



A Federation flag

Australia begins

This flag measures 485 mm by 710 mm and depicts Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Union Jack. The Southern Cross links them. The flag was made for the festivities that surrounded Federation in 1901 and perfectly depicts how White Australia saw itself in relation to England – constitutionally and emotionally.

Australia did not become a nation at Federation on 1 January 1901. On that day, six distinct self-governing colonies of the British Empire – Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia – federated into the Commonwealth of Australia, but gleefully remained subservient to the British government in Westminster. Under the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, any act of the Australian parliament was deemed invalid if it was 'repugnant' to the British parliament.

The Australian parliament couldn't make foreign policy, and there was no Australian military. The country had no power to make war or peace. The highest court in the land was the Privy Council in London and any Acts of the Australian parliament could be overturned, written or rewritten by Westminster. The public was not concerned: by and large, Australians were faithful sons and daughters of the Empire.



53

1934

Don Bradman's 1934 bat

The blade

No piece of sporting equipment aroused more passion in Australia in the first half of the 20th century than Don Bradman's cricket bats. In the gloved hands of the Don, these strands of willow made by William Sykes & Sons of Yorkshire astounded cricket fans, inspired the inflamed battle of the Bodyline series and later became a source of great national pride.

Contests between Britain and Australia, which commenced in 1861, were always hard fought. On 29 August 1882 at The Oval, the Australians, led by 'The Demon Bowler', Fred Spofforth, staged a breathtaking fight-back so spectacular that English journalist Reginald Brooks, under the pseudonym 'Peter Blobbs', opined in the *Sporting Times* that English cricket had died and its ashes had been taken to Melbourne. Thereafter the contest between Britain and Australia became known as the tussle for the Ashes.

Almost half a century after that Test, in 1930 Don Bradman arrived in the United Kingdom and played cricket as it had never been played before. At Lord's he scored 254. In the third Test, at Leeds, he scored a century before lunch and another between lunch and tea, and had reached 309 not out at stumps. This remains the only time a player has passed 300 in



Lifebuoy from the *MV Tampa* Turning back boats

This is a lifebuoy from the Norwegian ship *MV Tampa* that rescued asylum seekers on a boat between Australia and Indonesia in 2001. The *Tampa* crisis, as it was known, set the agenda for what has been Australia's refugee policy ever since.

On 24 August 2001, a 20-metre wooden fishing boat, the *Palapa 1*, became stranded in international waters about 140 kilometres north of Christmas Island. On board were 438 refugees – 369 men, 26 women and 43 children.

According to the law of the sea, all boats have an obligation to go to the assistance of a vessel in distress on the high seas, to rescue people and transfer them to the nearest appropriate port. The nearest vessel to the *Palapa 1* was the Norwegian freighter *MV Tampa*, with a crew of 27 and licensed to carry no more than 50 persons. The *Tampa* responded to the *Palapa's* call.

Under Australian and international law people have the right to seek asylum from countries that persecute them. Under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Australia's protection obligations are



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