



**AUSTRALIAN NATIVES' ASSOCIATION**

**The role of the  
Australian Natives' Association  
in the Federation of Australia**

**One Nation With  
One Destiny**

By **JUDY JOHNSON, B.A., Dip. Lib., A.L.A.A.**  
**Grad. Dip. (Chns. Lit.)**  
Melbourne, February 1984

ISBN 0 949484 01 6

# “ONE NATION WITH ONE DESTINY”

## The role of the Australian Natives' Association in the Federation of Australia

**By Judy Johnson, B.A., Dip. Lib., A.L.A.A. Grad. Dip. (Chns. Lit.)**

In August 1899 after the passage of the Commonwealth Bill, which meant acceptance of the Constitution by the people of Australia, the editor of the Australian Natives' Association journal *Advance Australia* wrote in glowing prose about the achievement of the Association in its efforts towards Federation-

“Here’s to the A.N.A.! May it wear the laurels of victory with becoming modesty and pride. Through good and evil report, in the teeth of ridicule and apathy, for a quarter of a century its founders and leaders have zealously disseminated the Gospel of Federation. Politicians have flirted with it. Insincere men posed as its friends. Theatrical pretences were made to achieve it. Still the enthusiast laboured on, preaching his cherished ideal with almost fanatical fervour. An inspiration came. ‘Make it a People’s Question.’ ‘Wake the masses up.’ The proposal took definite shape. The Premiers of the colonies nodded their heads in half-hearted acquiescence. Another pause. The native watch-dog barked: The slumbering leaders awoke and started to work. Slowly, but irresistibly, public opinion pressed forward, and the Federal movement majestically advanced to consummation.”<sup>1</sup>

The Australian Natives' Association undoubtedly played an important role, notably in Victoria, in the campaign for the Federation of the Australian colonies throughout the 1890's. It influenced public opinion in favour of the movement, and it provided a forum for the leading political figures to debate and promulgate their views and ideas, thereby swaying more reluctant politicians. At a time when many prominent figures and influential newspapers were against Federation, members of the Association held to their faith in the cause, rallying support through public meetings and debates.

The A.N.A. began on 24 April 1871, when a small group of men met at Grimwood's Hotel in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. They agreed to establish a mutual benefits society, which, unlike most other similar organisations at this time, was to be non-political and non-sectarian, promoting the moral, social and intellectual improvement of its native-born members. In 1877 a Board of Directors was established-the Association's first administrative body. Members engaged in debate and discussion, and during the 1870s Federation of the Australian colonies became a definite objective.

The Association developed slowly during the 1870s, with 511 members in 1882



*Elizabeth Street Melbourne in the 1870's. Grimwoods Hotel was the site of the inaugural meeting of the A.N.A. in April 1871.*

(and with total funds of £1787), but gained momentum in the 1880s when children of the goldfields grew to manhood, idealistic in their espousal of national causes, and attracted to the A.N.A. because of its concern for Australian interests and its vision of a country united in one Commonwealth. In 1898 there were 10,063 members (total funds of £95,569) <sup>2</sup>. The A.N.A. attracted men with a sense of Australian destiny, motivated by a love for their country which had hitherto found little opportunity for expression, and many of whom were to rise to positions of social significance.

The Federation of the Australian colonies had been a goal of the A.N.A. from its early years, a goal which was taken up with renewed enthusiasm under the direction of Deakin, Purves, Peacock and other A.N.A. personalities. The *Argus* reported how important this issue was within the Association:

"No page in the records of the Australian Natives' Association is more honourable than that which recounts the service done to the cause of Federation. The subject is always prominent at their annual gatherings. The members themselves take their platform training by talking Federation. They are talked at upon the same topic by political visitors, and the scheme of bringing the colonies together, which is now being tried, bears a close resemblance to one which first germinated in the brain of a representative of the A.N.A."<sup>3</sup>

The first important public move made by the A.N.A. towards Federation was to organise an Intercolonial Conference in Melbourne, in January 1890. Delegates representing A.N.A. branches in all States except Tasmania met in the Melbourne



A.N.A Certificate of membership, 1885. The caption "Federation" occupies a position of importance.

Town Hall, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Bray from South Australia, who was a prominent politician and member of the A.N.A. He declared in his inaugural address:

"I am induced to believe that the views of the Australian Natives' Association, and of the people generally, are in advance of those held by the Governments of the different colonies."<sup>4</sup>

After several days of discussion and debate, the Conference resolved that: "the time



*Delegates to the A.N.A. Intercolonial Conference, January 1890.*

has now arrived for the Federation of the Australasian colonies."<sup>5</sup> Other resolutions were passed, some of which later became incorporated into the Federal Constitution in its final form. These resolutions were:

1. A Federal Legislature should be established, to consist of a Governor-General and two Houses of Parliament.
2. The members of one House should be elected by the Colonial (State) Legislatures, and those of the other House by the people of the several colonies.
3. In one House each colony should be represented by an equal number of members.
4. The Federal Legislature should be empowered to deal with national matters, including defence, customs, post offices, railways. All legislation affecting provincial affairs should be left to the Parliament of each colony.<sup>6</sup>

The attitude of the press towards the conference ranged from indifference to hostility.

The *Argus* described the conference proposals as “crude” and “undigested”<sup>7</sup> and historians have debated about the subsequent value or impact of the conference on the public or politicians. However it did publicise the issue of Federation, and put forward definite proposals about the form which union could take; and certainly the delegates themselves were enthusiastic about the achievement, as W.J. Sowden, another South Australian member, indicates:

“I was the originator of, and one of the delegates to, the Australian Natives’ Interstate Federal Convention, which... succeeded in precipitating federation from the clouds in which it had been suspended, and in removing from the federal path the lions that, according to an eminent statesman of the day, were hopelessly obstructing the advance towards union.”<sup>8</sup>

It was significant that the first Intercolonial Convention convened by politicians to discuss the idea of federating the Australian colonies took place later in the same year after initiatives taken by Sir Henry Parkes. Members to this Convention were elected by the Legislatures of each State and proceeded to draft a constitution, but without provision for legal enactment and for want of public interest, the draft constitution was largely ignored, although it became the basis for discussion at later conventions.

