

# LACHLAN MACQUARIE

THE FATHER OF AUSTRALIA



A **STUDY GUIDE** BY ROBERT LEWIS



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## OVERVIEW

In 1810, Lachlan Macquarie arrived in New South Wales to rule over 10,000 criminals and colonists.

He was ordered to normalise the situation after the political and social unrest caused by the arrest of Governor Bligh by the New South Wales Corps and its wealthy supporters such as John Macarthur.

But what was normal. Was New South Wales a jail or a colony?

Over the next twelve years Macquarie's policies profoundly shaped the nation – not least by nurturing Australia's egalitarian spirit and national belief in the right to 'a fair go'. He was even the first person to use, in an official document, the colony's future name – Australia.

And it was not only Lachlan Macquarie's vision – behind every great man is a great woman, and this film is her story too. We also see Elizabeth Campbell Macquarie's untold contribution to the Australian nation.

In 1821 the Macquaries left the colony – to the acclaim and praise of many of the inhabitants, but to the criticism of the British government and its representative, Commissioner J.T. Bigge.

- » Why was Macquarie praised by some but criticised by others? How is his legacy seen today? What does a study of his period of governorship tell us about the role of the individual in history, and about the nature of the developing colony at the time?

*Lachlan Macquarie: The Father of Australia* (Les Wilson, 2010) is a 60-minute documentary that explores the life and governorship of Governor Macquarie. Using expert interviews, diaries and letters written by the characters themselves and contemporary narrative, this film tells the dramatic story of the father of Australia.

## CURRICULUM APPLICABILITY

*Lachlan Macquarie: The Father of Australia* is an appropriate resource for use in History/Society and Environment at Years 8–10.

It can be used as:

- » a source of information about early New South Wales society,
- » an exploration of the role of a famous man (and woman) in history,
- » a critical analysis of evidence,
- » a focus for students' own further research into the period,
- » a stimulus resource for exploring the idea of representations of history,
- » a way of creating their own representation – either as a television program reporting on Macquarie's departure in 1921, or through setting up the 'Macquarie Museum' and modelling a museum site study.

## BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM

Imagine that you are in Scotland.

You come across an inscription on the outside wall of a mausoleum (a special building containing a grave or tomb).

<http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/lmr/tomb.html>

Read the inscription and then respond to the statements on page 4. You may agree with each statement, disagree with it, or be unable to say from this information. Where you agree or disagree, draw a line from the statement to the wording in the inscription that supports your idea. One example has been done to help you.



HERE IN THE HOPE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION LIE THE REMAINS OF THE LATE MAJOR GENERAL LACHLAN MACQUARIE OF JARVISFIELD WHO WAS BORN 31ST JANUARY, 1761 AND DIED AT LONDON ON THE 1ST OF JULY, 1824.

THE PRIVATE VIRTUES AND AMIABLE DISPOSITION WITH WHICH HE WAS ENDOWED RENDERED HIM AT ONCE A MOST BELOVED HUSBAND, FATHER AND MASTER, AND A MOST ENDEARING FRIEND.

HE ENTERED THE ARMY AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN AND THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF 47 YEARS SPENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE WAS UNIFORMLY CHARACTERIZED BY ANIMATED ZEAL FOR HIS PROFESSION, ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE, AND GENEROSITY WHICH KNEW NO BOUNDS.

HE WAS APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES A.D. 1809 AND FOR TWELVE YEARS FULFILLED THE DUTIES OF THAT STATION

WITH EMINENT ABILITY AND SUCCESS.

HIS SERVICES IN THAT CAPACITY HAVE JUSTLY ATTACHED  
A LASTING HONOUR TO HIS NAME.

THE WISDOM, LIBERALITY, AND BENEVOLENCE OF ALL THE MEASURES OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, HIS RESPECT FOR THE ORDINANCES OF RELIGION AND THE READY ASSISTANCE WHICH HE GAVE TO EVERY CHARITABLE INSTITUTION, THE UNWEARIED ASSIDUITY WITH WHICH HE SOUGHT TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF ALL CLASSES OF THE COMMUNITY, THE RAPID IMPROVEMENT OF THE COLONY UNDER HIS AUSPICES, AND THE HIGH ESTIMATION IN WHICH BOTH HIS CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT WERE HELD RENDERED HIM TRULY DESERVING THE APPELLATION BY WHICH HE HAS BEEN DISTINGUISHED

THE FATHER OF AUSTRALIA.

