



Australia's Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms was granted by King George V in 1912. It consists of a shield containing the badges of the six Australian States, enclosed by an ermine border. The shield is a symbol for the federation of the States, which took place in 1901.

The Australian Coat of Arms is commonly but incorrectly referred to as the 'Commonwealth Crest'. Strictly speaking, the Crest is the device above the shield and helmet on a coat of arms and in this instance is a seven-pointed gold star on a blue and gold wreath. Six of the points represent each of the States of the Commonwealth, the seventh point represents the Commonwealth Territories (see Fact Sheet No. 9, *Australia's States and Territories*).

The Supporters are native Australian animals: the red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) and the emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*). Usually the Arms is depicted on a background of sprays of golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) with a scroll beneath it containing the word 'Australia'. The wattle and scroll, however, are not part of the armorial design and are not mentioned in the Royal Warrant.

The first official coat of arms of Australia was granted by a Royal Warrant of King Edward VII in 1908. This Coat of Arms was used on some Australian coins after it was superseded and last appeared on the sixpenny piece in 1966.

The Australian Government uses the Coat of Arms to authenticate documents and for other official purposes. Its uses range from

embellishing the Australian passport to being widely recognised as the badge on the famous 'baggy green' cricket cap.

Australia has never adopted any official motto or floral, faunal or bird emblem. By popular tradition, however, the golden wattle, kangaroo and emu are widely accepted as national floral, faunal and bird emblems.

For many years, the motto 'Advance Australia' appeared on unofficial Coats of Arms, even before the Federation of the States in 1901. It was included in the 1908 Arms, and was popularly accepted in association with the 19th century song 'Advance Australia Fair'. A revised version of this song officially became Australia's national anthem in 1984 (see Fact Sheet No. 17, *The Australian National Anthem*).

On that same day, Australia also officially adopted green and gold as its national colours. Until then, the nation had no official national colours, although the use of green and gold by Australia's international sporting teams had become a tradition and had been associated with its Olympic teams since the 1920s.



The Australian Coat of Arms consists of the Badges of the six States of the Commonwealth arranged on a shield in two rows of three columns:

NEW SOUTH WALES – Golden Lion passant (right to left) on a red St George's Cross on a silver background (usually depicted white), with an 8-pointed star on each extremity of the cross.

VICTORIA – White Southern Cross (one star of 8 points, 2 of 7 points one of 6 points and one of 5 points), beneath an Imperial Crown, on a blue background. **QUEENSLAND** – light blue Maltese Cross with an Imperial Crown at its Centre, on a white background. **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** – the White-Backed Magpie (or Piping Shrike), erect, wings outstretched, on a yellow background. **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** – Black Swan swimming, left to right, on a yellow background. **TASMANIA** – Red Lion passant (right to left) on a white background.

State and Territory Coats of Arms



New South Wales

King Edward VII granted a Coat of Arms

to the State of New South Wales in 1906. The description of the Arms embodies the motto, *Orta Recens Quam Pura Nites* (Newly Risen, How Bright Thou Shinnest).



Victoria

In 1910 King George V granted a Coat of Arms to the State of Victoria, which was named after his grandmother. In

1973 certain additions were made to the Coat of Arms and a Royal Warrant was issued by Queen Elizabeth II. The description of the Arms embodies the motto: 'Peace and Prosperity'.



Queensland

Queen Victoria granted a Coat of Arms to the then colony of Queensland in 1893. The

supporters, a red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and a brolga (*Grus rubicunda*), were assigned in 1977 by Queen Elizabeth II. The motto of Queensland, *Audax et Fidelis* (Bold, Aye, and Faithful Too), is embodied in the description of the Coat of Arms.



Western Australia

Western Australia's Coat of Arms had its origins in 1829

when British settlers established the Swan River colony. Their successors adopted an unofficial emblem which featured the black swan and the motto, a Latin pun, *Cygnis Insignis* (Distinguished for Swans). The Coat of Arms, which now carries no motto, was given official sanction when Queen Elizabeth II granted Arms to the State in 1969.



South Australia

The State's Coat of Arms was granted by Queen Elizabeth II on April 19,

1984. The shield contains the State badge, comprising the piping shrike, or whitebacked magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen leuconota*), standing on a staff of gum tree, against a gold orb representing the sun. The crest is the State's floral emblem, Sturt's desert pea (*Clianthus formosus*), above a collar of the State's colours, red, blue and gold. The present Coat of Arms replaced the Arms granted by King Edward VIII in 1936.



Northern Territory

Until the Northern Territory was granted self-

government on July 1, 1978, it was administered by the federal government, and used the national Coat of Arms.

The Territory's own Coat of Arms was granted in 1978. The shield contains Aboriginal motifs associated with Arnhem Land. The supporters are two red kangaroos and the crest is a wedge-tailed eagle.



Tasmania

The Coat of Arms of the island State was granted by King George V in

1917 and the description of the Arms embodies the motto, *Ubertas et Fidelitas* (Fertility and Faithfulness). The supporters of the shield in the Arms are two Tasmanian tigers (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), which in modern times have been found only in Tasmania and are now possibly extinct.



Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has no

Coat of Arms. However, a Coat of Arms for the city of Canberra, the national capital of Australia, was granted by King George V in 1928. The motto embodied in the Coat of Arms is 'For the Queen, the Law and the People'. The supporters are a black swan and white swan, symbolising the Aboriginal and European races.

Other Fact Sheets

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Fact Sheets provide a range of information in print and online versions. These revised titles have been released since July 1997:

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