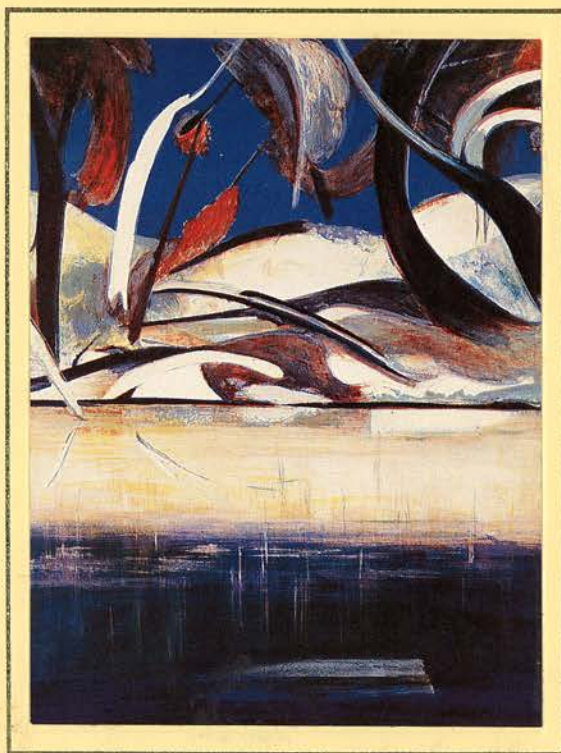


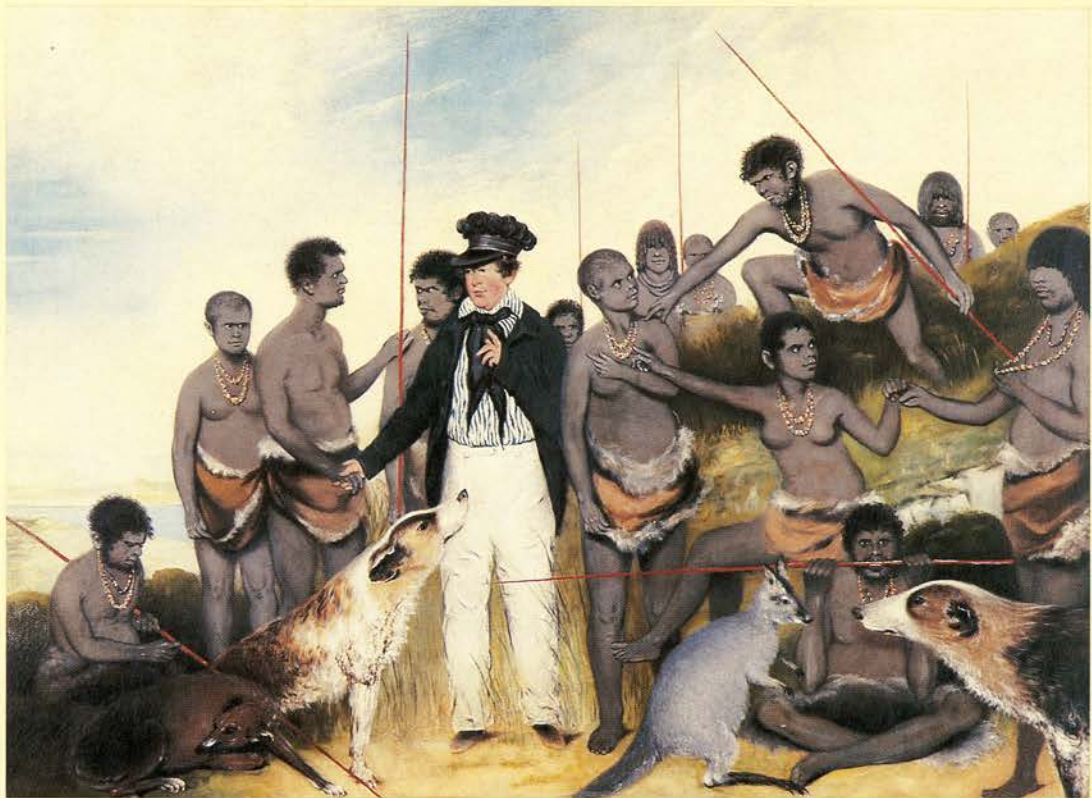
AUSTRALIANS



1988

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1988



*Benjamin Dutterau, The conciliation, 1840, oil on
canvas 121 × 170.5. Inscribed in crayon 'The conciliation/
A sketch for a National Picture. . .'
TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, HOBART*

AUSTRALIANS

1988

CHRONOLOGY WRITTEN BY

MARION K. STELL

AND

RUTH THOMPSON

EDITED BY

KIM ANDERSON

FAIRFAX, SYME & WELDON ASSOCIATES

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

Arthur Boyd, Shoalhaven quartet, 1988. Boyd was awarded the 1988 Bird and Bell Award for being an outstanding Australian by the Australian Ireland Fund. He later announced that he would donate his property on the New South Wales south coast to the people of Australia as a place where they could both appreciate and study Australian art.

ENDPAPERS

*Detail from Bronson Jakamarra Nelson,
Living together, working together, 1986
acrylic on canvas, 182 x 184 cm.*

WARLUKURLANGA ARTISTS

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|------------------|------|
| CONTRIBUTORS | | vii |
| INTRODUCTION | | viii |
| JANUARY | | 1 |
| <i>Bicentennial Antarctic Expedition</i> | LINCOLN HALL | 5 |
| <i>Celebration of a nation</i> | PETER SPEARRITT | 20 |
| FEBRUARY | | 25 |
| MARCH | | 39 |
| <i>Aboriginal art — an Australian distinctiveness?</i> | TIM ROWSE | 55 |
| APRIL | | 61 |
| <i>Trade and foreign relationships</i> | CORAL BELL | 62 |
| <i>Anzac Day in France</i> | KEN INGLIS | 77 |
| <i>AIDS in 1988</i> | J. A. BALLARD | 81 |
| MAY | | 83 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | JAMES JUPP | 98 |
| JUNE | | 103 |
| <i>Trick or treaty for Aboriginal Australians?</i> | ROBERTA B. SYKES | 107 |
| JULY | | 123 |
| <i>Environment</i> | J. M. POWELL | 129 |
| AUGUST | | 145 |
| <i>Economy</i> | ROBERT HAUPT | 159 |
| SEPTEMBER | | 163 |
| <i>Constitutional referendums</i> | GRAEME NEATE | 166 |
| <i>The sporting 'norm'</i> | MARION K. STELL | 176 |
| OCTOBER | | 187 |
| <i>'Dynasty Corporation' — the takeover of John Fairfax Ltd</i> | RUTH THOMPSON | 198 |
| NOVEMBER | | 205 |
| <i>Secondary and higher education</i> | J. ANN HONE | 221 |
| DECEMBER | | 231 |
| ENDNOTES | | 244 |
| NOTES ON ILLUSTRATIONS | | 246 |
| INDEX | | 247 |



Geoff Parr, *The National Picture*, 1985, Nekko
print on canvas.

J. W. POWER COLLECTION
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, SYDNEY

AUSTRALIANS 1988
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INTRODUCTION

Australia's Bicentenary marked one of the most significant events in Australia's past — an event that is often simply referred to as the 'European settlement' of the Australian continent. Many have argued that not all Australians place equal significance on 26 January 1788. Yet no event in the last 40 000 years of this continent's history has had such far reaching and even devastating consequences. For Aboriginal Australians it was 200 years ago that their ancestors realised that eleven of the numerous ships that had visited their shores had come to stay, to colonise, to conquer. It was also the end of one of the longest sea voyages in English history, and for those convicts who survived the 252 days that the voyage had taken, it was only the beginning of a much greater ordeal. Marines, too, felt the burden of their cargo and of the 'dreary prospect' before them.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the bicentennial theme 'Celebration of a nation' was to many Australians a controversial notion. Some felt its awkwardness as they sought to rediscover the past and, so, in some way, to redirect the future. Others believed it was an opportunity for reconciliation and unification for many people: for some World War II refugees and post World War II immigrants, Australia had provided opportunities and cause to celebrate.

Throughout the bicentennial year many projects and planned events did penetrate the 'birthday cake and candle' facade, producing regional unity in a way that national events could not hope to achieve. Indeed, it was through such regional unity that some national events, such as the Bicentennial Beacons, could be achieved.

Australians 1988 records such events and at the same time reflects the varying and often conflicting responses to Australia's Bicentenary. We hope we have captured something of the mood and feeling of Australia in 1988, in the day-to-day transactions of politics, business, law, sport, leisure and the arts.

The selection of entries was based on a set of criteria, but these guidelines merely serve as a watchdog for consistency and evenness of style. They do not in themselves justify our selection — this is in all events our choice. Others, no doubt, would choose a different set of criteria.

The articles sprinkled throughout the chronology afford greater opportunity for assessment and evaluation of their subject. Together, with the chronology, we hope they will form a valuable record of Australia in 1988.

Australians 1988 was inspired by the series *Australians: A historical library*. As publisher of the series, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon have endeavoured to maintain the standard of the series by producing a work that is comparable in its intent and quality. While not involved directly in the writing or publication of this book, we would like to take the opportunity to thank History Project Incorporated, the corporate authors of *Australians: A historical library*, and especially Peter Spearritt, for valuable time and advice.

Equally, we would like to thank Marion K. Stell and Ruth Thompson for their patience, persistence and thoroughness. The contemporary nature of this work often made it difficult to locate official sources of information and to verify newspaper and other media reports.

We would also like to thank David Syme & Co and John Fairfax & Sons Ltd for their valuable help in the compilation of this work, in particular, the illustrations. A special thanks must go to Fiona Russell and Ray Blackburn of David Syme & Co, Lee McDonald of John Fairfax & Sons Ltd, and Douglas Sellick, Alan Moir, Ron Tandberg, Michael Leunig, Peter Nicholson, Michael Fitzjames and Bruce Petty.

KIM ANDERSON



1 January The official New Year Bicentennial celebrations centred on Melbourne where the tall ships were anchored in Port Phillip Bay. Under the headline 'Spirit of festivity prevails. A mix of hype, history', a *Time* reporter described the scene.

