



Chats. Drawn by Neville Cayley, engraved by Bacon and Co. The illustrated Australian encyclopaedia, edited by Arthur Wilberforce Jose and Herbert James Carter, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1925–27, vol I, plate XIII.

CHAPTER 7

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS, DICTIONARIES AND FACT BOOKS

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THIS CHAPTER PRESENTS AN OVERVIEW of the reference works that provide general information on Australia. The type of book included here is characterised by the presentation of factual statements, briefly explained or set in context and wholly or almost wholly dedicated to Australia. Dictionaries (other than language dictionaries), encyclopaedias, handbooks of dates and certain types of directories form, therefore, the substance of this chapter. Specialist reference on the subjects treated in the following chapters of this volume are, of course, cited in the appropriate context and readers should look there for such specific works as an encyclopaedia of sport (chapter 47) or a dictionary of Australian painting (chapter 49).

Also excluded are the large general encyclopaedias produced by other nations—the *Britannica*, the *Americana*, the *Soviet encyclopaedia*, for example—which though they do contain sizeable amounts of information on Australia cannot be looked upon as prime sources of information for Australian studies.

The number of reference works that fall within these confines is still relatively small and the titles listed below present a selection of the more reliable among them. No attempt has been made to list all of them and, though the overall trend of this volume is historical, in this section only limited attention has been paid to reference works that have generally outlived their usefulness. A broader and retrospective treatment of reference works has been provided by Borchardt (*Australian bibliography*, 3rd edn, Sydney, Pergamon, 1976). The public library oriented *Current Australian reference books* (Canberra, AACOBS, 1983) is another useful tool to help identify reference works for specific purposes. Readers are urged to consult these two main lists of information sources. Reference works especially designed for children have also been excluded; important as they may be for didactic purposes, they are scarcely relevant as sources for Australian studies.

The list of reference works that follows has been divided into six groups: encyclopaedias; dictionaries of dates and events; yearbooks; atlases; gazetteers; and directories. It should be noted that references to bibliographies and catalogues of books are listed in the following chapter.

As can be expected, given the political history of Australia, many of the early dictionaries and encyclopaedias were regional or state based. Only since the 1880s have there been genuine attempts to treat the whole continent within the covers of one book: the oldest example is by Sir Joseph Heaton (1879; facs, 1984). Though its importance as a source of biographical information far outshines its value as a chronology, it contains data on the events and institutions

that shaped Australian history. Heaton's importance for Australian biography is discussed in chapter 19 of this volume; though the work also offers a great deal of information on Australia in the nineteenth century, not all dates and reported events should be accepted at face value.

An encyclopaedia, as the name suggests, represents a summing up of our knowledge about a subject or even about the world at large, and we associate with the term a certain degree of reliability and educational or academic quality. As the great historian of science, George Sarton, wrote in his *Guide to the history of science* (Waltham, Mass, Chronica Botanica, 1952): 'It is wise to refer to encyclopaedias for first guidance; it is priggish to disregard them; it is foolish to depend too much on them'. The number of Australian encyclopaedias published to date is relatively small, even if we count among them those restricted in their coverage to individual states.

Users of an encyclopaedia have certain expectations regarding the quality and presentation of information, and unless these are met they are not likely to be satisfied. It is difficult to assess the quality of an encyclopaedia and, as the annotation to some of the examples cited in the bibliography will show, some publishers have had more of an eye on sales than on quality and reliability of information. Among the most obvious criteria that should be considered when evaluating an encyclopaedia are the reputation of the editor and contributors; the plan and objectives of the work as a whole; the treatment (popular or scholarly) of the subjects; obvious or hidden bias (national, religious, racial); the inclusion of references and bibliographies; the currency of statistics and tables; and the quality of cross-referencing and indexing.