In his Annual Report to the A.N.A. Annual Conference in March 1890 J. L. Purves as Chief President claimed that the efforts of the A.N.A. Intercolonial Conference were instrumental in raising the question of federation from speculation into fact, and he believed that before long it would become the subject of practical legislation.<sup>9</sup> However, in 1892 in his Annual Report, President G.H. Wise regretted that the colonial Parliaments had done little to promote Federation, and in some States the Bill drawn up at the Intercolonial Convention of 1891 had not even been discussed.

He therefore advocated that future draft constitutions must be made by local conventions elected specifically for the purpose of framing a constitution, and quite free from local parliamentary and political parties.<sup>10</sup>

The A.N.A. was becoming aware that initiatives for Federation must come from the people themselves, and must be promoted by organisations with a real concern for the issue.

In March 1893, the A.N.A. Annual Conference at Kyneton decided that an active popular organisation was need to promote the cause and to press colonial Parliaments into action. The Chief President J.W. Larter commended the formation of Federation Leagues in the border regions (as well as advising each branch to set aside two nights during the year for a discussion of a Federal constitution.) The Richmond Branch put forward a motion that “this conference assembled recommends to the incoming Board of Directors the advisability of forming Federation Leagues throughout Victoria.”<sup>11</sup>

Following this resolution, a deputation of members went to Edmund Barton, who was prominent in the Federal movement in N.S.W., to urge him to form a Central Federation League in Sydney - a central organisation to co-ordinate the work of Federal Leagues which had already formed, notably in the Murray Valley, the border region where tariff differences had created many problems, and where support for Federation was therefore quite strong. The Australian Federation League was formed

as a result. A Conference held by this body in Corowa on 31 July 1893, with 50 delegates representing trading and commercial bodies, Federation Leagues and the Australian Natives' Association, called for practical and definite action towards Federation. The most important outcome of the conference was the resolution moved by Dr John Quick, a representative of the Bendigo Branch of the A.N.A. -

"The Legislature of each Australasian colony should pass an act providing for the election of representatives to attend a statutory Convention or Congress to consider and adopt a Bill to establish a Federal Constitution for Australia, and upon the adoption of such Bill or measure it be submitted by some process of referendum to the verdict of each colony."<sup>12</sup>

Dr Quick subsequently elaborated his resolution into a definite scheme by framing an "Australian Federal Congress Bill", which became the basis of the Enabling Acts passed in all colonies. The resolution is important because it laid down the exact steps to be taken for the process towards Federation, guaranteeing popular interest and participation through the election of delegates and the final acceptance or rejection of the constitution framed by these delegates. It also ensured that once the scheme was begun, the only possible conclusion was presentation of the draft constitution to the electors by referendum. Federation therefore became a matter which affected every member of the community, and the A.N.A. continued its self-appointed task of community education and promotion of the issue.

Following a proposal from the Prahran Branch, the Metropolitan Branches of the Association formed a Federal League in Melbourne - the A.N.A. Metropolitan Federation Conference - after having sought support and financial assistance from the Victorian Board of Directors in 1893. The Conference intended to confer with various bodies including the Chamber of Commerce, Trades Hall etc. to consider the objections to Federation and to determine the best means of overcoming them, then to hold a "monster public meeting in Melbourne as a stepping-stone towards forming branches of a National Federation League throughout the metropolis, and then endeavour to federate the various Leagues in Victoria". The Conference would utilize the organisation of the A.N.A. in Melbourne to hold meetings, and would call on the A.N.A. for approval and assistance.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1895 the Premiers of each State met in Hobart, where they drafted an Enabling Bill incorporating the scheme proposed by Dr Quick in 1893 and taken up by George Reid, Premier of New South Wales. Enabling Bills were subsequently passed by New South Wales (1895), South Australia (1895), Tasmania (1896) and Victoria (1896), and conditionally by Western Australia (1896), thus setting in motion a procedure which would inevitably lead to the submission of a draft constitution to the general public for its acceptance or rejection for the Federation of the Australian States.

A "People's Federal Convention" was held at Bathurst in November 1896, at which A.N.A. members numbered among the 200 representatives meeting to discuss in detail the Commonwealth Bill of 1891, which became the draft for future discussions about the Constitution. The Convention was an indication of the strength of popular concern for Federation among many groups in the community, anxious to have a voice in the formation of a constitution.

On 22 March 1897 the Federal Convention met for the first time in Adelaide, where elected delegates (some of whom were members of the A.N.A.) began to frame the

Constitution. At the same time the Australian Natives' Association was active in promoting the cause of federation, urging its members to great efforts on behalf of the cause. Alfred Deakin, a member of the Prahran Branch of the A.N.A., wrote in *Advance Australia* prior to the Federal Convention at which he was an elected representative:

"The Association from the outset supported the Federal Enabling Bill providing for the forthcoming Convention... Its branches were the means of stimulating general interest in the issue by the holding of many public meetings in all parts of the country, which would not otherwise have been held... What, then, will be the duty of the A.N.A.? To secure the largest possible vote... If it be a reasonable scheme for enabling the people of Australia to manage their national affairs in themselves, it will also be the duty of the Association to employ all its influence and use all its endeavours to secure its adoption... Every polling booth should be attended by the members of the A.N.A., every elector canvassed, and every voter brought to the poll.

"The Association's opportunity will at last have come; the long- looked for hour will have struck. The fruit of all its past labours will be within its reach. It can then step forward once more as the representative of those born on the soil in order to place the coping stone upon the noble edifice of Australian unity, of which it long ago began to lay the foundations."<sup>14</sup>

Similar articles followed, and editorials in the journal urged members to be vigilant in promoting the federal cause. They saw federation as a vital concern, and the culmination of all their efforts as an association. The editor addressed his readers in April 1897 thus:



*A. N. A. Board of Directors, 1896: Chief President James flume Cook is seated centre.*



"Many years have elapsed since the battle was begun; and we are now within measurable distance of beholding the full fruition of the toil and struggle of the past...The day is coming-and even now we see the rosy dawn in the east-when this, the land of our love and pride, will be strong in unity; when the Southern Cross will look down upon a people who have swept away artificial barriers so dangerous to true brotherhood; and who have declared, come weal, come woe, to stand forth to the world as 'one nation with one destiny'."<sup>15</sup>

The A.N.A. Board urged in its Conference Report of 1896:

