



Australian Government

IT'S AN HONOUR

Australia Celebrating Australians

## Australian National Flag

The Australian National Flag is Australia's foremost national symbol. The flag was first flown in 1901 and has become an expression of Australian identity and pride.

The flag is an important part of national occasions such as Australia Day, Anzac Day, and Australian National Flag Day.

### About the Australian National Flag

The Australian National Flag has three elements on a blue background. The Union Jack in the upper left corner (or canton) acknowledges Australia's historical links with the United Kingdom.

Below the Union Jack is a white Commonwealth Star. It has seven points representing the unity of the six states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. The seventh point was added in 1908 and is the only change to the flag since 1901.

The Southern Cross is shown on the fly (or right hand side) of the flag in white. This constellation of five stars can be seen only from the southern hemisphere and is a reminder of Australia's geography.

### History of the Australian National Flag

In 1901 Prime Minister the Rt Hon Sir Edmund Barton MP, announced an international competition to design a flag for the Commonwealth of Australia.

Five near-identical entries were awarded equal first place from more than 30,000 designs. The designers shared the prize of £200.

The Australian National Flag flew for the first time on 3 September 1901 from the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne.

### Australian National Flag Day

Australians celebrate the first time the Australian National Flag was flown by flying or displaying the flag on 3 September.

### Other Australian flags

Australia recognises other official flags including the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

The ensigns of the Australian Defence Force include the Australian Defence Force ensign, the Australian white ensign and the Royal Australian Air Force ensign.



*The Australian National Flag has three elements on a blue background. The Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross.*

The Australian Red ensign is the official flag to be flown at sea by Australian registered merchant ships.

### Proclamation

The Flags Act 1953 proclaimed the Australian National Flag.

### Use of the Australian National Flag

The flag can be flown every day of the year. As the nation's foremost national symbol it should be treated with dignity and respect and there are protocols governing its use.

#### Fast facts

##### FIRST FLOWN:

3 September 1901

##### AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG DAY:

3 September

##### DESCRIPTION:

A blue background with the Union Jack in the upper left corner, a white Commonwealth Star in the lower left corner and the five stars of the Southern Cross on the fly of the flag in white. The colour references for the Australian National Flag are: Blue Pantone® 280 and Red Pantone® 185.

##### USE OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG:

The flag can be flown every day of the year.

##### SIZE OF THE FLAG OVER PARLIAMENT HOUSE:

12.8 by 6.4 metres or slightly larger than the side of a double decker bus.

### More information

IT'S AN HONOUR WEBSITE: [www.itsanhonour.gov.au](http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au)