These are fundamental considerations. There are other characteristics, of course, such as the quality of printing and binding, typography and illustrations, and the important problem of updating. The fact that most encyclopaedias represent large printing and publishing projects makes it unavoidable that the information they contain will be at least one year old and even older in multivolume works. Some of the large international encyclopaedias issue supplements on a regular basis. The *Britannica book of the year* . . ., for example, is issued annually and tries to update the most important and vulnerable (from a chronological point of view) articles and data. Indeed, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has issued one special supplement for Australasia (*Britannica book of the year: the year in Australia and New Zealand, 1963-1965*, Sydney, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1967) but no further special issues have appeared.

The most important sources of information on all aspects of Australian studies are the four editions of the *Australian encyclopaedia* that have appeared between 1925-26 and 1983. Unquestionably, the quality as well as the quantity of information offered has increased over the years, but those seeking concise data on topics related to Australia are advised that in spite of the greater number of words that mark successive editions, some fundamental articles in the early editions, especially the second edition, have retained their intrinsic value; indeed, some have not been replaced by new contributions. That there should be changes in the several editions is understandable; publishers must limit the size of their books to make them marketable. Each of the four editions of the *Australian encyclopaedia* has certain advantages and faults when compared with the others. Thus the most serious shortcoming of the third edition is the lack of an index. The fourth edition has taken over some articles from the second and third editions, metricating and updating data, and in several instances shortening the pieces so that the information is less comprehensive.

A number of recent publications have tried to present within the covers of one book a concise listing of information on Australia, but careful examination and a survey of expert criticism suggests that none is worthy of recommendation to the serious student. In particular, it should not be thought that inclusion in this list is in any respect a recommendation. The fact is, simply, that at times it is convenient to consult a one-volume reference work and of the several publications available the least offensive have been included.

Subject dictionaries (as distinct from language dictionaries) differ from encyclopaedias mainly in their method of presentation, which tends to be brief and based on definition rather than on explanation. Occasionally there is some overlap between dictionaries and encyclopaedias. We also have works called 'dictionaries of dates' or 'dictionaries of events' which, besides presenting facts

about Australia in alphabetical or chronological sequence, also explain such facts and events, or comment in an explanatory manner on the chronology. The work of Sir Joseph Heaton mentioned above is a good example. The few titles of quality in this category are listed in the second part of the reading list of reference works that follows.

Readers' attention is also drawn to two other titles among the reference volumes that form part of *Australians: a historical library*. One is *Australians: events and places*; the other, *Australians: a historical dictionary*. The first includes a chronology and a gazetteer of Australia, while the second includes subject and biographical entries.

The third part of the reading list below details the several annual compilations by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The *Yearbooks*, as they are now known, are official publications—they emanate from a government authority and have the standing that goes with such authorship. The head office of the ABS in Canberra issues the *Yearbook Australia* while the comparable volumes for the states are issued by the respective state offices. Although there is co-ordination and supervision from the ABS head office, the state offices arrange presentation and selection of topics to fit the needs of each state.

A selection of atlases, gazetteers and directories concludes this discussion of reference books. Taking the atlases first because there are so few of them and their significance is so obvious, it is with much pleasure that we note *Australians: a historical atlas*, part of this series *Australians: a historical library*, as the project's contribution to the cartography of Australia. It presents a bridge between a historical atlas and a reference tool for physical, social and demographic data.

Few other atlases fulfil an acceptable standard of cartography and statistical data. The scores of school atlases that have been inflicted upon Australian children over the last century are best forgotten. It was not until the advent of the *Reader's digest atlas of Australia* (Sydney, Reader's Digest Services, 1977) that the Australian public had available a quality product, created from an Australian point of view and supported by charts and statistical data. A second edition appeared in 1984, and almost at the same time the completion of the Macquarie atlas was announced.

Of considerable importance is the *Atlas of Australian resources*, an official publication produced by the Division of National Mapping in Canberra. A series of three atlas volumes was first published in 1953–60; a second edition appeared in 1962–77. A new edition now in progress is to consist of ten volumes, each centred on a topic map, such as population or agriculture, with commentaries and smaller cartographic and statistical data in support. The same government authority has also produced, in association with the ABS, social atlases of Australian cities based on the census data collected in 1976 and 1981 respectively.