"that the present position of the Federal movement should be clearly understood by every member of our organisation... It will be to the lasting discredit of this Association if our people are allowed to remain apathetic while a matter of such momentous issue is dependent on them."<sup>16</sup>

The Victorian Board of Directors in September 1897 impressed upon all members the necessity of having an intimate knowledge of every point of the Draft Bill, and the need for the spread of information throughout the whole community to stimulate the growth of Federal sentiment.<sup>17</sup>



*Photograph of the President, Charles Kingston taken to commemorate the Third Federal Convention in Melbourne 1898.*

The Australian Natives' Association Conference in Bendigo, March 1898 illustrated the importance of the Association in its contribution towards acceptance of Federation in Victoria. Quick and Garran have written thus:

"... Finally, at a critical juncture, on the eve of the adoption of the Constitution by the Melbourne Convention, when the *Age* advocated the Fabian policy of caution and delay, and when the Turner Ministry, or at least some members of it, seemed to hesitate, the Association at its annual conference held at Bendigo, stimulated by the inspiring eloquence



*Photograph of the Leader, Edmund Barton taken to commemorate the Third Federal Convention in Melbourne 1898.*

of Mr A. Deakin and Mr J. L. Purves, announced its support of the Bill with a declaration of triumphant enthusiasm that left no doubt as to the result." <sup>18</sup>

The *Age* exercised enormous influence over its readers at the time, and the Turner Ministry depended to a great extent on its support. The paper was strongly protectionist, and, jealous of its influence in Victoria, which it feared would diminish under federation, this powerful newspaper strongly denounced the proposals of the 1897-98 National Convention. The Turner Ministry in Victoria was also opposed to the Bill.

With these facts in mind the A.N.A. Board of Directors met prior to commencement of the annual conference in Bendigo, to consider the Constitution Bill. They discussed it in detail, resolving ultimately to support the measure by a unanimous vote. Their deliberations were put to the conference delegates on the following day.

The members of the conference enthusiastically supported the resolution of the Directors, and when the motion was put "the response was a mighty Aye and a call for three cheers for the Bill." <sup>19</sup>

The incoming Board of Directors was requested to issue a manifesto which would embody the principles of the Constitution Bill, and to take any steps necessary to further the Federal cause.<sup>20</sup> At the banquet the following evening the debate about the Constitution continued, with Isaacs and Higgins calling for caution and further consideration of the Bill; but in a splendid speech Alfred Deakin swept away all doubts and hesitations, inspiring his hearers about the Federal cause:

"This after all is only the beginning of our labours. The 160 delegates who leave this Conference, returning to their homes in all parts of this colony to report its proceedings, will, I trust, go back each of them filled with zeal and bearing the fiery cross of Federation. Every branch should be stimulated with action, until, without



resorting to any but legitimate means, without any attempt at intimidation, without taking advantage of sectionalism, but in the purest and broadest spirit of Australian unity all your members unite to awaken this colony to its duty. You must realize that upon you, and perhaps upon you alone, will rest the responsibility of organising and carrying on this campaign. The greater the odds, the greater the honour. This cause dignifies every one of its servants and all efforts that are made in its behalf. The contest in which you are about to engage is one in which it is a privilege to be enrolled. It lifts your labours to the loftiest political levels, where they may be inspired with the purest patriotic passion for national life and being."<sup>21</sup>

The Australian Natives' Association immediately took up Deakin's call. *Advance Australia* contained the following message to members in April 1898:

"Truly it seems as if the A.N.A. had a mission in this land of ours, beyond the ken of its founders.... Now the work of the Federal Convention delegates is completed, the Commonwealth Bill-the most liberal Constitution yet evolved from the brain of man-is presented to the people, the A.N.A. is the first to say: 'This is the Charter for which we have worked through long years, and we will give it our whole-hearted support!'"<sup>22</sup>

Following the directive of the Conference, a manifesto on Federation was prepared, to explain the principles of the Bill, so members could fully understand and thereby pass on information. President Carty Salmon wrote in his preface:

"Organisation, concentration and action are imperatively necessary; and no effort, no sacrifice, no amount of honest work should be wanting to obtain for the Australian people that larger portion of national life which union promises and must surely yield."<sup>23</sup>

The Association then began to organise meetings throughout Victoria to impress upon the public the advantages of and the need for Federation: 212 meetings were held in the first campaign, and 170 meetings, with 388 speakers, before the second referendum.<sup>24</sup> The public meeting organised by the Association in the Melbourne Town Hall on 30 May 1898, almost on the eve of polling day, attracted an enormous crowd of people who were addressed by twelve speakers- all A.N.A. members-on Federation. Alfred Deakin comments that the *Age* suddenly wavered in its stand on the Federal issue, realizing the extent of popular feeling towards the Bill. The paper, "while sneering at the patriotic enthusiasm of the young members of the Australian Natives' Association went so far as to admit that from a democratic point of view there was after all nothing to censure in the Bill".<sup>25</sup> From then on it relapsed into sulky silence, after which the Ministry also formally adopted the Bill.<sup>26</sup>

After the disappointing result of the first referendum on 3 June 1898 when the "Yes" vote in New South Wales did not receive the required numbers, a second vote was taken in 1899 which not only reached the required number and more in New South Wales, but also increased the "Yes" vote in Victoria by more than 50,000 votes.<sup>27</sup>

At the Annual Conference of the A.N.A. at Geelong, March 1900, the Board of Directors praised the Association for its efforts to influence the public:

"In the Short space of three weeks 170 meetings were provided with speakers to the number of 388... It may be fairly estimated that at the



*The Annual Conference at Bendigo in March 1898 was a turning point in the campaign for Federation This photograph from Advance Australia -April 1898 shows delegates to the Conference. Inset left -Carty Salmon, elected Chief President 1898 at the Conference. Inset right -R.F. Toucher, Chief President 1897, who presided at the conference.*

monster meeting held in the Town Hall and adjacent rooms on the 27th July last, fully 4000 people were addressed...The result of the Referendum exceeded the most sanguine anticipations, and proved a well-merited reward to those who had laboured so hard.<sup>128</sup>

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia became law on 9 July 1900, federating five colonies (Western Australia joined within a year) and the Commonwealth of Australia came into being in January 1901, after Royal Assent and approval by the Imperial Parliament. The first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia was Edmund Barton, a man who had fought tirelessly for Federation, and who was himself a member of the Waratah (N.S.W.) branch of the Australian Natives' Association.