From this evidence we can say that:

STATEMENT – LACHLAN MACQUARIE:	AGREE	DISAGREE	CANNOT TELL
WAS A CHRISTIAN			
LOVED HIS FAMILY			
HAD SEVERAL CHILDREN			
WAS A MILITARY OFFICER			
FOUGHT IN SEVERAL WARS			
BELIEVED IN DEMOCRACY			
WAS LOVED BY ALL			
IS HONOURED IN AUSTRALIA			
WAS HAPPILY MARRIED			
OWNED SLAVES			
WAS A POPULAR GOVERNOR			
IMPROVED THE COLONY OF NSW			
NAMED AUSTRALIA			
WAS HONOURED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT			
CREATED MANY PUBLIC BUILDINGS			
TREATED CONVICTS FAIRLY			
DEVELOPED THE NSW ECONOMY			
SAW NSW AS A PRISON			
BELIEVED IN SOCIAL EQUALITY			
WAS AN EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR			
WAS GOOD TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE			
WAS AN HONEST MAN			
HAD NO ENEMIES			
WAS AN EASY-GOING MAN			
WAS A GREAT SUCCESS IN LIFE			
LEFT NSW BETTER OFF THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED			

Your tasks now will be to watch the film and:

- » understand what the film says about Macquarie,
- » research to test these claims further,
- » use all the information you have gathered as a class to report on Macquarie's departure from NSW OR to create the 'Macquarie Museum',
- » come to your own judgement about Macquarie's place in Australian history.

## EXPLORING IDEAS AND ISSUES IN THE FILM

### A. MACQUARIE THE SOLDIER

1. What was Macquarie's social background? How might this have influenced his later attitudes towards ordinary people?
2. The film includes a scene on the Battle of Culloden. This was the battle in 1746 when an English-led force defeated the Scottish-led force that wanted to replace the English King George III with the Scottish King Charles Edward Stuart. Why did this defeat of the Highland Scots lead to Macquarie, not even born until 1761, joining the British Army?
3. Where did Macquarie serve as a soldier?
4. How might this experience have shaped his attitudes towards:
  - » authority
  - » leadership
  - » the possibilities that existed for a place as a British colony?
5. The film stresses that Macquarie's life as a governor was strongly influenced by his second wife, Elizabeth. What were her qualities?
6. How well prepared was Macquarie to become Governor of New South Wales?

### B. MACQUARIE THE GOVERNOR

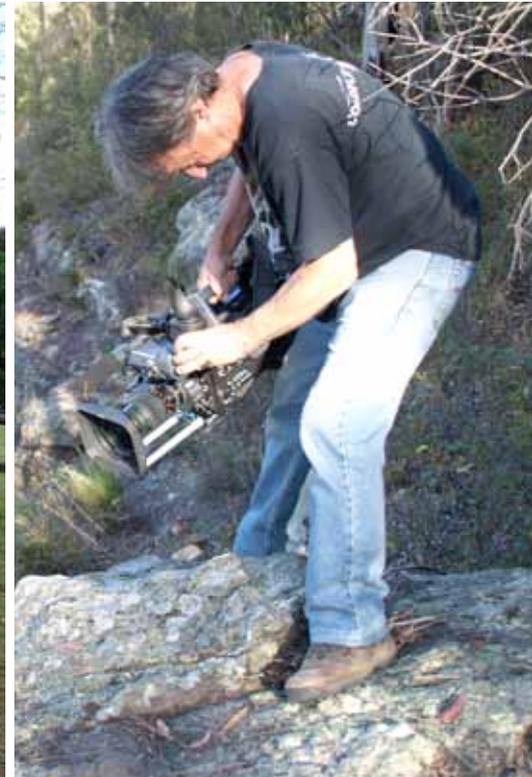
7. There are two key features of New South Wales that Macquarie would have been very aware of:
  - » that it was a prison, and
  - » that he was appointed governor to sort out the place after the 'Rum Rebellion' – which saw the military officers and wealthy settlers of NSW arrest the previous Governor, William Bligh, who had interfered with the wealthy settler's commercial interests, and had favoured the small settlers over them.

