

# Colony and Empire

## A Broad Background to Australia's Subservient Relationship with Britain

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### Section One

#### Introduction

This publication looks at the ongoing subservience of Australia to Britain, British institutions, and British politicians. While the nature of this **subservient** relationship has changed, both in direction and in degree, it still continues. The aim here is to give the general reader a **broad background to Australia's subservient relationship with Britain**.

The British contribution to Australian society should also be acknowledged, as the nation's foundation stone, but such acknowledgment is not the aim of this document, and can be found in other publications. However, such positive contributions should not act as a smokescreen to blot out the negative and/or stifling aspects of the British legacy.

Australians need to be made aware of our subservient history; of the down-side to our relationship with Britain; and that while earlier generations of Australians often put Britain first, the reverse was not forthcoming.

So what's the point that's being made within this document?

Just this: Australia can only rely on Australians to look after our national interests (even then, we can only truly rely on Australian nationalists, not on those who have foreign loyalties or foreign interests at heart).

Thus, we must free our nation from all foreign constraints (no matter whether these are operational or symbolic). We must become independent in as many aspects of our national life as is possible, to every extent that is possible. Australia must become a Republic; on top of which we will still need to seek further independence - political, cultural, and economic.

Australians must look to themselves if we are to find a basis for national advancement. As Henry Lawson once wrote:

*"For the South must look to the South for strength in the storm that is to come." [\(1\)](#)*

## Australian National Sovereignty COLONY OR NATION?

It would be untrue to say that the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 gave birth to a nation. Australia was still called a "colony" after 1901, albeit one of the "great colonies". Even the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* stated that, for certain purposes, "the Commonwealth shall be taken to be a self-governing **colony**"; and the **Colonial** Laws Validity Act applied to Australia right up until 1942.[\(2\)](#)

Federation, rather than enabling the expression of nationalistic ideals, actually became an expression of British Imperialist designs.

As Hudson and Sharp have spelt out:

*"For reasons of administrative convenience, quite apart from what was thought best for the colonies, the United Kingdom for long had looked kindly on the notion of an Australian colonial federation".*[\(3\)](#)

This view has been borne out by the words of the British politician Joseph Chamberlain, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies, in his speech to the British Parliament - when it was considering whether to grant the federation of the Australia colonies, via the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Bill. Chamberlain said that "federation... is a great and important step towards the organisation of the British Empire" and that "we believe the relations between ourselves and these colonies will be simplified... when we have to deal with a single central authority instead of having severally to consult six independent Governments".[\(4\)](#)

The parliamentary committee of the NSW Trade Labor Council recognised this important distinction, when it campaigned in 1891 for "The Federation of the Australasian Colonies upon a national, as opposed to an imperialistic, basis". *The Bulletin* magazine also recognised this distinction, as its stated "Australian National Policy" denounced "Imperial Federation". Indeed, when federation was achieved in 1901, Australia simply moved from limited colonial self-government to limited national self-government.[\(5\)](#)

As Donald Horne has pointed out: "Even when these colonies federated it was believed that Australia was still not a true nation. Economically, strategically and culturally Australia was defined as part of the British Empire", although it came to pass that "Decade after decade, Australians slowly abandoned this explicitly colonial frame of mind".[\(6\)](#)

Later on - in 1907 - it was decided that the "great colonies" (Australia, Canada, Cape Colony, Natal, New Zealand, and the Transvaal) should no longer be called colonies "because that term confused their status with that of crown (coloured) colonies lacking self-government". The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom hosted a "Colonial Conference", with the prime ministers of the "great colonies", where it was agreed that "henceforth the Colonial Conferences would be called Imperial Conferences and that the great white colonies should be styled 'the self-governing dominions beyond the seas' - which inevitably became shortened to 'the Dominions'".[\(7\)](#)

In nationalist terms, the Federation of the Australian colonies was largely a farce. It did not lead to a new nation, but rather to "one big colony" (which was therefore easier for Britain to administer, rather than channelling all matters through six separate colonies).[\(8\)](#)

As E.M. Andrews has stated:

*"Constitutionally, however, Australia remained tightly bound to Britain. On 1 January 1901 the six Australian colonies coalesced into a federation, the Commonwealth of Australia. The celebrations of the event naturally stressed loyalty to the British monarchy and the 'motherland', and lavishly praised British parliamentary government as the basis of Australian freedom. Nevertheless, Federation was granted by Britain through an Act of the British parliament which did not include 'independence'. Nor did it create a new 'nation'; for the official view was that 'the British nation' spread across the world, from the United Kingdom, through Canada and parts of Africa to the antipodes. So in 1901 the governor-general of the new Commonwealth was appointed by the Queen, on the advice of the British government, and was her representative in the Commonwealth - as the colonial governors in the separate colonies had been before him. Australian ministers had no direct access to her. The governor-general would normally act on the advice of Australian federal ministers, but was also responsible to the Colonial Office in London. Like the colonial governors he was the agent of Britain, appointed primarily to protect British interests, including commercial interests, not Australian.*

*"...it was only through the governor-general and the Colonial Office that the Australian prime minister could communicate with the British government... The British had everything to gain from allowing Australia local autonomy, but absolutely nothing from encouraging her and the other Dominions to act more independently, which would only complicate Britain's international problems. 'External affairs' were therefore probably only mentioned in the constitution out of a British desire to give the federal government - rather than the States - the monopoly of implementing imperial treaties and negotiating with London. This simplified British administration, but the Australian government was granted no control over foreign affairs as such. It therefore did not seek to play a part in running the Boer War, nor a voice in the peace settlement.*

*"...The situation has been expressed with brutal frankness by Hudson and Sharp:*

*'The colonies were at war when their sovereign, advised exclusively by United Kingdom ministers, was at war, and they were at peace when their sovereign, advised by United Kingdom ministers, was at peace.'*

*"In 1901 they had formed a separate entity, a federation, established by the British government - nothing more. The Queen was still the sovereign; and the old rules applied."[\(9\)](#)*

Indeed, many nationalists opposed federation; not because they didn't want the six colonies to unite, but because they realised that the form of federation proposed at that time would mean that Australia would remain as a British colony.

The 1891 New South Wales Labor election platform had thus included the aim of: "The Federation of the Australasian Colonies upon a national, as opposed to an imperialistic, basis".[\(10\)](#) When Australia became a federated Commonwealth it was as a colonial Commonwealth, not as an independent Commonwealth. The joining together of the six colonies was seen as an expedient method of efficiency in the interests of the British Empire.

The *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* (the British Act establishing and encompassing Australia's Constitution) states that the Commonwealth of Australia itself "shall be taken to be a self-governing colony" (emphasis added). So, Australia simply moved from being six colonies into being a single colony (thus ensuring ease of administration for the British Government).[\(11\)](#)

## THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL

The Australian Constitution (which had been approved by the Australian people voting by referenda) was interfered with, and changed, by the British Government. The clause in the Constitution regarding the avenue of legal appeal to the Privy Council in Britain (known as "The Queen in Council") was opened far wider by the British Government, in order to "satisfy British commercial interests". The British were able to demand such a change, because the legal creation of the Australian Constitution was in the hands of the British government - it came into being only as part of a British law: *The Commonwealth of Australian Constitution Act*.[\(12\)](#)

F.W. Eggleston later testified to a Royal Commission that Joseph Chamberlain (Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies) "did not want the appeal in private cases stopped, because he said that the big shipping companies and mercantile interests desired the right of appeal to the Privy Council".[\(13\)](#)

Hudson and Sharp have explained why this "right of appeal" was wanted:

*"United Kingdom investment in the colonies had been heavy, and it was feared in London that United Kingdom investors would be at a disadvantage in cases settled in Australia... it was an issue on which the United Kingdom intervened decisively to squash colonial tendencies towards greater autonomy".*[\(14\)](#)

**Note:** The Australian Parliament passed laws in 1968 and 1975 to stop appeals from federal courts to the Privy Council, and - with the consent of the states, and that of the British Government - passed the Australia Act in 1986 to stop appeals from state courts.[\(15\)](#)

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Tom Keneally and John Craig have concisely pointed out the realities of Australia's early standing as regards foreign affairs:

*"In the earlier stages of Federal Australia's existence, Australia was not seen as independent enough to communicate directly with foreign governments".*[\(16\)](#)

*"Up to 1927 communication between the Australian Government and the British Government was conducted via the Australian Governor-General".*[\(17\)](#)

These early years saw that Australian prime ministers still could not communicate directly with British prime ministers and that Australian communications "could be addressed no higher than the Colonial Secretary via the governor-general's office".[\(18\)](#)

For foreign affairs, the rules still applied in like manner as had been laid down in 1894 by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon:

*"A foreign Power can only be approached through Her Majesty's Representative, and any agreement entered into with it, affecting any part of Her Majesty's Dominions, is an agreement between Her Majesty and the Sovereign of the foreign State, and it is to Her Majesty's Government that the foreign State would apply in case of any question arising under it".*[\(19\)](#)

For example, in 1907,

*"Prime Minister Deakin wanted to communicate his concern about the transportation of French convicts to New Caledonia to the French government. He was not able to speak to the French Ambassador in London or to go to Paris and speak to the French*

*government, or even send them a cable directly... so he had to ask the Colonial Office to inquire of the Foreign Office whether they would ask the United Kingdom's Ambassador in Paris to inquire into the matter".*

The answer (that France had no intention for such a penal settlement) had to come back via all those same channels - thus it took almost three months for Deakin (Australia's Prime Minister) to receive a response to his question.[\(20\)](#)

Indeed, when Deakin had spoken to the Japanese Consul in 1905 "he was chastised by London for improper dealings with a foreign power".[\(21\)](#)

Hudson and Sharp give another example:

*"in 1907 and 1908, to raise public interest in naval defence, to register concern about United Kingdom naval policy in the Pacific and to show his wish for a stronger United States naval presence in the Pacific as a balance for growing Japanese strength, Deakin directly approached the United States ambassador in London and consul-general in Melbourne to arrange a visit to Australian ports of an American fleet, the Great White Fleet, during a proposed world cruise. Deakin subsequently asked London to issue the formal invitation, but in the meantime the United States had reacted favourably and publicly to his feelers. Although the United Kingdom had no choice but to accept the fait accompli, Whitehall was appalled by this colonial interference in its diplomacy. The Foreign Office was especially outraged, and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, demanded that Deakin be reminded that 'invitations to foreign governments should not be given except through us'."*

Because of such treatment of Australia by Britain, "in federal circles there was some resentment at the extent to which the Colonial Office still could involve itself in Australian affairs".[\(22\)](#)

In 1911, Australia was forced to protest "at the commitment of the Dominions to international treaties entered into by the UK without consultation".[\(23\)](#)

The Colonial Office channel was changed in 1918 to allow direct communications between the Prime Ministers of Britain and Australia.[\(24\)](#)

However, it was not until after the First World War that, largely at Canada's instigation, the British "surrendered control over the diplomacy of the dominions" ("In 1923 the dominions had been given their diplomatic independence").[\(25\)](#)

But even that "diplomatic independence" can be questioned, when Declarations of War are considered (see relevant section in this publication).

