

Governors of NSW

Oatley Heritage and Historical Society

Rodger Robertson 2026



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Governors of NSW

- The first three and last three
- History of their roles up to 1986



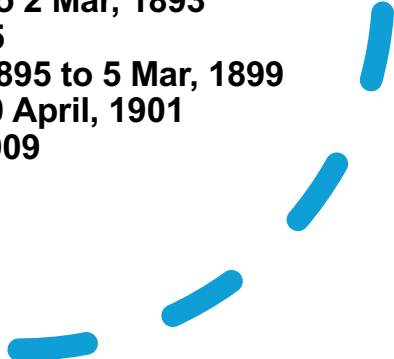


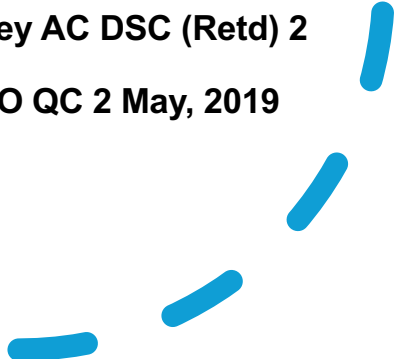
There are 39
NSW Governors
to this date.

Can you name
first three and
last three?



List of Governors of New South Wales

- 1. Captain Arthur Phillip, RN 26 Jan, 1788 to 10 Dec, 1792**
 - 2. Captain John Hunter, RN 11 Sept, 1795 to 27 Sept, 1800**
 - 3. Captain Philip Gidley King, RN 28 Sept, 1800 to 12 Aug, 1806**
 - 4. Captain William Bligh, RN 13 Aug, 1806 to 26 Jan, 1808**
 - 5. Major-General Lachlan Macquarie 1 Jan, 1810 to 1 Dec, 1821**
 - 6. Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane 1 Dec, 1821 to 1 Dec, 1825**
 - 7. Lt-Gen. Ralph Darling 19 Dec, 1825 to 22 Oct, 1831**
 - 8. Major-General Sir Richard Bourke 3 Dec, 1831 to 5 Dec, 1837**
 - 9. Sir George Gipps 24 Feb, 1838 to 11 July, 1846**
 - 10. Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy 3 Aug, 1846 to 20 Jan, 1855**
 - 11. Sir William Thomas Denison 20 Jan, 1855 to 22 Jan, 1861**
 - 12. Rt. Hon. Sir John Young (Gov-in-Chief) 16 May, 1861 to 24 Dec, 1867**
 - 13. Rt. Hon. Somerset Richard, Earl of Belmore 8 Jan, 1868 to 21 Feb, 1872**
 - 14. Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson 3 June, 1872 to 19 Mar, 1879**
 - 15. Rt. Hon. Sir Augustus Loftus 4 Aug, 1879 to 9 Nov, 1885**
 - 16. Rt. Hon. Charles Robert, Baron Carrington 12 Dec, 1885 to 3 Nov, 1890**
 - 17. Rt. Hon. Victor George, Earl of Jersey 15 Jan, 1891 to 2 Mar, 1893**
 - 18. Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Duff 29 May, 1893 to 15 Mar, 1895**
 - 19. Rt. Hon. Henry Robert, Viscount Hampden 21 Nov, 1895 to 5 Mar, 1899**
 - 20. Rt. Hon. William, Earl Beauchamp 18 May, 1899 to 30 April, 1901**
 - 21. Admiral Sir Harry Rawson 27 May, 1902 to 27 May 1909**
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22. Rt. Hon. Frederick Napier, Baron Chelmsford 28 May, 1909 to 11 Mar, 1913
 23. Sir Gerald Strickland, Count della Catena 14 Mar, 1913 to 27 Oct, 1917
 24. Sir Walter Davidson 18 Feb, 1918 to 4 Sept, 1923
 25. Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair 28 Feb, 1924 to 7 April, 1930
 26. Air Vice-Marshal Sir Philip Game 29 May, 1930 to 15 Jan, 1935
 27. Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven 21 Feb, 1935 to 22 Jan, 1936
 28. Admiral Sir Murray Anderson 6 Aug, 1936 to 29 Oct, 1936
 29. The Right Hon Baron Wakehurst 8 April, 1937 to 8 Jan, 1946
 30. Lt-Gen Sir John Northcott 1 Aug, 1946 to 31 July, 1957
 31. Lt-Gen Sir Eric Woodward 1 Aug, 1957 to 31 July, 1965
 32. Sir Arthur Roden Cutler VC AK KCMG KCVO CBE 20 Jan, 1966 to 19 Jan, 1981
 33. Air Marshall Sir James Rowland 20 Jan, 1981 to 20 Jan, 1989
 34. Rear Admiral Sir David Martin 20 Jan, 1989 to 7 Aug, 1990
 35. Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair 8 Aug, 1990 to 29 Feb, 1996
 36. The Honourable Gordon J Samuels 1 Mar, 1996 to 28 February, 2001
 37. Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO 1 Mar, 2001 to 1 October, 2014
 38. His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) 2 October, 2014 to 1 May, 2019
 39. Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC 2 May, 2019 to the present

