

# NewsLetter - August 2004

## The President's Message, 2004

The year to-date has been tumultuous with the constant threat of international terror and war. In these trying times our national flag of "Stars and Crosses" has flown proudly in many parts of the World representing our peace keeping and humanitarian personnel. Soon our champion athletes will raise Australia's flag at the Athens Olympics ... in the spirit of friendship and sporting competition. It is 103 years since our national flag was first hoisted over the main dome of the Royal Exhibition building, Melbourne and today it is more admired and respected than ever.

On a positive note the Prime Minister and Minister for Education have strongly enforced the flying of our flag at all schools. Well done Mr Howard and Dr Nelson. In many schools past policy regarding display of The Flag was often determined undemocratically with a vocal objector, or a few, preventing a supportive majority from conducting school flag ceremonies.

A great success this year has been the recognition of the role of Mr Leslie John Hawkins the only New South Wales resident to share in the honour of designing our national flag. In 1901, Mr Hawkins, aged 18, was living at 58 Henry Street, Leichhardt. Former Vice President of ANFA, Victor Alberts OAM and Councillor Robert Wilmot have been delighted by the enthusiastic support of the present owners of the former Hawkins family property, Messrs Rex and John Gilmour and the Leichhardt Council as well as the Rotary Club of Leichhardt to celebrate Mr Hawkins contribution to our history and heritage. Rex and John Gilmour have graciously suggested that a suitable monument, honouring L J Hawkins and the Australian National Flag, could be placed on site. The September, 1901, "Review of Reviews" article featuring the story of our national flag competition has been reprinted and the front cover, in colour, is shown below. Mr Hawkins photo is included in this landmark publication as is that of Egbert Nuttall, another winner, who signed the original and subsequently donated it to the State Library of NSW.

For the future of The Flag, one might sum up the situation with a well known saying, "be alert but not alarmed" as you and I must combat the false statements and propaganda aimed at rewriting and degrading the well deserved status of the Australian National Flag ...our chief national symbol by law, custom and tradition.

I look forward to seeing you and your friends at the Flag Day ceremonies to be held at the Martin Place stage commenting 12.15pm on Friday, 3 September, when the Guest of Honour will be The Honourable Dr Brendan Nelson MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

**John Christian Vaughan**  
**Vexillographer**  
**PRESIDENT & NATIONAL SPOKESMAN**

## Editorial, 2004

With a new ALP Leader of the opposition (Mark Latham) in the Federal Parliament and possible Prime Minister after the forthcoming election – the date not yet announced – there is renewed speculation and movement in some political circles for another drive towards a republic. Latham, himself a republican, should he win the election will certainly place it high on his agenda.

While not all Labor politicians are necessarily republicans, it is well known that a significant number in other parties do support that cause, either strongly or to lesser degrees. However they (politicians) should all realise that it is the vast majority of Australian citizens on the streets, in their homes, in the towns, villages and cities of the nation who will be in control of any final decision. Just as they did, a mere five years ago in the 1999 republican referendum, to gain a resounding win for our current stable and long lasting constitutional Monarchy. That result was achieved despite the tub thumping efforts of certain politicians and the frantic bias of editors and "journalists" of leading print and electronic media. How could they get it so wrong?

But they just could not graciously accept the decision of the umpire – the Australian people. They did not and still cannot believe that their one eyed campaign and grab for more power for politicians and Canberra, was so well recognised as such, by a majority of the people.

So while we are all aware of the pressing need for more and better hospitals, schools and in particular, nursing homes for the aged, we are being softened up to expect another republican campaign with foolish plebiscites and a mandatory referendum – at what cost? \$100,000,000 plus?