## Section Two

### Australian Laws: Subject to Britain

#### POWERS OVER COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

From 1788 to the 1820s the legislation of Britain provided **all** of the laws governing Australia.

In 1823, the main Australian colony - New South Wales - was permitted to establish its own legislature, (the Legislative Council) so that **some** laws were locally produced (although proper democracy was yet to come). Local legislatures were created in the other, and ensuing, colonies over later years, thus adding to the extent of local laws created.[\(26\)](#)



A great number of laws were subsequently passed by the governments of the several colonies in Australia. However, doubt arose as to the validity of such laws. To rectify the situation, the Imperial Parliament in Britain passed the *Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865*.

This Act ensured the legal validity of colonial laws which were:

- 1) Held to be against ("repugnant to") Imperial Acts relating to the colony (only those sections of a colonial law held to be repugnant were void, while the rest of the colonial law was deemed valid).
- 2) Held to be repugnant to fundamental principles of English law.
- 3) Passed without being reserved by the colonial Governor (only if contrary to instructions received by the Governor, but not if contrary to Letters Patent, etc.).
- 4) Passed, in accordance with existing law, in respect to the colonial legislature's Constitution, powers, or procedures.[\(27\)](#)

However, the *Colonial Laws Validity Act* did make clear the already existing legal principle that if any laws were passed in Australia which were at odds with a relevant Imperial law, then the British law would override the Australian law.[\(28\)](#)

Also, the Australian colonial parliaments had other limitations placed upon them. Some kinds of legislation (for example, constitutional amendments) could not be approved by the British-appointed local Governors, and "had to be reserved for royal assent on the advice of United Kingdom ministers". As well as which, "any colonial legislation, even if approved by governors, could be disallowed by the sovereign within a specified period on advice of United Kingdom ministers". These controls, however, were used sparingly; indeed, "by the end of the century only fifteen New South Wales bills, for instance, had been reserved for royal assent, and all had received it; of all the bills passed by all the colonial legislatures in Australia to that time, only five had been disallowed". These control devices "were used sparingly because London had no interest in unnecessarily provoking the colonies, but also because, by and large, the colonial parliaments had no wish to provoke London". That is, the colonial parliaments self-muzzled their own legislative independence, because they realised that the British government could override any colonial law that they considered to be disagreeable or against the perceived interests of the British Empire.[\(29\)](#)

## REJECTING PROPOSED LAWS (BILLS) OF COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

All proposed laws (Bills) passed by the Parliaments of the Australian colonies did not actually become **law** until approved by the British-appointed Governor.

However, "the Queen" (in actual practise, the British Government) could disallow (i.e. veto) any law passed by any colonial parliament and its Governor. Alternatively, the Governor could reserve a Bill for "Royal Assent", and if the Assent was not given, then the Bill would lapse (that is, it would not become law) even though it had not actually been disallowed as such (in other words, a sneakier kind of veto). The power to "Reserve" Bills was also sometimes used in order to force colonial parliaments to re-word or re-draft Bills. As well as this, prior reserving of Bills, of withholding Assent, and of disallowance (as well as official communications and instructions from Britain) were enough to enforce Imperial will upon Australian parliaments (both before and after Federation) as the elected parliamentarians knew that they had to frame their proposed laws in such a way so that they would not be stopped by the British Government, or by its local vice-regal representatives. The Australian immigration laws (those of the separate colonies, and those of the new Commonwealth) are a good example of this (see relevant section in this publication).

Not only was the act of reserving Bills used many times in Australia, but - on five separate occasions - Bills which had been passed into law by the Australian colonial parliaments and had been assented to by the local colonial Governors were afterwards disallowed by Britain:[\(30\)](#)

- 1860 - Victorian law re. regulation and discipline on armed vessels.
- 1862 - South Australian law re. marriage.
- 1863 - Tasmanian law re. prisoners.
- 1864 - South Australian law re. the Marine Board.
- 1864 - South Australian law re. transportation of convicts.

So, using their powers of reservation and disallowance, the British Government - and the British-appointed Governors - stopped various Australian Bills from becoming law (even though these bills had been agreed to and passed by Australia's elected representatives).

Indeed; the Australian Constitution of 1901 (which was only brought into force via an Act of the British Parliament) specifically included two sections to enable the Monarchy to "disallow" any law passed by the Australian Parliament. Section 58 gives the Governor-General the power not to pass a Bill into law (i.e. he can withhold Assent). Section 59 gives the Queen the power to disallow any law passed by Parliament, if done "within one year" of the law having received the Governor-General's Assent.[\(31\)](#)

At the time of federation it was envisaged that "the reserve power of disallowance will be wisely and sparingly exercised... **except** in cases involving Imperial and international relations". But, nonetheless, it was envisaged that Britain's power to reserve Australian laws (all in the name of "the Queen", of course) would quite possibly be used. After all, such an action was possible because the Commonwealth of Australia was **not** an independent and sovereign nation. As was stated in 1901 by John Quick and Robert Garran (who were both involved with the framing of the Australian Constitution): "the Commonwealth is only quasi-sovereign... and the amending power - the highest legislature of the Commonwealth - is a colonial legislature".[\(32\)](#)

Quick and Garran's words of 1901 deserve repeating:

**"the Commonwealth is only quasi-sovereign... and... the highest legislature of the Commonwealth - is a colonial legislature".**

These words remained undeniably true up until the passing of the *Statute of Westminster* in 1931 (passed by the Commonwealth of Australia in 1942), still being relevant until the passing of the *Australia Act* in 1986; and - in a technical sense - arguably still true today.

The bureaucrats in the British government's Colonial Office (in London) had proposed an alternative section to be put into the Constitution whereby "the Crown should list in the Constitution the sorts of bills which would be reserved for Royal approval". Actually, the Constitution in section 74 does give one such example of this, regarding the limiting of appeals to the Privy Council ("The Queen in Council"): "proposed laws containing any such limitation shall be reserved by the Governor-General for Her Majesty's pleasure". This was the case for the *Privy Council (Limitation of Appeals) Act 1968* and the *Privy Council (Appeals from the High Court) Act 1975*; as well as the *Australia Act 1986*.[\(33\)](#)

## POWERS OVER THE AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH

Even after the Australian colonies federated in 1901, thus creating the Commonwealth of Australia, "the UK parliament retained its sovereign power to enact laws that applied in Australia". Indeed, the *Colonial Laws Validity Act* continued to be "regarded as binding the Commonwealth Parliament".[\(34\)](#)

In the years following federation, "at the state level, governors still were appointed by London, still were instructed by London, still reported to London and still compromised the sole channel for communication between the state capital and London".[\(35\)](#)

In 1908 London forced a compromise between the Australian federal government and the NSW state government in a matter of trade representation; and in 1914 London moved to limit the exercise of power of the Governor of Tasmania. The point being made here is that Britain was able to authoritatively intervene in Australian internal affairs.[\(36\)](#)

As W.G. McMinn has stated:

*"the degree to which Australian governments and legislatures were subordinated to Downing Street had been greatly lessened by the early 1900s, but the fact of ultimate imperial supremacy remained. Both the Commonwealth and the States were frequently reminded of their inferior status. In the years before World War I, for example, efforts by the Commonwealth government, particularly under the Prime-Ministership of Deakin, to communicate directly with the British government rather than through the Governor-General and the Colonial Office were repeatedly rebuffed. Neither the States nor the Commonwealth were permitted to legislate with extra-territorial effect until after 1930: not until the Statute of Westminster was passed in 1930 was the Commonwealth granted the right, an indispensable attribute of sovereignty, to legislate fully for its citizens wherever they might be; not until 1933 did a Privy Council decision give the States power to apply **any** legislation extra-territorially, and even then it remained necessary to show the connection between the law being applied and the State's territorial rights. Moreover the Crown refused, despite the fact that the Constitution gave the Commonwealth power over 'Trade and commerce with other countries' and despite vehement protests, to acknowledge the right of the federal Parliament to legislate in terms inconsistent with imperial shipping Acts. As late as 1925 the Commonwealth found certain provisions of its Navigation Act of 1913 voided by the High Court because of repugnancy to the British Merchant Shipping Act of 1910."*[\(37\)](#)

Following pressure, mainly from the Irish Free State and South Africa, at the Imperial Conferences held in 1926 and 1930, the British government passed the *Statute of Westminster 1931*, which "stated that no United Kingdom law would in future apply to a Dominion unless that Dominion requested and consented to the law".[\(38\)](#)

