

# THE AUSTRALIAN



# COAT OF ARMS



**HERITAGE  
SERIES**

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# **THE AUSTRALIAN COAT OF ARMS**

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THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE COAT OF ARMS  
WAS ESTABLISHED 19TH SEPTEMBER 1912

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

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# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## AUSTRALIAN COAT OF ARMS

**Name:** Coat of Arms of Australia  
**Approved:** 7th May 1908 by  
King Edward VII  
**Updated:** 19th September 1912 by  
King George V

The Coat of Arms of Australia was formerly known as the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and is the official symbol of the country of Australia. Numerous updates have occurred throughout our history.

**The second official Australian Coat of Arms, approved by King George V on 19 September 1912. This is our current Coat of Arms.**



The Australian Coat of Arms (above) is an official formalised symbol that represents the Commonwealth of Australia. It is used under certain circumstances and with strict guidelines, to represent the country of Australia.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## COAT OF ARMS 1912 - PRESENT

**Our first Australian Coat of Arms, approved by King Edward VII on 7 May 1908.**



The Federation of Australia and the establishment of a National flag for Australia occurred in 1901, yet there was no formal Coat of Arms for Australia at this time.

Australia's first official Coat of Arms (above) was rudimentary, though managed to capture something special about our country and its relationship with mother England. The use of the Kangaroo and Emu, two animals native to Australia, could only represent Australia, as this is the only country where these two animals are found together. This Coat of Arms was ratified by King Edward VII on 7 May 1908.

While the design of the Coat of Arms was new, similar designs had been seen before, as unofficial Coat of Arms were already appearing across Australia.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## COAT OF ARMS 1912 - PRESENT

The Bowman Flag is the earliest use of an emblem with an emu and kangaroo, known to exist



These unofficial Coats of Arms appear to represent what the districts were built upon, as well as showcasing their part of the colony of Australia

One striking work is located on the Town Hall at Alexandra in Central Victoria. This Coat of Arms predates the first officially proclaimed Coat of Arms by 36 years and the current Coat of Arms by 40 years.

Much earlier in 1806 in New South Wales, a single silk flag had been designed and produced by John and Honor Bowman. On this flag was an emblem (above left) that was strikingly similar in design to Australia's first formal Coat of Arms. It was even more similar to the Alexandra Town Hall Coat of Arms as mentioned above. This flag has since become known as the 'Bowman Flag' and was created using oil paints and reproduced on a fine silk material taken from Honor's own wedding dress. It is believed by many people that this earlier 'Bowman' emblem may have inspired future Coats of Arms.

It was not until 7 May 1908 that Australian first Coat of Arms was ratified by King Edward VII (previous page). Interestingly, King Edward VII was the husband of Queen Consort Princess Alexandra whom coincidentally the small rural township of Alexandra in Central Victoria (mentioned above) is named after.

An second and final alteration to the Coat of Arms was then approved by King George V on 19 September 1912. King George was the son of Princess Alexandra and King Edward (who ratified the first Coat of Arms).