The sound of New Year, the Bicentennial year, was the blaring of plastic trumpets and thudding of fireworks in the night sky. The smell of New Year was a heady mixture of sunburn cream and fast food: pizza slices and waffles, dagwood dogs and meat pies, Thai takeaway and 'Authentic German sausages', Chocee Nanas, Indian samosas and Hot American Donuts. Call it a triumph for free enterprise and edible multiculturalism. The sight of New Year was spectacular: rigging and masts of tall ships etched against a city skyline made fuzzy by rain. Rain? Sorry. The weather of New Year was lousy.

But . . . rain could only dampen rather than destroy celebration in Melbourne . . .

Rain also fell in Hobart on the first day of the three-day Festival of Hobart, which included harbour cruises on the North Head ferry, a martial arts display, buskers and entertainment by Te Roopu Arohandi, a group of Maori performers. A family concert featuring the Tasmanian Junior Wind Symphony, the Deaf Choir and the Geilston High Big Band, was held at St Davids Park, Hobart, on New Year's Eve. Others converged on Hobart's waterfront where the boats in the Sydney-to-Hobart and Melbourne-to-Hobart yacht races were moored.

Territorians greeted the New Year quietly with police reporting few arrests, but in

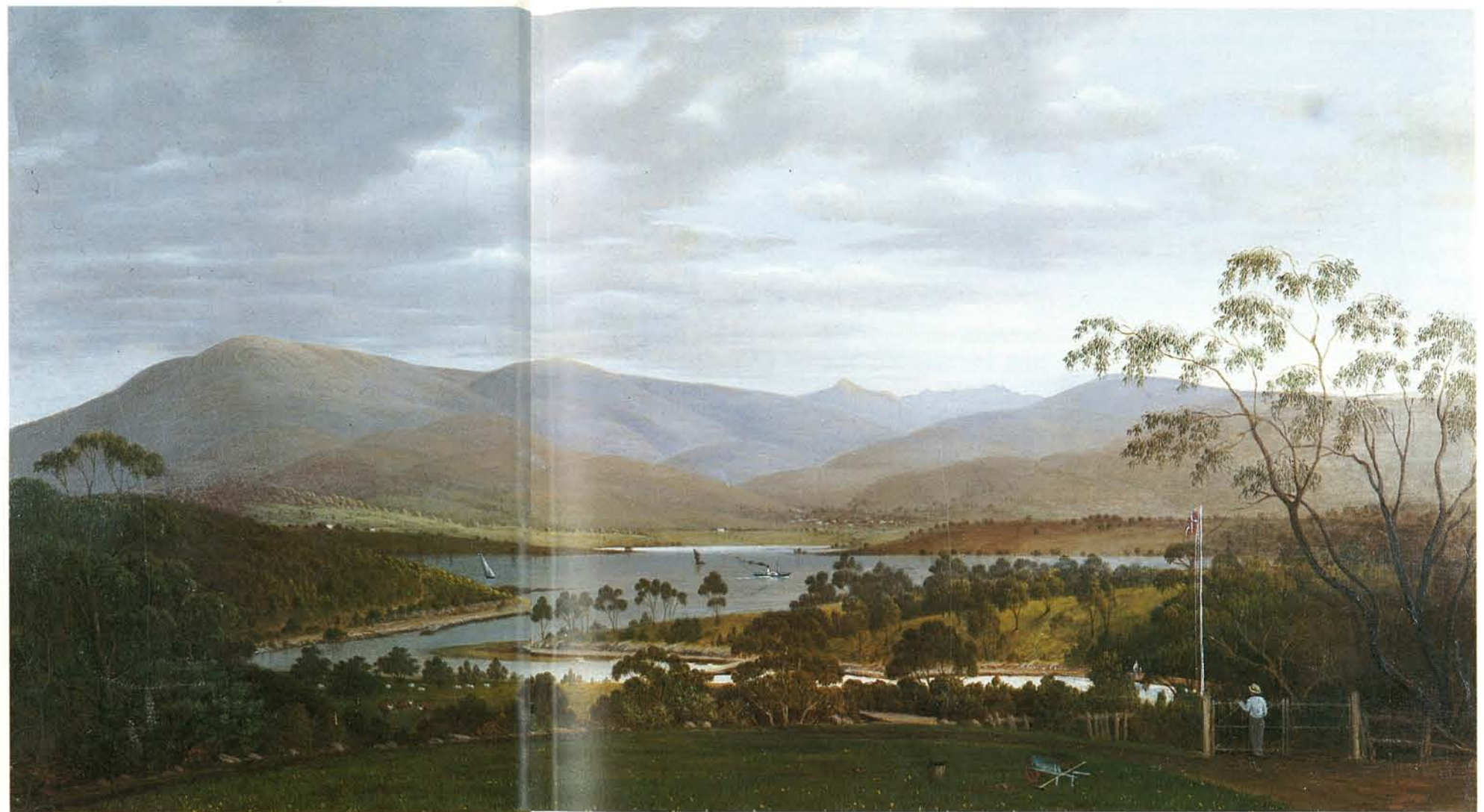
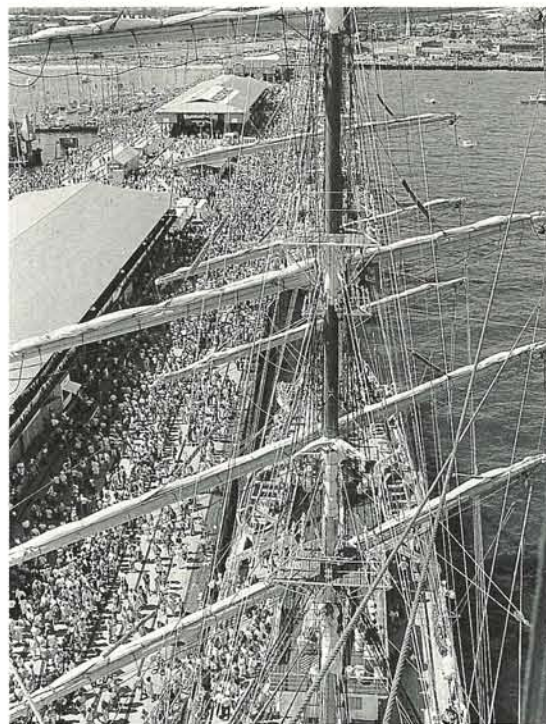
Cartoonist Michael Leunig's wry comment as Australia began the national celebration of the bicentennial year. Age, 1 January 1988.

Fremantle, WA, revellers smashed shop windows and police reinforcements were brought in from Perth to quell rowdy behaviour. Queensland police also reported fewer arrests than normal as council workers began the clean-up in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Aborigines held a memorial service in Musgrave Park, Brisbane, and raised their flag to half-mast in protest against '200 years of mistreatment and misunderstanding' of Aborigines by Europeans. Demonstrators marched silently through Townsville and gathered to sing hymns of grief and watch dancers give performances symbolic of the loss of Aboriginal identity as well as hope for the future. Organisers asked Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to keep their children at home on the first day of the school year to show opposition to the white system of education.

1 January In Canberra, Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Mrs Hazel Hawke hosted a Bicentennial dinner at The Lodge for more than 100 guests.

Pawel Roguszcak captured the scene at Melbourne's Princes Pier from the mizzenmast of his ship, Poland's Dar Mlodziezy, in port for the New Year celebrations. Age, 1 January 1988.



1 January The *Tasmanian vision* art exhibition opened at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart. The exhibition covered the period 1777 to 1900 and aimed to display examples of Tasmanian colonial art. Artists included John Glover, Benjamin Dutterau and T. G. Wainwright. The exhibition went on display at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, on 16 March.

1 January The first Bicentennial activity to be completed in the New Year was the Police Camel Expedition which left Darwin on 6 September 1987 and finished in a procession along the main street of Adelaide just after midnight on 1 January. Under the leadership of South Australian police officer Constable

Robert Clyne and Constable John White of the Northern Territory, the expedition commemorated the pioneering work of police who patrolled the Northern Territory and the far north of South Australia from 1880 to the 1950s.

1 January All children born in WA during 1988 received a \$50 savings account from the state government and the Rural and Industries Bank to commemorate the Bicentenary. This gift cannot be drawn on until the children reach twelve years of age.

1 January Twenty-one-year-old Mitchell Kemp, vice-president of the Melbourne Trail Horse Riders Association, left Melbourne on the first leg of a three-week horse ride to com-

G.F. Evans, Risdon Cove (1890s), oil on canvas, one of the exhibits in the Tasmanian vision art exhibition. TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

memorate the 150th anniversary of the first overland mail run between Melbourne and Sydney.

1 January Prime Minister Bob Hawke launched the Bicentennial celebrations in NSW at the Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay, and again at the Federation Pavilion in Centennial Park, Sydney. In his opening speech at the Bicentennial Park he said that Australia had to learn from its past. 'It is only if we do that that we can rectify those mistakes, those wrongs . . . It's only if we do that that we will give the Bicentenary its proper and full meaning.'

1 January Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen opened the World Scout Jamboree at Cataract Park, Appin, near Sydney. Fourteen thousand Scouts from 80 countries had gathered for the event.

1 January Aboriginal activist Gary Foley launched the Aboriginal Year of Mourning at La Perouse, Sydney. He told supporters that Aborigines wanted to force international pressure on the government to deliver 'real land rights and economic independence, to grant self-determination to Aborigines.' Floral wreaths were scattered across the waters of Botany Bay to mark a '200-year-old war with the white invaders'.

1 January The Australian Bicentennial Exhibition opened at Albury-Wodonga, NSW. The travelling exhibition, transported in 25 semi-trailers and scheduled to make 34 stops in its year-long tour of Australia, was originally designed to give Australians in rural areas an opportunity to experience a major Bicentennial event.



Textile wallhanging in patchwork created by 34 community groups for the Australian Bicentennial travelling exhibition. The reverse side shows designs capturing the character of each region.
AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

1 January *Australia live — celebration of a nation*, a four-hour television program telecast live from 70 locations around the world, was broadcast on the ABC, SBS and Channel 9 television stations. It featured messages from world leaders and Australian celebrities overseas, live telecasts from on board the *Indian Pacific* train and Antarctica and an underwater interview with Valerie Taylor from the Great Barrier Reef.

