

The AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY *Newsletter*

A Mirror of Society

At the simplest level, a language tells something of the history of the people who created it: the convict era, the exploration and settlement of a new land, the goldrushes, the birth of Australian nationalism – these are all reflected in the language. But at a more penetrating level, language is a mirror of society, a harsh or romantic mirror according to the viewer's perception.

Australian English

Australian English may provide ample evidence of Australian racism, sexism, and inhumanity, of the Australian's self-consciousness and insecurity of identity, but it may also reveal invention, pragmatism, heroism, and idealism, the emergence of a distinctive national character. The value of an historical dictionary is that it provides evidence of the use of language in the words of the people themselves, leaving the readers to make their own interpretation.

The Australian National Dictionary provides authoritative definitions of Australian words as well as being an anthology of Australian history, with fascinating historical evidence of the development of the Australian character. Each word is examined to reflect how the meaning has developed historically, and this is accompanied by a chronological sequence of quotations from Australian writings to illustrate the use of the word.

dispersal. [See next.] The clearing of Aborigines from a particular locality; the pursuit and slaughter of Aborigines. Also *attrib.*

[1836 T.L. MITCHELL *Three Exped. Eastern Aust.* 27 May (1838) II. 103 New and remarkable shrub—Darling tribe again—Their dispersion by the party.] 1902 W. LEES *Aboriginal Problem Qld.* 11 The issue of distinct orders . . . that the aborigines were to be treated on humanitarian lines, with the result that since then not a single 'dispersal', i.e., by bullet, has taken place. 1926 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 4 Feb. 22/2 Mrs McAuley's husband was killed long ago by the blacks near Cairns. The 'dispersal party' which went out rushed the camp of the suspected tribe. 1929 *Ibid.* 9 Jan. 25/3 Touching those incidents of 'dispersals' of the blacks in Queensland half a century ago, there is some not over-credible history recorded. . . Some of the 'dispersals' were mere butcheries. 1939 J.W. COLLINSON *Early Days Cairns* 64 The blacks gave trouble. . . The subsequent police 'dispersal' gave great displeasure to the settlers, through the capture of some of the native children.

Sample entry: actual size

There's one restaurant I shall not be patronizing. . . *'It is axiomatic that a bab should have had absolutely no experience of cooking or experience confined to hashhouses where, instead of customers getting serviettes, they wipe their greasy hands on the establishment's woolly dog, which is washed every Wednesday, and muligatawny soup is on the menu every Thursday.'*

You'd be fairly 'butchers in the comics' after that.

'The "Grasshoppers" . . . fly into a town, devour all there is to eat, drink and see and then fly out again.' —Stuart Rudd wasn't talking about insects in *Far and Near*.

'Our great Australian slangage . . . "A blanky cop's pinched a bloke for nip-pin' tommy off a pie-stall. There 'e gows in the flounder"; and he pointed to where a hansom was disappearing down the street.'

Would you mind meeting a 'toothsome snot-goblin' on a wild dark night in the bush?

Can something 'on the bugle' be called a 'dud rot'?

Our earliest example of brick veneer? —*'5 generations have lived there, and the original house of pine logs had been encased in 100-year-old home-made bricks.'*

**A fascinating insight
into the language and
culture of the
Australian People.**

The Incomparable Work of Lexicography

The Australian National Dictionary (A.N.D.) is an historical dictionary of words which are distinctively Australian or which have a greater prominence in the Australian vocabulary than elsewhere. As such it differs radically from a general reference dictionary.

The A.N.D. is closely linked with the great Oxford English Dictionary and its four Supplements, which record the entire vocabulary of the English language since c. AD 1150.

The Oxford English Dictionary is recognized as the ultimate authority on the usage and meaning of English words and phrases. It is a fascinating guide to the evolution of the language and has been described as 'among the wonders of the world of scholarship'; it is a dictionary like no other ever produced. Unrivalled in accuracy and comprehensiveness, it is the supreme reference work for the office and the home, for the library of anyone who loves the language.