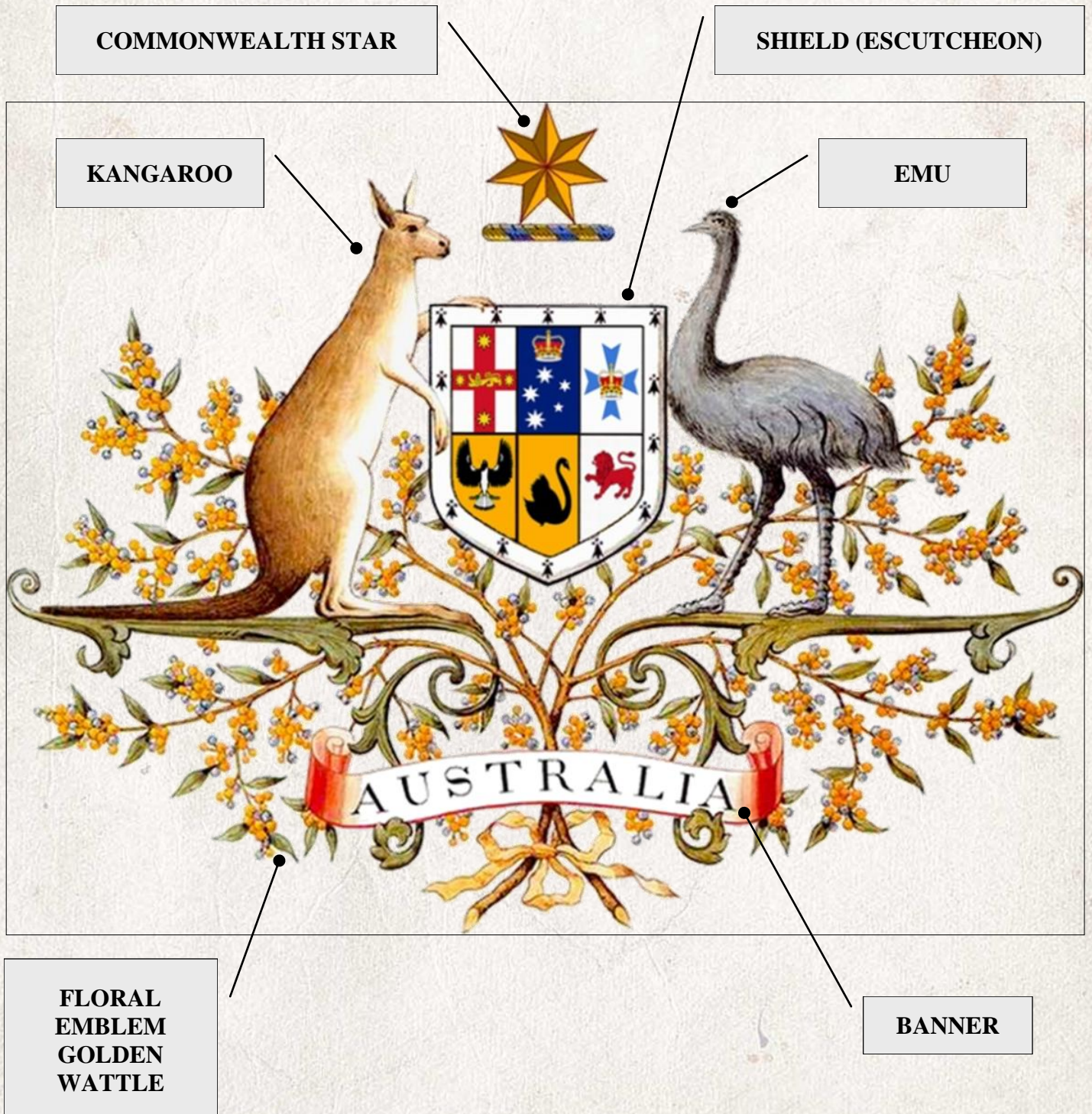
# THE AUSTRALIAN COAT OF ARMS

OUR OFFICIAL COAT OF ARMS



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## COAT OF ARMS 1912 - PRESENT

