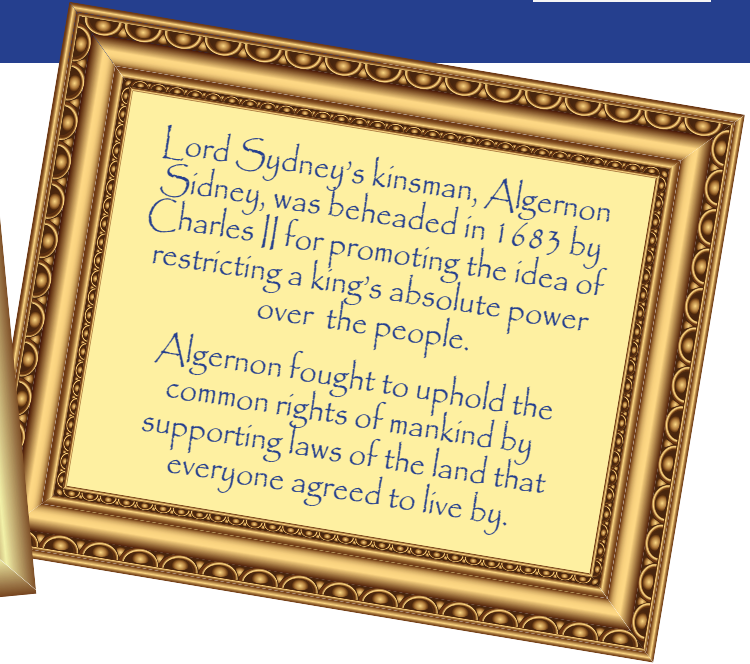
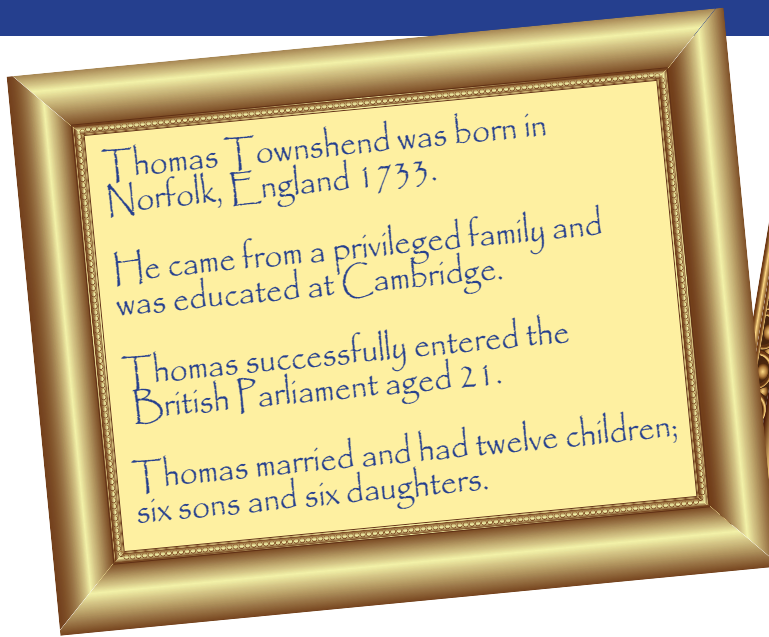


LORD VISCOUNT SYDNEY

Sir Thomas Townshend



Thomas Townshend became British Home Secretary in 1782. His responsibilities included managing immigration and citizenship. In 1783, Thomas became Baron Sydney of Chislehurst and entered the House of Lords as Lord Sydney. He chose Sydney as a name in honour of a distant relative named Algernon Sidney. Lord Sydney carried much of Algernon's beliefs and supported individuals having rights and liberties, regardless of their status in society.

Throughout the early to mid-1700s, convict transportation stopped when Great Britain found itself at war with the Americas. The prisons became unbearably overcrowded and the British Government needed to find a solution to the growing number of hulks, housing the overflow of felons, anchored around London. Alternative arrangements had to be found quickly.

After great debate, the decision was made to transport convicts to Botany Bay, New South Wales. As Home Secretary to the British Cabinet, Lord Sydney was given the responsibility to plan and supervise the program.

Lord Sydney selected Captain Arthur Phillip in 1786 to be the first governor of the colony of New South Wales. He knew Phillip well after working together on previous naval campaigns in the Americas. Sydney identified Phillip as a highly organised and compassionate individual, who would be the best person to manage the complex task of setting up a penal colony in a harsh and challenging environment. Captain Phillip was also a compassionate man who shared Sydney's values on supporting rights and freedoms for all people.

The first governor would need to establish the rule of law if the colony was to survive and flourish in the years ahead.

Lord Sydney gave *Instructions* for the governor to grant rights to all individuals who would become part the new society. These *Instructions* were made effective from the moment the First Fleet left England in 1787. To protect these rights, Lord Sydney set up a blueprint called The **First Charter of Justice**. The Charter provided a plan for Governor Phillip to establish a civil and criminal court system, to administer justice and manage grievances in the colony. This was highly unusual as felons were not allowed to have rights in British law.

The first civil case in Australian history involved two convicts, Henry and Susannah Kable successfully suing a ship's Captain for the loss of their personal possessions during the voyage from England. Lord Sydney had set the grounds for access to fair representation for everyone, even convicts.

When Captain Arthur Phillip sailed the First Fleet into Port Jackson and landed on shore 1788, he named the area Sydney Cove in honour of Lord Sydney. The following year in 1789, Lord Sydney became Viscount Sydney.

Lord Sydney's vision established the foundations for Australia's governance and legal system we use today. Its principles are based on justice and supporting rights for all citizens.

Thomas Townshend died in 1800, aged 67.