

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 32 Learning the history of Australia for the benefit of Japan

15 January 2021

Happy New Year! How did you spend the end-of-year holidays? I was able to get away from work for the first time in some while and enjoy quiet time at home. As COVID-19 continues to be a major issue around the world, I once again felt grateful to be able to live in good health.

I also made use of the time to read a number of books about Australian history that I had not had the chance to read before. When I first assumed my post, I did look through a few books on Australian history, but this time, my reading enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the historical background of places I have visited and of events I have participated in.

There are three developments in the course of modern Australian history that particularly interest me – developments which have enabled Australia's current peace and prosperity. From the national security viewpoint, it is the shift from the UK to the US as the major security partner; from the societal viewpoint, the change from the White Australia policy to multiculturalism; and from the economic viewpoint, the move from protectionism to free trade. Furthermore, in order to understand Australia, it is critically important to consider the development of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In this issue of my newsletter, as I briefly introduce the points in Australian history that I personally feel to be important, I invite you to join me in reflecting upon their significance to Japan and the Japanese people today.



**Statue of Captain Cook in Sydney's Hyde Park
(October 2020)**

- **Colonial foundation**

Around 100 million years ago, the Australian continent separated from the Indian sub-continent and Antarctic continent and moved to its current location. The curve of Australia's southern coast was formed because it was once attached to the northern coast of the Antarctic continent.

Indigenous Australians first arrived in Australia around 50,000 years ago and have continuously inhabited the continent. In 1770, Captain Cook of the British Royal Navy led a scientific expedition and visited Sydney, and in 1788, Admiral Phillip led the 11 ships of the First Fleet with its approximately 1,000 members from England and arrived in Sydney to establish a colony.

Later, new colonies were founded: first in Hobart in 1803, and from the 1820s to 30s, in Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and Melbourne. The western half of the continent was called New Holland, and the eastern half, New South Wales, but in 1824, the British government officially named the entire continent Australia.



**A steam locomotive from the second half of the 19th century
displayed at the Powerhouse Museum
(10 January 2021)**

● Formation of the Federation of Australia

In the beginning, the vast majority of settlers were convicts and their families, but gradually the number of free settlers increased, and from the 1840s to 60s, each colony stopped accepting convicts. Coexistence between settlers and Indigenous people was not always easy, and conflicts resulted in many victims.

From the 1850s, the population suddenly boomed due to the gold rush. In the 10 years from 1851, the population, excluding Indigenous people, increased nearly three-fold from some 440,000 people to around 1.17 million people. In the second half of the 19th century, industry and technology developed enormously, including agriculture and rail and communications.

On the 1st of January 1901, the six Australian colonies came together as a federation under a new constitution. The main objectives of federation were to abolish the complex tariffs between the colonies, to harmonise regulations for Asian immigration in order to promote the White Australia policy and to strengthen national defence in response to French, German and Russian expansion into the South Pacific. The first legislation passed immediately after Federation was the Immigration Restriction Act.

In 1914, the new nation of Australia entered the First World War together with the UK, and in 1915, the ANZAC troops dispatched to the field of conflict fought valiantly at Gallipoli, an event which strengthened national identity. Under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan fought together with Australia during the First World War and there were even military exchanges between the two countries. However, during the Second World War, Japan and Australia came to be on opposite sides of the conflict.



Laying a wreath at the Memorial Service for USS Peary which was sunk during the Bombing of Darwin (19 February 2020)

- **Shift of key security ties from the UK to the US, and promotion of Indo-Pacific cooperation**

As a country which had developed as a member of the British Commonwealth, the Second World War would prove to be a great challenge. The Bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Imperial Japanese Army in December 1941 saw Australia at war with Japan. Before the Fall of Singapore to Japan on 15 February 1942, it became clear that Australia could not rely on Britain for its national defence, and Australian Prime Minister John Curtin announced a major shift in key security ties from the UK, with which Australia had such a long history, to the US.