The Australian National Dictionary integrates naturally with the full O.E.D. Definitions are framed in traditional Oxford style and are complemented by a string of Australian quotations illustrating each word's or sense's use. Additional unpublished material has also been made available from the word files of the O.E.D. to supplement that collected by researchers in Australia. The A.N.D. represents a major adjunct to the new O.E.D. and will be merged into the full O.E.D. database on compact disc.



OXFORD

A Good Read

'I believe that people will come to see it as a good read. There are many quite fascinating words in it, and the string of quotations which illustrates them means that you can just sit down and browse.' (Bill Ramson)

Like most Australian words, *chunder* has been given various – probably spurious – etymologies. For instance, it has been said that it is short for *watchunder* – someone being sick on a ship. It is probably rhyming slang for *Chunder Loo of Akim Foo*, originally drawn by Norman Lindsay and appearing in advertisements for Cobra boot polish in *The Bulletin*.

chunder /'tʃʌndə/, *v.* [Prob. f. rhyming slang *Chunder Loo* for 'spew', after a cartoon figure *Chunder Loo of Akim Foo* orig. drawn by Norman Lindsay (1879–1969), and appearing in advertisements for Cobra boot polish in the *Sydney Bulletin* between 1909 and 1920.] *intr.* To vomit.

[1914 *Gzeelong Racer: Paper of Troopship 'Gzeelong'* 29 Oct. 2 At the sign of the three onions Uncle Chunder the well known financier is prepared to do business. 1917 *Rabaul Rec.* 1 Aug. 5 They envy the cut o' me, and all make a butt o' me And sing out 'Hullo, Chunder-Loo.' 1918 *Kia Ora Coo-ee* June 15/1 My guide ('Chunder') halted before a low, squalid-looking mud hut. 1950 'N. SHUTE' *Town like Alice* 76 The way these bloody Nips go on. Makes you chunda. 1964 B. HUMPHRIES *Nice Night's Entertainment* (1981) 77 When I'd swallowed the last prawn I had a Technicolor yawn And I chundered in the old Pacific sea. 1965 *Times Lit. Suppl.* (London) 16 Sept. 812/2 His favourite word to describe the act of involuntary regurgitation is the verb to chunder. This word is not in popular currency in Australia, but the writer recalls that ten years ago it was common in Victoria's more expensive public schools. It is now used by the Surfies. . . I understand, by the way, that the word derives from a nautical expression 'watch under', an ominous courtesy shouted from the upper decks for the protection of those below. 1967 J. HIBBERD *White with Wire Wheels* (1970) 154 The man who can count the number of times he's chundered on one hand. 1976 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 28 Feb. 24/3 Newly-elected Federal MPs should celebrate their triumph by 'chundering' over the stern bronze statue of George V which graces the hall of Parliament House. 1978 R. MACKLIN *Newsfront* 100 On the eighth loop-the-loop the poor bugger couldn't take it any more and he chundered—urrh—right in me ear, and all down me collar. 1985 *Austral. Short Stories* xi. 42 And lamb chops and fluffy kenebecs drooling melted butter have been known to make me chunder!

2. *transf.* and *fig.* Also *trans.*

1968 B. HUMPHRIES *Wonderful World Barry McKenzie*, Hey Bazza? You chundering off [sc. departing] already! 1971 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 17 Apr. 40/1 Ellis with gum-ache, . . . Boddy bilious, his candy-striped jeep chundering petrol all over Waverley. 1979 CAREY & LETTE *Puberty Blues* 117, I paddled out first. Sue couldn't stop laughing at me slipping off and getting chundered [sc. thrown into the sea].

Hence **chunderer** *n.*

1967 F. HARDY *Billy Barker yarns Again* 61, I know a better yarn called 'The Champion Chunderer from Cooper's Creek'. 1968 B. HUMPHRIES *Wonderful World Barry McKenzie*, We've been after the Brompton chunderer for a long time. We knew he'd go too far with the sweet corn one of these days.