Many people at the time, and historians since that time, have recognised the importance of the role played by the Australian Natives' Association in the federal movement, especially in Victoria, in providing a forum for the advocates of federation to advance their views, and by the enthusiasm of its members in adopting it as a national cause, beyond all sectional and vested interests. As Deakin later wrote:

"The enthusiasm for union without which the merely selfish energy would have died down and disappeared many times, swayed all to some extent, but was the dominating factor only among the young, the- imaginative, and those whose patriotism was Australian or Imperial.

This feeling of loyalty was the mainspring of the whole movement, and its constant motive power."<sup>29</sup>

Quick and Garran wrote that the Australian Natives' Association:

"had in Victoria attained an extraordinary development, and represented the bulk of the political activity and enthusiasm of the younger generation. This Association, which was not only a power in politics, but also a political training school of the greatest value, had always been unswerving in its zeal for Federation...This Association had helped to develop the federal sentiment widely throughout the colony, and was persistent in its agitation for definite action."<sup>30</sup>

In August 1899 *Advance Australia* published messages of congratulations sent to members of the A.N.A., in recognition of the major role played by the Association in the federation issue, as the editor noted in his preface:

"Such compliments...will be gratifying to the members of our great Association. It is an honor and glory reward but one which quite befits the sacrifice and unselfish labors of the members. It will, no doubt, be most heartily and deeply appreciated by them and will, we trust, help to spur them on to even higher and nobler work in the cause of the Empire."<sup>31</sup>

The Premier of South Australia, C.C. Kingston, sent this praise to the A.N.A.-

"I warmly congratulate the Australian Natives' Association on the prospects of the early accomplishment of Australian Union. No organisation has worked more patriotically, industriously and intelligently to bring this boon within the National grasp."<sup>32</sup>

The *Argus* published the following tribute in the leading article of 26 July:

"The Australian Natives' Association have fought the battle to the end...to them belongs the lasting credit of realising that the people would succeed where jealous provincial Parliaments had ignobly failed. They understood their responsibility in the after popular campaign, and never flinched from it. When there was a certain wavering in Victoria about the Commonwealth Bill, it was their Bendigo enthusiasm that carried the doubters over. They will continue their exertions tomorrow, and Australia will owe her triumph to the fervor of her patriotic youth."<sup>33</sup>

One of the finest tributes to the A.N.A. came from the Governor of Victoria, Lord Brassey, who wrote:

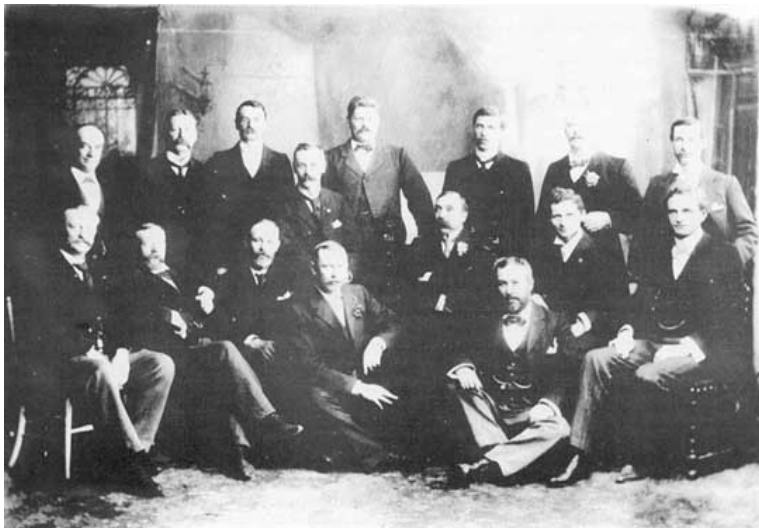
"The earnest and sustained efforts of the Australian Natives' Association in the cause of Federation have won a glorious victory for a great cause. As Governor of the loyal colony of Victoria I offer my warm contratulations. [sic]

"...The Federation of Australia is now assured, and the result, as all recognize, is largely due to the efforts of the Australian Natives' Association. They were early in the field, and their eloquent speeches

and their public-spirited labors, and perfect organisation of their forces have won a crowning victory."<sup>34</sup>

The A.N.A. played an important part, especially in Victoria, in the attainment of Federation of the Australian colonies. It helped to popularise the federal movement while politicians generally were reluctant to promote the cause or were openly hostile. It provided a forum for debate and actively sought to educate A.N.A. members as well as the general public, seeking to make every person aware of the issues involved, and to convince them about the importance of the question to the future of the country. The Association impressed upon people that they should carefully consider the Commonwealth Bill, then cast their vote in the referendum-as voting was then not compulsory. The A.N.A. had no vested interest in Federation, - but pursued this goal in the best interest~ of the country, and lofty ideals and splendid powers of oratory carried the matter to a successful conclusion.

Since that time the Association has successfully involved itself in many issues of national importance, and its members have continued to strive in all matters for the highest ideals and in the best interests of the country of Australia, after playing such an important part in the making of the nation.



*A.N.A. Board of Directors, 1900- 1901. Chief President Walter Skelton is seated centre.*

# AUSTRALASIAN FEDERAL REFERENDUM

JULY 1899



*This is to certify that the question of an  
 Australasian Federal Constitution  
 was submitted to the Electors of Victoria, viz.  
 the 27th day of July 1899  
 and that out of a Poll of 103,783 votes*

152,655 WERE CAST IN FAVOR OF SUCH AUSTRALASIAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTION,  
 AND FURTHER THAT