1 January The federal government's controversial \$5 immigration fee for international air travellers came into operation.

1 January The Australian Archives released the 1957 federal cabinet papers held under the thirty-year secrecy rule. The papers revealed that in 1957 Australian-Indonesian relations deteriorated. The Australian prime minister, Robert Menzies, urged US intervention in Indonesia. President Sukarno was threatening military action following the defeat of a United Nations resolution that demanded the return of the Dutch territory of West New Guinea (Irian Jaya) to Indonesia. The cabinet papers also revealed that ANZUS nations had considered contingency military plans against Indonesia if it became 'communist controlled'.

In another cabinet paper, the immigration minister, Athol Townley, described the dictation test for potential immigrants, which was adopted by the Australian government in 1902, as an 'undesirable feature'. The test effectively excluded non-European immigrants by requiring them to undertake a test in an unfamiliar language. Townley suggested that the test needed to be replaced because 'the essential objective is to preserve that power in a form which makes no reference to such delicate matters as racial origin'. The Migration Act of 1958 abolished the test but introduced a system of granting or withholding landing permits.

1 January Australian infertility specialists from the PIVET Medical Centre in Perth reported the success of PROST (pronuclear stage tubal transfer), whereby the early embryo is transferred to the Fallopian tubes instead of to the uterus as in conventional in-vitro fertilisation and embryo transfer techniques.

1 January Australia's one-hundredth heart transplant patient, Kurt Schutze, walked in the grounds of St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, for the first time since his operation ten days before.

1 January The federal opposition attacked Prime Minister Bob Hawke's defence of his role in the events that led to the resignation of Tourism Minister John Brown. Brown resigned



The schooner Alan and Vi Thistlethwayte trapped in pack ice. Photograph by Lincoln Hall.



Manhauling on Tucker Glacier. Photograph by Lincoln Hall.

BICENTENNIAL ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

1 January The Bicentennial Antarctic Expedition continued its voyage after departing from Walsh Bay, Sydney, on 31 December 1987.

'Our team of six mountaineers and five ship's crew left Sydney on 31 December 1987 on board the 21-metre schooner *Alan and Vi Thistlethwayte*. On the voyage south our ship was plagued with engine trouble and the generator failed. We were delayed a further 36 hours when the ship became trapped in pack ice. We reached Cape Hallett, our destination, in the early hours of 1 February. Our aim was to be the first people to climb Mt Minto, which at 4163 metres is the highest peak in the Admiralty Mountains. Though Mt Minto was only 70 kilometres from the coast, heavily crevassed terrain dictated that we make a long detour around the back of the range. This involved an outward journey of 150 kilometres. Our motorised toboggan was lost in disintegrating sea-ice on 7 February, so that we had to cover the remaining 120 kilometres to the mountain on foot, hauling our supplies behind us on sleds.

After an abortive attempt to reach the peak on 17 February, all six mountaineers (Greg Mortimer, Lincoln Hall, Lyle Closs, Chris Hilton, Jonathan Chester and Glenn Singleman) managed to reach the summit on 18 February at 5.30 pm. Wind speed was 40 knots and the air temperature approximately -20° Celsius. We named the south ridge which we had climbed 'World Park Ridge' and descended to our base camp. When relaying news of our success by radio from base camp we learned that the sea-ice was freezing around our ship at Cape Hallett, indicating the rapid onset of winter. This fact, and the presence of dangerous pack ice in Moubury Bay to the north of the cape, led skipper Don Richards to request the use of helicopters from the vessel *Greenpeace* to hasten our retreat from the mountain. The crew of *Greenpeace* generously agreed.

After three days of bad weather we had covered only half the distance back to the ship and we were picked up by a helicopter from the 120 kilometre-long Tucker Glacier. Immediately upon reaching Cape Hallett and rejoining our ship, we motored north. A five-day gale, strengthening to Force 11, almost destroyed our vessel. As a result of the storm the ship's tailshaft broke, all but one sail was ripped, the largest freshwater tank was ruptured and the radar was made inoperable. North-westerly storms prevented us from making any headway to the west and allowed little progress to the north. We had no option but to set course for New Zealand. As we approached the South Island, conditions improved and we sailed comfortably to Lyttelton, the port for Christchurch, arriving on 22 March.'

LINCOLN HALL

GERMAINE GREER

4 January Feminist author, academic and expatriate Germaine Greer published an article in the London newspaper, the *Independent*, critical of the Australian Bicentennial celebrations. Entitled 'Time to party, or protest', Greer wrote 'Many Australians are beginning to wonder if making multi-million dollar whoopee because a few hundred oppressed people were dumped on the eastern shore of the continent and left to kill or be killed by the native population, the elements and each other, exactly two hundred years ago, is such a good idea after all.' Her article drew attention to the Aboriginal boycott of the celebrations, the fight for land rights and the opening of the Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.



Author of the influential book *The female eunuch* (1970), criticising the oppression of women and the male domination of Western culture, Greer had returned to Australia in order to examine the treatment of Aborigines. She praised the strength of Aboriginal women, 'Historically, it is the women whose gathering skills have kept the race alive'. Caustically, she told British readers 'Tasmanian children of Aborigine descent were taught at school that the Tasmanian Aborigines were extinct. If the white man could have left the black woman alone they would have been.'

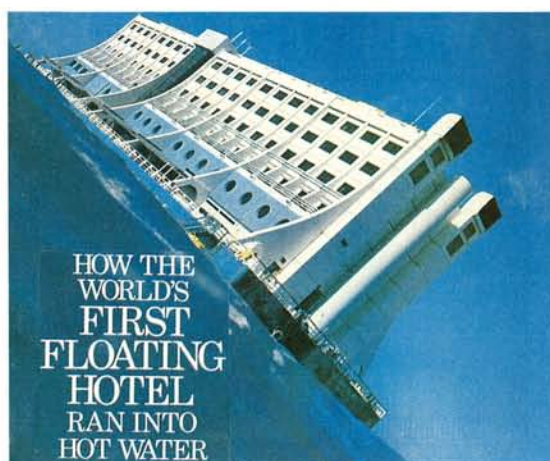
Throughout January Greer addressed capacity audiences at several Australian universities. She delivered the theme lecture 'Australia: a just society?' at the University of Western Australia's sixtieth Summer School. At Melbourne University she criticised mainstream Australian fiction, journalism and academic writing standards. Addressing the topic 'What should women be writing about now?' at the Australian National University, Greer called for a closer examination of the theory of sexism and of the common factors in sexual discrimination, 'her story, the humanising of history, has been a long and slow and agonising process' she said.

on 17 December 1987 after admitting that he had misled parliament over the tendering of a contract for Expo '88.

1-17 January The NSW police carried out a drug raid, code named 'Operation Banana Split', around Kempsey on the north coast. The raid led to 27 arrests and the seizure of marijuana crops worth \$16 million.

3 January The \$50 million seven-storey Four Seasons Barrier Reef Resort 'floatel' (a floating hotel) was carried to John Brewer Reef, 72 kilometres northeast of Townsville. The floating hotel opened on 18 March.

3 January Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gerry Hand announced he would boycott all official



Feature writer Jane Cadzow examines the controversy surrounding the Four Seasons Barrier Reef Resort. Front cover, Good Weekend, 29 October 1988.

Bicentennial functions. He said 'I think the Aboriginal people have little or nothing to celebrate during the course of 1988 . . . I think they're entitled to put their point of view about what has happened to their race during the last 200 years. I certainly won't be interfering in the right they have to put a point of view.'

3 January Thieves broke into the National Australia Bank's George Street (Haymarket) branch in Chinatown, Sydney, between 31 December and 3 January, robbing many of its safety deposit boxes, the contents of which are largely unknown. Losses varied, with some thought to be as high as \$100 million. The bank is situated close to the heart of Sydney's Chinatown.

4 January Prisoners at Fremantle prison held five warders hostage after starting a fire that destroyed a large section of the 130-year-old gaol. The following day the WA government announced that there would be an inquiry headed by John McKivern, a retired senior prison officer, into the riot. The findings would be made public.

5 January The federal government announced a joint Australian-Japanese study into a high-technology city, 'multi-function polis'. The city, with a projected international population of between 50 000 and 100 000, would be linked by satellite with global data bases, and include a centre for international cultural, scientific and technological interchange in the Pacific region.

5 January The Quakers (Religious Society of Friends) launched the *Bicentennial beast* in Adelaide, an exhibition protesting the \$200 million Bicentennial celebrations. The society's presiding clerk Bronwen Meredith said that '... rather than being a time for celebration, this is a time for reflection and prayer — reflection on the history and cruelty and injustice to the original owners of this land . . .'

5 January The federal government released the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on drug abuse as part of its drug offensive campaign. The figures showed that in 1985 there were 283 deaths in the heroin-opiate category among fifteen- to twenty-year-olds.

5 January The federal government announced draft self-regulation guidelines for retailers under which the importation, manufacture or sale of 'toy nasties' would be banned. The toys typically feature physically impaired or injured children.

6 January The \$450 million Sanctuary Cove resort on the Gold Coast, which opened amid a blaze of publicity, failed to attract the projected crowds. Heavy rains marred the 'Ultimate Event', featuring Frank Sinatra.

6 January Energy Resources of Australia and Electricite de France signed a long-term contract for the supply of Australian uranium to France. This was the first contract between the countries since the federal Labor government lifted its ban in 1986 on uranium sales to France (who is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). The announcement sparked an outcry from environmentalists, anti-nuclear groups and some Labor politicians.

6 January In an unusual step by immigration officials, three Tamils were sent back to Sri Lanka after their applications for refugee status were rejected by the federal government.

7 January State and federal education ministers agreed to change school curricula by placing greater emphasis on the role of Aborigines in Australian history following moves by teachers' unions to boycott school Bicentennial programs that did not address the Aboriginal perspective of the Bicentenary.

