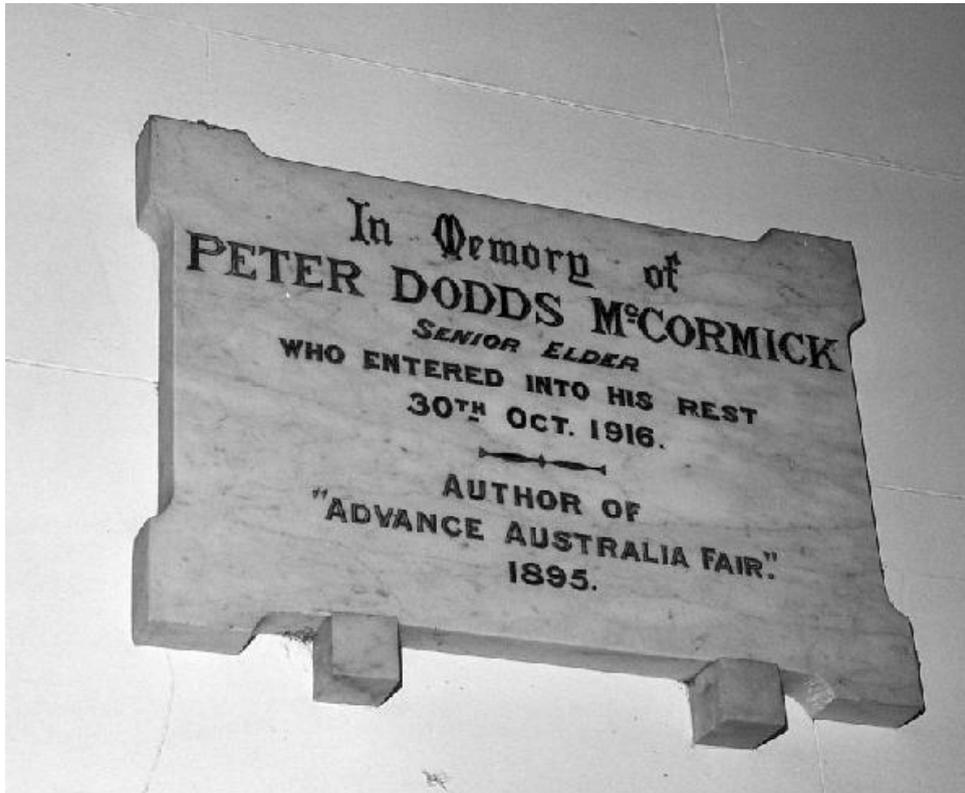


## ***Advance Australia Fair* and Peter Dodds McCormick**



*Memorial to Peter Dodd McCormick in the Grahame Memorial Church, Victoria Street, Charing Cross*

Peter Dodds McCormick was best known for the patriotic song *Advance Australia Fair*. Written in the 1870s, it was first performed for the public at the Highland Society's St Andrews Day Concert on 30 November 1878.

McCormick described how he had come to write the song after attending a concert at which national anthems were sung. He said he: "...felt very aggravated that there was not one note for Australia. I concocted the first verse of my song, and when I got home I set it to music... And tried it over on an instrument next morning, and found it correct... It seemed to me to be like an inspiration, and I wrote the words and music with the greatest ease."

He composed the song under the pseudonym 'Amicus,' meaning 'friend' in Latin. As Amicus, he had the music and four verses of the song published by W.H. Paling & Co. Ltd. It was sung by a choir of 10,000 voices at the inauguration of the Commonwealth in 1901. In 1907 McCormick was awarded £100 for his composition by the Australian government, even though he did not formally register his copyright for the song until 3 September 1915.

McCormick's work increased in popularity throughout the years, until in 1933 the NSW Opposition Leader, Jack Lang is reported as having: "...chastised a group of people at Lidcombe for not removing their hats and not standing to attention when *Advance Australia Fair* was being played."