*John A. G. Fisher*  
 PREMIER

VOTED AT THE SAID ELECTION







## NOTES

1. *Advance Australia*. Vol. III no.8 August 1899. p.1.
2. *A History of the Australian Natives' Association 1831-1921* p. 14.
3. Fitzpatrick, Brian *90th Anniversary History of the A.N.A.* Melbourne, A.N.A. 1961. p 29.
4. Hume-Cook, James *Australian Natives' Association-Its Genesis and History*. Melbourne, Horticultural Press, 1931 p.11.
5. *ibid*.
6. Quick, John & Garran, Robert Randolph *The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth*. Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1901. p. 151.
7. Hume-Cook, J. *op.cit*.p.12.
8. Sowden, Will. J. *An Australian Natives' Standpoint*. London, Macmillan, 1912. p. 58.
9. A.N.A. Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference held at the Presbyterian School Room, Maryborough, on Wednesday and Thursday 19 & 20 March 1890. p. 7.
10. A.N.A. Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference, Sale, 8-9 March 1892. p. 220. 11. A.N.A. Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference, Kyneton, 14 & 15 March 1893. p. 18.
12. Quick, J. & Garran, R. R. *op.cit*.p.153.
13. A.N.A. Report of Special Meeting of the Victorian Board of Directors, Melbourne, 22 Nov 1893. pp. 5-6;
14. *Advance Australia*. Vol. 1 no.3 April 1897. p. 1.
15. *ibid*.
16. A.N.A. Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Victorian Branches, Daylesford, 10-12 March 1896. pp. 348-9.
17. A.N.A. Report of Quarterly Meeting of the Victorian Board of Directors, Melbourne, 7 September 1897. p. 15.
18. Quick, J. & Garran, R. R. *op. cit*. p.211
19. Menadue, John E. *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871- 1971*. Melbourne, Horticultural Press, 1971. p. 242.
20. Hume-Cook, J. *op. cit*. pp. 14-15.
21. Menadue, J.E. *op. cit*. pp. 243-4.
22. *Advance Australia*. Vol. II no.3 April 1898. p. 1.
23. A.N.A. Federation Manifesto. (Melbourne, Edgerton & Moore.) p. 2.
24. Menadue, J.E. *op. cit*. p. 245.
25. Deakin, Alfred. *The Federal Story*. Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1944. p. 94.
26. *ibid*.
27. Menadue, J.E. *op. cit*. p. 246.
28. A.N.A. Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Victorian Branches held at the Town Hall, Geelong, 13-15 March 1900. p.9.
29. Deakin, A. *op. cit*. p. 166.
30. Quick, J. & Garran, R. R. *op. cit*. p.151.
31. *Advance Australia*. Vol III no.8 August 1899. p. 9.
32. *ibid*. p.10.
33. *The Argus* 26 July 1899.
34. *Advance Australia*. Vol. III no.8 August 1899. p. 9.

## FURTHER READING

- Aveling, Marian. *A History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1900*. Thesis, Dept. of History, Monash University, March 1970.
- Deakin, Alfred. *The Federal Story*. Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1944.
- Fitzpatrick, Brian. *Ninetyth Anniversary History of the A.N.A. 1871-1961*. Melbourne, A.N.A., 1961
- Fredman, L.E. ed. *Sir John Quick's Notebook*. Newcastle, Pogonoski, 1965.
- A History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1921*. In The Proceedings of the Victorian Board of Directors of the Australian Natives' Association from 10 March 1921 to 29 March 1922.
- Hume-Cook, James. *Australian Natives' Association - its Genesis and History*. Melbourne, Horticultural Press, 1931.
- La Nauze, J.A. *The Making of the Australian Constitution*. Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1972.
- Martin, A.W. ed. *Essays in Australian Federation*. Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1969.
- Menadue, John E. *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1971*. Melbourne, Horticultural Press, 1971.
- Quick, John & Garran, Robert Randolph. *The Annotated Constitution of The Australian Commonwealth*. Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1901.
- Sowden, Will. J. *An Australian Natives' Standpoint*. London, Macmillan, 1912.

# A.N.A Members involved in the Federal Movement

The importance of the role played by the A.N.A. in the federation of Australia was due in no small part to its prominent members. The Association had become a political training ground, and many men in positions of importance had risen through its ranks, learning and practising skills of oratory, debate and discussion. It was an accepted notion within the Association that men would aspire to positions of political power to work in the interests of the nation:

"The A.N.A. teaches the obligations of citizenship, and also attempts to instil into its members some idea of the value of privileges attaching thereto. One of these privileges is the right of every man to aspire to the highest honors in the gift of the people, therefore the large number of natives who intend soliciting the suffrages of the electors is but an indirect sign that the Association is accomplishing the work to which it set its hand years ago."<sup>1</sup>

Deakin wrote of the A.N.A. that:

"Its leaders were young men of varied ability and information, most of them well trained in debate and all deeply in earnest in the national cause. They merited great praise for all that they accomplish."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to look at some of the personalities behind the events outlined above, and significant to note how many of the protagonists in the federal movement were members of the A.N.A., though not all assumed prominent positions within the Association. Some were involved on the political level of the movement, helping to draft the constitution, some were concerned with the popular movement and inspiring the electors to accept the constitution, while some men were involved in every aspect of the campaign. Some names such as Deakin and Barton are synonymous with Federation, while others who played an important role are not as well known, such as John Quick. It cannot be denied that many A.N.A. members were involved in the federal cause, and significantly affected the outcome, thereby earning a place in the history of the nation.



## Alfred Deakin

Alfred Deakin was a life member of the Prahran Branch of the Australian Natives' Association, and although he never took a position of leadership in the Association, he worked closely with it in the quest for Federation. He was regarded within the A.N.A. and Victoria generally as the leader of the Federal movement in the State.

In 1856 Deakin was born in Collingwood, and after attending Melbourne Grammar School he went to Melbourne University, becoming a barrister in 1878. Deakin worked as a journalist for the *Age* and the *Leader* before being elected to Parliament to represent West Bourke, then Essendon.

From 1883 to 1890 Deakin held office in coalition governments, was joint leader of the government in 1886, and Solicitor-General in 1890. He joined the Prahran Branch of the A.N.A. on its formation in 1884, and was always an active member, continually promoting the cause of Federation. He was seen as a representative figure within the Association, being young, capable, Australian-born, and a wonderful public speaker and spokesman for the ideals which the A.N.A. espoused.

Deakin was a member of the Federal Convention of 1891, and one of the ten elected Victorian delegates to the Convention of 1897-98, where he served on the Constitutional Committee. However his most important role in Federation was his participation in the popular campaign. As well as being President of the A.N.A. Metropolitan Federation Conference, Deakin spoke widely at gatherings and meetings, many of which were conducted by the A.N.A., and his rousing and inspiring speech at the A.N.A. Annual Conference at Bendigo is well known, and considered by some to be a turning point in the campaign.