7 January Serious bushfires in SA destroyed parts of the Morialta Falls Conservation Park in the Adelaide hills, the Myora pine forest in the southeast of the state, and Mount Remarkable National Park, north of Adelaide. In Tas four fires broke out near North West Bay, south of Hobart.

7 January A report prepared by the Department of Employment, Education and Training for the federal government, entitled *Meeting Australia's skill needs*, was released. It noted that hospitals in Australia, especially public hospitals in Vic and NSW, were critically short of nurses, despite overseas recruitment programs

and efforts to attract nurses in Australia back to the profession.

7 January Journalists at the ABC voted to apply workbans after the corporation allegedly failed to honour a verbal job offer to investigative journalist Wendy Bacon. The matter was referred to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

8 January In a report *Towards reconciliation in Australian society: reconciliation and Aboriginal Australians*, church leaders called for Aborigines to be given an assured place in the political process. The report was the first of six papers on reconciliation to be published during the year.

8 January Michael Mansell, barrister and legal adviser to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Hobart, announced his intention to conduct further negotiations with Libya and other countries in an effort to fund a new Aboriginal political movement. The federal government had ceased direct funding to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in May 1987, but resumed funding it in the wake of Mansell's visit to Libya.

8 January Charles Perkins, head of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs, urged a cut in Asian immigration and a more balanced intake of immigrants during a speech to the National Lutheran Youth Assembly in Canberra. His comments caused controversy and embarrassed the Labor government.

8 January According to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian wine exports almost doubled in 1987. The largest buyer of Australian export wine is Sweden, where the Chernobyl disaster has left fears of contaminated food, followed by the United Kingdom and the United States.

8 January *Shipwreck!*, a Bicentennial exhibition of Australia's maritime history, opened at the Western Australian Museum. The exhibition included displays of Dutch and British ships wrecked in Australian waters prior to 1800 and featured the pewter plate left by Dutch navigator Dirk Hartog on a beach south of Carnarvon, WA, in 1616. The plate was lent by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The exhibi-

tion toured SA, NT, Vic, Tas, Qld, finishing in NSW.

9 January Motorcyclist Wayne Gardner and the Australian men's cricket team won the ABC sports awards for 1987.

9 January The Elizabethan Theatre Trust's revival of David Williamson's play *The department* opened in Melbourne. It was first performed in 1974 to mark the opening of the Adelaide Festival Centre.

9 January Crowds gathered in Sydney's Domain for a performance of Verdi's *La traviata* at the annual 'Opera in the park'. The opera was also staged on the following Saturday at Parramatta Park in Sydney.

9 January Macquarie Street, Sydney, was closed for a street parade with the theme 'New South Wales 1778-1988' to mark the official opening of the refurbished Macquarie Street and Circular Quay areas.

9 January The NSW team defeated ACT 7-2 in the final of the Australian women's softball championships in Brisbane.

10 January Bob Hawke became the longest-serving Labor prime minister in Australian history with 763 days in office since his election on 11 March 1983. The previous record-holder was Andrew Fisher who served three terms: 13 November 1908-2 June 1909, 29 April 1910-24 June 1913, 17 September 1914-27 October 1915.

10 January Kerry Saxby broke the world 5000 metres walking record by 40 seconds, recording a time of 20 minutes 55.76 seconds, at the Sydney Athletic Field.

11-24 January The first Australian Open to be played at the National Tennis Centre in Flinders Park, Melbourne, was held. Members of the Australian Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstrated against Australian player Pat Cash, winner of the 1987 South African Open. Cash was defeated by Sweden's Mats Wilander in the men's final. Defending women's champion Hana Mandlikova, who had become an Australian citizen on 1 January, lost to West German Steffi Graf in the quarter finals. Graf



Eight-year-old Zimbabwe-born Kudzai McFarlane of Flemington, Melbourne, protesting outside the National Tennis Centre, Flinders Park, against the visit to South Africa of tennis champion Pat Cash. Photograph by Neil Newitt. Age, 12 January 1988.

defeated US player Chris Evert in the women's final.

12 January Foreign Minister Bill Hayden met with US trade representatives in the first of a series of yearly ministerial meetings. Hayden voiced Australia's opposition to US protectionist trade legislation, claiming that it threatened the level of Australia's primary exports.

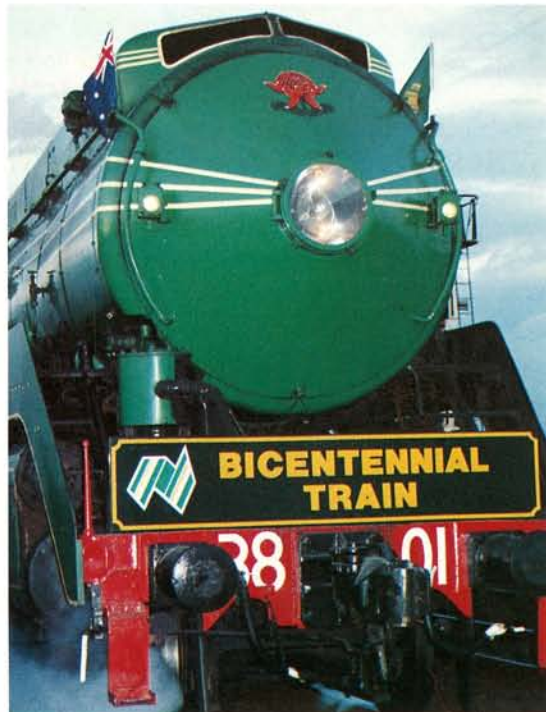
12 January The 3801 locomotive train set off on its Bicentennial journey around Australia. The C38 locomotives were designed and built in Australia in the late 1930s and early 1940s and heralded a new age in high-speed passenger travel. Locomotive 3801 held the Sydney-to-Newcastle record of 2 hours, 1 minute, 55 seconds until 9 October 1988 when the XPT covered the distance in 1 hour, 55 minutes, 51 seconds.

13 January Australian army officer Captain Peter McCarthy was killed in South Lebanon

while serving as a United Nations observer. He was the first member of the Australian armed services to be killed in an overseas conflict since the Vietnam War.

13 January The fourth annual Burra to Broken Hill Barrow Push began. The event commemorates the 1883 trek of miners from Burra, where copper mines had closed, to the newly discovered silver, lead and zinc deposits at Broken Hill.

13 January The Aboriginal Cricket Association held a one-day match against the Prime Ministerial XI, to celebrate the one-hundred-and-twentieth anniversary of a series of matches played in England between an Aboriginal team and English teams. The Aboriginal team won by seven wickets. Hawke made a 'solid nought' according to one young autograph hunter while legendary wicket-keeper Rodney Marsh said 'We're too old mate . . . we're just too bloody old.' A lone Aboriginal protestor, actor and former senate candidate Burnum Burnum, was removed from the pitch by police.



Steam train enthusiasts boarded the Bicentennial Train, pulled by locomotive 3801, as it made its way around Australia. Good Weekend, 2 July 1988.



The Tall Ships anchored at Darling Harbour, Sydney.
 Photograph by Neil Morrison.
 WELDON TRANNIES

14 January The Hobart–Sydney Tall Ships Bicentennial race began. A reported 165 vessels took part in the race, which was intended to introduce young people to sailing.

14–25 January Tamworth, NSW, hosted the Australian Country Music Festival.

15 January Fast bowler Dennis Lillee came out of retirement to join the Tasmanian men's cricket team in a Sheffield Shield match against South Australia. He took 4/99 off 45 overs.

15 January Imparja Television, the Aboriginal-owned station, began its first regular broadcast with the award-winning series *Women of the Sun*.

16 January Manning Clark's *history of Australia — the musical* premiered at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne. Based on the historian's six-volume *History of Australia*, the production was directed by John Bell with music by Martin Armiger, George Dreyfus and David King. It received mixed reviews and closed prematurely.

16 January Victoria won the Ruth Preddey Cup for the highest aggregate points during the

two-week Commonwealth Bank National Women's Cricket Championships in Canberra.

16 January Sydney's Bob Brown won the Australian 18-Foot Skiff Yacht Championships held off St Kilda, Melbourne, in *Southern Cross*. On 7 February he won the World 18-Foot Skiff Championships on Sydney Harbour.

17 January Judy Chicago's controversial feminist art installation *The dinner party* opened at the Exhibition Building, Melbourne. The table is set for 39 women who were selected for their significant contribution to the fight against the oppression of women. A further 999 women's names are written on the floor.

18 January Prime Minister Bob Hawke, campaigning in Adelaide for the by-election to be held on 6 February, announced that the government would introduce timed local telephone calls. Under the Telecom Australia proposal, a four-minute local daytime call could cost 16 cents instead of 20 cents for an unlimited time call. Hawke supported the view that most local calls were less than 6 minutes and that these callers would be better off.

18–20 January At a three-day meeting on Thursday Island, Torres Strait leaders voted unanimously to secede from Australia. The island's Co-ordinating Council planned to challenge the Commonwealth in the High Court in an attempt to gain compensation for loss of land and resources.

19 January Thirty-year-old Gary Punch was appointed minister for the arts and territories and minister assisting the minister for immigration and local government. His appointment resulted from a cabinet reshuffle following the resignations of Senator Susan Ryan and Tourism Minister John Brown in December 1987.

19 January The federal government's Social Security Review released a report *Income support for the unemployed in Australia: towards a more active system*. The report recommended a restructuring of unemployment benefits taking into account factors such as age and experience, a relaxation of income tests, an increase in unemployment benefits to the level of pensions and an extended retraining program for those

people up to 55 years of age who had been unemployed for longer than 12 months.

19 January The bicentennial third annual World Series Cycling commenced in Albury. The Australian team led by Martin Vinnicombe defeated the Rest of the World team 392–372 during the 12-meet series, which finished in Sydney on 6 February.

20 January The first genetically engineered vaccine Engerix-B was released in Australia. It is used to control the sexually transmitted virus hepatitis B and is expected to halve the cost of immunisation.

20 January The Victorian Employers' Federation released its report *Rebirth of the lucky country*, a critical response to the ACTU's blueprint for economic recovery, entitled *Australia reconstructed*, which was published in July 1987.

