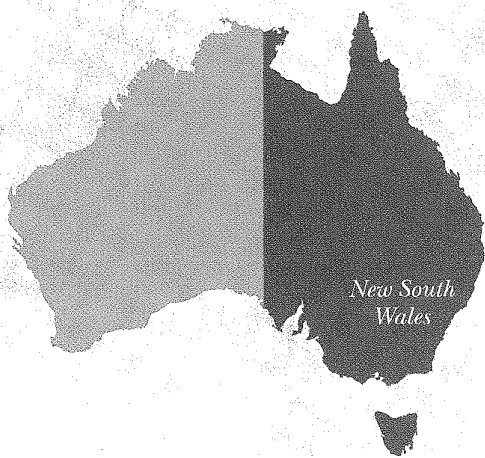## ◢ COLONIAL SETTLEMENT 1788

New South Wales

The First Fleet, commanded by Captain Arthur Phillip, set sail from Britain for New South Wales (NSW) on 13 May 1787. The eleven ships of the fleet transported nearly 1500 people to Botany Bay, over 700 of them convicts. It was a journey that covered 25,000 kilometres.

Phillip was the first governor of the colony and he took his orders from the British Government. His role was to establish a settlement at Botany Bay, a presence in Norfolk Island to exploit its valuable timber and flax, and to further explore the coast.

The colony of NSW was expected to survive on its original supplies and crops from the new land until the arrival of the second fleet two years later. But the environment was foreign to the Europeans and conditions were harsher than expected. This resulted in more than fifty people dying of disease or starvation in the first year of settlement.

While the Europeans eventually prospered in the new land, European diseases, such as the smallpox epidemic in 1789, killed many Aboriginal people. Skirmishes over land and stock resulted in the deaths of many more Indigenous Australians.

◢ First flags of NSW

On 21 October 1805, a sea battle, the "Battle of Trafalgar", was fought between the British Royal Navy and the united fleets of the Spanish and French Navies.

The first flag designed in European-settled Australia was created in honour of Viscount Horatio Nelson's victory for the British, after news of the battle was published by the *Sydney Gazette* in April 1806. Farmer John Bowman made the flag in 1806 using a piece of his wife's silk wedding dress. The flag featured both Australian and British symbols – an English rose, Irish shamrock, Scotch thistle, kangaroo, emu and the word "unity". It also included the motto "England expects every man will do his duty" – a message that was used to rally the fleet at the beginning of the Battle of Trafalgar, signalled by Nelson from the HMS *Victory*.

The first official flag representing the colony of NSW was adopted in 1867 and was a defaced British blue ensign featuring the letters NSW. A second flag was adopted in 1870 replacing the letters NSW with the yellow stars of the Southern Cross topped by the British imperial crown. The British Admiralty considered this version too similar to Victoria's flag design so it was replaced in 1876 by the current design featuring the lion, Cross of St George and four eight-pointed gold stars.