Macquarie announced his instructions on arrival: 'It is the earnest wish of our most gracious King to promote the welfare and prosperity of this rising colony. The honest, sober, and industrious inhabitant, whether free settler or convict, will ever find in me a friend and protector.'

What was the focus of his instructions: on the prison, or on the development of the colony?

8. Macquarie found a more complex society than just a prison. Explain the place in society of these different groups:
  - » convicts
  - » emancipists
  - » small settlers
  - » exclusives
  - » military officers.
9. Who did Macquarie favour, and why? Was this justified?
10. Who were the main people in the 'unfavoured' group? How did they react to Macquarie, and why?



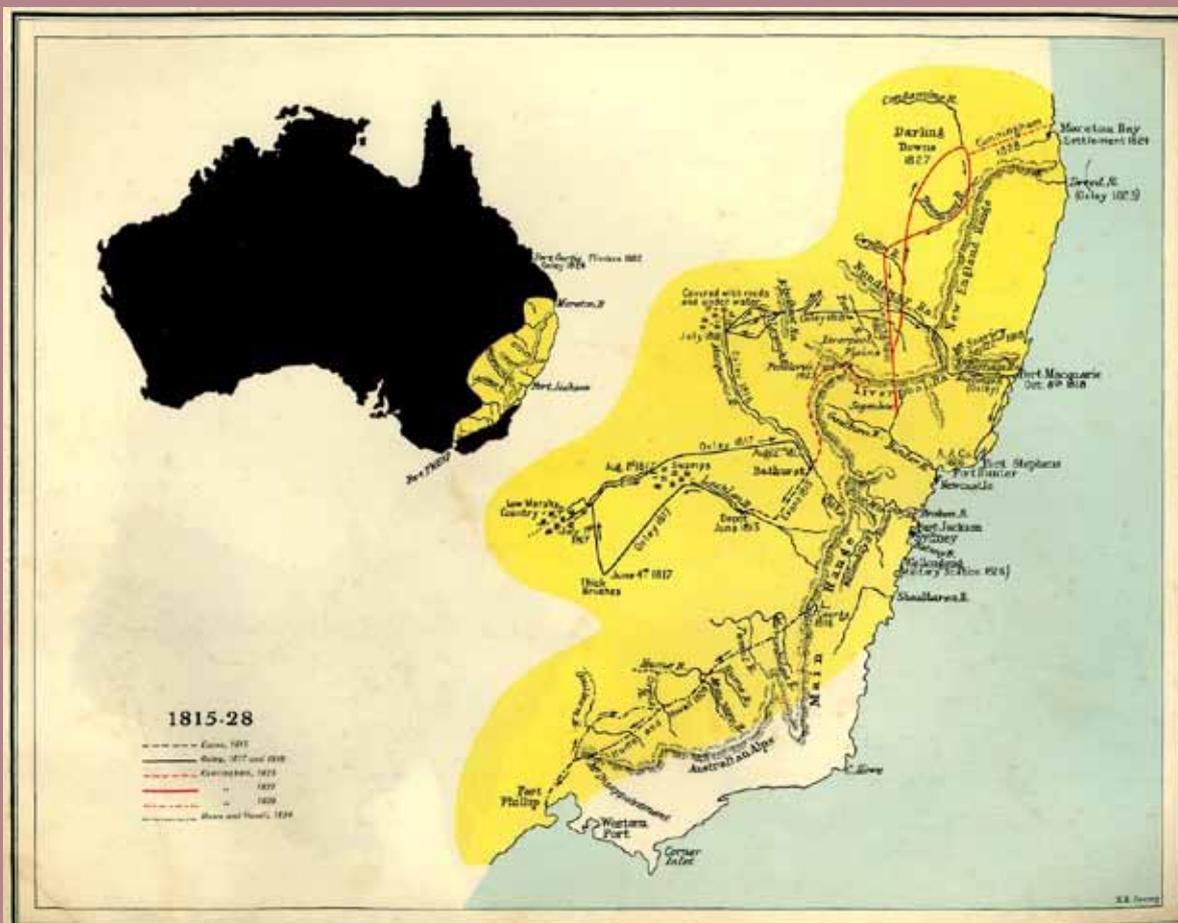
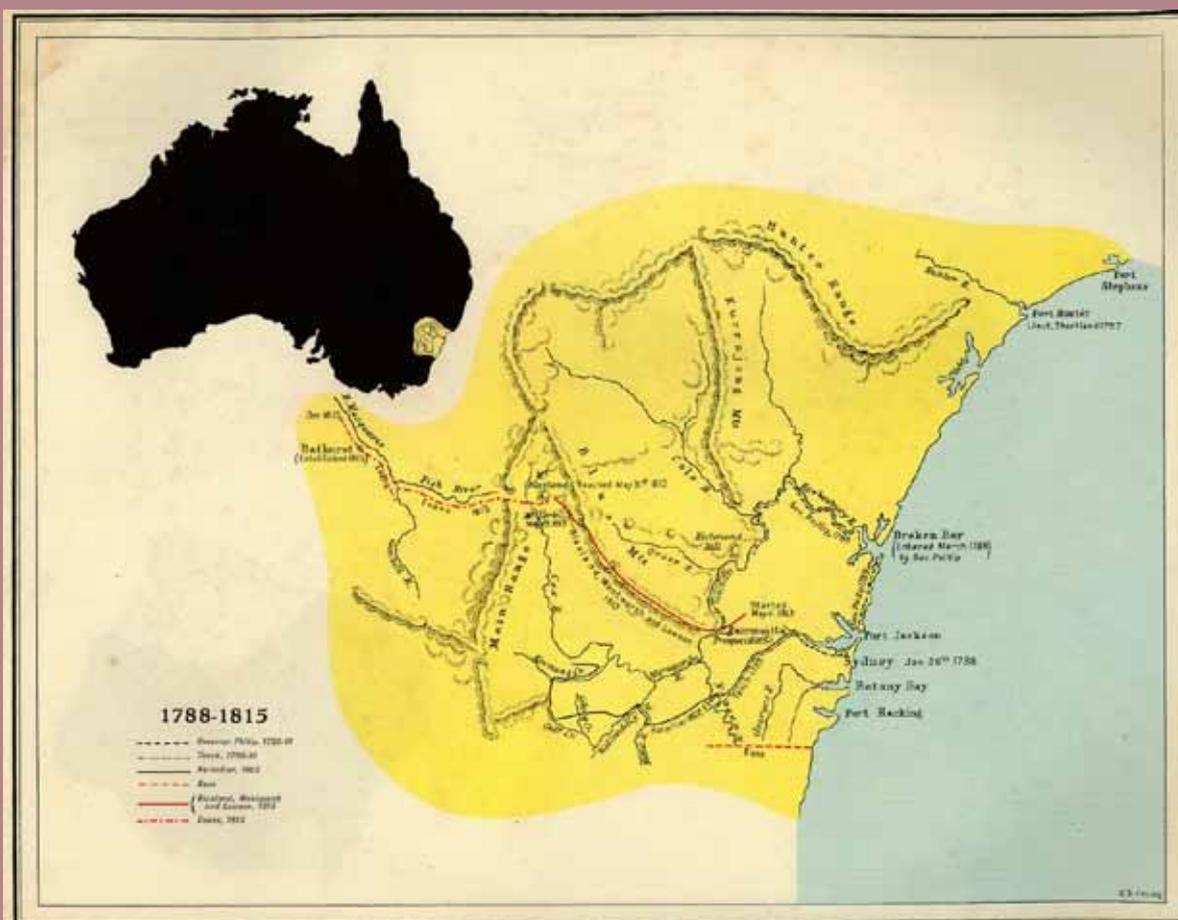


