

Facts about Queensland

About Queensland Day

Queensland Day is a celebration of the state's culture, heritage, people and industry.

The celebration centres around the state's birthday on 6 June and acknowledges the 'birth' of Queensland as a separate colony in its own right.

Since 1981, Queensland's birthday has been officially promoted by the Queensland Government and expanded to include a series of events and celebrations.

A highlight of Queensland Day celebrations is the announcement of the prestigious Queensland Greats Awards.

Communities can participate in Queensland Day by lighting or decorating key landmarks, buildings and bridges maroon.

In celebrating Queensland Day, the community can share a sense of pride in being both Australian and a Queenslander. It is a time to reflect on how lucky we are to be part of such a wonderful state.

Come on Queensland! Show us what you love most about this magnificent state of ours.

History of Queensland Day

The move towards statehood for Queensland began with a public meeting in 1851 to consider separation from New South Wales.

As the push for separation gained momentum, Queen Victoria was approached to consider establishing a separate colony based on Moreton Bay. The Queen gave her approval and signed the Letters Patent on 6 June 1859, now known as Queensland Day. Not surprisingly, she favoured the name Queensland over suggestions to call it Cooksland in honour of Captain James Cook.

The new colony of Queensland was established. With the word 'Separation' painted on its hull, the ship *Clarence* sailed into Brisbane on 10 July to be greeted by a jubilant crowd eagerly anticipating the news of separation.

They welcomed *Clarence* with a 14-gun salute, a 'blue light' display and fireworks.

On 20 July 1859, celebrations resumed with the news Sir George Ferguson Bowen would be the state's first Governor. Fireworks, cannon fire, flag raisings and the sound of a gun shot expressed the public's sentiment.

On 10 December 1859, Governor Bowen arrived in Brisbane to a civic reception in the City Botanic Gardens.

He officially marked the historic occasion of statehood by reading a proclamation from the verandah of the Deanery of St John's Cathedral.



Our state emblems

Coat of Arms



Queen Victoria granted the Queensland Coat of Arms, the oldest State Arms in Australia, to the Colony of Queensland in 1893.

The Coat of Arms symbolises the Queen's constitutional authority in the state. It was the first Arms assigned to a British

colony since Charles II granted Jamaica its Arms in 1661. The Queensland Coat of Arms has been used as the government's corporate logo since August 2012.

Meaning behind the symbols

Primary industries take pride of place on the Coat of Arms, in line with economic trends in the nineteenth century.

Rural activities are represented by a sheaf of wheat, the heads of a bull and a ram, and two stalks of sugar cane surrounding the state badge at the top.

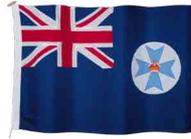
The prominence of mining is represented by a column of gold rising from a heap of quartz.

On the Coat of Arms is Queensland's state motto, *Audax at Fidelis*, which means 'bold but faithful'.

In 1977, during Her Majesty The Queen's Silver Jubilee year, the Coat of Arms was given a more modern appearance when Queen Elizabeth II granted the addition of supporting animals, the brolga and the red deer.

The brolga is one of Queensland's most distinctive birds and symbolises the native population. The red deer was introduced from the royal herds near London and represents the old world.

State flag



The Queensland flag features two components: the Union Jack in the upper left corner and the state badge.

The state flag was first introduced in 1876 when Queensland was a self-governing British colony with its own navy.

State badge



The badge of Queensland was developed from the need to include a seal or badge in the design of the state flag.

The badge was adopted as part of the state flag on 29 November 1876. It is officially described as 'On a Roundel Argent a Maltese Cross Azure surmounted with a Royal Crown'. It was designed by William Hemmant, the then Queensland Colonial Secretary and Treasurer.

It is not known why this was chosen as a suitable badge. However, it is interesting to note a Maltese Cross is the final stop on the legend band around the Great Seal of Queensland (1859). The Royal Crown also appears on this seal.

In 1893, the badge was incorporated into the Queensland Coat of Arms.

The Royal Crown has been altered slightly since the badge was first adopted under Queen Victoria's rule, as succeeding monarchs have preferred different interpretations of the Crown.

It was last altered in 1963, after Queen Elizabeth II decided to reproduce the Crown during her reign.

Animal (faunal) emblem



The koala was officially named the animal (faunal) emblem of Queensland in 1971, after a newspaper poll showed strong public support for this endearing marsupial.

The Queensland Government introduced the poll due to a proposal by state tourism ministers for all states to adopt a faunal emblem.

Floral emblem



The Cooktown orchid became known as Queensland's floral emblem in 1959, during celebrations to mark the state's centenary.

Before this, the distinctive native flower had long been popularly considered as Queensland's unofficial floral emblem.

This was according to a government-sponsored newspaper public opinion poll taken in the centenary year.

The State Parliament endorsed the popular choice in the now repealed *Badge, Arms, Floral and Other Emblems of Queensland Act 1959*.

The orchid was commemorated in 1968 on the 25 cent stamp and in 1998 on the \$1.20 stamp.

Image © Murray Fagg Australian National Botanic Gardens

Bird emblem



The brolga has featured on the Queensland Coat of Arms since 1977. It wasn't until January 1986 that it was announced as the official bird emblem of Queensland.

Aquatic emblem



The Barrier Reef Anemone Fish was officially named Queensland's aquatic emblem in March 2005. The public nominated the species as their preferred representative for Queensland.

The Australian Underwater Federation originally developed the idea to introduce an official aquatic emblem for Queensland. As a result, a panel of experts, chaired by the Queensland Museum, suggested a shortlist of aquatic species.

The public was then invited to have its say on the shortlist during an eight-week consultation process.

Image © Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

State gem



The sapphire gemstone, a variety of the mineral corundum, was originally discovered in central Queensland in the early 1870s. It continues to be found in the central and northern parts of the state.

State colour



On 13 November 2003, the Governor in Council officially named maroon as Queensland's state colour.

This announcement was made as a result of a long-held, but informal, tradition of using maroon to represent Queensland.

Maroon has traditionally been associated with Queensland sport in particular and is the official colour for the Maroons State of Origin rugby league team.