

Newsletter - August 2003

The President's Message, 2003

The highlight of ANFA's 20th anniversary year will be the attendance of the Governor of New South Wales at our main Flag Day celebration at Martin Place on Wednesday, 3 September, commencing at 12.20 pm.

ANFA is indebted to our popular Vice Regal representative, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir, A.C., for her participation in this year's celebrations which acknowledge the 102nd anniversary of our flag of "Stars and Crosses". Members and friends are encouraged to attend this special occasion. The renowned Woollooware High School Band and Choir together with the Five Dock Primary School Choir will entertain us at this year's Flag Day in Martin Place.

A great deal has been achieved since 1983 when Sir Colin Hines, OBE, and his patriotic associates launched ANFA. It is thanks to the sheer hard work and resolute dedication of many volunteers that the Association is now nationwide and boasts a membership of some 20,000 motivated Australians.

The unwavering support of members and the generous annual donations that they make has facilitated the achievement of the following goals:

- The Proclamation in 1996 of Australian National Flag Day
- The ANFA video kit - "Our National Flag . . . since 1901"
- Successful lobbying for the ANFA video to be incorporated into the Commonwealth Government's national schools' programme, Discovering Democracy, (thanks to the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, MP, Minister for Education)
- Australia wide celebrations marking the centenary of The Flag in 2001
- Establishment of the Australian Flag Promise and Flag Prayer.
- Creation of the comprehensive Home of the Australian National Flag website, www.australianflag.org.au
- Annual Flag Day messages from notable Australians including the Governor-General, Prime Minister, Premiers, Governors, political party leaders and a wide selection of well-known dignitaries
- An increasing appreciation and celebration of The Flag at schools
- Establishment of the Australian Centenary Flag Warrant under the CommonwealthFlags Act
- The 1998 Amendment to the Flags Act ensuring that the Australian National Flag cannot be changed unless the Australian Electorate votes for change. This reaffirms that our flag is owned and controlled by the Australian People not the Commonwealth Government

Our Australian National Flag is one of the most distinctive and attractive flags in the world. It is Australia's chief national emblem by law, custom and tradition, and is very much a flag of the people having been chosen in a unique and democratic public competition in 1901 - the year that the Australian nation was born. Since that time our flag of "Stars and Crosses" has represented generations of Australians through war and peace, terror and triumph, depression and prosperity.

In 2001 the Governor-General signed the Centenary Flag Warrant, commissioning a specially sewn, satin Australian National Flag to be designated as our Centenary Flag. This commemorative flag was flown in the presence of the Prime Minister and other dignitaries at the Royal Exhibition Buildings on 3 September 2001, on the very same mast from which the Australian National Flag was first flown in 1901. The Centenary Flag will be carefully preserved and used for the bicentenary of our flag in 2101 and at other important national events. It represents a link between current and past generations and is a symbol of an historical continuum; of our values; of pride in our heritage and traditions.

Despite ANFA's successes there is still work to be done. ANFA stands as a bulwark against lobby groups who wish to change our flag. Ausflag Limited is one such group whose massive website is aimed at undermining the Australian National Flag.

The key to ANFA's continuing success is the dissemination of accurate and interesting information to schools across Australia. The video kit and the ANFA website must remain valuable, up-to-date tools for dissemination of information. To this end we need to take advantage of the latest technological developments such as DVD formatting.

I have been privileged to serve on the ANFA New South Wales Committee since its inception in 1983 and as President since 1991. It is with sadness that I advise that, due to the increasing pressures of my business commitments, I will not be seeking re-election. However, I will remain active on the "flag front" and will be fully supportive of ANFA's objectives.

Words cannot describe my indebtedness to the members, the council of management and the tireless and talented volunteers. In particular I wish to voice my sincere gratitude to Ted Eggins and Gwen Carruthers who continue to man and maintain the ANFA office on a voluntary basis.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Martin Place Flag Day celebration on, Wednesday, 3 September. Let's keep our flag flying . . . forever!

John Christian Vaughan
PRESIDENT & NATIONAL SPOKESMAN

Editorial 2003

Last year we were able to relate in our newsletter the exciting details of the success of our video "OUR NATIONAL FLAGSINCE 1901" when the Federal Government provided one to every primary school, public and private in Australia.

This year our main editorial will focus on "the 20 years of ANFA" - another success story. Yes, believe it or not, we have arrived in our 20th birthday year. This can only be a summary of those eventful years but it is hoped both foundation members and those more recently joined will enjoy sharing in the ANFA historic reminiscence of battles waged and achievements gained. So hearty congratulations to all our members - it is only through your assistance and loyal support that our progress has been sustained.