Governors of NSW

- Before 1946 there were 18 born in England, 4 in Scotland, three in Ireland and four in other British Colonies but none in Australia.
- Marie Bashir was first female in 2001. (also of Lebanese descent)
- First and only Catholic was Strickland in 1913.
- First Australian was John Northcott in 1946.
- Terms are now four years but can be extended to 5 years.
- Macquarie served almost 12 years.
- Two thirds had a military background.
- Governors appoint by British Government till 1986.

Limits of power over time

- Early Governors were all powerful.
- 1823 Legislative Council set up 5-7 members appointed by the Crown. Governors are the ones who proposes law and if the LC votes against then it does not become law.
- 1828. Enlarged to 10-15 members. LC can initiated law but if Governors refuses it goes to London for final decision.
- 1842 some members of LC elected (restricted franchise)
- 1856 responsible government granted. But British Parliament had final say- NSW laws could not conflict with British law.



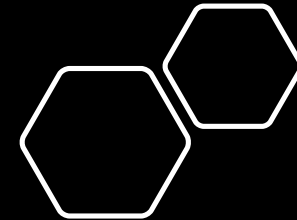
I Grew Up in Mortdale 2223 is in Sydney, NSW.

· Follow

about an hour ago · 🌐

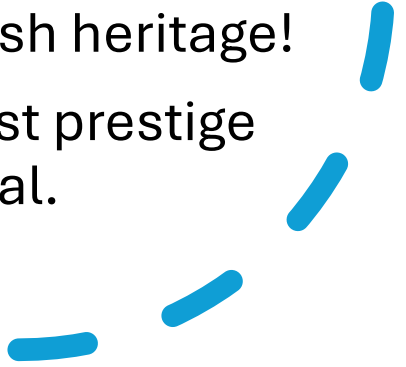
202 years ago [#OnThisDay](#) 25 August 1824, the first meeting of the Legislative Council of NSW was held in Government House in Sydney. The Legislative Council had five members appointed by Britain's Secretary of State and was presided over by Governor Brisbane. The Legislative Council had no real law-making power as only the Governor could initiate a bill and he maintained veto powers. The first act, a Currency Act, was passed on 28 September 1824.

PHOTO: Legislative Council, flashlight photo of interior during sitting - Dec 1915 [See less](#)



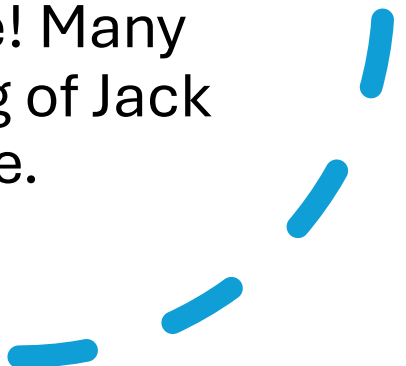
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1880-1930

- By 1880 Governors became more of Constitutional Head of State without ability to make major decisions, but again not without some power in unusual circumstances. The limits of power were rather vague.
 - By 1900 communication with Britain was much improved and quicker than before when it would take many months to get a response from London.
 - Governors were the representative of “Empire” and they were required to remind the residents of NSW of their British heritage!
 - At Federation, State Governors lost prestige and power to the Governor General.
- 
- Four short, curved blue lines arranged in a diagonal pattern in the bottom right corner of the slide.