Sample entry: actual size

Did You Know?

- * ...that 'South Australians "get the hump" when addressed as croweaters' (1892)
- * ...but 'They do things differently in Sandgroperland' (1908)
- * 'And his naming of the coinage is a mystery to some With his "quid" and "half-a-caser" And his "deener" and his "scrum".' (1898).
...you probably know a 'quid' but what's a 'deener' and a 'scrum'?
- * What are these boys spinning?
'And I see the camp-fire blazing
'neath the overhanging trees,
And the boys a-spinning cuffers
to the sighing of the breeze' (1894)

Eight Months to read THE BULLETIN

The A.N.D. has taken nearly ten years to compile. Initiated by The Australian National University in 1978, Dr Bill Ramson, then the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, embarked on the enormous task of compiling the dictionary.

Mrs Pauline Fanning, formerly Director of the Australian Humanities Collection at the National Library, drew up a comprehensive bibliography of possible sources, and a team of readers was employed to sift through the huge numbers of printed words. They read every newspaper published before 1850, and selectively after that date. Joan Hughes read every issue of *The Bulletin* published between 1880 and 1970 – it took her eight months.

And when the reading was over, it was time for the editing to begin. At that point the emphasis shifted from The National Library – the 'coalface' where the research was carried out – back to the cottage which is The Australian National Dictionary Centre.

Each possible entry in the dictionary has its own index cards listing sources and quotations. On these cards are stored more than 300,000 quotations from all aspects of Australian life – the database which makes this dictionary unique, in that it's the only dictionary drawn exclusively from Australian sources.



The first segment of the manuscript is handed over to Professor P.H. Karmel, Vice-Chancellor of The Australian National University

ONAL DICTIONARY



The project team

From National Library to Cottage

'Cottages are important to dictionaries' says Bill Ramson (Murray's O.E.D. was also housed in a cottage), 'I could yell at my science editor, and we could pass cards around without disturbing anyone else. It is a good working atmosphere.' It was in this cottage that the small tightly-knit team started work on the editing of the dictionary.

'One of the most valuable bits of advice we got was from Bob Burchfield, Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary Supplements. He suggested we measure our cards and determine the rate at which we would have to get through them.' (Bill Ramson).

The cards were measured and stretched for 48 metres (not end-to-end but in a block). That meant 4 metres had to be completed every three months for three years, and the manuscript was delivered on time – a remarkable achievement.

The Cottage Industry

The Australian National Dictionary Centre, under the direction of Dr. Ramson, will build on the foundations laid in *The Australian National Dictionary*. 60,000 quotations are included in *The A.N.D.* – a small part of the Centre's total database of 300,000 quotations. One aim of the Centre will be to expand and update this database, recording changes in Australian English as they occur, so that *The A.N.D.* itself can be updated constantly, and other specialist dictionaries produced.

Through its Oxford connection, the Centre will be linked to the monumental *New Oxford English Dictionary* and its editorial staff in Oxford, and to the Center for North American English being established by Oxford in Washington. It will also have links with dictionary centres in Canada and New Zealand.

The study of Australian English cannot be undertaken in isolation: Australian English is one of several branches of English; the interaction between these branches is constant, and with colloquialisms particularly, up-to-date information is essential.

The Project Team

Dr William Ramson heads the Australian National Dictionary Centre in Canberra. He is a New Zealander who came to Australia in 1955, and gained his Ph.D. in English, the first conferred by the University of Sydney. Since 1961, he has been on the staff of The Australian National University where, from 1981 until 1987, he was the full-time Editor of *The Australian National Dictionary*. He is a leading authority on Australian English, and has published many books and been involved in work on a variety of dictionaries and other works of reference. Dr Ramson is also one of the two Australian advisers for Oxford Australia's Word and Language Service (AUSSIE OWLS).