After the passage of the Commonwealth Bill in the State Parliaments, the Bill had to be approved by the British Parliament. Deakin was a member of the delegation sent to London to secure the passage of the legislation, and in this capacity became one of the first truly Australian statesmen.

Deakin became Attorney-General and Leader of the House in the first Federal Government under Edmund Barton, representing Ballarat-a seat which he had held until 19.13. When Barton retired to the High Court, Deakin succeeded him as Prime Minister. His book *The Federal Story*, edited posthumously by Herbert Brookes and published in 1944 is one of the few contemporary accounts of the Federation years, and historians have relied heavily on Deakin's reports and observations.



## James Hume-Cook

James Hume-Cook was well known in the Australian Natives' Association, as he served on the Board of Directors for 48 years -38 years as Treasurer.

Hume-Cook was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1866. He became a member of the Legislative Assembly for East Bourke Boroughs in 1894, he was a member of the House of Representatives in the first Federal Parliament, and Minister for Defence.

Hume-Cook was Chief President of the A.N.A. in 1896, during the exciting times of the federal campaign. He is remembered as a raconteur, as well as a writer of pamphlets, a history of the A.N.A. and several published works including *Australian Fairy Tales* and *Tales o f the Dandenongs*.



## Isaac Alfred Isaacs

Isaac Isaacs was born in Melbourne in 1855, and educated at Beechworth Grammar School and Melbourne University. He graduated in Law, becoming a Queen's Counsellor in 1899.

Isaacs was a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly 1892-1901, and Attorney-General in the Turner Ministry. In 1897 he was an elected delegate to the Constitutional Convention, but was not selected for the Drafting Committee- Deakin reports that there

may have been a plot to exclude him because he had aroused the antagonism of delegates by his arrogance and conceit of superior learning. This was unfortunate because he was a brilliant constitutional lawyer, and many of the objections he raised in debate were later shown to be real problems in the Constitution.

At the Bendigo Annual Conference of the A.N.A. Isaacs made a speech appealing for caution and restraint, in the hope that a better Constitution could be attained. He was a member of the Prahran Branch of the Association, though he never assumed active leadership. Isaacs was a man whom Deakin found to be respected rather than liked, but very learned, able, ambitious and with great power of recall.

Isaacs became Chief Justice in 1930, before being appointed as Australia's first native-born Governor-General - an appointment which aroused considerable criticism. Isaacs, however, held the position with great distinction. He retained his interest in constitutional issues, and wrote and spoke widely on the subject - at meetings of the Prahran Branch of the A.N.A., and many other forums.



## Alexander Peacock

Alexander Peacock was born in Creswick in 1861. Educated at Creswick Grammar School, he became assistant teacher before joining the local office of a legal manager of mining companies. He went on to establish his own business and eventually became legal manager to 50 companies.

In 1882 Peacock joined the Creswick Branch of the A.N.A., where he became Branch Secretary, and in 1884 he joined the Board of Directors, being elected

to the esteemed position of Chief President in 1885, at the age of 24. He held this position for three terms - 1885, 1886, 1893 - and during his term of office the Association grew in strength, impelled by the enthusiastic and good-humoured way in which he fulfilled his role. Consequently between 1885 and 1887 three lapsed branches revived and 25 new ones were formed.

Peacock was elected to the Legislative Assembly, representing Clunes and Allandale in 1889. He held several important portfolios in the ministry including Minister of Public Instruction before becoming Premier and Treasurer 1901-02. He worked diligently in the fields of social legislation and education in Victoria, earning the title

of "Father of Factory Legislation in Victoria" after his Factory Act of 1896 introduced a wages board system.

A member of the National Convention of the Commonwealth Constitution 1897-98, he served on the Judiciary Committee, without being prominent in debate. Peacock was later in a dilemma when his colleagues in cabinet and the powerful *Age* were determined to defeat the draft constitution. An appeal was made to him by a small group of Parliamentarians, most of whom were members of the A.N.A. (Hume-Cook, Salmon and Toutcher being amongst them) after which Peacock declared his unequivocal support for the Bill, and the opposition began to waver.<sup>3</sup>

Peacock had a friendly, jovial disposition, with a hearty laugh for which he was famous.



## James Liddell Purves

James Liddell Purves was one of the more colourful figures in the A.N.A. He was born in Melbourne in 1843, attended several schools, then was sent to Europe to complete his education. After travelling widely on the Continent he returned to Melbourne, where in 1865 he was admitted to the Bar.

Purves rose to a foremost place in his profession. He was noted for cross-examination of witnesses, in

which he displayed his brilliant mind and sharp wit, and he became famous for the cases he conducted. He was a superb speaker, and though according to Deakin he lacked ambition and concentration, he excelled in debate in the Legislative Assembly, where he represented Mornington 1872-80.

Purves was an early member of the A.N.A., which he joined in 1872, being elected Chief President 1888-90, a term which was not without turbulence in the A.N.A. but which promoted the image and importance of the Association within Victoria. Purves came to be known as "The Emperor" within the A.N.A., and he certainly inspired members by his stirring and effective speeches.

Although not a member of the Federal Convention of 1897, Purves used his gifts of speechmaking and persuasion in the campaign before the referendum, speaking at many meetings organised by the A.N.A.



## John Quick

John Quick was not a native-born Australian, but came to Australia from Cornwall in 1854 at the age of 2 years, settling with his family at the goldfields town of Bendigo. Shortly after their arrival, John's father died of "colonial" (typhoid) fever, leaving his widow and son to struggle for their livelihood. After scant education, John went to work at Jopplings Ironworks, at the age of 10. The work was arduous and his long

day began at 6 a.m., but he managed to find time to study and improve his education, thereby obtaining a position as junior reporter on the Bendigo *Independent*. He continued his studies, graduating as a Bachelor of Law at Melbourne University in 1877.

Quick became leader of the Parliamentary staff of the Melbourne *Age*, before being elected to Parliament in 1880 to the seat of Sandhurst (Bendigo) which he held for nine years. After the loss of his Parliamentary seat, Quick concentrated on his legal practice in Bendigo and strengthened his associations with the A.N.A. in its quest for Federation, which was an issue dear to his heart. He had joined the Association in 1880 at Bendigo when "virtual" natives were accepted.<sup>4</sup>

Quick was one of the representatives sent by the Sandhurst Branch of the A.N.A. to the Corowa Conference of 1893, where he made a major contribution in his advocacy of an Australian Federation League, and by his suggestion and subsequent drafting of an Enabling Bill.