The Statute of Westminster was not adopted by the Australian Government straight away. However, it was finally adopted in 1942 "when various technical inconveniences brought about by World War II made it expedient to do so. The adoption was then back-dated to the outbreak of war". Hudson and Sharp have stated that "the cause was less nationalistic fervour than a need to expedite the implementation of merchant shipping legislation and to remove doubts about some of the government's activities under the National Security Act."[\(39\)](#)

Al Grassby says that the reason for the adoption of the Statute of Westminster "was because a couple of homosexuals in the Australian Navy were convicted of murder, and sentenced to death, while the navy's flagship *Australia* was on duty in the Coral Sea. The Australian Government and courts were unable to intervene because the ships were under the control of the British Admiralty. When the Curtin government sought to intervene they were told by the British Prime Minister's office that the lack of sovereignty was all due to Australia failing to ratify the Statute of Westminster of 1931. Curtin lost no time in doing so and back-dated the ratification to 1939. The sailors did not die but were paroled after eight years."[\(40\)](#)

Reasons for Australia not immediately adopting the Statute of Westminster were varied; such as "the states were loath to accept an immense boost to the status of the federal authority", many



politicians wanted to maintain "the London connection", and some politicians thought that "votes might be gained from an ultra-loyalist posture". Robert Menzies, as the then Attorney-General, put forward adoption bills in 1936 and 1937 in order to enact the Statute, but these "were let lapse by a government which gave them no priority on parliamentary business papers."[\(41\)](#)

When it was finally enacted, the Statute "put an end to the arrangement by which the Governor-General's chief role was that of representative of Imperial interests", so that the Governor-General's role was from then on meant to be solely in looking after Australia's interests.[\(42\)](#)

However, "the Australian states preferred not to have the Statute of Westminster applied to them. As a result the (Imperial) Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 continued to apply to Australian states thus creating odd situations including the continued application of laws repealed in Britain. The Australia Act of 1986 ended this situation".[\(43\)](#)

### THE AUSTRALIA ACT OF 1986

Even though the *Statute of Westminster* gave a lot more independence to Australia at the national level, at the state level many legislative and constitutional links with Britain remained (often rendering the Australian states as subject to Britain). This was all changed with the passing of the *Australia Act* in 1986.

Until the passing of the *Australia Act*:

- 1) The laws of the Australian states could be disallowed on the formal advice of the Ministers of the British Government.[\(44\)](#)
- 2) Appointment of state governors were subject to British approval, or at least had to be appointed by using the British government as intermediary.[\(45\)](#)
- 3) State governors were required, under Royal Instructions, to seek approval from Britain before approving certain categories of bills (such as regulation of coastal trade, which "could adversely affect British trade and shipping").[\(46\)](#)
- 4) Appeals could be made, over matters relating to state law, to the Privy Council in Britain (i.e. "The Queen in Council").[\(47\)](#)

The *Australia Act 1986* became law only after all of the Australian states agreed to it, along with the Australian federal government; but also, only after the British Government agreed to pass a "mirror" Australia Act; and even then **only after the Queen personally assented** to both versions of the Australia Act (in the UK, and during her visit to Australia; although the Australian Governor-General could have assented to the Australian version, but did not do so, as it had been arranged for the Queen to do so while she was in Australia).[\(48\)](#)

The *Australia Act 1986* could never have become law in Australia unless it was passed by the British Government. If just the Australian Parliament had passed it, it would have been an **invalid** piece of legislation; that is, the Australian Government did not have the power to pass the law unless it was agreed to by the British Government.

*"Since the enactment of the Australia Act 1986, an Act of Parliament of a State that has been assented to by the Governor of the State is no longer subject to disallowance by the Queen or suspension pending signification of the Queen's pleasure".[\(49\)](#)*

On a national level, "The power of the British Crown to disallow Australian legislation remains in our Constitution (s.58 and s.59) although it would seem politically impossible to invoke it". However, it is important to realise that, in this case, "seem" is the pertinent word; as, if an

extraordinary or controversial Australian Government (especially a "radical" one), were to pass laws wholly at odds with the British Establishment (or even at odds with the Australian Establishment) or was to pass laws which were totally against the liberal-internationalist ideology currently dominating world affairs, sufficient pressure could be brought upon the British Monarch to disallow such laws (perhaps a tactical move by the Establishment, which could be used as a prelude to a "constitutional" coup).[\(50\)](#)

The **fact** is that such a disallowance carried out personally by the Queen could happen in unusual and/or extreme circumstances, despite any prattle about "conventions" or "agreements" (such as those arising from the 1930 Imperial Conference). The Queen, and the Governor-General, still have the Constitutional power to disallow Australian legislation.[\(51\)](#)

With the passing of the *Australia Act 1986*, it has been stated that "the United Kingdom Parliament now has no legislative authority whatsoever in respect of Australia".[\(52\)](#)

However, it has been maintained by some that the British Parliament could repeal the Australia Act 1986 (the version passed in the U.K.), the *Statute of Westminster 1931*, the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900*, and even the *Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865*; as well as repealing any other Acts it saw fit; and thus regain legislative authority over Australia. However doubtful and esoteric this suggestion may be, it makes the point that Australia can never be a fully independent nation until it becomes a properly constituted Republic, established from a basis of national sovereignty (rather than from a basis of "sovereignty" granted by a British government).

It would be relevant to note here that various Imperial (British) laws still apply to Australia, albeit that the Australian State and Federal governments (as applicable) now have the power to repeal such laws.[\(53\)](#)

## STILL A COLONY?

In some ways, the status of Australia is still regarded as being situated underneath Britain:

**1)** The Australian Constitution - the legal document that established, and defines, the Commonwealth of Australia - states in its Preamble that the "colonies" (now the "states") of Australia "have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth **under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland**" (emphasis added).

**2)** The Oath of Allegiance, as set out in the Schedule to the Australian Constitution, declares that Allegiance is to be sworn to "the King or Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" (of course, such an Oath is to be given in relevant form, as it was recognised that the name of the Monarch may be changed "from time to time"). The Schedule sets out the Oath thus: "I, A.B., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her heirs and successors according to law. SO HELP ME GOD!".

**3)** The *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act's* Section 8 (part of the Preamble to the Constitution) states that the Commonwealth of Australia may be regarded as a "self-governing **colony**" (emphasis added). Australia's status has changed from a collection of several actual colonies to the status of a self-governing dominion to the status of a basically independent country. However, the above law still exists, and - in a technical sense - the "form" of our constitutional structure is still somewhat colonial, in that Australia still comes under the "rule" of "the King or Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland".

**4)** Despite any protestations about the Queen being Australian, or about on whose advice her actions are made, it is the Queen of England (legally, the Queen of the United Kingdom) who formally appoints the Governor-General of Australia and the Governors of the Australian States.

It is this same Queen who forms an integral part of the Parliament of Australia (see section 1 of the Australian Constitution), and in whom the "executive power of the Commonwealth is vested" (see section 61). Indeed, we are not seen as independent citizens, but (as Section 117 of the Constitution shows) merely rather as "subjects of the Queen".[\(54\)](#)

**5)** It has been pointed out that, by our very own Constitution, Australia is regarded as "British". Section 44 refers to the fact that no-one can become a Senator or a Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) if he/she is "a subject or citizen... of a foreign power". This clearly does not apply to Britain, as all Senators and MHRs were British subjects at least right up to 1949, and a certain number still were right up until the 1990s. This section of the Constitution was actually designed to be applied in regards to all non-British countries. As long as this section remains in the Constitution then it is - in effect - a constitutional fact that since Britain is not regarded as a "foreign power", that Australia must therefore be regarded as a "British country".

**6)** British laws still have "force and effect" in Australia.

United Kingdom legislation still applies in Australia as established under law, for example:

Australian Capital Territory: *Imperial Acts Application Act 1986* (reprinted as at 17 December 1993).

New South Wales: *Imperial Acts Application Act 1969* (updated 1 December 1994).

Queensland: *Imperial Acts Application Act 1984*.

Victoria: *Imperial Acts Application Act 1980*.

Interestingly, the existence of such Acts came to the fore following the implementation of anti-gun laws in 1996. Various pro-gun, sporting, and shooting organisations commenced pro-gun campaigns, often basing their arguments upon imperial law and common law, especially sections of the *Magna Carta* and the *Bill of Rights*, citing the Imperial Acts Application Acts.[\(55\)](#)

Published correspondence to one such pro-gun organisation from the Attorney General's department of New South Wales states that

*"I have carefully noted your inquiry, and I can assure you that the 1688 enactment remains part of the law of New South Wales. Section 6 of the Imperial Acts Application Act 1689, specifically provides that the Bill of Rights remains part of our law. That same Act also provides that the Magna Carta of 1297 remains part of the law of New South Wales. However, as I am sure you are aware, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, and all the legislation in force in New South Wales, is subject to legal and judicial interpretation by our courts. How the Bill of Rights impacts upon the daily administration of the State and upon members of our community remains an issue of legal interpretation".*[\(56\)](#)

In addition, the *Act of Settlement 1701* and the *Bill of Rights 1689* determine who shall succeed to the British Throne - and therefore determine who shall be Australia's Head of State.[\(57\)](#)

**Note:** In this publication, the common usage of "Parliament" is retained, referring to the Houses of Parliament (the Senate and the House of Representatives). In technical legal fact, "Parliament" also includes the Queen of the United Kingdom (or her local representative, as applicable).

**Note:** Section 1 of the Australian Constitution states that the "Federal Parliament... shall consist

of the Queen, a Senate and a House of Representatives". This means that one-third of the Australian Parliament is unelected - and this is utterly undemocratic.