On 19 February 1942, the Imperial Japanese Military bombed Darwin, and in March, the Commander of the US Forces in the Far East, General Douglas MacArthur, retreated from Singapore to Australia, where he told journalists "I shall return". Later, Australia in cooperation with the US won the war against Japan.

After the Second World War, Australia continued to adhere to security cooperation with the US. As the world entered the Cold War, Australia signed the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security) Treaty and participated in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Furthermore, Australia expanded its network of cooperation to the Asia-Pacific region and took the initiative in political and security cooperation. In recent years, this also includes the establishment of the Japan-Australia-India-US framework (the so-called Quad).



Mr Sakuno Yoshinori, Group Managing Director of doq®, with Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the Ethnic Business Award ceremony (28 October 2019, photo courtesy Nichigo Press)

● **From White Australia to multiculturalism**

After the Second World War, Australia continued its White Australia policy. In 1947, under the Labor Government's Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell, large-scale immigration began, but this plan targeted European (white) immigration from countries in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

However, against the worldwide trend of decolonisation, in the 1960s, Australia was under pressure to choose between a racially discriminatory immigration policy and coexistence with Asia. In 1972, the newly inaugurated Whitlam Labor

Government announced the demise of the White Australia policy and at the same time introduced a new immigration system based on a points system. In 1973, Immigration Minister Al Grassby announced the formal policy of multiculturalism, and with the Fall of Saigon in 1975, Australia began accepting refugees from Indo-China.

The Fraser Coalition Government (1975-83) continued to accept refugees as it announced the outline of its refugee policy in 1977. Also, in 1980, it set up the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to promote multiculturalism. The Hawke Labor Government (1983-91) also steadily developed and deepened Australia's multiculturalism policy, for example by enlarging and broadening the family reunion immigration program.

In 2017, the Australian Government announced the latest basic direction of its policy regarding multiculturalism in "Multicultural Australia – United, Strong, Successful", which emphasised the importance of connecting Australians through shared values as well as stating that the cultural diversity of Australians is one of the country's greatest assets, which sparks innovation, creativity and vitality.

Soon after I started working here in Sydney, I had the opportunity to attend the dinner for the Ethnic Business Award, and I learnt that not only did Prime Minister Scott Morrison attend from the opening remarks to the very end of the event, every year the Prime Minister attends the awards dinner. I really felt the strong commitment of the Australian Government to the promotion of multiculturalism. Mr Funayama Seijiro, Founder of Tokyo Mart, and Mr Sakuno Yoshinori, Group Managing Director of doq®, have both been chosen as finalists in this Ethnic Business Award. It is wonderful that they and many other Japanese and Nikkei Australians have contributed to the development of Australian multiculturalism.



A site visit of Daikin Australia's logistic hub in Liverpool, Sydney
(13 December 2019)

- **From protectionism to free trade**

From the end of the Second World War and through the 1960s, the Australian economy achieved great economic growth due to increased demand driven by a growing population and natural resource exports. However, under a protectionist economic policy, domestic manufacturing was protected by high tariffs and securing international competitiveness became an issue. Then, in the 1970s, Australia faced economic difficulties such as inflation, high unemployment and low growth.

To address this, the Hawke Labor Government, which came to power in 1983, took steps to liberalise trade including the abolishment of exchange rate controls and the voluntary reduction of tariffs. This was called “economic rationalism” and was in line with Reganomics in the US and Thatcherism in the UK. This changed Australia's economic structure: primary products were exported and cheap manufactured goods imported; domestic industries successfully moved to include internationally competitive services and advanced manufacturing.

Furthermore, in 1987, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Trade merged to become the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Australia demonstrated leadership in establishing APEC in 1989 to promote trade liberalisation in the Asia-Pacific Region, and the first APEC Ministerial Meeting was held in Canberra. Furthermore, the Keating Labor Government, which came to power in 1991, helped to realise the first APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting at Seattle in 1993. In addition, Australia has been demonstrating leadership in economic and trade liberalisation through the WTO, TPP, RCEP, and various FTAs.