His resolution was accepted by the Conference, and ultimately with some modifications became the accepted basis on which the Federal Convention of 1897-98 was summoned. It provided a simple, democratic and practical means of overcoming difficulties and deadlocks in the path to federation, and with the increased support of the A.N.A. behind Dr Quick a new enthusiasm was awakened in Victoria. In 1897 Dr Quick wrote in the *A.N.A.'s Advance Australia*:

"The question is whether there is to be a continuation and intensification of our separate existence as separate colonies, under which there will be antagonism, isolation, parochialism, and belligerency, with all the frightful family of evils flowing therefrom; or whether there is to be an integration and union into one people with one destiny. There can be no reasonable doubt about the magnitude of the issue, and the supreme importance and fate-begetting character of the alternative.

One will lead to national decay and ruin! the other, as sure as the dawning sun dispels the mists and gloom of night, will lead on to national life and national immortality. Well then may we say in warning tones, at the critical juncture and awe-inspiring moment of our history, 'Unite, and live'; 'Divide, and perish'. The shadow on the dial swiftly moves towards the fateful hour. Australians! quit yourselves as men, and prove yourselves worthy of your heritage!"<sup>5</sup>

John Quick was selected as one of Victoria's ten representatives to the Convention in Adelaide to draft a Commonwealth Bill, and there he added his formidable skills in debate and drafting of legislation to the general discussions. His ability to present complex issues in simple terms was illustrated in an explanation of the official text of the Federation Bill, written by Quick and published in the *Argus* of 6 April 1898, for the enlightenment of all electors.

He was elected to represent the constituency of Bendigo at the first Federal Parliament, receiving a knighthood at the opening ceremony. He played an active role in politics until his defeat in 1911, and in 1922 was appointed Deputy President of the Federal Arbitration Court.

Sir John Quick published a number of works which became widely used for reference and practice in judicial procedure, including, with Robert Garran, *The Annotated*

*Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth*, which is a standard and widely quoted work.

Quick acknowledged the role of the A.N.A. as part of his successful endeavours for Federation:

"It will be noticed that in four successive years-1893, Corowa; 1894, Sydney; 1895, Brisbane; 1896, Bathurst, I represented either the Bendigo branch of the Australian Natives' Association or the Bendigo branch of the Federation League in historic Federal missions which gave me valuable opportunities of promoting the cause of Australian union. I shall never forget what I owe to the confidence thus reposed in me by the Bendigo branch of the A.N.A. and the Bendigo branch of the Federation League."<sup>6</sup>



## **Dr Charles Carty Salmon**

Dr Charles Carty Salmon was another Chief President during this exciting period in the history of the Australian Natives' Association.

Salmon was born in 1861, educated at Scotch College, Melbourne University then Medical School, Edinburgh. He joined the Prahran Branch in 1894 and the Board of Directors in 1895, becoming President of the

Association in 1898, when he was also Chairman of the Platform Committee in connection with the Australian Federal movement. Salmon was a member of the Legislative Assembly 1893-1901, representing Talbot and Avoca, and became Minister for Education. He was a member of the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament 1901-13, and Speaker of the House 1909-10.

Salmon was an enthusiastic speaker for Federation, addressing 43 meetings in the campaign before the first Referendum. He also published works promoting federation, including the preface to the A.N.A. Manifesto on the Constitution and a number of articles in *Advance Australia*, where he wrote the following, in prose typical of the age:

"The close of the century should see the infant Australian nation, like another Hercules, strangling the serpents Provincialism and Jealousy, amidst the plaudits and approbation of every civilized race.

"The sun of Federation will rise and spread his life-giving beams over our beloved Australia, and a new era of prosperity will open for the freest people of the earth under the freest Constitution that the hearts and brains of the patriots ever devised."<sup>7</sup>





## R.F. Toutcher

R.F. Toutcher was an enthusiastic campaigner for Federation, and became widely known for his speeches.

Toutcher was a member of the Elsternwick Branch of the A.N.A. He was on the Board of Directors from 1894 to 1913, Honorary Secretary of the A.N.A. Metropolitan Federation Conference and was

presiding Chief President at the historic Annual Conference at Bendigo. A member of the Legislative Assembly, Toutcher served as Minister for Education.

Toutcher threw himself into the campaign for Federation with great vigour, and even within the ranks of the A.N.A. he was noted for his ardent speeches, as the following extract from a poem, published in *Advance Australia*, March 1898 shows:

*I'm R. F. Toutcher, M.L.A.,  
And (Pardon the elation)  
President of the A.N.A.  
I speak "on Federation".*

*The Natives are all loyal souls,  
They long to form a nation,  
And so I never miss a chance  
To speak "on Federation":*

*To every branch I've been in turn,  
And (after cogitation)  
I've spoken there the "words that burn":  
My speech "On Federation".*

*Then at the Banquet at the Fete  
(With lots of emendation)  
I gave the best speech in my pate:  
My speech "On Federation".<sup>8</sup>*



## George Turner

George Turner was Premier of Victoria during the important years leading up to Federation, and played a significant role in the events which took place.

Born in Melbourne in 1851 and educated at the Model School and Melbourne University, Turner was admitted as solicitor and barrister of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1881.

Turner joined the A.N.A. in 1872, holding the position of Treasurer of the Melbourne Branch until 1881, later joining the St Kilda Branch. He became Mayor of St Kilda in 1888, then was elected to represent that City in the Legislative in 1889.

After holding ministerial positions in the Munro and Sheils Ministries, Turner became Premier and Treasurer in 1894, when he began to introduce measures to ease the recession. Turner was a member of the National Convention of 1897-98 to frame the constitution, serving on the Finance Committee. His ministry later wavered in its support for the Constitution Bill, under pressure from the Age and David Syme, but decided to support the Bill on realizing the extent of public opinion in its favour.

Turner resigned from the Victorian Parliament to enter the Federal scene. He was elected as member for Balaclava, becoming Treasurer in the first Federal Parliament under Barton, and retaining the position under Deakin and Reid- McLean. He retired from politics in 1906.