## Section Three

### Rulers: Regal and Vice-Regal

#### GOVERNOR-GENERALS

Following the Federation of Australia in 1901, the role of each Governor-General was as "the principal representative of the British Government in Australia and, as such, was a protector of British and imperial interests". The position of Governor-General was viewed as a "quasi-diplomatic agent of the British Government".[\(58\)](#)

So, therefore, the role of the Governors-General to Australia - at least in the early years of the Australian Commonwealth - was to look after British interests (**not** Australian interests). On several occasions, these Governor-Generals acted against Australia's national interest, and sought to pursue the interests of Britain instead. This was shown by the actions of several Governor-Generals: putting pressure on Australian Governments to change immigration laws (1901), withholding documents from Australian Governments (1903), lobbying for Australia to donate a dreadnought (battleship) to Britain (1909), pressuring the Australian Government to "automatically" put the Australian Navy under British control in time of war (1909), encouraging the British Government to extract more debt repayments than the Australian Government was offering (1918), and encouraging the British Government to deploy British Secret Service agents into Australia (1919).[\(59\)](#)

It was not until 1926 that an Imperial Conference resolved that the role of Governor-General was simply to be a "representative of the Crown", and to no longer be "the representative or agent of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain".[\(60\)](#)

In 1930 the Australian Government decided to appoint an Australian-born judge, Sir Isaac Isaacs, to the position; but, as the Governor-General was now viewed as the "representative of the monarch in his personal capacity", King George V insisted that he should be able to make the choice of Governor-General himself - "subject of course to the concurrence of the British Prime Minister".[\(61\)](#)

The King wanted to appoint Lord Birdwood to the position, but the Australian Prime Minister, James Scullin, fought against George V's view that "it was not desirable to appoint a local (Australian) man". After much battling, delays, and stonewalling by the King and the British Government, Scullin won - and Isaac Isaacs was appointed as the first Australian-born Governor-General, taking office in 1931.[\(62\)](#)

There was a similar occurrence in 1945-46 when the Labor Premier of New South Wales, William McKell, became determined to appoint an Australian-born person to the position of Governor of N.S.W., while the British government was determined not to appoint an Australian. McKell submitted to the Dominion Office in London that Captain J.M. Armstrong, of the cruiser *HMAS Australia*, be appointed. The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs countered this with a suggested list of fifteen British generals, admirals, and air vice-marshals. Correspondence went back and forth between the two opposing camps, for several months. McKell finally submitted the name of Australia's General John Northcott, who had just been appointed as Commander of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. In January 1946, the British countered McKell by informing him that "with the King's approval... His Majesty would be prepared to make available for this appointment the Queen's brother, the Honourable Michael Bowes Lyon". McKell replied that this suggestion was "unacceptable". McKell then asked the then Australian Prime Minister,

Joseph Chifley, to intervene directly with the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, and at the same time to release Northcott from his duties in Japan in order to avoid British obstruction. Following this, Northcott's appointment as Governor of New South Wales was announced on the 1st of April 1946.[\(63\)](#)

Prior to 1926, all of Australia's Governor-Generals were nominated by the British Government, and therefore all of them were British - in fact, almost every one was a British Baron or Earl (except one - who later became a Viscount). Following the end of Isaacs' term in 1936, up until the appointment of Lord Casey in 1965, every Governor-General was British (with the one exception of an Australian ex-politician), every one of which was a British Baron, Viscount, or General (and including one British Prince). However, even the Australian-born Lord Casey was not considered as "truly Australian" by some, as he had "served the British Government in a number of important positions and held an English peerage".[\(64\)](#)

It is apparent that, at least up until 1965, the general intention (of the British government, then of the Australian government) was to ensure that the position of Governor-General was being used to represent the "Britishness" of the State; to reflect the "British mind-set".[\(65\)](#)

Also, it should be noted that the influence of Britain still remained; for instance, in regards to the appointment of the Duke of Gloucester (Prince Henry) to the position of Governor-General (1945-1947), "the Labor Government of the day did not want to appoint him, but did so under pressure from the British Government".[\(66\)](#)

From 1965 (or from 1969 if we exclude **Lord** Casey) all of Australia's Governor-Generals were - finally - not part of the "British" representation of the State (but even then, that is only if we don't exclude those post-1965 Governor-Generals who carried British Knighthoods - which was most of them).

**Note:** The plural form of Governor-General may be given as Governor-Generals or as Governors-General.[\(67\)](#)

**Note:** The first Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia was the Earl of Hopetoun (also referred to as Lord Hopetoun). However, Sir Charles FitzRoy (Governor of New South Wales from 1851 to 1855) and Sir William Denison (Governor of New South Wales from 1855 to 1861) "bore for a time the additional title Governor-General because their jurisdiction extended also to other colonies than New South Wales. Subsequently each colony was granted its own Governor and the title Governor-General was not revived until the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901".[\(68\)](#)

#### SIR PHILIP GAME AND SIR JOHN KERR

Both before, and after, Federation in 1901, the British-appointed Governors and Governor-Generals, and even the British Government itself, were known to interfere in Australian political matters. *The King and His Dominion Governors*, by H.V. Evatt, gives several instances of this.[\(69\)](#)

One example of British interference, from as late as 1976, was that - in that year - "the Queen **acting on the advice of the British Parliament** rejected the Sovereign State of Queensland's recommendation for its Governor".[\(70\)](#)

Also, in 1906 the South Australian premier sought to have a South Australian appointed as the next state governor, but the British government refused to co-operate.[\(71\)](#)

However, the most significant of such Vice-Regal actions in Australia were those of Sir Philip Game and Sir John Kerr:



In 1932 the New South Wales Governor, Sir Philip Game, sacked Jack Lang's NSW Labor Government, following a serious political crisis between the NSW and Federal governments during which Lang advocated "a moratorium on the payments of overseas interest debts".[\(72\)](#)

W.G. McMinin, in his highly regarded book, *A Constitutional History of Australia*, summarised the situation:

*"In 1930, during the worst period of the Great Depression, a Labor government led by J.T. Lang was returned to office with a large majority and a financial policy which, if hardly radical in terms of later economic thinking, was both unorthodox and, for financial interests inside and outside the State, quite alarming. Lang proceeded to raise the political temperature by making his second attempt to abolish the Upper House. While his legislation on this matter was under challenge in the courts he went ahead with his financial programme. He tried to force a lowering of the interest rate on the State debt; when he failed he defaulted on interest payments. But the Financial Agreement of 1927... had given the Commonwealth overall responsibility for the management of the debt of the States. Accordingly the federal government paid the amounts owing by New South Wales and then sought to reimburse itself by putting through Parliament four Financial Agreement Enforcement Acts authorizing the seizure of the State's revenues. By this time Lang's actions - or rather, perhaps, his words, for his denunciations of bond-holders and moneyed men in general were remarkably inflammatory - and the hysterical reaction of some of his opponents (including a lunatic fringe of quasi-fascists) had produced a real atmosphere of crisis ... the Governor, Sir Philip Game, was subjected to pressure to take action which would have been quite unconstitutional while the government remained within the law, as up to this time it had, however much its opponents might accuse it of acting immorally. But the Commonwealth government had forced Lang against the wall of legality: he had either to surrender or make a breach in it. He tried various means of evading the provisions of the Acts sequestering his revenues, which were held valid by the High Court under Ss. 105A and 109 of the Constitution. The Commonwealth seized the State's balances at the banks. He then ordered his officers, in contravention of both the State Audit Act and proclamations made under the federal Financial Agreement Enforcement Acts, to accept payments only in cash and not to pay moneys received into banks. The definitive order to this effect was issued on 10 May 1932. Two days later Game wrote formally to Lang in words which implied a request for his resignation:*

*'The position as I see it is that Ministers are committing a breach of the law ... Your case as I understand it is, that Ministers are determined on their action in order to carry on the essential services of the State. Into the aspect of justification it is not, as I conceive it, my province to enquire. My position is that if my Ministers are unable to carry on essential services without breaking the law my plain duty is to endeavour to obtain Ministers who feel able to do so.'*

*"Lang replied curtly that the government would not resign. The next day he was dismissed. Game commissioned the leader of the opposition and dissolved Parliament on his advice. In the election which followed the Labor Party was defeated.*

*"On 11 May Lang had rushed through Parliament a Bill to put a ten per cent tax, payable within fourteen days, on all mortgages. For this reason, and because the fate of Governor Strickland who had supported the Labor Party in a constitutional crisis sixteen years before was well remembered, Lang's supporters believed that the Governor had acted probably under instructions from London, in order to protect British bond-holders."[\(73\)](#)*

It may also be of interest to note that as early as March 1931 the Governor of South Australia was urging Game to dismiss Lang.[\(74\)](#)

In 1975 the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, sacked Gough Whitlam's federal Labor Government, following a crisis brought about by the refusal of the Liberal Opposition to pass (in the Senate) the Supply Bills that were necessary to finance the operations of all Government services and departments.