In addition to these national atlases there are numerous regional atlases, some of which have a historical component. The Lands and Survey departments of Tasmania and Western Australia have published respectively an *Atlas of Tasmania* (Hobart, 1965) and *Western Australia: an atlas of human endeavour 1829–1979* (Perth, 1979). An *Atlas of Victoria* (Melbourne, Government Printer) was issued in 1982 and the South Australian Lands and Survey Department has a new atlas of that state in the making. Each of these atlases has been prompted by the state government's desire to record the economic and social progress of its state and the cartographic work reflects this objective as well as providing details of physical geography.

There are, of course, many hundreds of maps of Australia, produced by many different authorities. Some guidance to these can be obtained from B.T. Tysons' *The topographical map series of Australia* (Melbourne, The Author, 1965), now over twenty years out of date but neither replaced nor updated.

The map collections of some Australian libraries are of considerable size and, as can be expected, the coverage of Australian cartography is especially strong in most of them. To list them here would exceed the space available, but N.M. Rauchle (1980) is a reliable guide. Current cartographic productions in Australia can be checked through the National Library's *Australian maps*, a complementary service to its *Australian national bibliography*. *Australian maps* lists sheet maps since 1967; atlases in book form are listed in the *Australian national bibliography*.

The cartographic emergence of the Australian continent has been the subject of several books,

some of which are typographically and cartographically quite delightful. Outstanding among these are Egon and Elsie Kunz (1971) and G. Schilder's *Australia unveiled* (Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976). R.V. Tooley's *The mapping of Australia* (London, Holland Press Cartographica, 1979), of which only volume 1 has appeared, is closely associated with the author's large collection of maps housed in the National Library of Australia.

For the historian and historical geographer, W.H. Wells (1848; facs, 1970) is of prime importance as the first attempt to define, in geographic terms, the sparse settlements that had by then grown up on the Australian continent. Almost twenty years were to lapse before another attempt was made to define the location of Australian settlements. F.F. Bailliere's gazetteers (1865–79) covered all the colonies except Western Australia.

The most comprehensive gazetteer published to date is that already mentioned as forming part of this series *Australians: a historical library*. Until its appearance, the United States Office of Geography's *Australia: official standard names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names* (Washington, USGPO, 1957) and the gazetteer of the Australian Division of National Mapping (1975, 1984) were the only comprehensive guides to Australian geography. The former includes 62 000 names of places and topographic features. Australia's Division of National Mapping has recently issued a list of Australian place names in microform (1984). This is an important document, which tends to be little known except to specialists.

A wave of interest in Aboriginal names and their meanings has led to the publication of a number of guides to Aboriginal place names, two of which—Reed (1967) and Massola (1968)—have been included in the bibliography that follows. There are many older reference works related to place names; most are restricted to one state or region and all are selective.

It should be noted that the topic bibliographies that follow include specialist directories where they exist or have bearing on the subject involved. This applies particularly to the professions, which often maintain and publish directories of their members and, where appropriate, of institutional services associated with the profession. Typical examples are the *Australian legal directory* published by the Law Council of Australia and the *Medical directory of Australia* issued by the Australasian Medical Publishing Co. The best source for the addresses of professional associations is the *Directory of Australian associations* (1985–86), details of which are shown below; those wanting to obtain such membership directories should address themselves to the appropriate association headquarters.

The ever-increasing services offered by government authorities render the *Commonwealth government directory* and its state counterparts a particularly useful reference tool. The most common use made of these directories is undoubtedly the identification of government offices, their principal officers, addresses and services provided. Beyond this, the directories also serve as sources of information on the history of government administration or of the evolution of political controls through the bureaucratic structure of government. The *Commonwealth government directory* goes back to 1918 but the passing of the Freedom of Information Act in 1981 has forced a new form upon the directory. From 1982 on, it appears in three parts: a directory of offices, a list of officers and a third section, in as many parts as there are ministries, showing the statutory responsibilities of all departments and statutory authorities responsible to each ministry. Some further details are described in the entry for the directory in the bibliography.