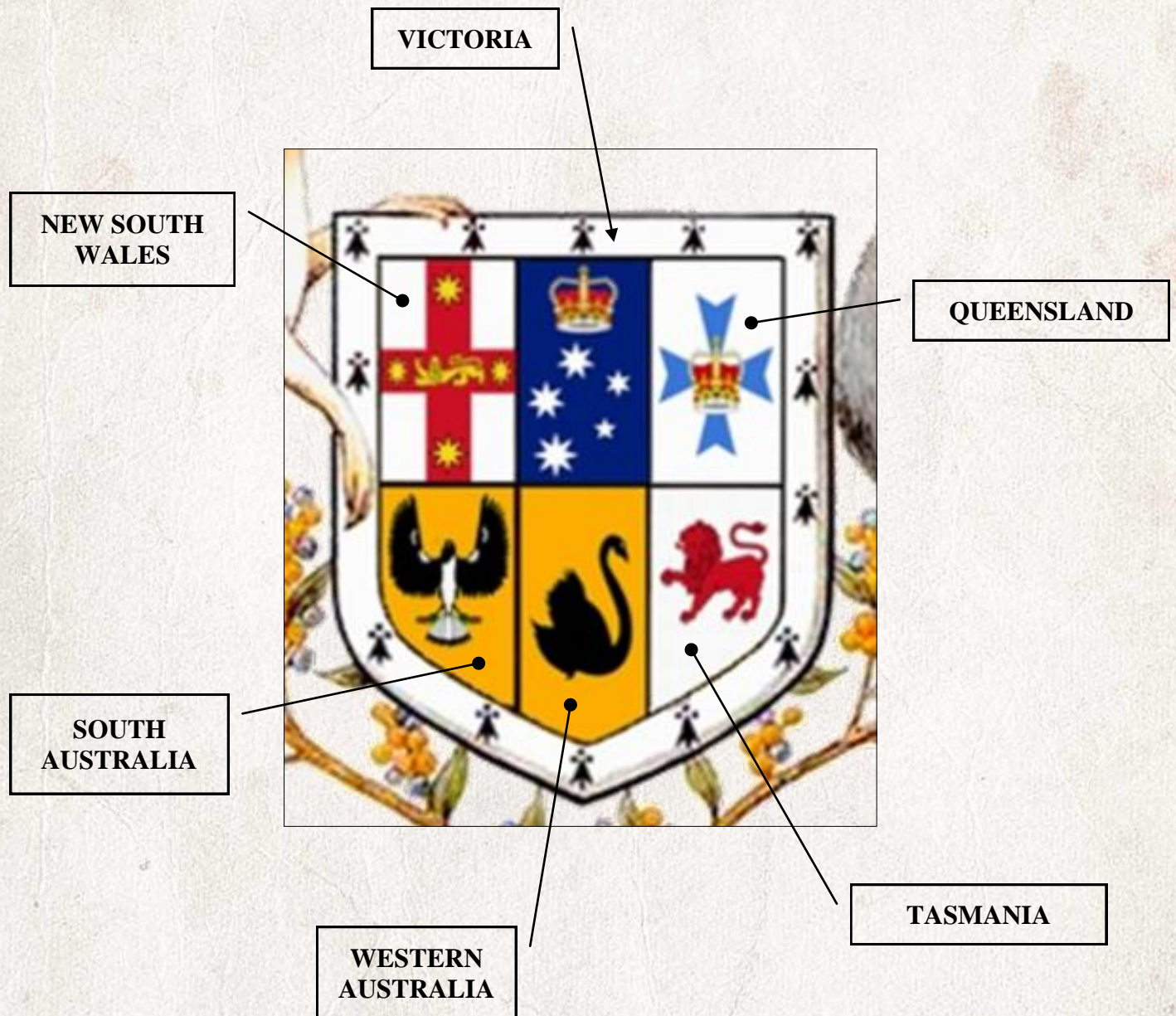


Click labels for more.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## ESCUTCHEON (SHIELD)



The shield is the focal point of the Coat of Arms, and on it is the badge of each of the States of Australia.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## ESCUTCHEON (SHIELD)



ERMINE

ERMINE SPOTS

The badges are surrounded by the Ermine (heraldy) of white and ermine spots black shapes.

Click labels for more



# INTERESTING FACTS

FACTS ABOUT THE COAT OF ARMS



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## INTERESTING FACTS

- The Kangaroo and the Emu are both represented on the Coat of Arms and neither can take a backwards step. This is considered to be symbolic of Australia heading only in a forward direction and never backwards.
- The Coat of Arms was used on coins and notes of the day.
- Even though the first (1908) Coat of Arms was altered and a newer version approved of by King George V in 1912, the old Coat of Arms continued to be used on the Sixpence Coin up until the mid 1966.
- In the 1908 version of the Coat of arms, the emu has one leg resting on the shield and the kangaroo's tail is bent downwards. Both of these are corrected on the final 1912 version.
- The Coat of Arms should never be used where it could wrongly imply a formal guarantee, sponsorship or endorsement by the Commonwealth.
- Use of the arms by private citizens or organisations is rarely permitted; however, there are provisions for use by sporting bodies and in educational publications. Use of the coat of arms without permission may be in breach of Sections 53 (c) (d) and (e) of the *Trade Practices Act 1974*, Section 145.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* or Section 39 (2) of the *Trade Marks Act 1995*.<sup>[10]</sup> The import of goods bearing the arms is also illegal according *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations*.
- There is a full colour version of the Coat of Arms and nine heraldically correct official versions that exist for single-colour reproduction.
- The coat of arms is used as badge of rank for Warrant Officers Class 1 (Army) and Warrant Officer (Navy and Air Force). A more stylised version is used as a badge of rank for Warrant Officer of the Navy, Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army and Warrant Officer of the Air Force.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## INVOLVEMENT OF KING EDWARD VII



King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions and Emperor of India. He was the first British monarch of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

**King Edward VII approved the first official Coat of Arms for Australia on 7 May 1908.**

**Born:** 9 November 1841  
**Reign:** 22 January 1901 - to his death.  
**Died:** 6 May 1910  
**Parents:** **Queen Victoria**  
Albert (Prince Consort)

**King Edward VII was the husband of Princess Alexandra. The small rural township of Alexandra in Central Victoria was named after Princess Alexandra.**





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## INVOLVEMENT OF KING GEORGE V



King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India. The township of Alexandra was named after his mother, Princess Alexandra and a statue in her honour stands in the Jack Shiel Garden, Perkins Street, Alexandra.

