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DEFINING MOMENTS OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY™

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Defining Moments is a celebration of Australia's history and the events, over the centuries, that have been of special significance for the Australian people and their identity within our distinctive and diverse nation.

Defining Moments is an initiative of the National Museum of Australia in cooperation with the National Capital Authority. It is designed to promote knowledge and debate about Australian history and what it means to be an Australian today.

Defining Moments will be identified over time with the guidance of professional historians, teachers of history and other experts and in consultation with the Australian public itself. The hundred key Defining Moments will remain under constant review. Necessarily, they will change over time and they will be bound to engender lively debate and differences of view inherent in a free and vibrant society such as Australia.

Defining Moments will aim to encourage this debate and thereby to promote a more intense encounter of Australians with their history.

Amongst the considerations that inform the selection of *Defining Moments* are:

- Moments in pre-history and in recorded history;
- Moments important to human beings within Australia and moments important for the unique fauna and flora of the Australian continent;
- Moments recounted in the oral traditions of indigenous Australians and those recorded in permanent form in modern times;
- Moments important for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, as well as for those who came to Australia after 1788, and their descendants;
- Moments important to women and children as well as to men and to all Australian families;
- Moments significant for minorities as well as for the majority;
- Moments happening in times of peace and in times of war;
- Moments significant for the exploration and settlement of the land and those important for Australia's development and advancement since those times;
- Moments that proved definitive for the early British explorers, settlers and for the earlier and later participation in Australia's story of explorers and immigrants from many other lands and cultures;

- Moments significant for science, technology, religion, culture, education and sport and, as well, for politics, law and economics;
- Moments that reflect the different social philosophies that have existed in Australia's political history - both liberal and conservative, in due reflection of their respective contributions;
- Moments that record the nation's triumphs and successes as well as a fair reflection of our defeats, errors and injustices;
- Moments that occur at a particular identified instant and those that gather their significance from the symbolism of an event or from the contribution of that event to others that have followed;
- Moments that involved dramatic happenings and undramatic events that may not have even been noticed at the time they occurred but which may now be seen as symbolic of changes of great importance to the nation; and
- Moments that look to the past together with moments that look to the future; moments important to older Australians and those important to the young.

Few Australians will embrace uncritically the initial hundred *Defining Moments*. This is to be expected. However, it is out of the ensuing debates and disagreements, exchanged in a typically robust Australian way, that familiarity with Australia's history will be heightened and recognition of the moments critical to Australia's identity will be sharpened and appreciated.