Again; W.G. McMinn has succinctly summarised the situation:

*"By the spring of 1975,... [the Labor] government, its political standing seriously eroded by the loans affair and by what was seen as a dismal failure to deal with serious inflation and rising unemployment, was faced by an opposition obviously prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to dislodge it. The crisis which had been looming for some time was touched off by further revelations concerning the overseas loan negotiations which culminated in the resignation of another senior minister. The opposition, alleging that popular confidence in the government had now been completely destroyed, acted to force a dissolution with a Senate refusal to pass necessary supply Bills until the government agreed to an election.*

*"The leader of the opposition, J.M. Fraser, announced his parties' decision to refuse supply on 15 October and the Senate passed the necessary amendment that afternoon; later in the day the Prime Minister announced his decision to stand firm. In the fortnight which followed the two leaders jockeyed for public support, and in the process manoeuvred themselves into positions from which it would be very difficult to retreat. On 21 October the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, began attempts to produce a compromise, but it was already too late. By the end of the month it was clear that the opposition would continue to use its Senate majority to defer supply Bills no matter how frequently they were introduced, and the government, still refusing to advise a dissolution and faced with the need to find money for its public service and contractors, began to look for ways round the impasse. Its decision to do so sealed its fate. A request to the banks to provide the necessary funds on credit was rejected by them after consulting counsel: it appears that the Governor-General had already formed the opinion that raising money in this way would be a breach of the law and that he would therefore not be justified in signing the necessary documents. Early in the afternoon of 11 November he came to the conclusion that only by an exercise of the reserve powers of the Crown could the crisis be resolved: he withdrew Whitlam's commission as Prime Minister and commissioned Fraser to form a 'caretaker government', having previously ascertained that Fraser could secure the passage of the blocked supply bills and would then advise a double dissolution." In the subsequent election, Fraser's Liberal-National coalition was voted into government.[\(75\)](#)*

*In all fairness, it should be noted that an elected Australian in Game's or Kerr's position **may** have acted the same way. It should also be noted that Kerr was appointed to the office of Governor-General on the advice of an Australian government (ironically, it was Whitlam's Labor government).[\(76\)](#)*

*However, it may be of further interest to note that the possibility has been raised that both Game and Kerr were acting in favour of foreign interests: Game at the behest of Britain's banks; Kerr at the behest of the CIA (the Central Intelligence Agency, of the USA). Whether these claims are just "conspiracy theories" or actual fact may never be known for certain.[\(77\)](#)*

## POINTS OF INTEREST

Some points of interest may also be noted here:

**1)** In 1916 the NSW Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, attempted to dismiss the NSW Premier (that is to say, he tried to sack the NSW Government).[\(78\)](#)

**2)** In 1914 the Tasmanian Governor, Sir William Macartney, attempted to dissolve the Tasmanian Parliament, against the wishes of the Government and the Assembly. Premier Earle (Labor Party) had been commissioned by the Governor, subject to certain conditions. Earle, upon taking office in April 1914, had breached his undertaking to the Governor by refusing to hold an immediate election as he had promised. Instead, the Labor Party used its Assembly majority to refer the matter to the Colonial Office, which then repudiated the Governor's conduct.[\(79\)](#)

**3)** Supply Bills have been blocked prior to the 1975 crisis; for example:

The Verran government (Labor Party) in South Australia was forced into an election in 1912 following the rejection of a supply bill (however, it should be noted that the Labor government had attached to the Supply Bill a proposal to establish a state brickworks).[\(80\)](#)

The Labor government of John Cain (senior) in Victoria was forced into an election in November 1947, following the blocking of supply in the Legislative Council (by the Liberal Party and Country Party) in October 1947. The Labor Party lost government, and almost half of their seats, in the ensuing election.[\(81\)](#)

In Tasmania in 1948 the Cosgrove Labor Government was subject to a blocking of supply by the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council. The Labor Party was able to form a new government following the subsequent election, although three independents in the Legislative Assembly held the balance of power.[\(82\)](#)

In Victoria in 1952 a majority in the Legislative Council, comprised of the Labor Party as well as dissident Liberals, blocked supply against the Country Party government of J.G.B. McDonald.[\(83\)](#)

In Queensland in April 1957, the Australian Labor Party's state executive expelled from the party its then leader, Premier Gair. Gair, with 15 backbenchers and all of his ministry (except one) then formed the Queensland Labor Party. When parliament resumed in April 1957, the ALP joined with the Liberal and Country parliamentarians in blocking supply against the Gair government. After the subsequent election, a new coalition government was formed by the Liberal and Country parties.[\(84\)](#)

It is ironic to note, regarding the federal events of 1975, that the latter two instances were brought about by the Labor Party.

**4)** In what "may be described as one of the most flagrantly unconstitutional acts in Australian constitutional history" occurred in 1924 "when the Governor of Tasmania with the general approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies assented to a money bill which had not been passed by the Legislative Council which had requested amendments to it."[\(85\)](#)

**5)** The use of the Governor-General's powers had been alluded to prior to the 1975 crisis. For instance, "In 1972... Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck gave a clear warning that those powers can and will be used. Hasluck threatened to dissolve Parliament if the Labor Government attempted to introduce policies for which it has no mandate, in particular the abolition of preferential voting and its replacement by first-past-the-post".[\(86\)](#)

## THE QUEEN: AN UNACCEPTABLE HEAD OF STATE FOR AUSTRALIA

Australia does not have a truly **Australian** Head of State. Our Head of State is an English Queen, who "is not an Australian, does not live in Australia and, worst of all in terms of our national dignity, has her principal loyalty and commitment to another country (her country, the United Kingdom)".[\(87\)](#)

Also, the position of the British Monarch (and therefore that of Australia's Head of State) is founded upon five principles which are repugnant to Australian society, and which would never be accepted as the basis for any reorganisation of the position of our national Head of State (nor for any other public position).

The five principles are:

- 1) Unelected representation - "our" unelected Queen is not just an appointed Officer of the people (like most public servants), but is supposedly Representative of the People (an unelected representative, to be exact). The Australian ethos demands that our "representatives" are democratically elected.
- 2) Hereditary succession - where a person takes on a public office, not because he/she is good at it, but because he/she is the heir of the previous office holder. This is against the Australian ethos.
- 3) Sexual discrimination - where males receive preference over females; for instance, sons of the Monarch receive preference in succession to the Throne, over daughters of the Monarch. This is an outmoded concept in Australia.
- 4) Religious discrimination - only an Anglican can succeed to the British Throne. This criteria for public office would be abhorred in Australia.
- 5) Lack of national sovereignty - most Australians do not believe that the sovereignty of our nation resides in the Crown - our national sovereignty resides within the Australian people.

## Section Four

### Defence

#### DEFENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

Britain put Australia's defence interests as a far second to her own. It was this attitude which fuelled Australian moves towards independence. As E.M. Andrews explained:

*"This desire for independence was reinforced by defence matters, in which Australia and Britain had divergent interests. British leaders' eyes were on Britain, Europe and India; while Australians were vitally concerned with the Pacific.*

*"This had been seen as early as the 1880s when Gladstone ignored the colonists' wishes over German and French moves in New Guinea and the Pacific."[\(88\)](#)*

These defence concerns were felt in earlier decades; for instance, "the establishment of a French convict settlement in the New Hebrides (1864) caused temporary alarm".[\(89\)](#)

In 1883, it was rumoured that Germany was contemplating the annexation of New Guinea. The colony of Queensland sent a magistrate to formally take possession of the territory (and the adjacent islands) in April 1883; but this action was disallowed by the British Prime Minister,

Gladstone, who had been "officially assured that Germany had no designs in the neighbourhood". The incompetence of the British action was shown when Germany annexed Papua and Samoa in the following year.[\(90\)](#)

As E.M. Andrews stated:

*"At a public meeting in Sydney in 1885 Sir Henry Parkes, ex-premier of New South Wales, had moved a resolution of loyalty to Britain, but protested against the 'apathy and unconcern evinced by the Imperial Government in respect to the interests of these colonies'. The British attitude, on the other hand, was expressed by the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, two years later when he remarked that the Australians were*

*'the most unreasonable people I have ever heard or dreamt of. They want us to incur all the bloodshed and the danger, and the stupendous cost of a war with France... for a group of islands which to us are as valueless as the South Pole.'*

*"The fact was that 'neither the Pacific, the New Hebrides nor Australia were that important' to Britain. It is not surprising therefore that Chamberlain's suggestion at the 1897 conference for imperial federation and a coordinated army met with a blank response in Australia.*

*"...The Australian response in the years before the war [World War One] was to support Britain for emotional and security reasons, but at the same time to try to influence imperial policy to suit Australia's own needs.*

*"...The British government was preoccupied with the strategic situation in Europe, so when it spoke about 'imperial' foreign and defence policy, it really meant 'British'".[\(91\)](#)*

*"...The Colonial Defence Committee also believed in a centrally planned army for the Empire, and viewed Australian problems from a British perspective. Like Winston Churchill in 1942, it was prepared to sacrifice temporarily what were to it peripheral areas - such as Australia - to protect the centre.[\(92\)](#)*

*"...In Britain, the review of imperial defence for the House of Commons by A.J. Balfour, Prime Minister in 1905, made concentration 'at the centre of the Empire' the basis of general strategy.[\(93\)](#)*

*"...A special Imperial Defence Conference was held during July and August 1909. Here, it was finally agreed that the Australian government would create a naval unit, controlling the ships, while the discipline would be that of the Royal Navy. In time of war or emergency they would come under the Admiralty.[\(94\)](#)*

*"Meanwhile, the Naval Defence Act of 1910 brought the Australian Navy completely under British naval discipline."[\(95\)](#)*

*"In 1911 the Admiralty renegotiated its naval agreement, allowing the Dominions to have their own navies. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was to be regarded as a 'sister member' of the King's navy, with which its training and discipline were to be 'generally' uniform, as officers and men were to be largely interchangeable. It was to be under the control of the Australian government, except in time of war, when it came under the Admiralty, and was liable for service anywhere in the world... Moreover, as a result of the agreement the RAN became closely tied to the Royal Navy, while the purchase of equipment from Britain and the recruiting of British officers 'contributed... subtly to Australian dependence upon the Mother Country'. "[\(96\)](#)*



At the onset of World War One, on 10 August 1914, the Australian government, abiding by its prior arrangement, placed the Australian Navy under the control of the British Admiralty. "From that date, all ships, officers and seamen of the Commonwealth Naval Forces became an integral part of the Imperial Navy", a situation which lasted "for the duration of the war". This was an act of national subservience, rather than an act of national sovereignty.[\(97\)](#)

### OUR JAPANESE PROTECTORS?

The British dismissal of Australia's interests was such that, after providing naval protection for Australia for quite some years, Britain passed the responsibility for Australia's forward naval defence into the hands of the Japanese!!! This was arranged under the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1904.