All states except Western Australia have issued a similar directory of state departments and authorities and of their responsibilities. These are updated at irregular intervals and are obtainable through the state government information departments or the state government printers.

Only one state, Victoria, provides easy access to data on local government administration. The *Victorian municipal directory* has appeared since 1866. In other states the same type of information has to be gleaned from commercial directories such as the directories issued by Sands & McDougall for South Australia and Victoria, and those compiled by Sands for New South Wales.

Lastly, and merely to remind users of the obvious which is sometimes so easily forgotten, there are telephone books issued and frequently updated under the authority of Telecom Australia, and street directories for all the larger towns in Australia and for some of the smaller ones as well.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

THE ANGUS & Robertson concise Australian encyclopaedia. A & R R, 1983. 505 p, illus, maps.

A very simplistic approach to things Australian, suitable for primary schools.

AUSTRALIAN encyclopaedia. A & R, 1925–26. 2 vols, illus, maps, no index.

AUSTRALIAN encyclopaedia. A & R, 1958. 10 vols, illus, maps, index. Reprinted, Sydney, Grolier, 1965.

AUSTRALIAN encyclopaedia (3rd edn). Sydney, Grolier Society of Australia, 1977, 6 vols, illus, maps, no index.

AUSTRALIAN encyclopaedia (4th edn). Sydney, Grolier Society of Australia, 1983. 12 vols, illus, maps, index.

The latest of the four editions of the most important Australian reference work contains more than four thousand articles on a wide range of subjects. Most longer articles are signed and there are many illustrations. For further comments see the introductory essay above.

THE CONCISE encyclopedia of Australia and New Zealand. Hong Kong, Multimedia International for Horwitz Grahame, 1982. 2 vols, illus, maps.

A popular work, strong in biography and geography. Some articles have notes on further reading. First published as *The modern encyclopaedia of Australia and New Zealand* in 1964; revised as *New national Australian encyclopaedia* in 1974, and then as *Concise encyclopaedia of Australia* in 1979. The New Zealand content is located at the end of vol 2.

THE CYCLOPEDIA of N.S.W. illustrated . . . an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations . . . Sydney, McCarron, Stewart, 1907.

THE CYCLOPEDIA of South Australia: an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations . . . Ed by H.T. Burgess. Adelaide, Cyclopaedia Co, 1907–09. 2 vols, illus. Repr, Austaprint, 1978.

THE CYCLOPEDIA of Tasmania: an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations . . . Hobart, Maitland & Krone, 1900. 2 vols, illus.

THE CYCLOPEDIA of Victoria: an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical facts, figures and illustrations . . . Ed by James Smith. Melbourne, Cyclopaedia Co, 1903–05. 3 vols, illus.

THE CYCLOPEDIA of Western Australia: an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations. Ed by J.S. Battye. Adelaide, Hussey & Gillingham, 1912–13. 2 vols, illus.

These five state-oriented cyclopaedias represent important general surveys of achievements. Still useful as a rich source of information on the men and women who made progress possible.

LEARMONTH, A.T.A. AND LEARMONTH, N. *Encyclopaedia of Australia* (2nd edn). Sydney, Hicks, Smith & Sons, 1983. 606 p, illus, maps.

A reliable but restricted one-volume reference work. Includes living and deceased persons of note; relatively strong on natural history, but weak on social, economic and political history. First published in 1968.

SHAW, J. ed, *Collins Australian encyclopedia.* Sydney, Collins in association with David Bateman Ltd, 1984. 848 p, illus, maps.

One-volume reference work, accurate enough as a first source of reference. Includes tables, indexes, chronologies.

DICTIONARIES OF DATES AND EVENTS

The Australian almanac. Sydney, A & R, 1985. 793 p, illus, maps.

Useful work. Deals with a range of issues including politics, the arts, geography and history.

AUSTRALIAN handbook and almanac 1–37. Sydney, Gordon & Gotch, 1870–1906.

Title, size and significance have varied over the years and the handbook increased in scope as it grew from 100 to 500 pages. The last few issued included business information, land and mining maps, country towns and their commercial enterprises.