In conclusion (a step back in time) I include a clipping from our July 1991 newsletter of the Hawke/Keating era:

*"As we go to press we note reports that the present Government is to plan for an AUSTRALIAN REPUBLIC for the year 2001 (one hundred years since Federation) with the intention of 'educating' the public in that direction and winning 'popular' support*

*ahead of a referendum from which they would hope to clinch their long held aspirations. One can already imagine the propaganda to be circulated in the guise of 'mass education'.*

While this Association does not have an official position on the subject of a Constitutional Monarchy or republic (our historic National Flag is way above and beyond politics, politicians and Governments of the day) we must be mindful of the danger to our Flag from those groups of people who would use such a proposed political change in an endeavour to launch an underhand attack on our beloved Flag.

The Government will not be offering a referendum for generous or democratic reasons. Whether they like it or not, it will be "the referendum they have to have". Our trusty Constitution tells them so. The people have the power to decide. We can remain confident, but vigilant. Careful, to ensure we retain all that is good and cherished. Once relinquished cheaply to Canberra, that power will never be returned to the people".

## Secretarial Report

The Council of Management wishes to acknowledge with most sincere thanks, all those Members who responded to our 2003 donation appeal and to those who did so during the year according to their own schedule. We also thank those who conserved time and postage cost by not requesting receipts. We confirm that those receipts are held on file at the ANFA office, always available. With limited voluntary office assistance, any time saving is much appreciated.

Our list of available volunteers for special projects eg. processing and mailing of newsletters, has reduced. However we are fortunate to have the continued cheerful assistance of Marie Wilson and her sister Lesley Holder, Nancy Hansen, John Lynch and Grace Fowkes. Sadly we lost John Williams last year (a most valuable member, as was his wife Bettina who can no longer travel from Gosford).

A big thank you to all those great friends and helpers for their long, dedicated service to ANFA. But these plaudits are not complete without special recognition of Gwen Garruthers OAM who has served on a regular voluntary basis and contributed much to the success of ANFA/NSW almost from inception in 1983.

## HON SECRETARY

PS: As there is at times some debate about the original colour of our Australian National Flag, please note (on page 1) in the picture of the historic issue of the September 1901 Review of Reviews - the flag is BLUE. Also, that it is the "Federal Flag adopted as the National Flag by the Commonwealth Government."

## Birthday Celebrations 3-9-2004

Our national flag was first officially flown on 3 September 1901. Its 103rd birthday celebrations will be held on that date this year (Australian National Flag Day) at a function in Martin Place Sydney (near Pitt Street) commencing at 12.15pm. The function held last year at this location was highly successful.

We are delighted to advise that our Guest of Honour this year will be The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training. The principal feature will be a formal Flag Raising Ceremony conducted by our President John Vaughan. The one hour programme will be further enhanced by musical entertainment from the popular Woolooware High School Band and Choir, well supported by Five Dock Public School Choir.

So members, supporters and friends, please attend this happy event to celebrate our historic flag.

## ANFA (NSW) Member - Versus - Premier Bob Carr

For several years now, our active and persistent member Mrs Mary Kirk JP has battled with the Hon. Bob Carr, Premier of NSW to have the flagpole on Fort Denison (Sydney Harbour) restored and authorise flying our National Flag there on a permanent basis. Well now, its SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS to Mary. Her patience and tenacity have won over the Premier. See letters below:

*24 May 2004*

*Dear Premier,*

*Our National Flag – Fort Denison*

*I refer to my letter of 23rd January, which, after two attempts, has not yet received a reply!!*

*However, I will try again.*

*Recently I was pleased to note that the Navigation Light, on top of Fort Denison, had been repaired and reinstalled. Now that electricity is certainly available, could the flagpole be lit at night to save concerns about the unsatisfactory flying of the flag as I have detailed so many times.*

*This would obviate the difficulties that seem to apply with staff leaving early and lowering the flag before sunset. Our flag, lit at*

*night, would certainly look great next to the now operating navigation lights that have been repaired at cost and installed again. Your kind consideration and acknowledgement of the above suggestion would be greatly appreciated.*

Yours sincerely,  
(Mrs) Mary Kirk J.P.