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1930-1946

- Statute of Westminster 1931 transformed Dominions from Colonial Status to equality with UK. This applied to the Commonwealth and not the States.
 - But States remained self governing colonial dependencies till 1986. State Governors appointed by UK, on advice, till 1986. State Governors had considerable power to act in Local matters but were required to seek advice from UK on matters of Imperial importance! Many examples including the sacking of Jack Lang in 1932 by Governor Game.
- 
- Three blue curved lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

1946 to today

- From 1946 with immigration we became less “British” and the Governor represented the State of NSW and not the Crown.
- But it was not till 1986 (*The Australia Act*) that UK laws had no force in NSW. State laws passed after 1986 could conflict with UK laws and be valid. State Premiers advised the monarch directly on the appointment and termination of Governors. Appeals from State Courts went to the Australian High Court and not the Privy Council
- The Governor is Chair of the Executive Council from which legislation and regulations are discussed and occasionally questioned by the Governor.



Arthur Phillip

- Governor from January 1788-December 1792

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What territory was Phillip granted

- Cook had claimed the east coast of Australia down to where he sited Point Hicks to Possession island
 - But Phillip was given more than that including Van Diemens Land?
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- A blue dashed line in the bottom right corner, composed of four curved segments that follow a diagonal path from the bottom left towards the top right.