The A.N.D. project has had a full-time editorial staff of five, with a number of part-time support staff working in The National Library and The War Memorial Library. Dr Ramson was supported by the Associate Editor, Joan Hughes; the Science Editor, Bernadette Hince; a Copy Editor, Julia Robinson; and Secretary, Dallas de Brabander. The National Library group has been led by Pauline Fanning.



Dr. William Ramson, Editor

The Centre is funded jointly by the Australian National University and Oxford University Press Australia.

slant. *Obs.* [Spec. use of Br. slang *slant* a chance: see OEDS *sb.* 6 and 7.] An opportunity to go somewhere procured as the result of a stratagem.

1835 *Cornwall Chron.* (Launceston) 2 May 3 This was a prosecution at the instance of Constable Thomas Perkins, who is stationed at Birch's Bay and Long Bay, and has detained him in town from his situation as constable for a week. No prosecutor appeared, and there was not the slightest evidence adduced of a felony. This charge appeared to have been trumped up for no other purpose than but for him to get a *slant* to Hobart Town. 1837 *Ibid.* 25 Nov. 2 David Adams, assigned to Mr Barclay, was charged with feigning sickness, by which getting a 'slant' to go to the doctor, he went to a public house instead. 1851 H. MELVILLE *Present State Aust.* 171 He was sent up to Hobart Town on the 'slant' for trial. 1897 P. WARUNG *Tales Old Regime* 217 Pedder had got tired of things in general, and had organized that movement which was popularly known in Norfolk Island and Port Arthur as a 'slant', that is, he had planned a murder or a mutiny on purpose to obtain a trial in Hobart or Sydney.

convict. *n.* and *attrib. Hist.* [Spec. use of *convict* a condemned criminal serving a sentence of penal servitude: see OED *sb.* 1. 2.]

2. *fig.*
1859 'EYE WITNESS' *Voyage to Aust.* 19 The last dinner taken on British soil is the only comfortable one you will take until you return or die; in short, you are the convict of your own choice, and those with a young family leaving home for Australia would be kindly visited if the undertaker had to receive the money paid to the shipping agents.

B. 1. *attrib.*
1793 W. TENCH *Compl. Acc't. Settlement* 25 A dozen farthing candles stuck around the mud walls of a convict-hut. 1829 D. BURN *Bushrangers* (1971) 44 Without encroaching on the convict brood, 'Who left their country for their country's good!' 1835 *Colonist* (Sydney) 23 Apr. 3/4 The prevalence of a convict-morality has been so extensive and so debasing in this colony. 1837 J. MUDIE *Felony of N.S.W.* 145 Convict prisoners before the supreme court may utter the most atrocious calumnies. *Ibid.* 195 The convict swains . . . usually apply for permission to go to the factory in quest of a fair helpmate. 1838 S. *Austral. Rec.* (London) 14 Nov. 116 One universal *esprit de corps* animates and pervades the whole convict body, uniting them like Freemasons in one silent, deep-rooted sentiment of hostility to the free settler, or, as they profanely call them, the b- emigrants. 1839 *Sydney Standard* 22 July 2/3 The feelings and wishes of convict parents have no right to be considered or consulted upon the question of education. 1840 J.P. JOHNSON *Plain Truths* 44 The occupation of the first class is making convict clothing. 1841 *Port Phillip Patriot* 22 Apr. 4/4 A curious and not a very unfavourable specimen of convict poetry. 1843 *Sydney Morning Herald* 22 Aug. 2/2 He would re-brand the colony with that convict-stigma which made it so long an object of loathing. 1846 *Atlas* (Sydney) II. 553/3 The people of New South Wales will not suffer themselves to be deceived, by canting tirades against convict pollution. 1855 G.H. WATHEN *Golden Colony* 142 He swore a deep convict oath. 1856 J. BONWICK *Bushrangers* 13 We must . . . introduce the reader to the convict homes of Macquarie Harbour and Port Arthur. 1869 J. MARTINEAU *Lett. from Aust.* 115 In New South Wales a considerable proportion of the population is of convict descent. 1870 J. BONWICK *Curious Facts* 154 The children were brought up by thirty resident convict nurses. 1878 G. WALCH *Australasia* 42 The salt breezes may blow across Port Arthur at the present time, untainted by convict breath. 1879 'RECENT SETTLER' *Emigration to Tas.* 40 The standard of morality in Tasmania is decidedly lower than in England; attributable, most probably, to the fact of the convict element having predominated so greatly in former years. 1891 H. NISBET *Colonial Tramp* II. 274 The worst of the convict-floggers, also insane now, was dying when I saw him. 1892 C. PARKER *Round Compass in Aust.* 129 As a refutation of any unusual emphasis of the 'convict taint', it may be noted that the most moral, religious, law-abiding, and arcanid of the Australian colonies, is Tasmania. 1935 F. CLUNE *Rolling down Lachlan* 7 The convict iron-gang roadmenders wore fetters.