We are indebted to Deakin for a glimpse of the personality of George Turner, whom he shows as an average, self-made man, trustworthy and capable, with great capacity for work and great attention to detail, whose whole life was devoted to his legal practice and to politics. Deakin saw Turner as a plain speaker, lacking his own fire and sparkle in debate, but able to put forward complicated ideas clearly. Within the federal movement he worked conscientiously to achieve the best Constitution in the interests of Victoria.

An illustration of his rational and lucid style can be seen in the following extract from *Advance Australia*, July 1899, before the second referendum, when he sought to influence voters in favour of the draft constitution:

"No constitution in the world is more liberal or democratic than that proposed; none can be better said to be 'broad based upon her people's will'; none better conserves the interests of the several States; none is more elastic or more suited to the ever-changing requirements of a young and growing community. It frees us from provincialism and leads us to an expanded national life; it ensures to us free trade throughout Australia, a common market for our produce, and protection against the rest of the world."<sup>9</sup>



## George Wise

George Wise was born in Melbourne in 1853 and educated at Scotch College. A barrister and solicitor, Wise was a member of the Sale Borough Council 1880-1904, and six times Mayor; he then became the member for Gippsland in the House of Representatives 1906-22. In 1920 he became Post-Master General of Australia.

Wise was a member of the Sale Branch of the A.N.A., elected to the Board of Directors in 1887, where he served for 59 years. He became Chief President in 1887, and he took a leading part in the campaign for federation from that time. He has always been highly regarded

within the Association, as the following tribute in 1921 shows:

"In other spheres he has done well, as the public position he now occupies testifies, but it is questionable whether in any assembly he has made such an impression upon his fellow countrymen by the manner in which he has addressed himself to and handled public questions of the highest importance as at the Annual Conference of this organisation. It is bare justice, therefore, that...acknowledgement should be made of his work. The A.N.A. can never forget his eminent services."<sup>10</sup>

## BIOGRAPHIES-NOTES

1. *Advance Australia*. Vol. I no.7 August 1897. p. 7.
2. Deakin, Alfred. *The Federal Story*. Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1944. p. 7. *ibid.* p. 92.
3. Menadue, John E. *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871- 1971*. Melbourne, 4. Horticultural Press, 1971. p. 392.
5. *Advance Australia*. Vol. 1 no.2 March 1897. p. 2.
6. Fredman, I. E. ed *Sir John Quick's Notebook*. Newcastle, Pogonoski, 1965. p. 45.
7. *Advance Australia*. Vol. III no.7 July 1899. p. 9.
8. *Advance Australia*. Vol. II no.2 March 1898. p. 11.
9. *Advance Australia*. Vol. III no.7 July 1899. p. 8.
10. *A History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1921*. p. 6. In The Proceedings of the Victorian Board of Directors of the Australian Natives' Association from 10 March 1921 to 29 March 1922.

## AUSTRALIAN NATIVES' ASSOCIATION - PUBLICATIONS

Since the successful culmination of its campaign for Federation, the Australian Natives' Association has played an important part in guiding the destiny of the nation by its continuing work for the advancement and welfare of Australia and its people. The Association has been actively involved in most of the important issues which confronted the new nation in the 20th century, and has helped shape policy on defence, transport, conservation, amendment of the Constitution, housing, education, health, and many other matters affecting national life. The A.N.A. initiated the campaign to promote Australian-made goods and develop Australian manufactures, it was prominent in the establishment of Australia Day as a national celebration, and it maintains its interest in the promotion of Australian art, literature and science.

### Some Other Publications:

- "The A.N.A. -Its Aims and Influence on the Australian Scene"  
by Bryan .I: Kelleher. ( Also published in "Anapress " of March,1963 at pps 5-10) (1963)  
"A.N.A. - Some Background Notes for Chairmen" by Bryan J. Kelleher and Bruce C. Kelleher. (1970)  
ISBN 0 9599842 1 6 "The Mineral Springs Spa Waters of Australia -A Plea for their Development" by I. E. Menadue. (1972)  
ISBN 0 9599842 2 4 "Afforestation -Australia- Wide Plan Needed" by Bryan .I: Kelleher. (See also "Anapress" December 1978, pps 10-13). (1978)  
ISBN 0 9599842 3 2 "A.N.A. -A Forum To Advance Australia " by Bryan J. Kelleher. (1980)  
ISBN 0 9599842 4 0 "Australian Art, Literature and Science - The A.N.A. 's Interest" by Bryan J. Kelleher. (See also "Anapress" Sept. 1979, pps 1-5). (1979)  
ISBN 0 9599842 5 9 "Federation and Constitutional Reform - The A.N.A. 's Interest" by Bryan J. Kelleher. (1981)  
ISBN 0 9599842 6 7 "Salination and Desalination -Some A.N.A. Thoughts on the Twin Problems " by Bryan .I: Kelleher and Les .I: Crofts. (1981)  
ISBN 0 9599842 7 5 "Housing -The A.N.A. 's Interest" by Bryan J Kelleher and T. Ray Davey (1981)  
ISBN 0 9599842 8 3 "Some National Questions -The A.N.A. 's Response" by Bryan J. Kelleher. (1982)  
ISBN 0 9599842 9 1 "Some Further National Questions -The A.N.A. 's Approach" by Bryan J. Kelleher. (1983)  
ISBN 0 949484 00 8 "Australian Poetry and the Australian Natives Association" by Bryan .I: Kelleher. (1983)

An A.N.A. Bibliography has been incorporated in the Report of Proceedings of the Australian Natives' Association Annual Conferences in Victoria in recent years, for example at pages 130 and 131 of the 1981 Conference Report and at pages 164 to 166 of the 1982 Conference Report.

*The A.N.A. journal "Anapress" has been issued in Melbourne since 1948. In the issue of September, 1978 pps 27-30 is an Index of subjects covered in "Anapress" between 1948 and 1978. In the issue of June, 1972 at pps 16-17 is an Index of source material relevant to the A.N.A. In the issue of December, 1971 at pps 22-29 is a Branch Index covering items of interest to the individual A.N.A. Branches in the period 1948 to 1971.*

For further details contact:

Beryl Armstrong  
Librarian & Archivist  
Australian Unity  
114 Albert Road  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
Telephone (03) 8682 6813

