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<https://www.bda-online.org.au>***Australasian Almanack 1827***

The *Australasian Almanac* published in Sydney in 1827 contains the names of 534 public officials, employees, clergy and military officers in colonies across Australia. The persons mentioned are usually listed by their name, title, occupation or official position, employer or organization and place of residence.

An almanack (modern spelling almanac) was a publication by a city, region or nation setting out useful political, cultural and economic information for citizens, generally including historical summaries, information relating to navigation, agriculture, weather, lunar cycles, tides, seasons, public holidays, and listing the names, location and functions of leading officials in government administration and organisations linked to government or partly or wholly funded by government. They usually included the military, religions, charities, legal, educational, charitable, religious, educational and other institutions and large corporations with close links to government.

The full title of the publication is:

Australasian Almanack, for the year of our lord 1827 being the third after bissextile, or leap year; and the eighth of the reign of his most gracious majesty King George IV published, under the sanction and patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant General Darling, &c. &c. &c., Sydney

The title is slightly misleading in that the publication includes the military establishments in the colonies as well as their civil establishments. Those listed were officials and public servants or persons holding official, honorary or part-time posts under the British colonial government, headed at the time by Governor Ralph Darling, based in Sydney and Parramatta.

In 1825 the colony of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) had been formally separated from New South Wales and was allowed to have its own independent administration and Legislative Council. Technically it was no longer a 'dependency' of New South Wales, but Tasmania officials and organisations were included in the 1827 almanac as if it were still a dependency.

This was probably because Tasmanian independence was still in a transitional phase in 1827 and had not yet developed the financial and administrative structures that would bring about full 'independence' from New South Wales. Though formally independent, its executive head George Arthur was only termed a Lieutenant-Governor. He was probably still expected to defer to military, shipping, communications, trade and foreign relations and other matters to the Governor of New South Wales.

Following the centuries old tradition of almanacs, the New South Wales publication included a list of the signs of the zodiac. It also provides a chronological history of the colony beginning the Captain James Cook's visit to Botany Bay in 1770. Its flourishing title of this section is:

Chronology of the most Remarkable Occurrences from the first Establishment of the Colony down to One thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven.

The names indexed here are listed under the heading:

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT, AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, IN THE TERRITORY OF
New South Wales and its Dependencies.

At the apex of colonial society in 1827 was the "Seat of Government" in Sydney headed by the Governor who headed the civilian government, advised by an unelected civilian Legislative Council. He was also the Commander in Chief of 'His Majesty's' [British] armed forces stationed throughout New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and settlements on Melville Island (in the modern Northern Territory), Western Port (Victoria), Norfolk Island and King George's Sound (Western Australia).

Persons stationed in all these areas are identified in the *Almanack*. The institutions they worked for included:

-) The Governor's and Lieutenant-Governor's military staff, the Executive Council and the Legislative Council.
-) The Colonial Secretary and his staff of 12.
-) The Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, Courts of Vice Admiralty, Requests, Quarter Sessions, legal practitioners, Sheriff's Department.
-) Church and School Lands Corporation, trustees and staff.
-) Anglican Church clergy and staff.

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-) Male and Female Orphan Institutions, infants and primary school teachers.
-) Commissariat staff, storekeepers and pensioners in NSW & Tasmania.
-) Departments of Master Attendant, Colonial Marine, Coroners, Engineers, Barracks and Inspector of roads and bridges, Magistrates, Police, Agriculture, Land Board, Surveyors of Crown Lands. Naval Officers, Distilleries, Medical , Post Office and Convict
-) A series of civil society, charitable or public-private partnership organisations, including the Botanical Garden, Agricultural Society, Benevolent Society, NSW Auxiliary Bible Society, Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, Australian Agricultural Company, Schol of Industry, Chamber of Commerce, Sydney Dispensary, Bank of New South Wales, Bank of Australia, Newspaper proprietors, Sydney Free Grammar School, Auctioneers and Appraisers.
-) A series of colonial settlements with small government establishments usually with a military commandant, surgeon, superintendent of government stock, magistrates and their clerk to the Bench, Police and storekeeper (and for ports pilots and harbour masters) at Bathurst, Wellington Valley, Illawarra Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay, Norfolk Island, Melville Island, Westernport, King George's Sound.
-) Military Establishments in all settlements around Australia.

A digitized copy of the *Australasian Almanack 1827* is available free on the National Library's Trove website at this link:

<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2977051890>

Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2024.

For other Indexes and Lists and Biographies included in the BDA see

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