

Putting in Heart and Soul

by Maureen Hyland

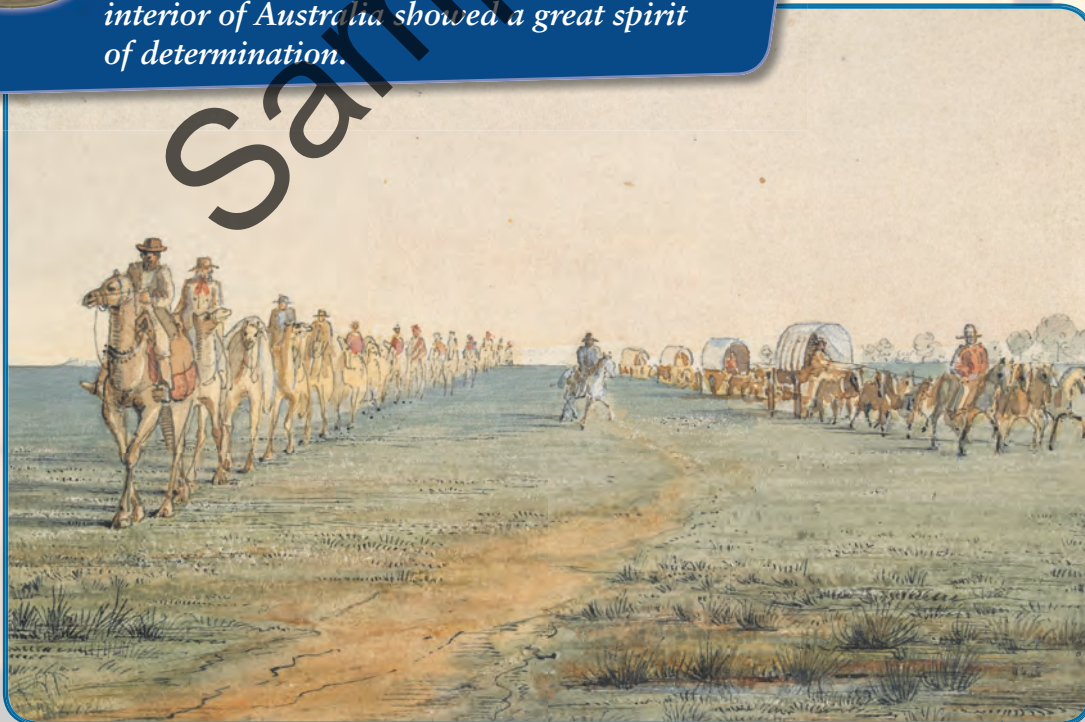
Throughout history, Australians have exhibited the characteristics of determination, giving things a go, shunning authority and “standing by your mates”.

From Australia’s settlement in the late 1700s, pioneers set out to open up the land, drovers sought better pastures for animals, prospectors set out to make their fortunes and others took to bushranging. However, this has not always had positive results. For example, explorers, such as Burke and Wills, died on their journeys to “discover” land unknown to them, gold-seekers lost everything and bushrangers were jailed or killed.

More recently, when soldiers left our shores for battles abroad and volunteers supported those caught up in the tragedies of the 2002 Bali bombings and the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, they demonstrated a common resolve. They made the best of a bad situation and looked out for their fellow human beings. However, many were traumatised by these experiences, and some even lost their lives.

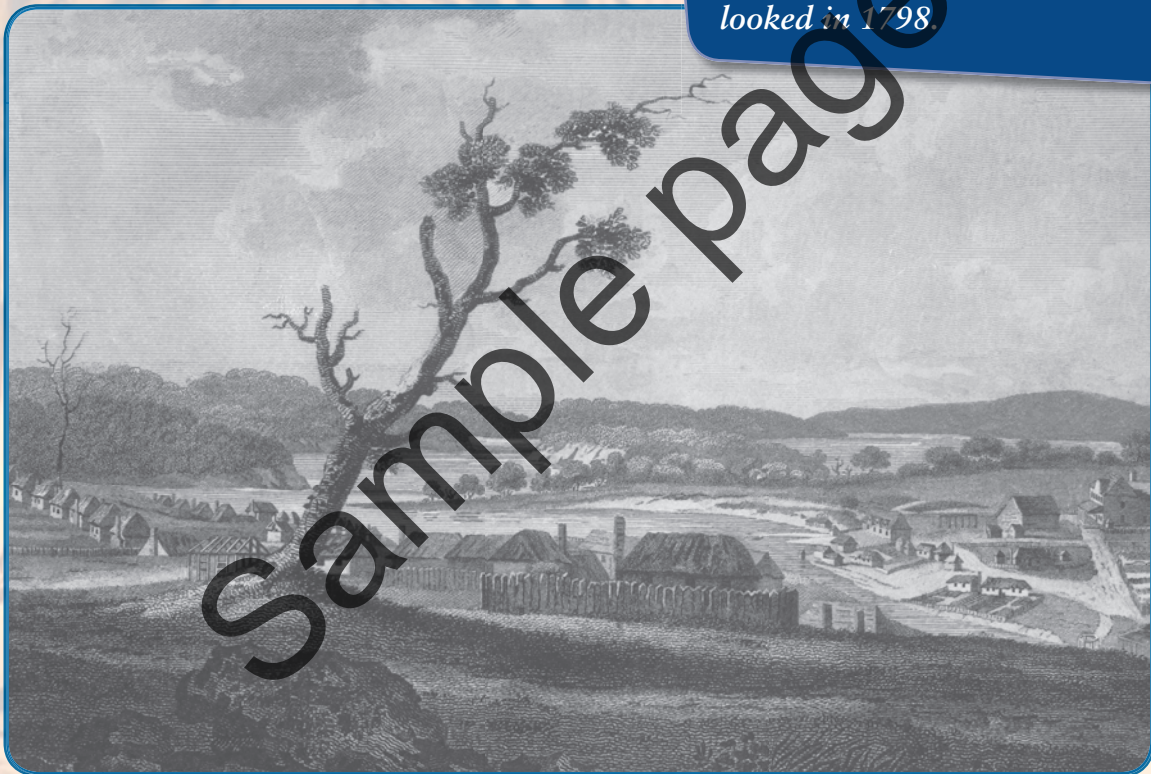


Burke and Wills’ expedition to open up the interior of Australia showed a great spirit of determination.



The convicts transported to Australia came as unwilling immigrants, who were forced to travel to an unknown land. Many, once free, went on to work hard and become landowners and trusted members of society. When the first free settlers began arriving in 1793, most believed that they were coming to a land of opportunities, but many found it different from what they anticipated. The climate was harsh, the land was unforgiving, work opportunities scarce and dreams were shattered. Yet many of these early-comers demonstrated the resolve to persevere and make the most of opportunities when they did arise.

An illustration of how Sydney looked in 1798.



In the 1800s, many men left their homes for months at a time to go in search of work, driving cattle and sheep and opening up roads into other parts of the continent. Travelling by foot or on horseback, they battled the currents of rivers, the fierce terrain of mountain ranges and the dry, dusty plains of the outback.