At the national conference of the Australian Labour Party (ALP) held in Canberra, 5-9 July 1982, their policy platform in regard to National Symbols was changed to - "Initiate and Support moves to establish with popular acceptance an Australian flag which will more distinctively reflect our national independence and identity."

Six months after that event, the organisation "AUSFLAG 1988 LIMITED" was launched. It was described as a group of prominent Australians who had registered the company name AUSTFLAG 1988 LIMITED and was dedicated to Australia "having its own identifiably Australian flag by 1988, the year of our bicentenary."

There is no doubt these were most tempestuous times with red hot debates raging over the talk back and TV airwaves, print media letters and editorials and across the political spectrum. There were accusations made that "AUSFLAG 1988 appears to be little more than a front for the ALP, despite its attempts to involve prominent Australians to give the organisation some kind of respectability." An article in The Australian on 28 January 1984 stated, "It is understood that Federal Cabinet will soon decide how best to ignite the debate on the pros and cons of changing the flag before the issue is put to a national vote before the 1988 bicentenary year. The Minister for Housing and Construction Mr Chris Hurford publicly revealed yesterday that the Government had not allowed economic discussions to completely swamp cabinet debate on the flag."

THE FOUNDING/FORMATION OF ANFA

While the following details relate to our ANFA (NSW) please note that each State formed their own autonomous ANFA with their own story to tell:

The initiative to form our Association certainly came from the late Sir Colin Hines OBE, then President of the RSL (NSW) State Branch and his State Council. This had followed earlier discussions with the RSL National Office, Canberra.

On the afternoon of March 11, 1983, a group of eight concerned citizens met at Anzac House on the invitation of Sir Colin Hines, OBE, to form the Steering Committee of an organisation with the principal objective to ensure, by continued effort until the Bicentennial Year 1988, the retention of the Australian National Flag. It was agreed that the most effective method to achieve our objective would be through positive promotional means to the people of Australia, to enhance their awareness of the history and traditions surrounding our Flag, rather than take a defensive position towards those groups which seem bent on changing it. On March 18, the Steering Committee, which had grown to eleven men and women, voted unanimously to name the organisation, The Australian National Flag Association, and on April 21, the Constitution was adopted, which stated the following aims and objectives:

1. To communicate positively to all Australians, the importance and significance of our chief national symbol - the Australian National Flag.
2. To provide promotional and educational material concerning the Australian National Flag.
3. To promote the Australian identity overseas by the use of the National Flag.
4. To support existing "fly the Flag" programmes and encourage support from recognised service organisations.
5. To encourage personal identity with the Australian National Flag at all levels within the community.

With the adoption of the Constitution, the Steering Committee became the Council of Management which had met in 18 regular meetings, 2 special meetings, a press conference, the Public Launch and various committee meetings, all in the implementation of the Association's objectives.

Additionally, Council members had appeared numerous times on radio, television and in the newspapers, and had addressed schools and public gatherings, all in support of our objectives. October 5th, 1983, marked the Public Launch of our Association, and with 289 registered attendees, it was moved by Mr John Vaughan and carried that September 3 be observed as National Flag Day each year, to commemorate the first occasion that the National Flag was raised in 1901.

The concept of a newsletter was born at our meeting in January 19, 1984 and we had supported wholeheartedly the now well-known Flag Wall Chart so generously distributed to all schools in Australia by Woolworths in February and was made available to the public from the end of March.

As can be seen, The Australian National Flag Association in New South Wales, which in 16 months had grown from an eight-member Steering Committee to a membership State-wide of several thousand (and many corporate members), is working hard on the accomplishment of its aim of retaining our Flag through popular voice, and it is our firm position that any change to the Flag must come from a mandate of the people in the form of a National Referendum.

Over 1984-85-86 the battles raged on towards the bicentenary target year (1988) on the AUSFLAG schedule - their big planned event was a monster new flag design competition to be judged a year or so short of 1988, with the grand winning design to be offered to the Hawke Government as The NEW Australian flag with which to celebrate the exciting Bicentenary. The government provided them with \$3,000 to cover posting competition entry forms to all Australian schools however, it flatly refused to give ANFA similar consideration. Thousands of dollars in designs prize money was awarded by Ausflag. But the project was a disaster for them. The prize winners of course happily walked away with bulging pockets. The public gave them the "thumbs down" and no one ran them up the flagpole!

The PM Mr Bob Hawke wisely sniffed the breeze and announced that The Australian National Flag would not be changed before or during the bicentenary year. Thus AUSFLAG 1988 LIMITED missed their target and were subsequently forced to change their name to "Ausflag Limited".