Dear Mrs Kirk, 16 June 2004

The premier has asked me to thank you for your letter of 24 May 2004 concerning the flying of our national flag on Fort Denison and respond on his behalf.

Advice has been received from the National Parks and Wildlife Service that work is currently being undertaken to install lighting on the Fort Denison flagpole. Upon completion of this work it is anticipated the national flag will be flown both day and night.

Thank you for your keen interest in both Fort Denison and the national flag.

Col Gellatly  
Director General

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

The Annual General Meeting is convened for Tuesday 28 September 2004 at 10.30am to be held at Level 7, ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

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. The 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.**

## **The Hon Mark Latham MP Leader of the Opposition**

On 12 February 2004 we wrote to Mr Latham with details about this Association and given his new position as Leader, requested a statement of support for the Australian National Flag. We had hoped to receive a response, signed by Mr Latham. It was not until 5 May 2004 after some phone calls to his office that we received a reply – not from him but one of his advisers, as copied below.

*Dear Mr Eggins, 5 May 2004*

Thank you very much for your letter to Mark Latham, Federal Labor Leader, regarding the Australian Flag. Mr Latham is travelling extensively at the moment, and will then be preparing for the budget sittings of Parliament, so has asked me to acknowledge your correspondence.

Labor's position is as follows.

Our national symbols, such as the flag, are important reminders of our unity as a nation. These national symbols reflect our respect for tradition, our current values and beliefs, and our aspirations for the future.

As such a powerful symbol of the nation, it is important that our flag is truly representative of Australians. Labor strongly believes therefore that the flag should never be changed without the consent of a majority of Australians. The requirement for a plebiscite is entrenched in the Flag Act. If a plebiscite determines that the majority of Australians want an alternative flag, only then should the flag be changed.

At the present time, public opinion strongly supports keeping our current flag. However, debate about the flag and its future is a healthy sign of a nation that wishes to ensure the continued relevance of its symbols.

The Federal Parliamentary Labor Party will always respect and defend the current Australian flag or any other symbol that retains the support of the Australian people.

Thank you for bringing this issue to the Leader's attention.

Yours sincerely  
John Cook  
Adviser

## **Letter to Peter Gopers "The Advertiser" SA**

*Peter*

I must respond to your Anti Australian flag story in which you state that "the British blue ensign has only been the national flag since 1953". This statement is incorrect as our flag was chosen in 1901 following a popular public competition which attracted 32,823 entries. Australia's blue flag of "Stars and Crosses" was raised for the first time on 3 September 1901 on the main dome of the Royal Exhibition buildings, Melbourne at a Federal Government ceremony hosted by Sir Edmund Barton, the first Prime

Minister. The Australian National Flag was formally proclaimed in the Commonwealth Government Gazette No. 8 of 20 February 1903.

It is not true to say that the Australian National Flag “has only been the national flag since 1953” as the Federal Flags Act 1953 served to confirm, that by law, custom and tradition that our flag of “Stars and crosses” was, and is the chief national symbol of this country and its territories. The other error you made was to say that “the British blue ensign” was the Australian National Flag. Our Flag, like the American, “Stars ‘n Stripes” has a connection to British flag design. The United States flag was inspired by the defaced British red ensign of the East India Company. The British blue ensign is a different design as it has no stars at all whereas our flag has five representing the Southern Cross and the Commonwealth Star.

As proof of the long term national status of our flag I recommend that you read the Governor-General, Sir William Deane’s 1996 proclamation of Australian National Flag Day, 3 September as the annual day Australians celebrate the first raising of the national flag in 1901.

For your information I have attached the Australian flag timeline and other material from the Australian National Flag Association website, [www.australianflag.org.au](http://www.australianflag.org.au). This site is an accurate source of information about our flag and other national symbols. It is recommended reading for your readers that would like a truthful history of Australia’s beautiful flag which has flown proudly for 103 years since the creation of our nation in 1901.

John Vaughan  
Vexillographer