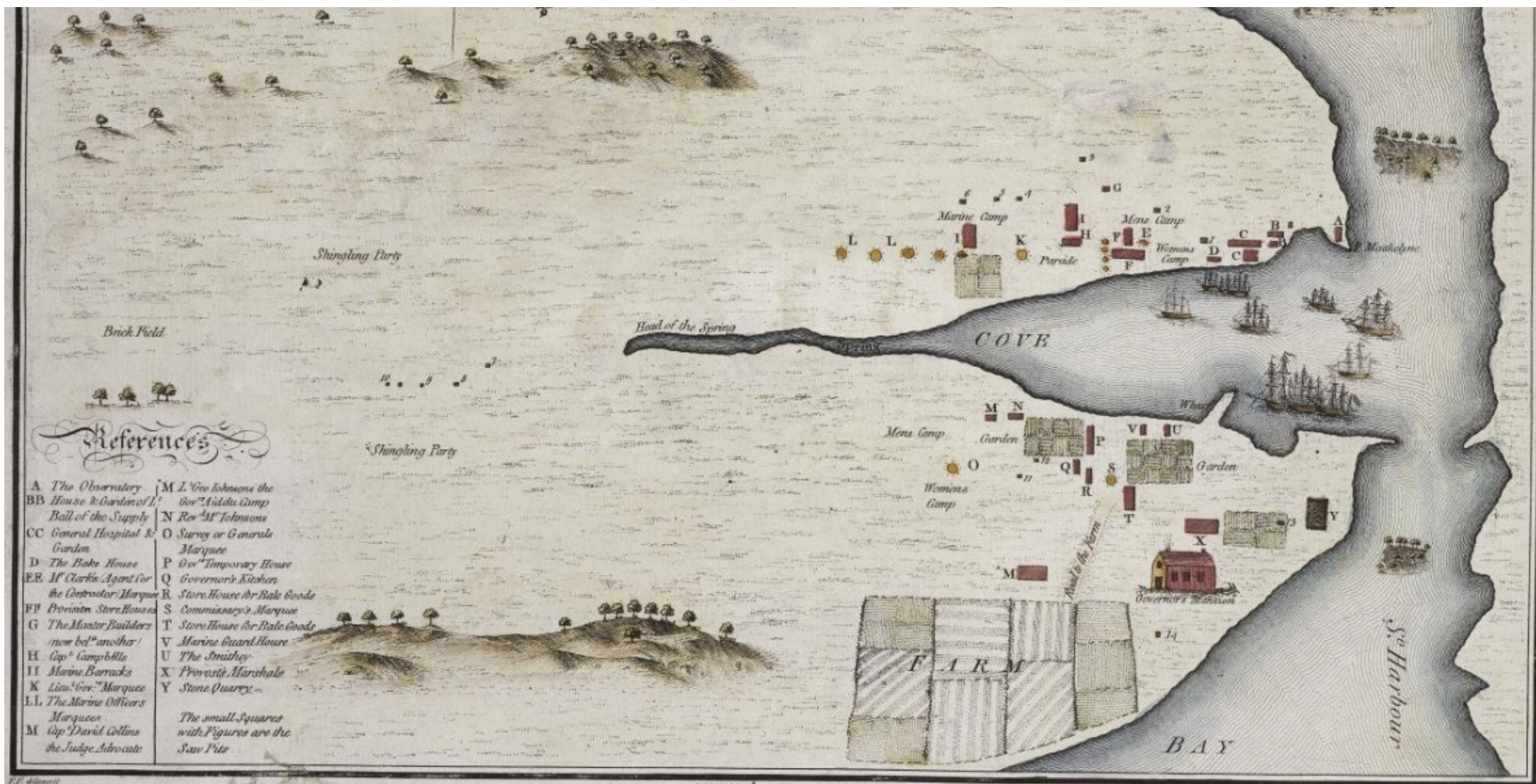
First Fleet and early years

- Lord Sydney was the Home Secretary – Thomas Townsend
- Phillip organized everything to do with the First Fleet- left May 1787 arrived Botany Bay 18-20th January 1788
- On Board were John Hunter and Phillip Gidley King
- Explored Georges and Woronora river and meet aborigines near Lugarno but no good water supplies found - so off to Sydney Cove
- La Perouse visit.
- Food issues in first few years
- April 1790 Second Fleet arrives and Phillip asks to be relieved on medical grounds and private issues

Georges River 20 January 1788





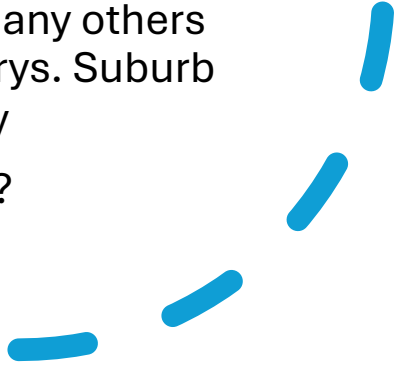


Published July 26th 1788 by R. DALL ST and High Street

W. B. Smith

Sketch & Description of the Settlement at SYDNEY COVE PORT JACKSON in the COUNTY of CUMBERLAND taken



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- Third Fleet arrives July 1791
 - Phillip and aborigines- Many incidents
 - Land grants for ex convicts starts
 - February 1792 Francis Grose arrives as Lieutenant Governor.
 - Phillip leaves December 1792- formally resigns Governorship July 1793.
 - Next Governor Hunter does not arrive till September 1795?
 - Phillip is made Admiral and serves in Napoleonic wars -dies in 1814
 - Naming rights?- Phillip street Sydney and many others around Sydney. Phillip Park opposite St Marys. Suburb Phillip Park near Bunnerong. Port Phillip Bay
 - What are the names of the ship in first fleet?
- 

•**The 11 Ships of the First Fleet**
Naval Escorts: HMS *Sirius* (flagship)
and HMS *Supply* (tender).

Convict

Transports: *Alexander*, *Charlotte*,
Friendship, *Lady Penrhyn*, *Prince of*
Wales, and *Scarborough*.

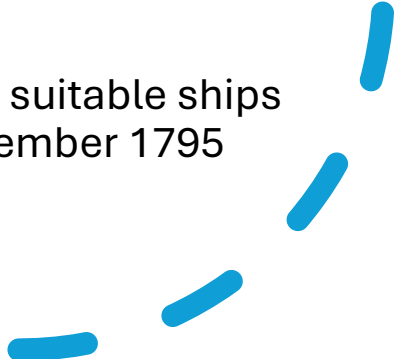
Store Ships: *Borrowdale*, *Fishburn*,
and *Golden Grove*.

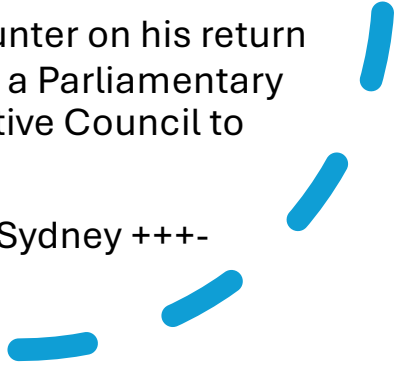




John Hunter

- September 1795 to September 1800
- Scottish

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- Was in Navy from early age
 - On First Fleet as a reserve Governor in case Phillip died etc
 - Hunter sailed in the Supply with slower vessels from Cape Town but because he sailed in more southern water with better winds they arrive together in Botany Bay.
 - Hunter stayed with La Perouse a few days in Botany Bay
 - Hunter sailed to Cape Town for food in late 1788 by way of Cape Horn!
 - Hunter runs the Sirius aground in Norfolk Island 1790. In 1792 he faces a British court but found he did all he could to save vessel.
 - Phillip returns but war with France prevents suitable ships to sail Hunter to Sydney but he arrives September 1795
- 

