



# 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. Stylised flowering 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 national 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'.

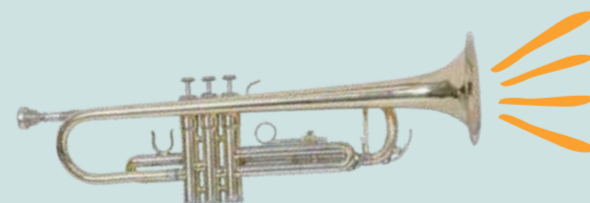


Australia's national floral emblem is the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*). The golden wattle is a symbol of unity and its colours reflect our national colours, green and gold.



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.