20 January The Australian defence forces introduced a requirement that all regular

entrants be tested for the AIDS virus. The twelve-month trial also required personnel in other categories to be tested. Any person with the disease would be discharged.

20 January The federal government continued its progressive liberalisation of foreign investment with the announcement that the 50 per cent Australian equity rule would no longer apply in oil and gas developments. Strict rules would still apply to mining, real estate, banking and the media.

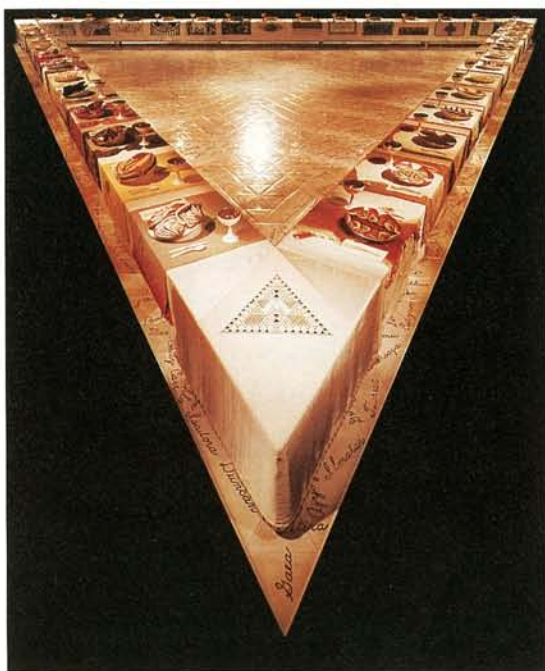
20 January Former Olympic hockey representative Des Piper revealed that he, not Dawn Fraser, had stolen flags at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In 1964 the Australian Swimming Union banned Fraser for ten years over the incident.

20–25 January The Commission of Inquiry into the Rehabilitation of Nauru found that the Pacific Island's former colonial administrators — Australia, Britain and New Zealand — were responsible for the rehabilitation of Nauru land damaged by phosphate mining prior to independence in 1968. The Australian government stated that it was not bound by the findings of the inquiry which had no legal standing in Australia.

20–25 January The Australian women's cricket team defeated New Zealand 3–0 during the Shell Rose Bowl Series One Day Internationals in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington.

21 January The board of Australia's largest company Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd regained control of its future when it signed an agreement effectively limiting the shareholdings of Robert Holmes à Court's Bell Resources Ltd and John Elliott's Elders IXL Ltd. Holmes à Court first made a takeover bid for BHP in 1983 through a little-known company Wigmore Ltd.

21 January Alexander Babiy, a Soviet post-graduate scientist who sought asylum at the Australian High Commission in New Delhi, arrived in Sydney, after the USSR government allowed him to emigrate.



THE DINNER PARTY

Judy Chicago

ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDING, Nicholson Street, Carlton, MELBOURNE, 17 January – 25 March 1988

Organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, New York City
Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities
The Dinner Party was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities
Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities
Produced by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Poster for Judy Chicago's *The dinner party*, showing the triangular table and names written on the floor.

THROUGH THE FLOWER CORPORATION, UNITED STATES

21 January Occidental Life Insurance Co of Australia Ltd announced that anyone seeking life cover for \$400 000 or more would face a mandatory AIDS antibody test. New applicants for life insurance would be required to sign an AIDS declaration form. This was the first time a life insurance company had introduced such requirements.

22 January On the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kim Philby's defection to the Soviet Union, new allegations surfaced that he was helped by Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett. The allegations appeared in a biography of Burchett by Roland Perry entitled *The exile, Burchett: reporter of conflict*.



One of two suggested designs for a new Australian flag released by Ausflag Ltd on 22 January.
AUSFLAG LTD

22 January Vincent Lingiara, Aboriginal land rights activist, died at the Northern Territory community of Daguragu.

22 January Two earthquakes occurred in the Tennant Creek area in the Northern Territory. The strongest measured seven on the Richter Scale.

22-24 January The Australian men's cricket team defeated New Zealand 2-0 in the finals of the Benson & Hedges World Series Cup One Day Internationals in Melbourne and Sydney. Tasmanian David Boon was named International Cricketer of the Year.

22 January-13 February The Bicentennial World Hang-Gliding Championships were held at Mt Buffalo, Victoria, the first world hang-gliding championships to be held in Australia.

24 January The Sydney Football Stadium opened.

25 January In an essay published on the eve of Australia Day, prominent historian Manning Clark argued that Australia was at last beginning to face the truth about the 'great evils' brought about by the coming of the British. He wrote 'recognition of those evils is the beginning of wisdom for those who want to understand the history of our ancient continent, [and] is one way to emancipate Australians from the dullness to which they committed themselves by not being prepared to face the truth.'

25-31 January SBS television began screening its *Australian retrospective*, which featured approximately 40 films including two from the original *Dad and Dave* series, Roy Rene's only movie *Strike me lucky*, and two of Charles Chauvel's classics *Forty thousand horsemen* and *Jedda* (Australia's first colour feature film).

26 January Australians commemorated 200 years of European settlement in official Australia Day ceremonies and informal gatherings across Australia. The Australian Bicentennial Authority organised a day-long program that centred on Sydney Harbour.

7.30 am At a ceremony in Customs House Square, Circular Quay, Sydney, the governor of NSW, Sir James Rowland, unveiled a plaque to mark the founding of NSW and to commemorate the raising of the Union Jack of Queen Anne by Captain Arthur Phillip.

11.00 am Aborigines and their supporters, led by Galarrwuy Yunupingu, head of the Northern Land Council, marched from Redfern Oval to Hyde Park. Aboriginal leaders, including Sydney activist Gary Foley, expressed their contempt for the Bicentenary and their hope for conciliation between blacks and whites. Aborigines from Arnhem Land and the Central Desert areas performed a 'welcoming dance' wearing traditional costume. A group of Tasmanian Aborigines organised a landing re-enactment that featured Captain Arthur Phillip being rowed ashore by two seamen. The boat was tipped over, the actors 'drowned' and three Aborigines took command of the boat.



WELDON TRANNIES

Left and below. The Tall Ships and accompanying flotilla of spectator craft made a magnificent sight on Sydney Harbour during the Australia Day celebrations. Photographs by Brendan Read.



WELDON TRANNIES

RAPPORT PHOTO AGENCY



Above. At night the Harbour Bridge was illuminated with giant birthday 'candles'. Photograph by Rob Tuckwell, Festival of Sydney.



WELDON TRANNIES



WELDON TRANNIES

Aborigines and their supporters demonstrate at Redfern Oval against the Australia Day 'celebrations'. Their banners questioned 'What's there to celebrate?' on 'Invasion Day'. Photographs by Brendan Read.

'COMMEMORATION OF THE PAST — COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE'

'We begin these celebrations in no spirit of boastfulness or national self-glorification. This is a day of commemoration. Even more important it is a day of commitment . . . Today, my fellow Australians, at this historic place and at this historic hour, let us renew that commitment, our commitment to Australia and Australia's cause — the cause of freedom, fairness, justice and peace.'

PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE AT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

'We pray that we might contribute to a truly Australian culture that takes full account of the sacredness of human life, the dignity of the individual and immortality of the human spirit.'

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP EDWARD CLANCY AT CUSTOMS HOUSE SQUARE,
SYDNEY

'The gathering here is expressing one simple message — that Aboriginal people in the last 200 years have survived, and we will survive. And let me say that we have been and we are here, and we will be here . . . We hope to establish a future for Australia, and that future is very simple and clear — white Australia together with Aboriginal Australians, and then we are all Australians.'

GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU, HEAD OF THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL IN SYDNEY

'As history goes, 200 years is barely a heartbeat. Yet look around you, and see what has happened in that time. A whole new free people. The people of a whole new free country, Australia.'

PRINCE CHARLES AT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

'So let's celebrate our entry into the new century that we begin living today, our third century as Australian members of the world community, with pride in our past and with a determination to work for a society of which we can continue to be proud in the future. Let's prefer hope to cynicism and faith in ourselves to suspicion of each other. I wish you all a splendid and joyous Bicentenary.'

AUSTRALIA DAY ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR NINIAN STEPHEN

11.00 am The Prince and Princess of Wales, accompanied by Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen and Lady Stephen, arrived by barge at the Man O'War Steps, Farm Cove. The official party walked to the Sydney Opera House forecourt where 4000 guests were assembled. The head of the NSW Bicentennial Council, Gerry Gleeson, introduced the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Reverend Donald Robinson, who offered a prayer for the nation. Australian soprano Joan Carden led the singing of a Bicentennial hymn *Lord of Earth and all creation* by the Sydney Philharmonia Choir, backed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The NSW premier, Barrie Unsworth, Prime

Minister Bob Hawke and Prince Charles gave short speeches.

11.38 am The eleven ships of the First Fleet Re-enactment sailed into Farm Cove, heralded by a medley of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh folk songs performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Philharmonia Choir and the Second Military District Band conducted by William Reid. About 150 military aircraft made a spectacular fly-past as the Naval Fleet Support Band played *God bless the Prince of Wales*. Thousands of balloons were released and fireworks were exploded following the singing of *Waltzing Matilda*.

3.30 pm The Parade of Sail, led by Britain's Bicentennial gift to Australia, the *Young Endeavour*, set off from the Harbour Bridge passing the review vessel HMAS *Cook*, moored off Bradley's Head. The Prince and Princess of Wales reviewed the two-hundred tall ships as they proceeded towards the Heads.

7.00 pm At the Opera House, the Australian Youth Orchestra began its concert with the Sydney Philharmonia Choir conducted by Felice Gillario. The concert concluded with the premiere of Peter Sculthorpe's Bicentennial composition *Child of Australia*, with words by Thomas Keneally.

8.50 pm HMAS *Canberra* fired an 86-gun cannonade to introduce the fireworks display, part of China's Bicentennial gift to Australia. The Harbour Bridge was lit up with fireworks.



Protestors and spectators share the foreshores of Lady Macquarie's Chair as Sydney Harbour becomes the focus of attention on Australia Day.