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- When Hunter arrives in Sydney **the NSW Corp** has taken over many supply trades especially rum! Grose had left in December 1794 so for 9 months little rule? But the NSW Corp had done good work with agriculture near Hawkesbury River so Hunter allows land grants and convict labour for the NSW Corp.
 - NSW Corps lead by Macarthur is proving difficult for Hunter to control
 - But exploration was going well in his time- **Bass and Flinders** various expeditions south and the coal discoveries in **Newcastle** and to the south of Sydney provided a boost.
 - But the expenses of the Colony were weighing on the British minds while at war with France. Hunter was seen as extravagant and was recalled in November 1799. Gidley King arrives in April 1800 but because of shipping delays Hunter stays on as Governor till September.
 - Portland the Secretary of State refused to see Hunter on his return but Hunter gets a Vice Admiralship. He also tells a Parliamentary Commission that NSW needs a Advisory Legislative Council to support Governor.
 - He dies in 1821 aged 83. Naming- Hunter Street Sydney +++- Newcastle area!- Hunters Hill.
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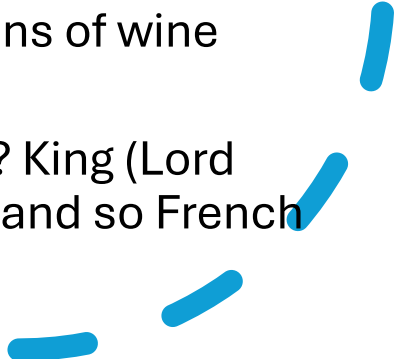


Phillip Gidley King

- September 1800-August 1806.

King before being Governor

- Early years in Navy and in 1782 was under Phillip in war with Spain.
- Arthur Phillip's protege! In First Fleet crew
- Left Sydney in February 1788 for Norfolk Island and he succeeds in making the settlement work- so much so that in early 1790 Phillip sends 200 convicts and 65 soldiers from Sydney to Norfolk.
- King returns to Sydney with convict Ann Inett and their child Norfolk. King then returns to London and marries Anna.
- Meanwhile Ann has had their second child named Sydney while still serving her time.
- So when King returns to Sydney with new wife Ann is left behind when King sails off to Norfolk with son Norfolk where Anna has son Phillip.

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- Phillip wanted King to replace him but Hunter got the job
 - King was keen on promoting flax from New Zealand and in the process reminded Britain of the promise of that place.
 - King returns to Britain after his Governorship of Norfolk in 1798 with wife and two new daughters.
 - King gets appointed to replace Hunter in 1799 and takes over in September 1800 and finds the colony being run by NSW Corps.
 - First issue is NSW Corps- fiery clashes with Macarthur over alcohol monopoly- King prevented ships with 26,000 gallons of rum and 22,000- gallons of wine from landing.
 - Baudin arrives 1802- spies or explorers? King (Lord Hobart) sends group to Van Diemen's Land so French are gazumped!
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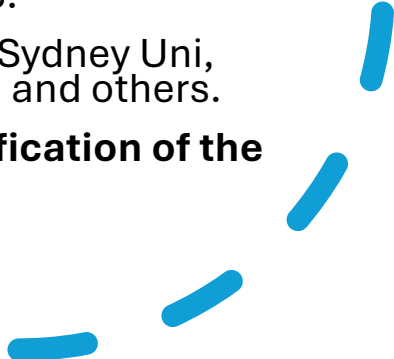
King – a gracious exit

- In 1803 an Irish rebellion occurred. A quarter of inhabitants were Irish! King allowed Catholic Mass but they revolted and were confronted and 12 died in battle- 8 ring leaders later executed.
- King was allowed to return to London and was complemented on his Governorship. King had successfully settled Van Diemen's land and made some progress with NSW Corps
- Bligh lands in Sydney August 1806 and King leaves in February 1807. Anna gets a grant of 790 acres!
- King had severe gout and his return was difficult – he dies in September 1808 before Phillip and Hunter- King has left his descendants in Sydney which at this time was unique.
- Naming- King Street Sydney- King... Lots?, King Island



