



Symbols of AUSTRALIA



Symbols of Australia: fast facts

- **KANGAROO:** A survey of American tourists conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism in 2000 found that the kangaroo was the second most recognised tourist icon in the world – after the Statue of Liberty and ahead of the Eiffel Tower.
- **WATTLE:** Wattle gained particular significance during World War I. Wattle Day Leagues sold wattle sprigs to raise money for the war effort and pressed wattles were sent to Australian soldiers. The dead were sometimes buried under wattle trees. Grieving mothers and widows wore ribbons embroidered with the rising sun and sprigs of wattle.
- **THE FLAG:** From 1788 until 1954 Australia's national flag was the Union Jack. The federation of the colonies in 1901 required Australia to develop national shipping ensigns and the federal government held a competition to select a design. The winning design was much the same as we know it today – a Union Jack in the top left corner, a Commonwealth star and the Southern Cross.
- **ULURU:** In November 1983 the Hawke Government announced that it would amend the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and return the title for Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park to the traditional owners. The land was to be leased back to the Australian Parks and wildlife Service, and run under a system of 'joint management', with a Board of Management comprising a majority of Anangu members (traditional owners).
- **BOOMERANG:** From the 1890s the image of the boomerang was widely used to brand and advertise a diverse range of products (brandy, butter, cigarette papers and flour). Military emblems in WWI also made much use of the boomerang.
- **THE SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE:** The official opening of the Harbour Bridge in January 1932 was the scene of a dramatic protest against the NSW premier Jack Lang and the left-wing policies of his government. Francis de Groot, a member of the 'New Guard' a right-wing paramilitary group, rode up on horseback and slashed the ribbon with a sword just before the official ceremony began.
- **THE BILLY:** Perhaps the most famous reference to a billy is in the first verse and chorus of "Waltzing Matilda" written by poet and author, A.B. (Banjo) Patterson in 1887 and this has given rise to the billy as a symbol of a democratic, independent and somewhat rebellious Australian spirit.

A travelling exhibition
developed and presented by the

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- **VEGEMITE:** Fred Walker ran a Melbourne business producing processed cheese and preserved meats. In 1923, Walker passed a tin of British Marmite to his chemist, Cyril Callister, and asked him to produce a product similar to it. Callister took up the challenge and produced Vegemite, eventually using his research to earn one of the first Doctor of Science degrees from the University of Melbourne.
- **THE SOUTHERN CROSS:** The Southern Cross is the most recognisable and well know constellation seen in the night sky of the Southern hemisphere. It features on the national flags of Australia, Brazil, New Guinea, New Zealand and Samoa and a stylised version was used on the Eureka flag hoisted at the Eureka stockade during a gold miners' revolt in 1854 near Ballarat in Victoria.
- **HOLDEN:** The Holden, Australia's first mass-produced car rolled off the assembly line at Fishermans Bend on 29 November 1948. 18,000 people signed up to buy a Holden without knowing a single detail about the car.

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