Of these arrangements - organised on Australia's behalf by our "Mother Country" - one poet at the time aptly wrote:[\(98\)](#)

*The war drums beat! The scene is changed!  
The brown man is a brother.  
Alas for dear Australia White!  
The Japs are pals of Mother!*

E.M. Andrews has explained the British government's attitude:

*"The British, however, were worried by their declining world position after the unification of Germany. Britain wanted a greater contribution from the white colonies towards their own defence; to withdraw from 'unnecessary' commitments overseas - including what they called 'the Far East' - and to make a series of agreements with foreign nations to protect her colonies. These policies presented problems for Australia. While the British were negotiating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the second half of 1901, the Australians were formulating their Immigration Restriction Act - against Japanese as well as other Asian nationalities. G.F. Pearce, later Australian Minister for Defence, remarked at the time that the British government might 'not always have the best interests of this part of the Empire at heart'. It could hardly have been expected to, for the interests of Britain and Australia simply did not coincide."*[\(99\)](#)

*...[When Britain's] "General Sir Ian Hamilton was insensitive enough to suggest in December 1903 that the Australians contribute 3000-4000 mounted troops to help the Japanese (then preparing for the Russo-Japanese War) against Cossacks, the response was predictable."*[\(100\)](#)

*"The Round Table demanded that Britain maintain greater naval power in the Pacific, in face of 'Japan's rapidly increasing industrial, naval and military strength' - a Japan which it 'identified as the real menace to Australia'."*[\(101\)](#)

In 1908, Australia's Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, in view of the British concentrating their naval forces in Europe, "then engineered, before informing the British, the visit of the American 'Great White Fleet' in August-September that year - to a rapturous reception in Australia".[\(102\)](#)

This move was designed to show Australia's potential enemies the military might of our "American friends"; however, this move towards the USA was not popular with the British government (who believed that Australia should remain within Britain's sphere of influence, not America's).[\(103\)](#)

Following the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905, and Britain's 1909 hysteria regarding being out-gunned by the German's new naval strength,

*"Australians... were not comforted when British officials and politicians, such as Winston Churchill, pointed to the Anglo-Japanese alliance as the protector of British interests in the Pacific. The alliance was with Australia's main perceived potential enemy."*[\(104\)](#)

*"In his long career Churchill never understood, let alone sympathised with, Australasian needs or fears. In his naval estimates on 17 March 1914 he criticised the idea of separate Dominion navies and reverted to his concept of an 'imperial' naval squadron, to which the Dominions would contribute their heavy ships. He had apparently sidestepped the naval agreement by putting obsolescent ships on the China station, and restressing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. He insisted on the orthodox doctrine, that 'The situation in the Pacific will be absolutely regulated by the decision in European waters.'*

*"Not surprisingly, the Australian press was up in arms, while its government sought British assurance that the naval agreement was still in force. It was so incensed that the Minister for Defence, Senator E.D. Millen, tabled in federal parliament a memorandum which included 'the sharpest criticism of the British made by any Australian politician, in public or private, since Federation'. It accused the Admiralty of abandoning the 1909 agreement, sabotaging the basis for the RAN, ignoring Australian needs and views (especially over the treaty with Japan), and totally failing to consult, or even notify, the Dominions. As in the 1940s, Australians doubted Churchill's assurances of a speedy despatch of a British battle fleet. The Australian government therefore pressed on with the development of its own fleet.*

*"...Churchill's unilateral abandonment of the 1909 naval agreement revealed his Anglocentric attitude to the Empire".*[\(105\)](#)

It has been remarked that "This formidable indictment of Admiralty policy was perhaps the most significant in the history of the emergence of the dominions from imperial tutelage". E.M. Andrews says that such a comment "probably exaggerates", but adds that "It would have been significant, if World War I had not turned attention to Europe and obscured the lessons of the crisis, which had to be learnt all over again in the 1940s."[\(106\)](#)

## AUSTRALIAN WAR DEAD

Another aspect of the "downside" to Australia's adherence to the British Empire was that this imperial relationship committed Australia to numerous wars, in which we should've had no part.

For example:

- The Boer war.

The result: 588 Australians dead, and 573 casualties.[\(107\)](#)

- The First World War.

The result: 60,284 Australians dead, and 586,581 casualties; also, this war directly cost Australia the massive amount of £376,993,052 (including indirect costs, by the mid-1930s this figure rose to £831,280,947). British bungling in the Dardanelles campaign (which included Gallipoli) cost us 8,418 dead, and 83,480 casualties.[\(108\)](#)

- The Second World War (European theatre).

The result: 9,572 Australians dead, and 9,480 casualties; and still more foreign debt. [\(109\)](#)

**Note:** Boer War and World War One figures are combined battle and non-battle casualties, World War Two figures are battle casualties only.

**Note:** In the war against Japan (1941-1945) Australia suffered 17,501 dead, and 13,997 wounded/injured (these figures are battle casualties only); while 21,467 were made Prisoners Of War (POWs). [\(110\)](#)

British bungling over Singapore cost us some 17,000 Australians being made Prisoners Of War by the Japanese, of which massive numbers were to die in captivity: Of the 7,289 Australian men and women made POWs by the Germans and Italians, 234 (3%) did not survive to be repatriated; however, of the 21,467 Australians made POWs by the Japanese, some 7,602 (35%) were to die as POWs. [\(111\)](#)

**Note:** The war against Germany and Italy is commonly referred to as the "European theatre", however, reference to this war against Germany and Italy (and other nations) also includes actions in North Africa and the Middle East.

#### WAR CASUALTIES [\(112\)](#)

	Battle	Non-Battle	Total
Boer War			
Dead	274	314	588
Other casualties	538	35	573
Total	812	349	1163
World War One			
Dead	53,884	6,400	60,284
Other casualties	155,133	431,448	586,581
Prisoners Of War	4,044	n/a	4,044
Total	213,061	437,819	650,909
World War Two (against Germany and Italy [European Theatre])			
Dead	9,572		
Other casualties	9,480		
Prisoners Of War	7,289		
Total	26,341		

The ramifications of these useless wars are enormous.

World War One saw the loss of the cream of a young generation of Australians. In general, it was the strong, brave, worthy, and patriotic men who "joined up" to fight in this country's military forces; and - while there were many who were not allowed to join up (such as those deemed medically unfit), or who objected to the war for nationalist reasons - the cowards and unpatriotic formed a sizeable proportion of those who stayed behind. It should make us wonder if it is the offspring of the latter group that now rule Australia.

As David McNicoll once said: "Gallipoli and France in World War I, Malaya and the islands in World War II, plus navy and airforce, saw the flower of our manhood lost. Who knows? If those tens of thousands of Australians had returned, they would have bred more of their kind to retain traditions in which they believed and prevent their country ending up the multicultural shambles it has become".[\(113\)](#)

## WORLD WAR ONE

Under international law, Australia had no option but to enter the First World War, as E.M. Andrews has explained:

*"...legally Australia had no option. Internally, under the Commonwealth Act of 1901 she was a 'self-governing colonial federation', but externally she was part of the British Empire, and ruled by the King of England, George V. When her king was at war, under international law Australia was also at war - and legally part of the prize if British forces were defeated."*[\(114\)](#)

*"Australia as a British colony would have suffered serious consequences if Britain had been defeated. At the very least she could expect that Britain, from whom she gained the bulk of her investment, would have been financially drained, and Germany would gain all of New Guinea and the British islands in the Pacific. At the worst she might have been obliged to accept German settlers and financial domination as well. For, as a New Zealand historian has noted, 'colonies had a nasty habit of changing hands as part of peace settlements. Racial disaffinity was no barrier to incorporation in another empire, as the French-speaking parts of Canada attested.'"(115)*

The fact is, **the First World War should have been irrelevant to Australia**. As an independent nation, Australia would've had no business in entering a war of European politics (and losing 60,284 Australians, as well as incurring 586,581 other casualties). That Australia was tied to Britain legally, politically, and by social culture ensured our entry into this needless war, and the ensuing loss of "the cream of Australia's youth". Australia's development was set back by uncountable years by the killing and maiming of some of the best of our nation's upcoming new generation.

## WORLD WAR TWO

During the Second World War, Britain developed a "Beat Hitler first" policy, whereby the fight against the Japanese became a secondary consideration. However, Australia's Prime Minister, John Curtin, put our national interests first, and recalled our troops back from North Africa - despite the attempts of Winston Churchill (Britain's wartime Prime Minister) to stop him. Those troops were badly needed to defend Australia against the expected Japanese invasion (while other allied troops were available to take their place in North Africa).[\(116\)](#)

## DECLARATIONS OF WAR

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1914 (the First World War) and in 1939 (the Second World War), it was taken for granted that this meant that Australia was automatically at war too.[\(117\)](#)

It has been pointed out by W.G McMinn that, in regards to the First World War,

*"whatever the constitutional theory of the Empire might be, the fact remained that in international law Australians - and Canadians, South Africans and New Zealanders - were British subjects, and therefore as much at war on 4 August 1914 as British subjects domiciled in Yorkshire".*[\(118\)](#)

K.H. Bailey says, regarding the Second World War,

*"when war broke out between Germany and Great Britain, the view taken by the then Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, was that by virtue of His Majesty's declaration of war at Westminster all his subjects in the Dominions were automatically at war".* [\(119\)](#)

Later, under the following Labor Government, the Prime Minister, John Curtin, and the Minister for External Affairs, Dr. H.V. Evatt, arranged for "Royal instruments" to confer upon the Governor-General the power to declare "a state of war with Japan, Finland, Hungary and Romania" (the proclamation of which was to be countersigned by the Australian Prime Minister). So, Australia declared war upon Japan by itself, but only - in effect - following Royal (i.e. British Government) permission to do so. [\(120\)](#)

## Section Five

### Immigration and Race

#### COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Over the span of several years the British Government interfered with the attempts of the Australian colonial governments to institute a colonial White Australia Policy. Also, following the federation of the colonies into the Australian Commonwealth in 1901, the British Government interfered (and made attempts to interfere) with the national Australian Government as regarding immigration policy.