Australia Day 26 January 1988 dawned a beautiful summer morning. Sydney Harbour an absolute picture, Australian flags waving every where. The excitement and noise level built up to a maximum as the Tall Ships of The First Fleet Re-enactment Venture (having sailed all the way from Portsmouth UK), entered and made their way down-harbour right on schedule. This set the scene for a wonderful, special day and a bicentenary year of celebration of our national history.

Ausflag Limited remained as a minority group, gathering renewed hope when Paul Keating managed to replace Bob Hawk as P.M. and set about attacking our flag in relentless fashion, with much support from the press media. There were further Ausflag design competitions (with tens of thousands of dollars given in prizes) but the winners were always judged unworthy and unacceptable by the Australian people.

Meanwhile over all these years ANFA produced numerous important achievements.

Please refer now to our President's Report in this publication where these most notable achievements are listed. May I just add that the contributions by John Vaughan over the full twenty years of this Association and the ANFA across Australia has been monumental, beyond comparison or comprehension.

HON SECRETARY

A.G.M. Notice A.N.F.A. (NSW) Inc.

The Annual General Meeting is to be held at ANZAC HOUSE, Level 7, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney on Tuesday 30 September 2003 at 10.30am. At this meeting all offices of the Management Council will be declared vacant and a new election held. The Association Annual Report will be presented. Order of business will be confined to AGM matters only. No general business will be heard, except those items advised in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

E. J. EGGINS
HON. SECRETARY

Birthday Celebrations 3-9-2003

Our flag, first officially flown on 3 September 1901, will celebrate its 102nd birthday (Australian National Flag Day) on that date this year at a function in Martin Place, Sydney (near Pitt Street) commencing at 12.15pm in the presence of Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales.

A central feature will be a formal Flag Raising Ceremony. The Woollooware High School Band and Choir will provide quality entertainment as will the Five Dock Public School Choir. We have to advise that no special seating is available in the area and the duration will be approximately one hour.

We look forward to a high level of attendance by Members and friends and please bring your Aussie waving flag.

The Daily Telegraph, March 21, 2003

The Art Gallery of NSW has been forced to keep flying the Australian flag after its director, Edmund Capon, took it down in protest at the war.

Mr Capon decided to have the flag removed on Wednesday in disgust at Australia's involvement.

Opposition Leader John Brogden was quick to jump on the issue, saying it was "a test of leadership" for Premier Bob Carr to intervene and stop Mr Capon, a State Government appointee, from using a public building to make the statement.

But the Premier equally was outraged and rang Mr Capon demanding the flag be allowed to fly at the gallery. "I immediately rang him and said the flag must fly immediately or I will be there and raise it with my own hands." Mr Carr said yesterday.

The flag was flying again yesterday.

Australian Flag History

Comments relating to early Commonwealth Government Gazettes.

Gazette No. 27, 29 April 1901: This one certainly knocks out those who continue to claim that the official Government design competition had special conditions requiring that all design entries must include the Union Jack or the colours red, white and blue.

Gazette No. 8, 20 February 1903: The Commonwealth Government publication "The Australian National Flag" (1994), Page 6 quotes "In February 1903 it was announced in the Commonwealth Gazette that King Edward VII had approved a design for the Flag of Australia, and also one for the Flag of the Merchant Navy. Both designs were shown in colour plates in the Gazette".
i.e. The Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. 8, 20 February 1903 illustrated in colour, The Australian Commonwealth Ensign (Blue Ground Flag) and, The Australian Commonwealth Merchant Flag (Red Ground Flag).

Gazette No. 38, 15 August 1903: This applied only to the Australian Red Ensign Merchant Flag. In those days of course, shipping was the sole means of coastal (and all international) transport so that it entailed much greater use of flags for identification and communication purposes than in other areas. So it seems that although the No. 8 (20 February 1903) gazettal proclaimed approval of both flags for their separate purposes, it was considered necessary to confirm the formal adoption of the Australian Red Ensign "to be used on board vessels registered in the Commonwealth of Australia".
Note: There was no approval or authority given for it to be used for any purpose on land.

Gazette No. 65, 19 December 1908: This applied to both the Australian Blue and Red Ensigns and the Badge of the Governor-General. It covers the proposal and authority to alter the 6 POINTED Commonwealth Star (below the Union Jack) by adding a 7th POINT. The new 7 POINTED large white Star would represent the six Federated States of Australia and the Territories of the Commonwealth.

Gazette No. 29, 22 May 1909: This relates directly to No. 65 (19 Dec 1908) above. Whereas No. 65 originated the design alteration in detail, this (No. 29) advises completion and supply of the amended drawings to the Australian Government. Attached to the Gazettal were copies of the amended drawings illustrating the Australian Blue Ensign of the Commonwealth and the Red Merchant Flag of the Commonwealth, both with the 7 POINTED Commonwealth / Federation Star.