

DECLARATION OF AUSTRALIA
AND
THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE

WHEREAS THREE STORIES MAKE AUSTRALIA: the *Ancient Indigenous Heritage* which is its foundation, the *British Institutions* built upon it, and the adorning *Gift of Multicultural Migration*:

And whereas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the First Nations of the Australian continent and its islands, possessed under ancient laws and customs, according to the reckoning of culture, from the Creation, according to the common law, from time immemorial, and according to science for more than 65 millennia. This is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or mother nature, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with their ancestors. We recognise and honour the First Nations who discovered Australia as their sovereign possession, the oldest continuing civilisation in the world.

And whereas those who sailed the First Fleet landing at Sydney Cove carried upon their shoulders the common law of England, when the sovereignty of the British Crown was proclaimed. The rule of law, parliamentary government and the Australian English language have their provenance in Britain. From eyes on board ship, this was a settlement, and from eyes on shore, an invasion. We recognise the eve of the 25th and the dawn of the 26th January 1788 as a profound time for all of us, when Ancient Australia became the New Australia. We recognise and honour the Britons and Irish – convict and free – who founded our institutional heritage, making our Commonwealth from 1901, a great democracy of the globe.

And whereas peoples the earth over brought their multitude of cultural gifts to Australia. That we celebrate diversity in unity makes us a beacon unto the world. We recognise and honour our New Australians. When we renounced the White Australia policy, we made a better Commonwealth. We show that people with different roots can live together, that we can learn to read the image-bank of others, that we can look across the frontiers

of our differences without prejudice or illusion, because interesting things happen at the interface between cultures.

NOW THEREFORE, with earnest and open hearts and strong desire to fill the lacuna, after more than two centuries, we make this *Declaration of Australia and the Australian People*, to see our reflections in each other, and recognise one and all:

OUR HISTORY IS REplete with shame and pride, failure and achievement, fear and love, cruelty and kindness, conflict and comity, mistake and brilliance, folly and glory. We will not shy from its truth. Our storylines entwine further each generation. We will ever strive to leave our country better for our children.

WE WILL HONOUR the Uluru Statement from the Heart and make good upon it. Whilst English is the shared language of our Commonwealth, mother tongues name the country and sing its song-lines – and we do not want for them to pass from this land. They are part of the cultural and natural wonder of our country that is the campfire of our national soul, and the pledge of care and custody we owe our ancestral dead and unborn descendants.

AFTER THE BATTLES of our frontier wars fell silent, diggers from the First Nations joined their Settler and New Australian comrades in the crucibles of Gallipoli and Kokoda, and there distilled the essence of our values:

- That our mateship is and will always be our enduring bond.
- That freedom and the fair go are our abiding ethic.
- That our virtues of equality and irreverence give us courage to have a go.
- That we know we can and always will count on each other.

THREE STORIES MAKE US ONE: AUSTRALIANS