A man of many talents, McCormick was first apprenticed to a joiner in Scotland. He emigrated from Glasgow to Sydney in 1855, reaching Australia on 21 February. Subsequently, he became a school teacher, a musician, an author, and eventually a church elder. When he retired as a teacher in 1885, McCormick was still heavily involved with the local schools.

Described as a: "...a God fearing man and so great was his zeal that he attended public schools five days a week to give religious instruction." He was also devoted to the expression of music, in particular Scottish music, and was the conductor of some of the largest children's choirs ever organised. In 1880 at the Robert Raikes Sunday School centenary demonstration, he conducted a choir consisting of 10,000 children and 1,000 teachers.

There has been some controversy over a 'missing' verse of *Advance Australia Fair*. This particular verse was apparently written to be the third verse of the song. The verse was first sung at the 1998 March for Jesus rally in Canberra. It has since been discovered that the verse is not authentic. Peter Dodds McCormick never actually wrote this verse. However, it has never been revealed who did. The verse is:

*With Christ our head and cornerstone,  
We'll build our nation's might,  
Whose way and truth and light alone,  
Can guide our path aright.  
Our lives, a sacrifice of love,  
Reflect our Master's care.  
With faces turned to heaven above,  
Advance Australia fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia fair.*

There have been a series of alterations throughout the years to McCormick's original lyrics. There are lines that were felt to be too sexist or politically incorrect to stay as originally written. Also, three of the five verses were cut, as the song was felt to be too long for an anthem. The current version is highlighted in bold, and the alterations are marked in brackets in the following verses.

Verse 1

Australia's sons let us rejoice,  
(Australians all let us rejoice)  
For we are young and free;  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil,  
Our home is girt by sea:  
Our land abounds in nature's gifts  
Of beauty rich and rare;  
In history's page, let every stage  
Advance Australia fair,  
In joyful strains then let us sing  
Advance Australia fair.

Verse 3

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross,  
We'll toil with hearts and hands;  
To make this youthful Commonwealth  
[To make this Commonwealth of ours] Renowned of  
all the lands;  
For loyal sons beyond the seas  
[For those who've come across the seas]  
We've boundless plains to share;  
With courage let us all combine  
To advance Australia fair.

Verse 2

When gallant Cook from Albion sail'd,  
To trace wide oceans o'er,  
True British courage bore him on,  
Til he landed on our shore.  
Then here he raised Old England's flag,  
The standard of the brave;  
"With all her faults we love her still"  
"Britannia rules the wave."  
In joyful strains then let us sing  
Advance Australia fair.

Verse 4

While other nations of the globe  
Behold us from afar,  
We'll rise to high renown and shine  
Like our glorious southern star;  
From England soil and Fatherland,  
Scotia and Erin fair,  
Let all combine with heart and hand  
To advance Australia fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing  
Advance Australia fair.

In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia fair.

Verse 5

Should foreign foe e'er sight our coast,  
Or dare a foot to land,  
We'll rouse to arms like sires of yore,  
To guard our native strand;  
Britannia then shall surely know,  
Though oceans roll between,  
Her sons in fair Australia's land  
Still keep their courage green.  
In joyful strains then let us sing  
Advance Australia fair.



*Peter Dodd McCormick's grave at Rockwood Cemetery.*

In 1893 McCormick was appointed an elder of the Grahame Memorial Church in Victoria Street, Charing Cross. He was also involved in missionary work in Dover Heights, and in extending the churches influence in Rose Bay and Randwick.

There are records of McCormick living in the Waverley area since 1889. His first address was at 5 Virgil St, Waverley (now 20 Yanko Avenue) in an appropriately Scottish-sounding house named *Clydebank*. In 1902 he moved to what was then 103 Birrell St, Waverley (now 87 Birrell Street) in a house also named *Clydebank*. This is the house in which he died on 30 October 1916 aged 83 years. Just before his death he willed the royalties of *Advance Australia Fair* to the Presbyterian Church. Unfortunately for the Church the copyright ran out in 1966, long before the song was officially declared to be Australia's national anthem in 1984.

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