

# GOVERNOR PHILIP GIDLEY-KING

## 1800 - 1806

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Philip Gidley-King was a British Naval Officer serving with Captain Arthur Phillip as second Lieutenant on the HMS Sirius during the First Fleet voyage in 1788.

On Governor Phillip's orders, Lieutenant King established another penal settlement on Norfolk Island. Members of the New South Wales Corps accompanied the expedition to provide support and a defence outpost for the New South Wales colony. King's time on the island was productive, successfully becoming self-sufficient by 1794. However, convicts and members of the Corps were difficult to control with their mutinous behaviour challenging King's every decision and order.

On 28 September 1800, King was appointed the third Governor of New South Wales. He was a good administrator and improved the economy. King exported coal and established a whaling industry. Cotton, hemp, and wool, also thrived as trading commodities during his governorship. His greatest success was developing a livestock farming program and exporting high quality animal stock back to England. King increased the size of the colony and surrounding towns by building churches, barracks, wharves, bridges, and schools. He supported the launch of the colony's first public newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*. This was an important development as it gave citizens the right to free speech.

King strived to make the colony prosperous by providing fair opportunity for everyone, including the convicts. Many who arrived on the First Fleet had completed their sentences during King's governorship, these people were called *emancipists*. King supported the emancipists by giving them the same positions of responsibility as free settlers. He believed emancipists should not be condemned in disgrace forever, but instead be accepted into the community along with everyone else.

King faced unrelenting opposition from the Corps when he tried to control the illegal trade in rum. Disobedience and insolence from its members plagued him, such as John Macarthur, who opposed every decision King made. To break the cycle, King sent Macarthur back to England to face a court-martial for his disobedience. However, the British Government supported Macarthur's version of events. In fact, Macarthur was rewarded with a large land grant, further increasing his wealth and influence in the colony.

King's reputation back in England had been trashed by the Corps and he resigned his post in 1806 and returned to England 1807. He had become sick and exhausted, caused by a combination of illness, the hard conditions of his service, and ultimately the treatment from officers of the New South Wales Corps.

Philip Gidley-King died in London, 3 September 1808.

Philip Gidley-King was born in Launceston, Cornwall England 1758

King joined the Royal Navy as a captain's servant when he was only 12 years old

King travelled from England on the First Fleet in 1788, and the Third Fleet in 1791

King was able to breed the hair from sheep into a 'wool'

During his time on Norfolk Island, King had two sons. He called them Norfolk and Sydney

King Island in Bass Strait is named after Philip Gidley-King

A COURT MARTIAL is a court that deals with members of the armed forces who break military law

An EMANCIPIST is a convict who has become a free settler after completing their sentence