**King George V approved the Australian Coat of Arms as it appears today on 19 September 1912.**

**Born:** 3 June 1865  
**Reign:** 6 May 1910 - to his death  
**Died:** 20 January 1936  
**Parents:** **King Edward VII**  
Princess Alexandra of Denmark  
(Queen Alexandra)

**King George V was the son of Princess Alexandra.  
The small rural township of Alexandra in Central Victoria  
was named after Princess Alexandra.**





# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

A BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 9 November 1841** Prince Edwards (later King Edward VII) was born. (He reigned 22 January 1901 - 6 May 1910).
- 1 December 1844** Princess Alexandra (Queen Consort to King Edward VII) was born.
- 10 March 1963** Prince Edward and Princess Alexandra were married.
- 3 June 1865** Prince George (later King George V) was born. (He Reigned 6 May 1910 - 20 January 1936).
- 17 June 1882** The Alexandra Shire Hall was officially opened. It included an unofficial Coat of Arms on the front that predated all official Coat of Arms (1908 and 1912). On its opening, it was described as being on a circular moulded panel, modelled by Mr James Scurry of Melbourne. (Alexandra & Yea Standard, 7 July 1882). James was around 55 years of age when he modelled Alexandra's Coat of Arms.
- 7 May 1908** King Edward VII approved the first Coat of Arms of Australia.
- 19 September 1912** King George V approved the Australian Coat of Arms as it appears today.
- 13 September 2013** Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.



