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RESOURCES

A HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES 1770 - 1924

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- 1770** At a ceremonial flag raising on Possession Island off Cape York, Lieutenant James Cook makes claim to possession of the whole of the eastern coast-line of Australia and names eastern Australia 'New South Wales'.
- 1778** When the First Fleet arrives and Captain Arthur Phillip raises the Union Jack in Sydney Cove, it is estimated that the Aboriginal population of that area is around 1,500. Historians have estimated that the entire Aboriginal population at the time was between 750,000 to one million.
- 1798** By this time Aboriginal people have been dispossessed or are in the process of being dispossessed from their land at: Sydney Cove, Parramatta, Prospect Hill, Northern Boundary, the Ponds, Kissing Point, the Field of Mars, the Hawkesbury River, Bankstown and the St Georges River.
- 1800** Aboriginal people continue to be dispossessed from their lands. The European population around Sydney Cove and district has exploded to approximately 8,000 people, placing increasing pressure on the remaining Aboriginal population.
- 1819** Governor Macquarie declares that Aboriginal people should be granted land. An Aboriginal man named Colebee is granted 30 acres of land at Bell's Creek, Plumpton.
- 1824** A mission for Aboriginal people is established at Lake Macquarie.
- 1835** New South Wales Governor, Sir Richard Bourke publishes a proclamation that implements the doctrine of *terra nullius* ('land belonging to no one') upon which British settlement is based.
- 1836** A British House of Commons Select Committee states that Aboriginal people have "...plain right and sacred right..." to their land.
- 1842** The *Land Act 1842* enforces the creation of reserves on Crown land for the use of Aboriginal people. In passing this Act, it was the government's intention to provide Aboriginal owners with secure occupation of some of their country.
- 1874** The Maloga Mission on the Murray River is established to accommodate approximately 9,000 Aboriginal people who remain in NSW.
- 1880** Mr George Thornton is appointed first Protector of Aborigines in NSW. He has the power to create reserves and enforce Aboriginal people's residence on them.
- 1883** An Aboriginal Protection Board is established in NSW. This takes over the administration of reserves and segregates Aboriginal populations. By the end of the 1800s several reserves are established across NSW.
- 1901** Federation. The Australian constitution specifically prevents the new Commonwealth Government from passing laws relating to Aboriginal peoples. Citizenship and the right to vote denied to Aboriginal, Asian and African peoples.
- 1909** *The Aboriginal Protection Act 1909 (NSW)* is introduced, giving authorities the power to move people away from towns and reserves.
- 1915** NSW Aborigines Protection Board is empowered to remove and apprentice Aboriginal children without a court hearing.
- 1920** From this period on, there is increased pressure by the public surrounding issues of civil rights, self determination and the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board.
- 1924** Australian Aborigines Progressive Association (AAPA) formed to oppose NSW Aborigines Protection Board. Soon after the Australian Aborigines' League follows. The League calls for self-sufficiency on land claimed by right of prior ownership.

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