CASTLES, A.C. *Australia: a chronology and fact book, 1606–1976.* Dobbs Ferry, NY, Oceana Publications, 1978. 151 p.

Contains brief notes on the most important events in Australian history and select documents to illustrate the development of government in Australia. Bibliography and name index.

HEATON, J.H. *Australian dictionary of dates and men of the time, containing the history of Australasia, from 1542 to May 1879.* Sydney, George Robertson, 1879. 232, 317 p.

This synopsis of Australian chronology is useful because it includes many minor events based on newspaper reports, including those which did not make the headlines.

THE MACQUARIE book of events. Ed by Bryce Fraser. Sydney, Macquarie Library, 1983. 608 p, illus.

This unorthodox dictionary lists a vast amount of detailed Australian history. The notable events that occurred in every year since 1788 are arranged under broad headings, which is particularly useful because the book has an inadequate index.

READER'S DIGEST SERVICES PTY LTD. *Australia's yesterdays: a look at our recent past* (2nd edn). Sydney, Reader's Digest Services, 1979. 360 p, illus, maps.

A nostalgic collection of illustrations showing Australian life including a chart of historic events, year by year 1901–78, and a biographical dictionary of Australians who made the news. First published in 1974.

YEARBOOKS

NEW SOUTH WALES year book. Sydney, ABS, NSW Office, 1886/87– .

Title varies: *Wealth and progress of New South Wales 1886/87–1900/01; Official year book of New South Wales 1904/05–1979.*

QUEENSLAND year book. Brisbane, ABS, Qld Office, 1937– .

Title varies: *Official year book of Queensland 1957–63.*

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN year book. Adelaide, ABS, South Australian Office, 1966– .

TASMANIAN year book. Hobart, ABS, Tasmanian Office, 1967– .

VICTORIAN year book. Melbourne, ABS, Victorian office, 1873– .

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN year book. Perth, ABS, West Australian Office, 1886–1902/04; ns, 1957– .

Title varies: *Official year book of Western Australia 1957–66.*

YEAR BOOK Australia. Canberra, ABS, 1908– .

Title varies: *Official year book of the Commonwealth of Australia 1908–72; Official year book of Australia 1973–74.*

These annual volumes of statistics, economic and political data and general information about Australia as a whole, and in separate volumes about the states, are the most reliable sources of information available. Compiled by the ABS, they are reliable and unbiased. The state volumes are not all alike though they

follow a common pattern and contain related basic data. The *Year book Australia* contains different additional features in each issue.

ATLASES

ATLAS of Australian resources (3rd series). Canberra, Division of National Mapping, 1980–

This remarkable and important work is planned to consist of ten volumes, each dedicated to a specific topic, for example, soils and land use, population and agriculture. The maps are of high quality and there are statistical data and other information.

ATLAS of population and housing: 1976 census. Canberra, Division of National Mapping and ABS in association with Institute of Australian Geographers, 1979–81. 7 vols.

ATLAS of population and housing: 1981 census. Canberra, Division of National Mapping and ABS in association with Institute of Australian Geographers, 1984–7 vols.

Important set of social atlases presenting graphical interpretations of census data prepared by the organisations listed as publishers. The atlas based on the 1976 census deals with the eleven major population centres (each of over 100 000 people) and the atlas for the 1981 census deals with the seven capital cities. Each volume includes a commentary on the area and on the maps.

THE AUSTRALIAN book of the road. Sydney, Hamlyn, 1971. 167 (40) p, illus, maps.

Designed for use while travelling, this atlas also contains an index to place names. The maps are clear but not always accurate.

KUNZ, E. AND KUNZ, E. *A continent takes shape*. Sydney, Collins, 1971. 175 p, illus, maps.

A documented history of the mapping of Australia.

THE MACQUARIE illustrated world atlas. Sydney, Macquarie Library in association with Division of National Mapping, Canberra, and the Dept of Lands & Survey, Wellington, 1984. 512 p, illus, maps.

A fine example of cartography. The publisher's collaboration with the official cartographic departments assures the reliability of Australian and New Zealand maps.