2. *Comb.* convict boy, -built *a.*, class, clerk, gang, labour, labourer, -made *a.*, mechanic, population, shepherd, stock-keeper, woman.

1853 *N.S.W. Mag.* (Sydney) 248 Convict Boys may be procured as apprentices on board ships. 1854 J.D. LANG *Hist. & Statistical Acc't. N.S.W.* II. 170 The Carters' Barracks—an establishment in which convict-boys are taught mechanical employments. 1837 *Rep. Select Committee Transportation* 67 Convict boys, 16 or 17 years old . . . had arrived in the last ships. 1839 S. *Austral. Rec.* (London) 9 Oct. 246 The new colony will throw their convict built importance entirely into the shade. 1913 H. LAWSON *Triangles of Life* 119 The old convict-built log fence. 1914 H.M. VAUGHAN *Australasian*

Apparently modern term can be traced back to earlier times

First recorded use is Australian

Includes not only Australian English of today but also obsolete and regional usage

Details of etymology, pronunciation, part of speech, status, meaning, variant spellings, and derivation included

Comprehensive Aboriginal references

Authoritative definitions of Australian words

Australian flora and fauna and their popular names

The manners and habits of all Australians illustrated in the quotations

An anthology of Australian history

Australian attitudes and prejudices become apparent

No special definition necessary here

Short bibliographical references

Dated quotations from published sources identify the period when a word entered the language

Meanings are set out to reveal their chronological sequence of development

Refers to O.E.D. definition for further explanation of mainstream English usage

Compounds and derivatives included under main headword

Australian literature well represented

demo. [*dem(onstration + -O.* Used elsewhere but recorded earliest in Aust.; see OEDS.) A demonstration; a public display of interest in a cause, usu. a procession or mass-meeting. Also *attrib.*

1904 *Truth* (Sydney) 11 Sept. 7/2 *A dig at demos.* On a charge of distributing certain handbills advertising a 'Monster Democratic Demonstration'. 1966 A. HOPGOOD *Private Yuh Objects* 7, I know these demos. back home have been worrying some of you. 1969 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 3 May 13/3 At last week's 'student-worker' demo in Sydney, almost all of the police controlling the manifestation kept their cool. 1975 A. O'GRADY *Sugar-Coated Comfortable* 22 A demonstration? What were you at that demo for? 1979 S. MORAN *Reminis. of Rebel* 15 Every time I appeared at a demo I was immediately arrested. 1986 *Canberra Times* 21 Feb. 3/4 (heading) Police condemn policy shift on demo arrests.

crammer /'kræmə/. *Austral. pidgin.* Also **cramma** [*a. Dharuk garama. l. trans.* To steal (something). Also *absol.*