11. The film lists a number of areas of Macquarie's achievements. Summarise the main ones under each of these headings:

BUILDING POLICY	
'WELFARE' OF NEEDY PEOPLE	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
AGRICULTURE AND EXPANSION	
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE	
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY	
PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR	
GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLONY	

12. Would you say that these were great achievements? Justify your views.

13. What role did Elizabeth Macquarie play in these achievements?



Look at these two maps, showing the extent of NSW in 1788–1815, and 1815–1828.  
<http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/hsie/visual-texts>

14. Describe the area that was opened to settlement and development under Macquarie.
15. What benefits would be likely from this expansion?
16. What harm might it cause, and to whom?

## C. MACQUARIE AND BIGGE

After 1815 there was a change in attitude in Britain to what was happening to the NSW penal colony.

When the Napoleonic Wars against France ended, there were many thousands of former soldiers and sailors who were suddenly no longer needed – and who were sacked. These men now had to find jobs and look after themselves and their families. Many of them turned to crime to survive, and were transported to New South Wales.

17. What problem would this sudden increase in convicts create for Macquarie?
18. Why might the British government want these convicts to suffer severe punishment in New South Wales, rather than be rewarded for good behaviour?
19. Why was Bigge now sent to NSW?
20. What was he expected to recommend?
21. How did Macquarie's way of running the colony not fit in with what the government wanted in these areas:
  - » convict punishment and deterrence
  - » the freeing of convicts as emancipists to engage in individual economic activities and to benefit the development of NSW as a colony rather than as a prison
  - » the allocation of convicts to exclusives as cheap labour for their pastoral expansion
  - » the cost of Macquarie's extensive public building program?
22. What did Bigge decide about Macquarie's policies?

Macquarie ended his time as governor before Bigge's reports were published. But they were published when he was back in Scotland. He spent the rest of his life fighting their negative assessment of him.

23. At the start there are several opinions or assessments. Look at these and decide which is closest to what the film presents.

**ROBIN WALSH:** I just find that so intriguing and so fascinating that 200 years later, people can identify with, you know, this Scottish couple who came here and created this amazing myth.

**ALAN ATKINSON:** I think that marriage was fundamental to understanding er what Macquarie did in New South Wales. He couldn't have done it without her, and she couldn't have done it without him. It's a partnership which was a tremendously creative one.

**GOVERNOR BASHIR:** Because of his vision, an ability to give hope and encouragement to people, he turned the colony around on a course for nationhood.

**TOM DEVINE:** He really did found Modern Australia. It's possible for Australians to look back at him and his efforts and say he was a good guy.

**JOHN MAYNARD:** I think the Macquarie era for Aboriginal people, it's the missed opportunities that you look back on.

**MEG DOUGLASS:** A gentleman of his times, who didn't do much for his people – the ordinary people he'd been brought up with.

**PAUL BRUNTON:** Macquarie; he's the Laird of New South Wales - improving his estate. That's what he is.

**GRACE KARSKENS:** I think we need to understand Lachlan Macquarie and Elizabeth Macquarie on their own terms as human beings because that's what makes this story gripping and - and tragic and interesting and astounding really. I hate to see them turned into paragons of virtue and cardboard cut outs. The real story is one of enormous ambition and huge tragedy, because in the end he was vilified for all the things that he actually did achieve that we now recognise as his great legacy.

24. Macquarie's mausoleum plaque describes him as the 'Father of Australia'. Do you agree with this assessment? Explain your views.

## D. FILM AS A REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY

*Lachlan Macquarie: The Father of Australia* is a representation of history – that is, it is one person's view of what happened. That person has chosen what facts and evidence to include and exclude, what to stress and what to underplay, how to present the story, what images and music and sound effects to use to influence the viewer, what words are to be spoken and what messages are to be presented.

Is it a fair and accurate representation? The only way to test this is by researching the topic further, and comparing your findings with the way the film has presented that information.

Here are the areas that you might research using small groups to develop an expert knowledge, and then reporting back to the whole class as the expert on that particular aspect:

- » Macquarie the person (his qualities and character)
- » The family man (how this influenced his life)

- » The soldier (what he did, where, and how it influenced him as a governor)
- » Macquarie's building policy (what, where, why, how and the costs)
- » Macquarie and the 'welfare' of people (who he tried to help, and how)
- » His economic policies and actions (how he influenced the economy of the society)
- » Macquarie's impacts on agriculture and pastoralism (how expansion opened up new areas)
- » Macquarie's treatment of Aboriginal people (his attempts to live amicably, to help, and to harm them)
- » His relations with different social groups (who he favoured and opposed, and why)
- » His policies about public behaviour (what changes he made, and why)
- » The nature of Macquarie as a rule-maker and enforcer (how he managed to balance his autocratic power with developing civic institutions in NSW – or did he?)
- » His supporters (who and why)
- » His opponents (who and why)
- » The Bigge inquiry (Bigge's instructions and conclusions)
- » His life after being Governor (how he tried to re-establish himself and defend himself).