JOHN FAIRFAX & SONS

In other states and territories, Australians commemorated the day with flag-raising ceremonies, re-enactments of the landing of the First Fleet on local rivers and lakes, multicultural festivals, street parades, fun runs, speeches and receptions. Families and friends gathered to toast Australia's two hundredth birthday and watch the coverage of the day's events on television. For many Aborigines and their supporters, Australia Day was a day of mourning and the national celebrations were at best a joke, at worst an insult.

In Canberra, Australia Day saw the completion of the 280 kilometre *Man from Snowy River* rides again trek from Mount Kosciusko. Horses and riders paraded through the capital's streets to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin at Commonwealth Park, where the celebrations had begun the night before with a fireworks display.

For more than 200 people in Canberra and the Perth beachside suburb of Cottesloe, Australia Day marked their first day as Australians. At the informal naturalisation ceremony in Cottesloe, new citizens swore allegiance to the 'Queen of Australia and her heirs and successors' before a cheering crowd of observers. The ceremony continued with the flag being raised, a toast and three cheers as the band

played 'Advance Australia fair' and 'There's a whole lot better to come'.

The Aboriginal community at Raukkan, near Lake Alexandrina, southeast of Adelaide, had less cause to celebrate. Formerly the Point McLeay Mission, established in 1848, since 1974 it has been run by a nine-member Aboriginal council headed by Henry Rankine. For many the spectacular celebrations were inappropriate. They were more concerned with the white bureaucracy that had failed to provide the township with adequate facilities or employment opportunities for Aboriginal youth.

One-hundred-and-fifty kilometres away, Adelaide's Australia Day parade made its way from Victoria Square to Elder Park. The 97 floats included community groups, businesses, state and local governments, historical groups, the Australian-Korean Friendship Group, the Cambodian-Australian Association and many others. There was no Aboriginal representation. Festivities began early on the day with a cake-cutting and flag-raising ceremony in Rundle Mall, a demonstration of Wing Chun martial arts and entertainment from Caledonian Society dancers and bagpipes.

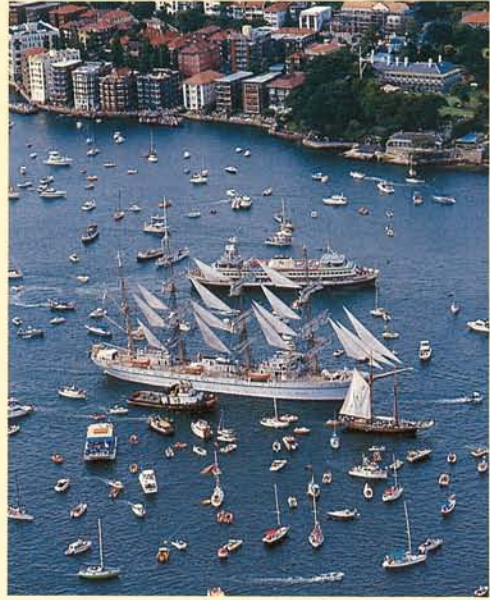
Multicultural Australia was the focus for Tasmania's Australia Day Bicentennial celebrations with a Mardi Gras at Launceston and

TALL SHIPS AUSTRALIA 1988

*I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and
the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by . . .*

JOHN MASEFIELD, *SEA FEVER*

The tall ships event commemorated Australia's long maritime tradition and its dependence on shipping for the transport of people and goods. Seventeen countries sent tall ships to compete in the event from Hobart to Sydney, but privately-owned tall ships increased the number of participants to about two hundred. The tall ships play an important role in sail training and at least half the crew are trainees between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Britain's Bicentennial gift, the *Young Endeavour* (right), a 44-metre brigantine, was designed to provide young Australians with the opportunity to experience the challenges of the sea.



26 January 1988. Photograph by Brendan Read.
WELDON TRANNIES

a daylong festival *Together '88* at the northern Hobart suburb of Glenorchy. Bwung Gul, a group from the Yirrkala Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land, NT, performed traditional dances including the Morning Star dance and tribute to the reef heron, which were televised nationally on the ABC as part of its Australia Day coverage. Other groups included Filipino traditional bamboo dancers, a group of Chilean musicians Arauco Libre, and Indian, Korean and Polish dance groups in national costume.

Australia's responsibilities in the Asia-Pacific region were remembered in a speech by Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop at the annual Australia Day reception hosted by the Australian Natives' Association in Melbourne. Sir Edward, a former army surgeon, said 'this is the last great continent on earth in which there is plenty of room for development, and we are surrounded by so many overcrowded and needy nations.' The association, which originated in Melbourne in 1871 as a friendly society paying hospital, medical and funeral benefits to subscribers, first suggested that 26 January be officially and uniformly celebrated as Australia Day in 1888, although the proposal was not adopted until 1935.

Elsewhere in Melbourne, Olympics bronze medallist Robbie Woodhouse won the five kilometre Yarra 'superswim' event and the Wandana, a former Royal Mail coach left City Square as part of a six-month re-tracing of routes taken by the old Cobb & Co coaches. Crowds lined the streets and waved to the children on board the horse-drawn vehicle, who were all suffering from cancer. The trip through more than 115 towns to Cairns aimed to raise funds for cancer research.

While Australians in rural areas could not enjoy at first hand the spectacular celebration of the capital cities, many joined local festivities. At Parkes, NSW, official ceremonies were followed by a billy-cart derby and a yabbie competition while in Victoria communities throughout the state began the day with a traditional Australian breakfast. In Dimboola (population 2000), 340 kilometres northwest of Melbourne, locals gathered at the old Shire offices for a flag-raising ceremony, organised by the Country Women's Association.

In the Northern Territory, Alice Springs (the town that gave Australia its only dry river race) hosted the Centralian Australia Day Mall, a combined games, competition pool party and

ball. Darwin Mall thronged with revellers, overlooked by patrons of the historic Victoria Hotel, many of whom took part in the 'iron-man event': drink a warm beer, eat two cold pies, do fifteen push-ups, drink a cold beer, eat four lamingtons, touch your toes twenty times and drink another warm beer.

In river-bound Brisbane, thousands enjoyed the Australia Day Beach Party at New Farm Park 'where 50 metres of beach sand was deposited to overcome the geographical inadequacies of the terrain. Amid the euphoria of the birthday celebrations, about four hundred Aborigines and their supporters marched through the city streets, serving as a sharp reminder of the European invasion of Australia on this anniversary day.

THE SETTLEMENT

26 January 1788 'The spot chosen for this purpose was at the head of the Cove, near a run of fresh water, which stole silently through a very thick wood, the stillness of which had then, for the first time since the creation, been interrupted by the rude sound of the labourer's axe, and the downfall of its ancient inhabitants: — a stillness and tranquillity which, from that day, were to give place to the voice of labour, the confusion of camps and towns, and the bush hum of its new possessors.'

JUDGE ADVOCATE DAVID COLLINS

26 January Standing on the white cliffs of Dover, England, Aboriginal author and activist Burnum Burnum read a declaration and sym-

bolically took possession of England on behalf of Australian Aborigines.

Burnum Burnum beneath the white cliffs of Dover.



DAVID SYME & CO



This graphic of a giant echidna made the final in a competition, organised by radio station 2BL, to design a commemorative symbol above Kings Cross tunnel, Sydney. Sydney Morning Herald, 31 July 1987.

26 January In the Bicentennial Australia Day honours list, fourteen Australians, including the former NSW premier Neville Wran and seven judges, received the highest honour, Companion of the Order of Australia. Justice Mary Gaudron, Australia's first female High Court judge, declined the decoration.

27 January The Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody began hearings in Adelaide. The federal government had announced the establishment of a royal commission on 11 August 1987. Its terms of reference included the investigation of all cases where Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had died in police custody, prison or other place

of detention since 1 January 1980. Justice James Muirhead was appointed commissioner on 1 September 1987 and hearings opened in Canberra on 12 November. The initial deadline for the commission's report was 30 June 1988 but on 15 April this was extended to 31 December 1989.

27-30 January The Prince and Princess of Wales left Sydney for a four-day visit to Melbourne and Adelaide. In Melbourne Prince Charles discussed the city's urban renewal program with state government ministers and visited public housing developments in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne. The couple, who had arrived in Australia on 25 January, attended the Footscray Multicultural Community Bicentennial Festival at Footscray Park. In SA they attended official engagements in Adelaide, Goolwa and Victor Harbor.

28 January The NSW government declared up to 80 000 hectares as new national parks or additions to existing national parks and reserves in the southeast woodchip logging region west of Eden.

29 January The federal government announced the resumption of development aid to Fiji following the decision to recognise the state of Fiji rather than the Fijian government. The elected Fijian government was overthrown by Brigadier Rabuka in May 1987. Diplomatic relations were restored on 3 March.