On a previous visit of the Daikin factory and logistic hub located in the Sydney suburb of Liverpool, I was briefed that air conditioners with distinct Australian specifications are manufactured on site, while general products and various parts are imported from less expensive manufacturing bases in South-East Asia, for example, to be distributed around Australia. I felt that both Australian and Japanese are enjoying the merits of free trade.



**A study tour for members of the consular corps
organised by the Australian Government for NAIDOC Week
(13 November 2020; photo courtesy DFAT New South Wales State Office)**

- **Promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians**

While Australia has been developing in this way, reconciliation with Indigenous Australians has continued to be a major issue.

In the early days of colonisation, the policy was to protect and isolate Indigenous people in facilities and designated areas, and later, an assimilation policy was adopted so that Indigenous people could live as part of white society. However, neither approach managed to give sufficient respect to the independence and unique qualities of Indigenous people and efforts were criticised as insufficient to improve welfare. The practice of separating children from their parents gave rise to the problem of the Stolen Generation.

The movement by Indigenous people to reclaim rights began with the protest action of declaring Australia Day a 'Day of Mourning' in 1938, the 150th Australia Day, and in the 1950s, the movement had spread to a national level. In 1967, the Constitution was revised to include Indigenous people in the national census. In 1992, the High Court recognised the rights to land of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Mabo decision, and in 1993, the Native Title Act was enacted. In 1992, Prime Minister Paul Keating gave a speech in Redfern (Sydney) acknowledging the violence against and dispossession of Indigenous people, and in 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the Apology Speech to the Indigenous peoples.

The practice of "Acknowledgement of Country" at the start of various events began in the 1990s after the Mabo decision, and in recent years, it has become common practice. At the start of more formal occasions, it is customary for a traditional owner/custodian of the land to conduct a "Welcome to Country" ceremony.

After my arrival in Sydney, I have seen positive efforts continue, including Prime Minister Morrison's announcement of the "National Agreement on Closing the Gap" in July 2020, the change of the words in the second line of the Australian national anthem from "For we are young and free" to "For we are one and free" on 1 January this year, and the start of inviting feedback and comments on the "Indigenous Voice" proposals on 9 January.

During NAIDOC Week in November last year, I took part in a study tour organised by the Australian Government for members of the consular corps in The Rocks, Sydney. I heard the Indigenous tour leader explain that, despite the series of government efforts, consideration for Indigenous peoples is still inadequate. I became aware that the issue of reconciliation with Indigenous people in Australia is yet to be resolved and that this may still take some time.



**Married couple in Sydney
(4 November 2020)**

● **Learning the history of Australia for the benefit of Japan**

Have you heard of the phrase “The Lucky Country”? It is the title of a book by the journalist Donald Horne, written in 1964, a book which admonished Australians for enjoying the good life while relying on good fortune rather than their own effort.

However, when you read Australian history, you see that it is not simply a matter of luck. Rather, Australia has enjoyed peace and prosperity for so long because Australia has been able to realise bold changes to address major difficulties. As mentioned above, the key security ties with the US and deepening Indo-Pacific cooperation, multiculturalism, free trade, and progress in reconciliation with Indigenous people are all the results of Australia’s own efforts to overcome difficulties.

Australia's efforts to address COVID-19 have been a wonderful success. I believe that Australia will also overcome future challenges including security, energy and climate change issues.

When cooperating with Australia, it is important for Japan to understand that today's Australia is not static – it is a dynamic entity that has changed through history. By understanding and empathising with Australians' convictions and resolve, concerns and sacrifices, dreams and joys, I believe mutual trust and cooperation between Japan and Australia will grow even deeper and closer.

Building on my reading over the summer break, I would like to study Australian history further and use this knowledge as I go about my work and share what I learn with others involved in Japan-Australia cooperation. In this way I will strive to further strengthen the foundation of our cooperation. I hope the content of this newsletter may be of some use to you.

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