As Bill Murray has noted,

*"A major reason why Great Britain did not want Australia to institute an overtly racist immigration policy was that this might upset the Japanese, with whom she wanted to develop good economic relations".*

Also, Britain did not want to upset the non-European parts of her Empire (especially India), who could be offended by Australia's immigration policies. So, although Australia wanted to establish a clear and unashamed White Australia Policy, she was stopped from doing so by Britain. As so often happened: British interests came first, Australian interests came a poor second. [\(121\)](#)

The Victorian Parliament, in 1855, and the NSW Parliament, in 1861, passed laws to restrict the massive influx of Chinese immigration. These laws were not disallowed by the British Government, although Britain's then Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, was not pleased - and stated "that exceptional legislation, intended to exclude from any part of Her Majesty's dominions the subjects of a State at peace with Her Majesty, is highly objectionable in principle". Later on, as the influx of Chinese abated, these laws were then found to be unnecessary and were therefore repealed. [\(122\)](#)

In 1876 the Queensland Parliament passed a Bill to amend the *Gold Fields Act* of 1874 which levied a higher gold licence fee upon Asians - in order to discourage their immigration into Australia. The British-appointed Governor of Queensland reserved the Bill, and the British Government supported his actions - thus the Bill did not become law. [\(123\)](#)

In 1896 an intercolonial conference was held where the question of Chinese immigration was discussed, whereupon the colonies decided that "the further restriction of Chinese immigration is essential to the people of Australasia". Accordingly, during 1896, Coloured Races Restriction Bills were passed in New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania (and an Asiatic Restriction Bill in New Zealand). These Bills were reserved, and "did not receive Her Majesty's assent"; hence, they did not become law. [\(124\)](#)



In December 1900, the Queensland parliament passed an amendment to the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act 1893 to 1895* which would stop the employment of any "natives of Asia, Africa, or of the Pacific Islands" in any sugar mill subsidised by the Government. This Bill was reserved for the Royal Assent, which the British Government refused to give; and so, the Bill did not become law.[\(125\)](#)

It was known that the Australian people were determined to stop Asiatic immigration, so in 1897 the Japanese Government specially asked that an effort should be made to induce the Australasian Colonies to adopt the same course as the Government of Natal, and thus "in deference to these representations Mr Chamberlain once more brought the question before the Colonies".[\(126\)](#)

Joseph Chamberlain, Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies, therefore suggested to the Australian colonies that they copy the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1897 that had been passed in Natal (South Africa). This law could be used to stop non-European immigration in a "roundabout" fashion, by admitting only those who could pass a dictation test - which could be given to non-Europeans in a foreign language so that they would fail, and therefore could not enter Australia as migrants.[\(127\)](#)

This Natal Act tactic, was opposed by many Australians for being "underhand"; but, faced with Britain's opposition to the specific exclusion of non-Europeans, this was the only course open to the Australian parliaments (unless they were to declare some form of republican independence). Therefore, Natal-like immigration laws were passed by several Australian colonies.

## FEDERATED AUSTRALIA

When the Australian colonies federated in 1901, the national parliament also copied the principles of the Natal law as the basis for its *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 (the first major piece of legislation passed by the parliament) - it did so in order to follow Britain's wishes, and so that the Act would not be stopped from becoming law by the British Government. The then prime minister of Australia, Edmund Barton, alluded to the problem in his speech to the parliament: "It is not a desirable thing in our legislation to make racial discriminations which will complicate the foreign relations of the Empire".[\(128\)](#)

Many still opposed this Natal-like method, such as H.B. Higgins (Member of Parliament), who said during the debate over the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 that "I have no hesitation in expressing my preference for the direct method. I wish to know whether this Federal Parliament is to be dictated to... by any authority outside... we should speak out plainly to the Imperial authorities". Higgins further complained that "One of the difficulties we had in the Victorian Assembly was that we were always told not to pass certain Bills, in a certain form because they would be thrown out in another place" (that is, Britain had made it plain that it would quash any Bills that any Australian parliament might pass against Asian or non-European immigration).[\(129\)](#)

In the debates over the introduction of the *Immigration Restriction Act*, the Labor Party sought straight-out prohibition, seeking an amendment to exclude "any person who is an aboriginal native of Asia, Africa or of the island's thereof", but when the amendment failed, the Labor Party then supported the overall legislation.[\(130\)](#)

But still the British Government continued to interfere:

"when restrictive immigration legislation was brought down in the federal parliament in 1901, with the exclusion device to be a dictation test in English, the Colonial Office told the Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun, to press his ministers [i.e. the Australian Government] to extend the test to any European language and, if he failed, to reserve the bill. Hopetoun persuaded his ministers to make the change, and approved the legislation. Faced

nevertheless with Japanese protests, the Colonial Office told Hopetoun to defer approval, but its instructions came too late and, much as the United Kingdom was anxious not to offend Indian subjects or Japanese allies, it shrank from provoking Melbourne by disallowing the legislation."

(**Note:** The use of "Melbourne" here refers to the Australian government, as the national parliament was situated in Melbourne until 1927, when a new Parliament House was opened in Canberra).[\(131\)](#)

It is interesting to note that Governor-General Hopetoun considered using his powers of reserving (i.e. stopping) legislation "under section 58 of the Commonwealth Constitution in connection with the Immigration Restriction Act, but eventually decided to assent to the controversial legislation himself, rather than reserve it for the King".[\(132\)](#)

Pressure was being brought to bear upon Britain by non-European countries, especially India and Japan, regarding Australia's laws pertaining to race:

In September 1905 the Secretary of State for India complained about Western Australia's *Factories Act* which placed heavy limitations upon Asiatics being "the owner or occupier of a factory".[\(133\)](#)

Britain had forged a military and naval alliance with Japan, and the Japanese, seeing themselves as the champion of equality of Asians, objected strongly to "the white settler society in Australia trying to limit or prohibit Asian (predominantly Chinese) immigration". Following such pressure, in November 1905, the Colonial Office in London instructed all Australian State Governors and the Governor-General to reserve for Royal Assent (i.e. for the assent of the British government) any legislation aimed to restrict Asian immigration.[\(134\)](#)

The November 1905 instructions were sent to all colonies, and - upon receiving them - New Zealand's Prime Minister planned to make "a public protest against the circular on the grounds that it was an unacceptable limitation of colonial constitutional independence". The premiers of the Australian states also protested at the Imperial instruction. On top of all this; the Australian Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, "protested so loudly at this interference in matters seen as domestic and vital that the instruction was withdrawn".[\(135\)](#)

Later on, "the Indian government protested at amendments to Australia's Immigration Restriction Act in March 1906, and requested that the Royal Assent be withheld" - but India was persuaded by Britain "not to press its objection".[\(136\)](#)

The *Customs Tariff (British Preference) Bill*, which was introduced into the Australian parliament in September 1906, gave tariff preference to goods imported into Australia by British vessels. The Bill was amended to give tariff preference only if such vessels "were manned exclusively by white seamen". Under pressure from Britain, the Australian Prime Minister had to get the Governor-General to reserve assent, and it therefore never became law.[\(137\)](#)

## THE COCOS ISLANDS AFFAIR

In the 1950s the Cocos Islands were transferred from British rule to Australian rule. This almost didn't happen, because "Australian officials drew particular exception to British demands that Cocos Islanders be given sympathetic consideration for settling in this country". A compromise was drawn up, by giving the Islanders sympathetic consideration "to enter" (not to "settle in") Australia. Once again, the British were attempting to interfere with the White Australia Policy.[\(138\)](#)

## Section Six

### Miscellaneous

#### IMPERIAL FEDERATION

In the late 1800s there were, in the United Kingdom and in the colonies, small and sometimes influential groups of imperial federationists who wanted "a genuinely imperial parliament, with the United Kingdom and the colonies as its electorate, and limiting Westminster [i.e. the British Government] to a domestic role". Such an Imperial Federation, with its Imperial Parliament, would've smothered Australia's interests - as we would have been only a very small minority in such an arrangement.[\(139\)](#)

As E.M. Andrews wrote,

*"Indeed, one section of British opinion wanted to... formally bind the Dominions in 'imperial federation'. This roused the hostility of Canada and South Africa, but all planning broke down anyway over the extent of representation to be given to each component part of the Empire. Chamberlain [Prime Minister of Britain] was an avid supporter of the idea, and at the 1897 Colonial Conference had looked forward to a time when the colonies would share in the management of the Empire 'which we like to think is as much theirs as it is ours', but was unwise enough to add that that would involve responsibility and 'some form of contribution towards the expense' and talked of the interchangeability of British and colonial armies. Few remarks could have been more injudicious, especially as he also suggested that the white settlement colonies and Britain be given representation in proportion to their population - which meant that Britain would dominate the organisation. He flatly rejected an Australian proposal for equal representation for each part of the Empire - which would have given the various colonies the ability to outvote Britain.*

*"In Australia, there were fears that the country would be dragged into Britain's innumerable wars, which led even the Sydney Morning Herald in 1900, when Australia was supporting Britain in the Boer War, to oppose joining an imperial federation. The Australian Defence Act of 1903 therefore did not change colonial legislation, but - against the wishes of the British government which wanted Australian troops in imperial wars - allowed conscription only for the defence of Australia itself. Service overseas was only on the basis of specific volunteering. Even so, support for imperial federation by British and Australian conservatives still made the movement suspect in the eyes of Australian nationalists and the left wing.*

*"Yet the idea dragged on. For a time the Imperial Federation League had some influence, especially under the presidency of Alfred Deakin, three times prime minister of Australia. Then in 1909 Lord Milner and members of his 'Kindergarten' in London formed the Round Table group, to organise influential citizens in Britain and the self-governing colonies to discuss the future of the Empire. Its journal, the Round Table, published anonymous reports and commentaries on matters of imperial importance. But even in this, the most imperialist of journals, the Australian commentators were keenly aware of Australia's special security needs; and ready to criticise Britain and the organisation itself if they were ignored. They also noted a reluctance on the part of their fellow Australians to accept any diminution in their powers of self-government. The Sydney Daily Telegraph spoke for them when it chided Tennyson, on the eve of his departure from Australia in 1904, for hoping for closer union with Britain, and described representation in an imperial parliament as 'a backward step on the road of British destiny'.*

*"Among the Australian public there was a deep apathy towards the dull and intricate task of creating some form of imperial constitution. Most Australians assumed that they were in a flexible empire, where their needs would be met. There was no need to rush into formal - and dangerously novel - agreements. They might consider the idea eventually, but in the meantime they were happy with their measure of self-government, and did not want to lose it."*[\(140\)](#)

Fortunately, despite the establishment of the Imperial Federation League in 1884, "there was never any serious likelihood that this body would succeed in turning the Empire into a federal Super-State". The movement collapsed in the 1890s. However, it is apparent that the movement had some success, in that its activities apparently led many politicians to the conclusion that there was a need for Imperial conferences.[\(141\)](#)

Imperial Federation was opposed by Australian Nationalists, who saw it as a regressive step that would pull the Australian nation further away from the goal of independence.