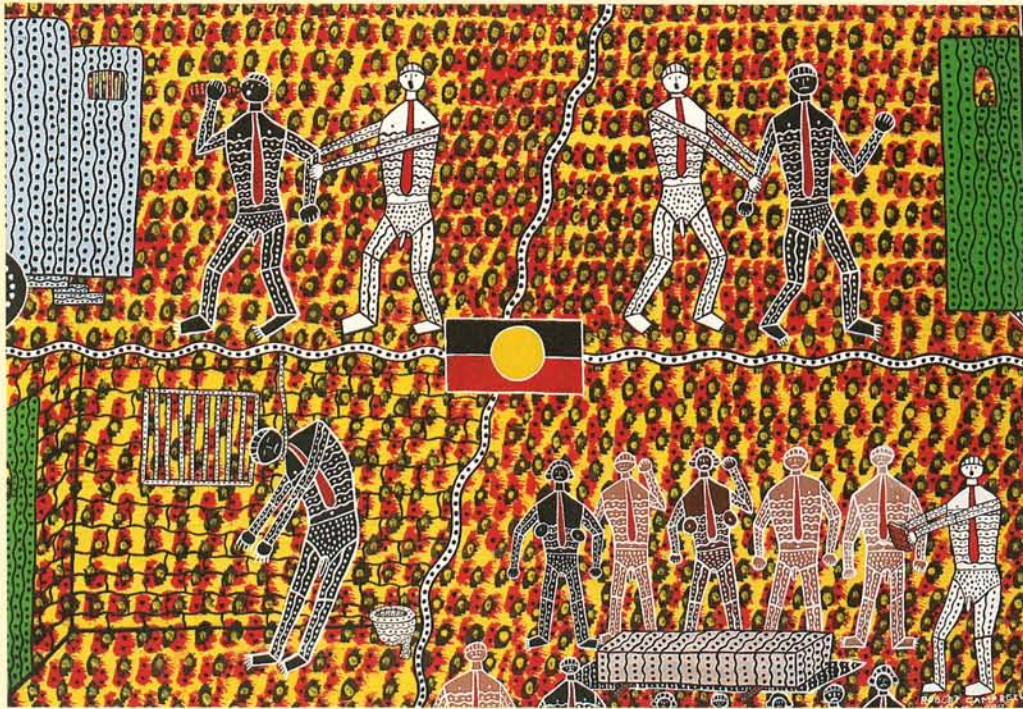
29 January The government released the 1987 December quarter Consumer Price Index.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Group Index Numbers — Weighted Average of Eight Capital Cities

| (Base of each index: Year 1980-81 = 100.0 unless otherwise noted) | | | | Household equipment and operation | Transportation | Tobacco and alcohol | Health and personal care | Recreation and education (a) | All groups |
|---|-------|----------|---------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Period | Food | Clothing | Housing | | | | | | |
| 1987-88— | | | | | | | | | |
| Sept qtr | 160.2 | 159.1 | 172.3 | 168.8 | 181.9 | 192.6 | 163.7 | 148.7 | 170.0 |
| Dec qtr | 162.2 | 163.8 | 174.4 | 171.4 | 186.7 | 195.9 | 168.4 | 149.5 | 172.9 |
| Mar qtr | 165.0 | 163.9 | 177.2 | 173.4 | 188.6 | 199.8 | 176.2 | 155.3 | 176.0 |
| June qtr | 170.4 | 170.1 | 180.8 | 176.1 | 188.2 | 203.0 | 179.2 | 156.9 | 179.0 |
| 1988-89— | | | | | | | | | |
| Sept qtr | 175.1 | 170.8 | 188.0 | 179.0 | 191.1 | 205.6 | 180.6 | 158.1 | 182.4 |

(a) Base: March quarter 1982 = 100.0. Australian Bureau Statistics, Catalogue no 1304.0.



Robert Campbell Jr, *Death in custody*, acrylic on canvas, 1987.

ROBERT HOLMES À COURT COLLECTION

CANTICLE FOR THE BICENTENNIAL DEAD

*They are talking, in their cedar benched rooms
on French-polished chairs, and they talk
in reasonable tones, in the great stone buildings
they are talking firmly, in the half-light*

*and they mention at times the drinking of alcohol,
the sweet blood-coloured wine the young drink,
the beer they share in the riverless river-beds
and the backstreets, and in the main street —*

*in government coloured parks, drinking
the sweet blood in recreation patches, campsites.
They talk, the clean handed ones, as they gather
strange facts; and as they talk*

*collecting words, they sweat under nylon-wigs.
Men in blue uniforms are finding the bodies,
the Uniforms are finding the dead: young hunters
who have lost their hunting, singers who*

*would sing of fish, are now found hung —
crumpled in night-rags in the public's corners;
discovered there broken, illuminated by the stripes
of regulated sunlight beneath the whispering*

*rolling cell window bars. Their bodies
found in postures of human-shaped effigies,
hunched in the dank sour urinated atmosphere
near the bed-board, beside cracked lavatory bowls*

*slumped on the thousand grooved, fingernailed
walls of your local Police Station's cell.
Bodies of the streets' larrikin Koories
suspended above concrete in phenyle thick air.*

*Meanwhile outside the count continues, on radio
the TV news; like Vietnam again, the faces
of mothers torn across the screens.
And the poets write no elegies, artists*

*cannot describe the shape of their grief, though
the clean handed ones paginate dossiers
and court reporters' hands move over papers.*

Robert Adamson



Cartoonist Bill Mitchell targets WA businessman Alan Bond, chairman of Swan Breweries Ltd, in his comment on Bond University. *Australian*, 29 January 1988.
NEWS LTD

29 January Professor Don Watts, vice chancellor of Bond University — Australia's first private university — released details of the fee structure. Undergraduate degrees would cost \$36 000, with an additional \$12 000 for an honours degree. The university would begin taking students in February 1989.

29 January The Bicentennial test cricket match between England and Australia began at the Sydney Cricket Ground. English captain Mike Gatting won the toss and elected to bat. The match ended in a draw on 2 February.

31 January The Prince and Princess of Wales attended an international fashion parade at the Sydney Opera House entitled *The Bicentennial collection — the world pays tribute to Australian wool*. They ended their Australian tour on 3 February in Darwin where they visited the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences and a crocodile farm.

31 January The National Companies and Securities Commission and the Australian Stock Exchange required publicly listed companies to disclose the value of listed stock as at 31 December 1987 in an effort to provide shareholders with updated information on the value of shares in the aftermath of the October 1987 share market crash.

31 January Sixteen-year-old Sydney school boy Shane Hill became the world's youngest International Master of Chess.

CELEBRATION OF A NATION

Let's lend a hand
And show the world
How great we all can be
All those years
Of sweat and tears
It's our Bicentenary
The celebration of a nation
Give us a hand
Celebration of a nation
Let's make it grand
Let's make it great in '88
C'mon give us a hand

For six months dress designers, pop singers, folk heroes, the stars of Foster's beer commercials, and Aborigines sang this song on the nation's television sets to a backdrop of Uluru and the dead heart. We were being prepared for the Bicentenary which — so advertising agencies said — had to be marketed like any other product.

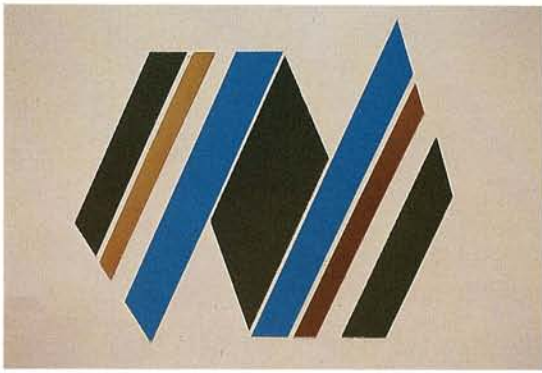
The Australian Bicentennial Authority spent almost a decade planning the year. In April 1979 Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser appointed John Reid, Chairman of James Hardie Industries and a director of BHP, to chair an Australian Bicentennial Authority, incorporated as a company in the ACT in January 1980. In November 1979 Fraser told parliament that the authority would be charged with providing a 'theme' or 'focus' for the celebrations. Dr David Armstrong, director of the Prahran College of Advanced Education in Melbourne, became general manager of the authority in January 1980.



The award-winning bicentennial logo that was later abandoned.

AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

The authority held a contest for a bicentennial symbol, which attracted 5000 entries. The successful entry proved difficult and expensive to reproduce and so was abandoned a few months after being unveiled in favour of a logo 'in the form of a ribbon vaguely resembling the shape of Australia'. A vague resemblance



The second bicentennial logo excluded most of Victoria and Tasmania.

AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

indeed, because this logo excluded most of Victoria and all of Tasmania. As the authority was trying to encourage funding in each state this was not a good move. Within weeks of the logo's release its southeastern dimension was extended but neither the designer nor the authority were prepared to allow an inelegant island appendage to mar the logo's clean lines.

Management and ideological problems dogged the ABA. One of the first problems was where to have its head office. Sydney, as the site of the first European settlement, seemed the obvious location, but the authority, as John Reid later wrote, went to 'great pains' to assure the rest of Australia that the Bicentenary 'is not just a glorified celebration of Sydney Harbour'. Separate councils in each state and territory were set up to overcome lack of enthusiasm elsewhere.

The ABA began life on the ninth floor of the Commonwealth Building in Chifley Square but soon moved to more lavish offices in Sydney's Rocks district, commanding superb views of Circular Quay. The authority became prey to entrepreneurs and charlatans, souvenir manufacturers and publishers all of whom wanted to make their name, and hopefully their fortune, out of the authority and the bicentennial celebrations.

One of the first groups to line up for money was the First Fleet re-enactment consortium, led by Melbourne University lecturer Jonathon King, a descendant of Philip Gidley King, aide de-camp to Captain Phillip and later a governor of New South Wales. King estimated that the project would cost \$6 million and the ABA granted \$15 000. *Bulletin* journalist Denis O'Brien regarded this contribution as 'a bit parsimonious towards what promises to be the star

attraction of the Bicentenary.' But Armstrong did not want the authority to be seen as a milking cow. A feasibility study suggested that the project might cost between \$25-30 million, and that most of the money could be spent in the UK or en route to Sydney. Meanwhile Armstrong became increasingly conscious of Aboriginal objections to the authority sponsoring the re-enactment. In November 1980 Reid announced that the authority would not invest in the First Fleet, but put its money into Tall Ships '88, where much of the cost would be born by the countries providing the ships.

On 26 January 1983 Fraser announced a \$166 million program (in July 1982 prices) for the Bicentenary. Executive directors and staff were appointed for all the state and territory councils. These bodies had small amounts of federal money to spend on state and territory activities but most of their funds were allocated for national programs and these remained firmly in the hands of head office in Sydney. If the state and territory councils wanted more money it had to come from their own governments. Only NSW came to the party in a substantial way and in 1984 Premier Neville Wran announced a \$70 million grant to the NSW Bicentennial Council, most of which was to be spent on lasting projects, including parks and gardens, the restoration of community and heritage structures and to provide seeding finance for local activities.

The \$166 million promised by Fraser did little to help the fortunes of his government. Within six weeks of announcing the allocation, the Liberal-National party lost office to a revitalised ALP under the leadership of Bob Hawke. By June the Hawke government, despite being preoccupied with an economic summit and a bizarre spy scandal, agreed to stick with the \$166 million budget, but wanted



The final green and gold version of the bicentennial logo.

AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

more emphasis on Aborigines and women. 'The Australian achievement' was abandoned in favour of the original slogan, 'Living together', and the logo's colours were changed from the heraldic blue and gold of the Commonwealth of Australia to the national colours of green and gold. The national program, frantically massaged by ABA staff to accord with the incoming government's wishes, was launched by the minister for home affairs and environment, Barry Cohen, on 23 July 1984. Like Armstrong, Cohen acknowledged prior Aboriginal occupation of the continent.

Emboldened by Cohen's attitude the ABA went to some effort to create an Aboriginal program. In opposing this emphasis the new right uncovered a brave proclamation made by Armstrong in April 1981:

I for one would not want to be involved in a Bicentenary that does not address the running sore of black/white relations in this country. If it is to be a white wank I want nothing to do with it.

This statement drew the wrath of the new right and its fellow travellers.

In January 1985 Dr Ken Baker of the Institute of Public Affairs entered the fray with a stinging attack on the ABA's ideology and program. Baker claimed that the program 'sacrificed tradition' to the 'fashionable concerns of a minority.' He argued that the family, the federal constitution, the monarchy, free enterprise and the legal system 'all receive overwhelming endorsement by Australians' but that these central themes were 'ignored by the ABA.' Moreover the program, while failing to give 'due recognition to the British contribution to Australia's heritage singles out the history and contribution of the Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders for special attention.'

John Reid felt obliged to reply to such a savage and consistent attack. He explained that the ABA had decided against gathering up 'a collection of tenets from the main political streams' and cobbling them together, because that course would have encouraged 'divisions' rather than 'uniting' us as a people. Armstrong, rather more rattled, responded to the Baker article saying that 'we have to give more attention to the mainstream and to give more time re-assuring the mainstream that we are not a mob of trendy long-haired anarchists.'

The ideological and political heat was intense. After the October 1984 election

Hawke, who had become increasingly concerned about the ABA's performance, took upon himself responsibility for the Bicentenary. In May 1985 he summoned Reid, Armstrong and Robert Maher (general manager of the national program) to Canberra to quizz them about 'extravagance' at the authority.

In June the NSW Bicentennial Council decided to grant \$230 000 to the First Fleet reenactment, a slap in the face for the federal ABA who continued to reject the Fleet in favour of Tall Ships. In July Ranald Macdonald, a director of the authority and chairperson of its Victorian Council, resigned, saying that the authority was overstaffed, too centralised and far too expensive.

On 15 August the ABA's board met for the first time since Macdonald's resignation. While the board was passing a motion of confidence in the authority's staff and planning, Reid, unbeknown to board members, had been called to Canberra to be told by the prime minister that Armstrong would have to resign. According to Armstrong there had already been speculation that Reid who had not endeared himself to Aboriginal groups and who had recently questioned the quality of state schools should go. Reid sacked Armstrong on 16 August. On 11 September the press revealed that Armstrong had received a payout of half a million dollars. Feverish manoeuvres followed. Had the prime minister known of the golden handshake? Had he approved it? The Senate Estimates Committee established that Armstrong was legally entitled to only \$123 000 and that the \$504 000 he eventually received was paid in a way that might minimise tax. In an attempt to kill the controversy Hawke asked Reid to resign, which he did on 26 September.

The resignations-cum-sackings disrupted and divided the ABA, which fell rapidly in public esteem. Hawke wondered whether the authority should be abolished but instead decided to reconstruct it from the top by appointing Jim Kirk, retired chairperson and chief executive of Esso Australia, as its head. Kirk took up the twin positions of Chair and Chief Executive in November 1985. More than thirty staff, including the manager of the ill-fated marketing division, resigned. Kirk immediately set about changing the authority's ideological balance, implicitly responding to some of the criticisms by the Institute of Public Affairs. The authority's many letterheads (each substantive program had its own letterhead) were reprinted to



The logo, and the merchandise that featured it, appeared in various shapes and colours before its now familiar green and gold design was finalised.

AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

incorporate the Australian flag in full colour, \$300 000 was given to the American Time-Life Books for a series of picture books called *Australians at war* and articles solicited by the editor of *Bicentenary '88* from Franca Arena on republicanism and Justice Kirby on discrimination against Aborigines were rejected by Kirk who said that 'the ABA is not the forum for such debate'. In late 1986 one in-house journalist dreamt up the rather catchy headline 'One year after Armstrong, one to go'. When Kirk spied this issue of the newsletter he promptly ordered the destruction of the 60 000 print run. Only a handful survive.

In March 1986 the ABA chose Mojo Australia and Monahan Dayman Adams Ltd to handle its \$10.5 million advertising account. The aim of the 'communications strategy' was 'to motivate people to become involved'. Low levels of participation would reflect badly on the authority, but like most limited term organisations (it has to wind up by 1990) it was always more worried about its current media profile than by how it might be judged by posterity. The agency flew celebrities to Uluru and created the 'Celebration of a nation' television commercial. It made a better jingle than 'Living together'. Some months after its release, two fundamentalist scholars from Wagga Wagga claimed that if you played it backwards you get a subliminal satanic message.

At the heart of the hard sell was the message that '1988 will be the first time in many years that Australians will unite across the country in a nationwide celebratory program.' The ABA did not mention when the last time was but it did attempt to facilitate the unification by producing a range of brochures about bicentennial activities. One such brochure, *How can I be part of 1988?*, included the following suggestions:

- plant an Australian flag in your local park, using coloured flowers
- hold an ecumenical church service
- release 200 green and gold balloons on Australia Day
- organise an Australiana trivial pursuit game
- paint 'a giant Bicentennial "Living together" sign' or sell 'Bicentennial bricks' to raise money for public works

Such activities are easy to satirise, but they also highlight the difficulty the authority had in thinking of ways to involve all Australians in the celebrations. In fact, although the authority spent more than half its budget on advertising, promotion and events, including Tall Ships and the travelling exhibition (which accounted for about one fifth of the total) it did fund many lasting projects, including the restoration of historic buildings, the establishment of local parks, the creation of wheelchair access to public places, the *Encyclopedia of the Australian people* and the Historic Records Search. Many more such activities were either jointly or separately funded by the state and territory councils. There is no doubt that bicentennial money went into many worthy municipal and community projects that had no other possible source of funds. The authority also funded a wide range of artistic events — from concert performances to exhibitions — that would otherwise not have taken place.

Under Kirk's leadership the ABA lost interest in getting Australians to reflect critically on their history. The authority stifled debate within its ranks — about both its ideology and its programs — in an attempt to present a united front to the media. When the NSW Bicentennial Council came up with another \$500 000 for the First Fleet in April 1987 (this time not as a grant but to purchase 30 berths from Mauritius) the authority finally succumbed, offering a loan of \$500 000. The money from the NSW council was provided on the understanding that the First Fleet would not attempt to re-enact the landing at Farm Cove because the federal government knew that the landing (which had been the centrepiece of 26 January 1938) would be a provocative act against Aborigines. As the year drew nigh the authority became preoccupied with spectacle at the expense of its participatory goals. Most of the responsibility for community projects and events had been devolved to or seized by the state and territory councils.

By 1 January 1988 bicentennial fervour was set to sweep the nation. First came the television extravaganza 'Australia live'. For four hours viewers were subjected to a never-ending series of bicentennial minutes as Clive James, Jana Wendt and Ray Martin introduced us to ordinary Australians in every corner of the nation. The message was that anybody could participate in the people's festival but the great and famous, including birthday messages from Ronald Reagan, the Queen and Prime Minister Thatcher, were there as well. This deliberate attempt to blur actor and audience did not work well. One of the few highlights in this 'fantasmagoria' was when an Australian serving at our base in Antarctica acted as an impromptu MC sending up prominent television interviewers as he did so.

According to the *Weekly*, ever cognizant of the need to appeal to the national market, 'the royals kept the celebrations going in Melbourne, Adelaide, Darwin and Sydney' on a 10 day tour which took them from 'the beach to the ballroom.'

The ABA whose roof garden commanded magnificent views of the spectacle was unable to prevent Australia Day 1988 becoming a glorified celebration of Sydney Harbour, Australia's greatest natural amphitheatre.

The only challenge to the celebratory mood came from the Aboriginal protestors. About 15 000 people marched through the city to the Aboriginal tent embassy at Mrs Macquarie's Chair. It got little media coverage, perhaps because it was universally described as 'a peaceful march'. The Aboriginal flag, with its striking colours and marvellous simplicity, stood out against a crowded background of Union Jacks, official Australian Flags, bicentennial flags and corporate logos.

After nine years of planning the ABA, its state and territory councils, created some notable achievements and presided over some equally notable disasters. Most local communities did stage bicentennial activities, from bicentennial shows to the firing of the bicentennial beacons. The Bicentenary caused many communities to reflect on their past and — often for the first time — these communities began to take seriously the prior Aboriginal occupation of the continent. This may or may not bring land rights and a just treaty any closer but Aus-



The travelling exhibition started at Ballarat and toured Australia throughout the year.

STEVE STRIKE/AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

tralians have at least been subjected to more sustained debate about the continent's history than ever before.

European Australians remain uncertain about how to create indigenous rituals. Aborigines and Aboriginal iconography have been wheeled out at many previous national ceremonies in a desperate attempt to display something genuinely Australian. In 1938 and in much larger numbers in 1988 Aborigines demonstrated on their own account. The imperial presence has also been a ritual ingredient in most national ceremonies. The opening of Sydney Harbour Bridge is one of the few important rituals this century where royalty did not officiate. Jack Lang wanted to open it himself. But that was a state, not a national ritual.

The ABA never established a convincing rationale for a year long ritual. In 1938, in a less questioning era, the sesquicentenary celebrations lasted only three months, from 26 January to Anzac Day, still our most ritualistic day. The 1954 royal tour was limited to two months. Planning a whole year of celebrations in a country that still has no national day is risky. The authority tried hard to make the 'celebration of a nation' a ritual of national unity. It presided instead over the greatest one-day spectacle that Australia has ever seen. But it was a one-off spectacle in one city. No new national rituals have been invented. The 26 January 1989 was just another public holiday. Only NSW, the Northern Territory and the ACT celebrated it on the day — a Thursday. The other states declared a long weekend.

PETER SPEARRITT