RAUCHLE, N.M. ed, *Map collections in Australia: a directory* (3rd edn). Canberra, NLA, 1980. 141 p.

A list of institutions holding significant collections of maps (not only Australian). First published in 1977.

READER'S digest atlas of Australia. Sydney, Reader's Digest Services, 1978. 287 p, illus, maps.

The first of a series of modern atlases combining quality maps with statistical data and explanatory legends. A gazetteer occupies pp 217–87.

GAZETTEERS

AUSTRALIA. Dept of National Development and Energy. Division of National Mapping. *Australia 1: 250 000 and 1:100 000 master names gazetteer. Master names file (microform)*. Canberra, The Division, 1984. 9 microfiches.

The only official gazetteer of Australian place names produced by the national authority also responsible for mapping Australia. The microform edition supersedes the 1975 book edition.

AUSTRALIAN Postal Commission. *List of post offices and localities*. Melbourne, The Commission, 1980. Loose leaf. Alphabetical list of both official and non-official post offices, with codes indicating services provided. Supersedes the Postmaster-General's Department's list *Post and telegraph offices*, 1969.

BAILLIERE, F.F. *Bailliere's Victorian gazetteer and road guide* . . . Comp by R.P. Whitworth. Melbourne, F.F. Bailliere, 1865. 442 p, maps.

A popular guide when published, now useful for historical information. Revised editions appeared in 1866, 1870 and 1879. Similar volumes issued for NSW (1866), SA (1866), Qld (1876) and Tas (1877).

MASSOLA, A. *Aboriginal place names of south-east Australia and their meaning*. Melbourne, Lansdowne, 1968. 62 p, illus.

REED, A.W. *Aboriginal place names and their meanings*. Sydney, Reed, 1967. 144 p.

Massola and Reed offer helpful, though dated, information on Aboriginal words for settlement and geographic features.

WELLS, W.H. *A geographical dictionary: or gazetteer of the Australian colonies* . . . Sydney, W. & F. Ford, 1848. 438 p, illus, maps.

Facsimile edition, Sydney, Library Board of NSW, 1970.

DIRECTORIES

THE BUSINESS who's who in Australia. Sydney, Riddell, 1964–

The most comprehensive of several works of this kind, but more specialised information can be obtained from *Jobson's yearbook of public companies* . . . (1928–) and *Jobson's mining year book* (1957–). These works, directly or indirectly, provide historical data of companies.

COMMONWEALTH government directory. Canberra, AGPS, 1983– . 3 vols.

The official guide to the organisation, executive personnel and services of the commonwealth government. Issued irregularly from 1918 to 1971, then annually. The title varied. The new format lists federal agencies, their access data and principal personnel (vol 1) and a brief description for each ministerial portfolio (vol 2). Vol 3 includes information on services offered. COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION. *Australian scientific societies and professional associations*. Melbourne, CSIRO, 1978. 226 p.

Restricted to scientific bodies. Includes some data on publications. First published in 1971.

DIRECTORY of Australian associations (4th edn). Melbourne, 1985. 515 p.

Lists in alphabetical order non-profit Australian organisations, excluding community groups, social clubs and sports clubs. There is a classified subject index according to service offered or principal activity, and a geographic index by state or territory. New editions appear regularly.

THE HERITAGE of Australia: the illustrated register of the National Estate. Melbourne, Macmillan in association with the Australian Heritage Commission, 1981. 1164 p, illus. Illustrated reference work presenting a comprehensive overview of items of the natural and cultural heritage listed by the Australian Heritage Commission.

OZARTS: *a guide to arts organisations in Australia* (2nd edition). Sydney, Policy and Planning Division, Australia Council, 1984. 236 p.

Lists federal and state government arts authorities, with an index to names of organisations, subjects and art form. First published in 1981.

VICTORIAN municipal directory. Melbourne, Arnall & Jackson, 1866–

Includes details of cities, towns, municipalities, boroughs, state government authorities and public institutions, names of officers and other details. An important historical source.