**Sources for gathering this information include:**

Derek Parker, *Governor Macquarie*, Woodslane Press, 2010

Harry Dillon and Peter Butler, *Macquarie, From Colony to Country*, William Heinemann Australia, 2010

<http://www.hawkesburyhistory.org.au/articles/macquarie.html>

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A020162b.htm>

<http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/lmr/biography.html>

[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events/exhibitions/2010/governor/docs/the\\_governor\\_guide.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events/exhibitions/2010/governor/docs/the_governor_guide.pdf)

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/common.nsf/key/HistoryGovernorLachlanMacquarie>

[http://www.historyofaustraliaonline.com/Governor\\_Lachlan\\_Macquarie.html](http://www.historyofaustraliaonline.com/Governor_Lachlan_Macquarie.html)

<http://www.modhist.mq.edu.au/documents/Hearn%20Macquarie.pdf>

<http://www.macquarie2010.nsw.gov.au>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachlan\\_Macquarie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachlan_Macquarie)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-father-of-australia-20091225-1f05.html>

**You can use this information to do three things. You can:**

- » Critically evaluate the film – is it accurate? Is it fair? Does it cover those aspects that it should?
- » Create your own representation of Macquarie's time in Australia – by reading his farewell address (see the document provided), and creating a television news report on it.
- » Create your own representation – the 'Macquarie museum'. There is more information on this below.

**CREATING YOUR NEWS COVERAGE OF MACQUARIE'S FAREWELL**

To do this you need to allocate teams of reporters. They will use their research to report on different aspects of Macquarie's farewell address below, and comment on them. For example, one team might look at Macquarie's statement that 'my constant maxim and principle being, to reward merit and punish vice, wherever I found them, without regard to rank, class, or description of persons', and might interview some emancipists or some exclusives to comment and make a judgement about this claim.



# HIS EXCELLENCY'S ADDRESS ON LEAVING NEW SOUTH WALES



Fellow Citizens of Australia!

Previous to the Commission of my Successor being read, I wish to address a few words to you by way of taking leave.

On the occasion of my own Commission, as Governor in Chief of this Territory, being read, now nearly twelve years ago, I pledged myself to administer the Affairs of this Government with strict justice and impartiality; and I trust, that every liberal and unprejudiced Person will admit that I have redeemed that pledge: my constant maxim and principle being, to reward merit and punish vice, wherever I found them, without regard to rank, class, or description of persons.

When I took Charge of this Government, on the 1st of January, 1810, I found the Colony in a state of rapid deterioration: threatened with a famine; discord and party spirit prevailing to a great degree; all the public buildings in a state of dilapidation and decay; very few roads and bridges, and those few very bad; the inhabitants, generally, very poor; and commerce and public credit at the lowest ebb.

I now have the happiness to reflect, that I leave it in a very different condition: the face of the Country generally, and agriculture in particular, greatly improved; stock, of all kinds, greatly increased; some useful manufactories established; commerce revived, and public credit restored; a great number of substantial and useful public edifices erected; good roads and bridges of communication constructed throughout the Colony; and the inhabitants, comparatively, opulent and happy.

To have been instrumental in bringing about so favorable a change, will ever be, to me, a source of sincere delight; and it is not arrogating to myself any questionable merit to say, that I have used every exertion of body and mind, I was capable of, to attain this desirable and important object; and I think all persons will allow, that I have not much consulted my own personal ease, or convenience, in the execution of the various and arduous duties attached to my Office; on the contrary, I feel that my health is greatly impaired by the constant and unremitting attention I have bestowed on, the faithful, zealous, and conscientious discharge of my public duties.

I am well aware that every man in public life must have enemies, and perhaps it would be unreasonable, in me, to expect to be totally exempted from the virulent attacks of party and disaffection.

But, buoyed above the fear of base calumny, vindictive slander, and malicious reproach, by the consciousness of a long life of upwards of forty years' service spent in honorable pursuits, and stained with no action which can give me remorse, I confidently anticipate not only the approbation of my Sovereign, but also the applause of Posterity, for the purity of my motives and the rectitude of my actions during my long, arduous, and laborious Administration of this Colony; in the future welfare and prosperity of which, I shall ever feel a deep interest, and lively solicitude.

The length of time I have governed this Colony, the progress it has made in improvement during; my Administration, and more especially the fond recollection of my only surviving Child being born in it- all combine in attaching me most strongly to it. I shall not fail to cherish the same sentiments of attachment in my son – who, although yet so young, feels, and already expresses, the strongest affection for his Native Australian Land.