# OTHER COAT OF ARMS

FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA WITH THE EMU ON THE LEFT



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## POSTCARD - 1806

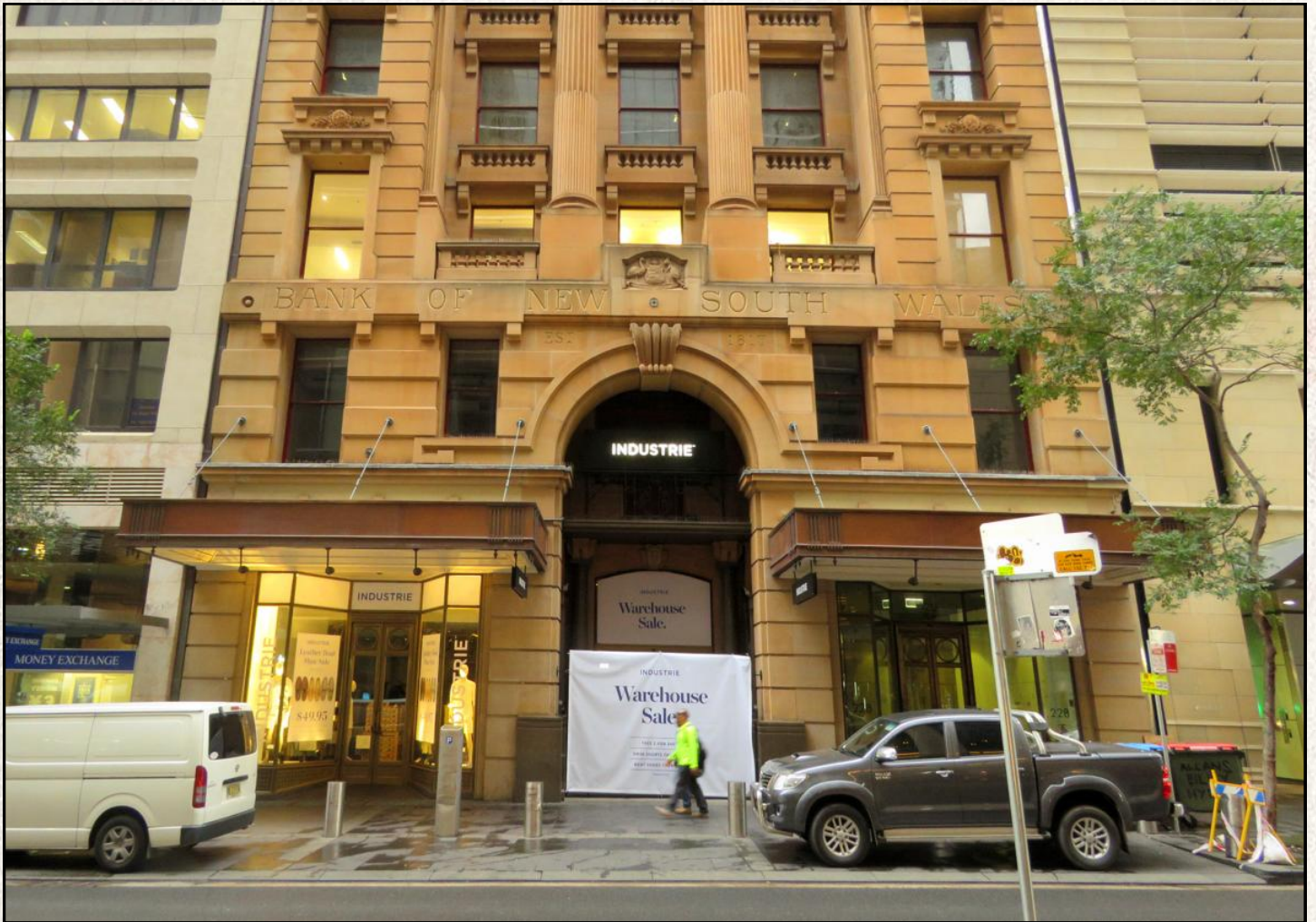


The Bowman Flag is the earliest use of an emblem with an emu and kangaroo, known to exist



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

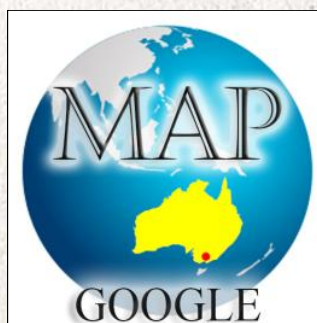
## PITT STREET SYDNEY - 1817



BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES



**The former Sydney Bank of New South Wales building at 228 Pitt Street, photographed in 2017. It remains one of the few Australian examples where the emu is on the left. The bank was established in 1817.**





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## COIN TOKEN - 1861



A 1861 Peace & Plenty coin token produced by Robert Hyde & Co. with the Emu on the left.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

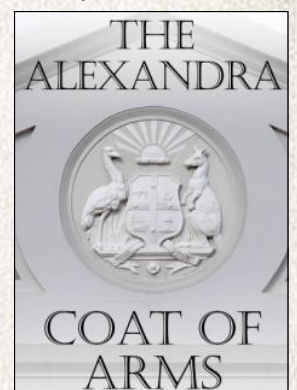
## ALEXANDRA TOWN HALL - 1882



**The Alexandra Shire Hall was built in 1881/82 and officially opened on 17 July 1882.**

The building is one of just a few in Australia to have a Coat of Arms that predates the first and second official Australian Coat of Arms by over 35 years. This is currently the earliest Coat of Arms we are aware of on an Australian building. If you are aware of any others that predate the official Coat of Arms, we would love to hear from you.

**See our Alexandra Coat of Arms Factsheet for more.**





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## ADELAIDE ARCADE - 1885



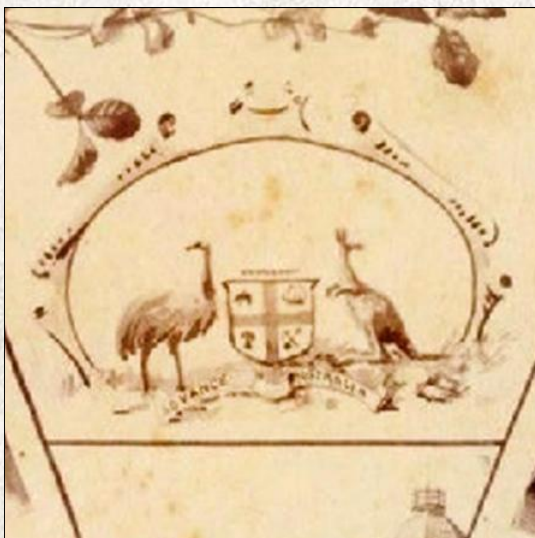
The Adelaide Arcade was built in 1885 and opened with 50 stores, rising to the 100 stores it now has. It is the oldest Shopping Arcade in Australia and is believed to be haunted by the ghost of a caretaker (Francis Cluney) who was murdered at the premises while investigating a flickering light.





# POSTCARD - c1890

# POSTCARD - C1890



### An early postcard from circa 1890 with the reversed coat of arms



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## BENIDGO SHIRE HALL



An illustration (top) located above a door in the Bendigo Shire Hall. The four elements inside the shield reflect those found on the Alexandra Shire Hall (left) and the postcard on the previous page (livestock, shipping, wheat and mining).

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*Serving the Community*