Marie Bashir

- 1 March 2001- 2014

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- Born to Lebanese descent on December 1 1930 in Narrandera.
 - Sydney Girls high in 1943. Sydney Uni for MB,BS
 - Married Nick Shehadie in 1957. She was local GP in Eastern Suburbs. Then Post Grad in psychiatry. Many leadership positions in Community leading to OA in 1988. Much clinical psychiatric work in Aborigine communities throughout Australia.
 - Recommended by Governor Sinclair in 1996 to Bob Carr but he went for Gordon Samuels.
 - 1 March 2001 Bashir made first female Governor of NSW. A break from Military and diplomats and politicians! Awarded the AC
 - She lived in Mosman leaving Government House open to the public.
 - Shehadie was also prominent in many circles in sport and as Lord mayor of Sydney he was knighted in 1976.
 - Many appointments for Bashir- Chancellor of Sydney Uni, Patron Sydney Symphony and Opera Australia and others.
 - **Visited Oatley on 75th anniversary of electrification of the Line**
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National and international [\[edit \]](#)

	Dame of the Order of Australia (AD)	2014 ^[50]
	Companion of the Order of Australia (AC)	2001 ^[16]
	Officer of the Order of Australia (AO)	1988 ^[13]
	Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO)	2006 ^[32]
	Dame of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem	2001 ^[25]
	Centenary Medal	2001 ^[15]
	Grand Cordon of the National Order of the Cedar (Lebanon)	2012 ^[41]
	Grand Officer of the National Order of the Cedar (Lebanon)	2004 ^[30]
	Officer of the Legion of Honour (France)	2014 ^[45]
	Chevalier of the Legion of Honour (France)	2009 ^[36]

- Bashir retired after holding the office for over 13 years, being the second-longest serving Governor of New South Wales, stating she did not want to surpass the length of service of war hero Sir Roden Cutler.

Awards

- Marie Bashir Peace Awards, National Council of Women of New South Wales.^[74]

Aircraft

- Boeing 737 Large Air Tanker 'Marie Bashir', [New South Wales Rural Fire Service](#).^[75]

Institutions and buildings

- Marie Bashir Mosman Sports Centre, [Mosman](#).^[39]
 - Marie Bashir Public School, [Strathfield](#).^[46]
 - Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity (MBI), [University of Sydney](#).^[48]
 - Governor Marie Bashir Reading Room, State Library of New South Wales.^[76]
 - Professor Marie Bashir Centre, [Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown](#).^[77]
- She died on January 20 2026!





David Hurley

- October 2014- May 2018



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David Hurley

- Born in Wollongong. Married Linda Mc Martin from Carlton
 - Military Career ending with Chief of Defence Force in 2011
 - Succeeded Peter Cosgrave as GG in 2019
 - Numerous awards and Honours.
 - Retired as GG in 2024.
 - Visited Oatley RSL ??
- 
- A blue decorative line in the bottom right corner, consisting of several short, curved segments arranged in an upward-curving path.



Margaret Beasley

- 2 May 2019- extended to May 2028

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Maragret Beasley

- Grew up In Hurstville
 - St Declans Primary Penshurst. St Josephs High in Kogarah and then Law degree at Sydney University
 - Numerous appointments to various senior Judicial roles with the President of the NSW Appeals court from 2013 to 2019 as her last appointment before the Governorship of NSW.
 - Authored “*Appeals and Appellate Courts in Australia and New Zealand*”
- 
- Four blue curved lines of varying lengths and orientations, arranged in a cluster in the bottom right corner of the slide.

	Companion of the Order of Australia (AC)	2020 ^[11]
	Officer of the Order of Australia (AO)	2006 ^[17]
	Dame of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem	2019 ^[18]

Honorary appointments [\[edit \]](#)

-  2019: Honorary Colonel of the [Royal New South Wales Regiment](#).^[19]
-  2019: Governor of the [New South Wales Police Force](#).^[20]
-  2019: [Deputy Prior of the Order of St John](#).^[21]
-  2019: Honorary [Commodore](#), [Royal Australian Navy](#).^[22]
-  2019: Honorary [Air Commodore](#) of [No. 22 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force](#).^[23]

Honorary degrees [\[edit \]](#)

-  2008: Honorary Doctorate of Laws (LLD) by the [University of Sydney](#).^[24]
-  2019: Honorary Doctorate of Laws (LLD) by the [Australian Catholic University](#).^[25]
-  2022: Honorary Doctorate of Laws (LLD) by [The University of Notre Dame Australia](#).^[26]



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- But no association with Oatley!
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Thank You!

