



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

MESSAGE: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG DAY 2005

Australian National Flag Day is an opportunity to learn more about the history and symbolism of Australia's flag.

In April 1901, the then Prime Minister Edmund Barton announced a competition for the design of a federal flag. Over 32,000 entries were received containing a wonderful diversity of images and symbolism – with one entry depicting native animals playing cricket with a winged cricket ball. So it seems that the search for the design of our flag aroused the Australian spirit of enthusiasm and creativity as well as the Australian sense of humour.

The design that was chosen was rich in symbolism that still speaks to Australians today. The Commonwealth Star with six points representing the States and the seventh point which was added in 1908 to represent Australia's territories – symbolises the unity of the Australian nation. The Union Jack acknowledges our historical links with Great Britain. The Southern Cross, a constellation seen only in the night skies of the Southern Hemisphere, is a striking and evocative symbol for our location in the world.

Australian National Flag Day commemorates the day on which the Australian National Flag was first flown. Since 3 September 1901, the Australian National Flag has formed part of the fabric of Australia's history, providing Australians with a focus for celebration and rejoicing as well as a symbol for unity at times of national commemoration or sadness.

I encourage all Australians to appreciate this marvellous symbol of our nation and to show their pride by celebrating Australian National Flag Day.

(John Howard)