My most fervent prayers will accordingly be offered for the welfare and prosperity of this Country, and for the happiness of its Inhabitants; fondly, and confidently anticipating, that, in less than half a century hence, it will be one of the most valuable appendages belonging to the British Empire: I shall not fail, on my return to England, to recommend, in the strongest manner I am able, to my Sovereign, and to His Majesty's Government, their early attention to the amelioration of this valuable rising Colony, and to extend to it their paternal support and fostering protection,

I cannot conclude this Address, better than by offering to the Inhabitants of this Colony my sincere congratulations on their good fortune, in having an Officer, of such distinguished Reputation and highly established Character, as Sir Thomas Brisbane, appointed to be their Governor; and, although I will not allow that He can surpass his Predecessor, in zeal and inclination, I trust and hope, He will, in ability and talents, in promoting the prosperity and improvement of the Country, and the happiness and unanimity of its Inhabitants. In these sentiments and wishes, deeply engraved on my heart, I now bid you all-Farewell!

**LACHLAN MACQUARIE**  
Sydney, New South Wales,  
Saturday, 1st Dec. 1821.

## F. CREATING THE 'MACQUARIE MUSEUM'

In creating this representation you need to work in small groups, with a group allocated to research each of the different elements listed earlier. But each group must choose one or two objects or images to illustrate the main points of their topic, and must create a short caption (about 50-80 words) to go with each object.

Here are two examples:



[http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/macquaries\\_sword/](http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/macquaries_sword/)

### MACQUARIE THE SOLDIER

Governor Macquarie's sword and dirk remind us that Macquarie was a military man, an experienced officer, used to leading and being obeyed. As a governor he had to issue orders, but he might have been not so happy with the development of civil legal institutions such as the jury that took away some of his absolute power.

The design of the hilt also reminds us of his Scottish ancestry.



[http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/aboriginal\\_breastplates/king\\_bungaree\\_and\\_matora/](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/aboriginal_breastplates/king_bungaree_and_matora/)

### MACQUARIE AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

This breastplate (or metal gorget) reminds us about Macquarie's policies towards Aboriginal people. He was keen to negotiate with them, so selected what he thought were the main persons or leaders, and gave them the breastplates to show their status. This would allow him to communicate effectively and easily with the Aboriginal people who were part of his community. However, when this did not work, he was also capable of ordering them attacked and killed.

The whole set of objects and images can then be arranged to tell Macquarie's story.

Once this has been done you have created a museum site, and you can apply these questions to see if your representation is a fair and balanced one.



## SITE STUDY – ANALYSING A MUSEUM DISPLAY

ASPECTS TO CONSIDER	THE MUSEUM DISPLAY
WHAT IS MY INITIAL IMPRESSION OF THE DISPLAY?	
WHAT DOES THE DISPLAY SHOW?	
IS THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT EXPLAINED CLEARLY?	
IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DISPLAY CLEARLY EXPLAINED?	
IS A VARIETY OF TYPES OF EVIDENCE DISPLAYED?	
ARE THE OBJECTS DISPLAYED AUTHENTIC FOR THAT EVENT OR PERIOD?	
ARE THESE OBJECTS THE BEST POSSIBLE ONES TO BE DISPLAYED?	
ARE THE TEXT DESCRIPTIONS CLEAR AND INFORMATIVE?	
DO THE SURROUNDINGS INFLUENCE MY IMPRESSION OF THE DISPLAY?	
IS THE DISPLAY ARRANGED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PROMOTE A PARTICULAR MESSAGE OR CONCLUSION TO THE VIEWER?	
IS THE NATURE OF THE EVENT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED (E.G. AM I TOLD IF IT IS CONTROVERSIAL OR CONTESTED)?	
IF SO, IS A VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS CLEARLY AND FAIRLY PUT?	
DO I KNOW WHERE THE EVIDENCE HAS COME FROM AND WHAT SORT OF EVIDENCE IT IS?	
IS THE DISPLAY'S PURPOSE TO PRESENT OBJECTS (NEUTRAL), OR TO EXPLAIN (IMPARTIAL), OR TO ARGUE A PARTICULAR VIEW (PARTISAN)?	
IS THERE AN OVERALL MESSAGE BEING CONVEYED?	
AT THE END, DO I FEEL THAT I REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION THAT IS BEING PRESENTED?	
WHAT IS MY FINAL JUDGEMENT ABOUT THE DISPLAY?	



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