1798 D. COLLINS *Account Eng. Colony N.S.W.* I. 614 *Carrah-mā*, stealing. 1850 R. DAWSON *Present State Aust.* 75 Black pellow crammer (steal). 1845 D. MACKENZIE *Emigrant's Guide* 220 When a man dies . . . a neighbouring tribe is blamed for it, as having 'crammer gourai' (stolen the fat), by some invisible agency, and thus caused his death. 1849 J.P. TOWNSEND *Rambles & Observations N.S.W.* 102 If he had been a good fellow, and had not 'crammered (stolen) corn'. 1879 'AUSTRALIAN' *Adventures Qld.* 38 Well, that been crammer (steal) my gin good while ago. 1912 J. BRADSHAW *Highway Robbery under Arms* (ed. 3) 21 Do you want to cramma young gin. Suppose you like it, she very good look out yarraman.

elegant parrot. The small, predom. green parrot *Neophema elegans* of s.w. and central s. Aust., having blue markings on the wings and between the eyes.

[1841 J. GOULD *Birds of Aust.* (1848) V. Pl. 38, *Euphema elegans* . . . Elegant Grass-Parakeet.] 1937 R.H. CROLL *Wide Horizons* 51 Another native of the inland, commonly called the Elegant Parrot. 1976 *Reader's Digest Compl. Bk. Austral. Birds* 290 The elegant parrot raises four or five young in a nest in a tree hole.

souvenir. *v.* [Used elsewhere but recorded earliest in Aust.; see OEDS *v.* 3.] *trans.* To appropriate; to steal; to take as a 'souvenir'. Also *absol.* and as *ppl. a.*

1918 C. GARSTIN *Mud Larks* 18 My batman tro. . . . underfoot at seven next morning. 'Goin' to be blinkin' murder done in this camp presently, Sir,' he announced cheerfully. 'Three officers went to sleep in bivvies last night, but somebody's souvenired 'em since, an' they're all lyin' hout in the hopen now, Sir.' 1919 *Austie: Austral. Soldiers' Mag.* Mar. 1/1 I'm just waiting for this photo bloke to get knocked. I want to souvenir his camera! 1926 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 27 May 22/2, I don't think 'Wang' need worry about the effect of war-souvenired cartridges dumped into municipal incinerators. 1932 J.J. HARDIE *Cattle Camp* (1944) 280 Ummm!—'Spouse you souvenired it off one of your Fritz prisoners. 1935 J.P. MCKINNEY *Crucible* 150 The builders of it had started out very ambitiously with material evidently 'souvenired' from R.E. dumps, salvage-heaps and local barns. 1956 S. HOPE *Diggers' Paradise* 83 Early, too, numbers of youngsters show that tendency to 'souvenir' which is the euphonious term for pilfering. 1963 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 26 Jan. 3/2 Kelly's bones were

creek. Also (rarely) **crick.** [Br. *creek* a narrow inlet in the coastline, an estuary, but also an inlet or short arm of a river, applied in U.S. and other former British colonies to a tributary river or stream: see OEDS *sb.* 1. 2 b. The earliest Austral. uses retain the Br. meaning (see quot. 1793).]

1. A watercourse, esp. a stream or tributary of a river; in Australian use often varying widely in application: see esp. quots. 1805, 1833, 1848, 1849, 1903, and 1955.

[1793 J. HUNTER *Hist. Jmrl. Trans. Port Jackson* 489 It will also be necessary . . . to make a dam across the creek, in order to prevent the tides making the water brackish at the lower part of it.] 1795 D. COLLINS *Acc't. Eng. Colony N.S.W.* (1798) I. 422 The husband . . . sold a very good farm . . . on a creek of the river. 1799 *Ibid.* (1802) II. 185 The creek runs winding between two steep hills, and ends in a chain of ponds. 1804 *HRA* (1921) 3rd Ser. I. 584 There is a small Creek . . . that discharges the Water of a beautiful Fall at its head into the main River. 1805 *Ibid.* (1915) 1st Ser. V. 586 A Creek—It's locally applied to all brooks and small Rills that are deeply seated in the Ground and the Sides or Banks very Steep.