority of them were out enjoying their special day, their national cultures and waving their national flag. That is, our historic Australian flag that Mr Scruby and Co. have been intent upon destroying for some twenty years or more. It has been well known for years that the small Ausflag group of high profile "well placed" elitists have been closely linked to leaders of the republic movement. Yet Mr Scruby continued to arrogantly tell Australians "we must symbolically and psychologically grow up" (as in his Australia Day lecture). He did not remind his readers that in the polls (Sydney Morning Herald) on Australia Days 1998 and 1999, our people's flag emerged a clear winner in competition with his flag designs.

MEMO: To all those Australian Olympian athletes (2000): Congratulations and good luck from all members of this Association. May your ambitions and the many hard yards (hours) of dedicated training be well rewarded with the satisfaction of producing the utmost effort for all Australians and our nation, under our national flag.

John Christian Vaughan
President

Letter to the Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

This letter concerns the Centenary celebrations for the Australian National flag which will take place in the Centenary of Federation year. Our 20,000 members across Australia are keen to see significant celebrations to mark this important event on 3 September 2001.

We would appreciate it if you would be able to advise details of the Government's program in this regard. In the meantime, our thoughts on the matter are outlined as follows:

- Co-ordinated nationwide flag raisings at all schools on the 3 September 2001.
- The issue to all schools and youth groups of:
 - commemorative centenary stickers
 - commemorative flag booklet
 - commemorative flag posters
- The issue of small, wall-mounted Australian flags for permanent display in all classrooms.
- Promotion of Australian National Flag Video "Our National Flag ... Since 1901" to all schools and youth groups.
- Establishment of an Australian National Flag Centenary home-page on the Internet, including the issue of CD Rom etc.
- Public awareness campaign to encourage the flying of the Australian National Flag from homes, offices, boats etc.
- Re-enactment of the first raising of the National Flag from the Royal Exhibition Buildings, Melbourne by the Prime Minister.
- Re-enactment of the first Vice-Regal flag raising at Townsville 16 September 1901 by the Governor General.
- A limited batch of Australian National Flags signed by the Prime Minister and the Premiers of each State to be placed on permanent display in the Federal and State Parliament Houses and/or other appropriate public venues.
- Issue of commemorative coins & postage stamps.

We do have many more ideas which we would be happy to discuss with you or your representative at your earliest convenience.

Looking forward to your reply

John Christian Vaughan
President

The Southern Cross Symbol

The winning Australian Flag design resulting from the Government competition of the 29 April 1901, had a Southern Cross of five stars all of which had differing numbers of points - being 9,8,7,6 and 5, indicating their degree of brightness - ie. the dimmest (small) star in the group, Epsilon, had 5 points. In 1902 Prime Minister Barton sent the newly designed flag to the U.K. for royal approval, together with a second option flag, the pre-Federation flag which until then had been commonly used throughout Australia. The newly designed flag was returned in late 1902 with the King's approval as the blue Commonwealth Flag for Australia.

However the flag and associated drawings had the Southern Cross with each of the four main stars having 7 points with the smallest fifth star (Epsilon) still with 5 points. The new Australian Commonwealth Flag was proclaimed as such in the Commonwealth Government Gazette of 20 February 1903. This minor design change was acceptable to all authorities as there was minimum variation in the brightness of those 4 main stars and it also had the benefit of a reduction in manufacturing cost.

There remained however, uncertainty as to where the design change occurred. It was often assumed the British Admiralty which had control of shipping registration and associated flags, must have made the change.

Eventual research, however, by William H MacFarlane (historian) resulted in his 1951 publication, quoting: "when the flag was being prepared to send to England for royal approval, the late Mr William Dobbs, a leading authority on heraldry, was asked to draw the mathematical plans, but not being a draughtsman, he sought the assistance of Mr Egbert Nuttall, the two sharing the fee paid for this work. A letter from the Prime Minister's Department which has come under my notice says that Mr Dobbs also consulted Mr Barrachi, well known in astronomical circles, in setting out the flag for Government approval. It was officially sanctioned by the King in 1902". MacFarlane has stated in his historic published article that he had personal contact with Mr Nuttall (who was one of the 5 original 1901 design competition winners) earlier in 1951 and had been shown letters from the Commonwealth authorities which had been sent to him (Nuttall). He was obviously satisfied that the final design drawings were completed in Australia before being sent for royal approval.

Supporting evidence is also available in a letter dated 202-1956 from Mr M C Timbs of the Prime Minister's Department who, following a visit to the United Kingdom, wrote: "It may also be of interest to you to learn that I have satisfied myself beyond doubt, that the sketch of the Australian flag forwarded by Mr Barton for approval, was approved by His Majesty without alteration".

Letter to Sandy Hollway

On 12th January we wrote to Sandy Hollway of SOCOG with a copy to John Coates, President of A.O.C. regarding the apparent absence of the national flag on any of their public literature or promotional materials. Replies were received from Sandy Hollway and Alan Grover, Director of Marketing A.O.C. both indicating an expectation of increased visibility of the beautiful Flag and Rings logo, as the Games draw closer. It must be stated however, that to date, little or no change has been perceived.

While hoping they have relented, it is understood SOCOG have also banned (bowing to sponsor Ansett Airlines) the playing of the late Peter Allen's great Australian song/music "I still call Australia home" at Olympic venues - that their Australian flags will be made in U.S.A., no doubt of incorrect dimensions, flouting Australian Government law (the Flags Act 1953) - and the great American icon McDonalds given exclusive rights to provide food for the public and athletes. So forget SOCOG and A.O.C. with their arrogant disregard of public opinion - our great champion athletes will have the final say when marching into the arena behind THE FLAG and, when it flies on high to proclaim yet more medals for them, and Australia. Our athletes will DO IT, for Australia.