The scheme was also seen as a threat against White Australia as, due to the Empire's trading interests and diplomatic ties with various non-European colonies and countries, massive non-European immigration into Australia could have been authorised by an Imperial Parliament which was dominated by Britain and which would have had no reason to put Australia's interests first.

As Arthur Calwell stated,

*"The Labor Party saw in the Campaign for Imperial federation, inaugurated by Joseph Chamberlain, an attempt to break down the White Australia Policy, and a threat to our infant secondary industries."*[\(142\)](#)

The Australian Workers' Union pointed out that:

*"A scheme of Imperial Federation under existing circumstances would mean good-bye forever to our system of responsible government, and an attack on the principles of a White Australia"*.[\(143\)](#)

## THE "REPUBLICAN RIOTS"

As part of the celebrations in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's 50 years on the throne, a Town Hall meeting "to declare loyalty to the Queen was scheduled for 10 June". But at this meeting the growing republican and radical sentiment was "expressed in cries of 'three cheers for liberty' which rang out louder than the 'loyal cheers'." The conservative press described the radical demonstration as the "republican riots".[\(144\)](#)

A subsequent meeting was held five days later to declare loyalty to the Queen. The Empire Loyalists (the "British mind-set") ensured that this meeting was held without any similar trouble: the meeting was held "under the protection of several conservative groups including the undergraduates of the University of Sydney, the Loyal Orange Institution, the Naval Brigade and several rugby clubs"; as well as which "dissidents were banned" from this second meeting.[\(145\)](#)

## EXPULSIONS FROM PARLIAMENT

In 1901, an article criticising King Edward VII was published in the *Toscin* magazine (the article had earlier been produced in an Irish publication). Edward Findley (the Labor member for Melbourne) although unaware of the article before its printing, was the *Toscin*'s nominal publisher. Peacock, the Victorian premier, moved Findley's expulsion from State parliament. The motion was passed.[\(146\)](#)

In 1920 when Hugh Mahon, Labor's Member for Kalgoorlie in the House of Representatives,

addressed a meeting of Irish patriots in Melbourne, he "spoke of the death in British custody of the Lord Mayor of Cork... (and) was reported to have expressed the hope that 'the sob of the widow on the coffin would one day shake the foundations of this accursed Empire'" and made other statements about Britain's "bloody and accursed Empire". The National Party's prime minister Billy Hughes organised Mahon's expulsion from the Commonwealth Parliament for having made "seditious utterances inconsistent with a parliamentarian's oath of office".[\(147\)](#)

## CITIZENSHIP

Legally, "there was no such thing as Australian citizenship before 26 January 1949". Prior to this, all Australians were British Subjects, and Australia was regarded as part of the British Empire.[\(148\)](#)

It was the Labor Government of Ben Chifley which made the change, via the *Nationality and Citizenship Act*, which came into force on Australia Day 1949 (26 January 1949) and created the new category of Australian citizen. The Act also enabled the creation of the Australian passport (prior to this, Australians travelled by using "British" passports), but this new passport creation was revoked by the incoming Menzies Government - so that Australians then continued to travel overseas until 1973 with the words "British Passport" emblazoned on the front of their passports".[\(149\)](#)

## Section Seven

### Culture

#### AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Our country's political position of being "under the rule" of the British monarchy (whether in a symbolic sense or in a practical sense) has stymied the development of Australia's national identity and culture.

As William Byrne has pointed out in *Republic Vs. Monarchy*:

*"Heads of State can fulfil an important role in the national psyche. The fact that Australia's Head of State is the Head of State of the United Kingdom is not just an incident to be taken in isolation, it is just the 'tip of the iceberg' in the number of ways that Australia shows its cultural servitude to Britain.*

*"The use, past and present, of the English Monarch as the symbol of Australia in many facets of Australian life does not fail to imbue into many people the impression, whether intended or not, that we are transplanted Britons beholden to the 'mother country' and its Monarchy. This means that instead of naturally developing indigenous Australian ways of life and culture, many look to Britain for ways of cultural expression. As Donald Horne pointed out: 'It is continued obsession with the monarchy that has helped preserve remnants of a colonial mentality and a nostalgic Britishness'.*

*"The psyche of Australia's culture is still impeded and undermined by continual, but usually subtle, references to the English Monarchy, and the institutionalised remains of British rule: various government bodies still print all envelopes with the heading 'O.H.M.S.' (**On Her Majesty's Service**); we are defended by the **Royal** Australian Navy and the **Royal** Australian Air Force; many other institutions bear the prefix 'Royal', such as the R.S.P.C.A. (**Royal** Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), **Royal** Flying Doctor Service, **Royal** College of Nursing, etc.; our legal system has **Queen's** Counsels, while our State takes on a royal persona (e.g. 'Smith versus **The Queen**', '**Regina** versus Smith', with criminal cases being prosecuted by **The Crown**); offenders are jailed in **Her Majesty's** Prisons; **Royal** Commissions are appointed to investigate matters of importance; the **Royal** assent is required to*



*create new laws; Scouts promise to "do my duty to... the **Queen**"; and the Australian flag, with the British flag in pride of place, is seen probably every day (in one form or another) by most Australians. To cap it off: every single coin used daily by the general public has the English Queen starring on it, as well as which her portrait is on all \$5 notes (all made, of course, by the **Royal** Australian Mint).*

*"Although dismissed individually as trivial, these symbols, remains and reminders of a "British Australia" actually appear everywhere and everyday, so that collectively they have eroded the "Australianness" of most Australians, and have infected them with a certain sense of being "British" or "British-Australians", this manifesting itself in a lack of true "Australianism" in our nation's culture. As one commentator put it: "The subconscious of Australia's collective culture has been extensively, but not irreparably, damaged by our still-continuing subservience to British institutions and symbols". Despite any protestations to the contrary, how can we develop a truly Australian culture with one hand while we salute the Queen with the other?*

*"The continuing servility of having an English Monarch has enormous ramifications for the continuing development of the Australian national culture.*

*"Australia has an identity, but it is an identity that is constantly stunted and stifled by our own political and cultural servitude. We should acknowledge the important contribution that Britain, and British people, have made to Australia. However, we have our own identity, culture, and way of life, and for that to fully develop Australia needs to attain independence."[\(150\)](#)*

Australia's past emphasis on its "British connection" has also fostered continual denigration of Australia's culture as "inferior" to that of Britain, thereby creating the "cultural cringe".

In Australia's early years, the "British connection" created a social and political climate where Britain was referred to as "the Home Country" or "Home" (even by those Australian-born who had never set foot in Britain), and where Australian children were taught "Loyalty to the Empire", rather than "Loyalty to Australia, first and foremost".[\(151\)](#)

Such happenings ensured that a substantial part of the Australian population was pro-Britain in many ways; politically, culturally, and even economically. This style of people have been referred to collectively by some as "the British Brigade".

For at least the first 150 years since European settlement, this "British Brigade" was predominant in Australia. It espoused a doctrine of "British imperial patriotism", a widely held ideology, the large support for which can be seen in the "jingoistic fervour" which was aroused by the British Empire's involvement in the Sudan War in northern Africa (1885), the second Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902), and the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900).[\(152\)](#)

As Ross McMullin has noted,

*"nearly all Australians possessed a strong pride in Britain's heritage; family links, educational influences and social conditioning combined to make this inevitable."[\(153\)](#)*

This "British mind-set" was reinforced in many areas of Australia's national life, such as the commencement in 1905 of an annual Empire Day as a "special festival for the schools", whereby children were taught that patriotism meant "loyalty to both Australia and the Empire", illustrated by the suggestion that "the cry 'Australia for the Australians'... should be 'Australia for the Empire'".[\(154\)](#)

With nearly one in five Australians being born in the United Kingdom, and with their affections for Britain being passed onto their children (most Australians were of British descent), it is not surprising that many Australians regarded Britain as "Home". However, during World War One, many Australian soldiers fighting in Europe had visited England whilst on leave - and they were disappointed with what they found - due to many small English annoyances and differences (the ANZACs especially disliked the very obvious English class system). One letter-writer wrote that he hated England, and that "they ought to give England to Germany and apologise for the state it is in". Due to the various cultural differences between the English soldiers and the Australians, the ANZACs actually developed more of an affinity with the Scottish troops, rather than with the English soldiers.[\(155\)](#)

Interestingly, rather than fighting for England or the Empire, many Australians held the view that it was in Australia's best interest for Britain to prevail; that is, "they were pro-British for Australia's sake, not for the sake of blind fervour towards the Crown".[\(156\)](#)

Following the end of World War One, Australian troops returned to their native land, which many now "saw with new eyes". Their experiences in Britain had made them more "Australian" in their outlook.[\(157\)](#)

Australians can take pride in our nation's British heritage, however, we should recognise it for what it is: It is only a **part** of our national heritage; it does not comprise our entire national identity nor our national culture (although it has provided a **part** of the basis for both).

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