

## *English in Australia and New Zealand*

### James Dixon, Narrative of a Voyage to New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land in the Ship Skelton During the Year 1820 (1822)

The children born in these colonies, and now grown up, speak a better language, purer, more harmonious, than is generally the case in most parts of England. The amalgamation of such various dialects assembled together, seems to improve the mode of articulating the words.

### Valerie Desmond, *The Awful Australian* (1911)

But it is not so much the vagaries of pronunciation that hurt the ear of the visitor. It is the extraordinary intonation that the Australian imparts to his phrases. There is no such thing as cultured, reposeful conversation in this land; everybody sings his remarks as if he were reciting blank verse after the manner of an imperfect elocutionist. It would be quite possible to take an ordinary Australian conversation and immortalise its cadences and diapacons by means of musical notation. Herein the Australian differs from the American. The accent of the American, educated and uneducated alike, is abhorrent to the cultured Englishman or Englishwoman, but it is, at any rate, harmonious. That of the Australian is full of discords and surprises. His voice rises and falls with unexpected syncopations, and, even among the few cultured persons this country possesses, seems to bear in every syllable the sign of the parvenu.

### Walter Churchill (of the American Philological Society)

The common speech of the commonwealth of Australia represents the most brutal maltreatment which has ever been inflicted upon the mother tongue of the English-speaking nations.

### Features of Australian English

1. Non-rhotic.
2. Some voicing of /t/ between vowels, but not as much as in American English.
3. Raising of /æ/ and /ɛ/ to /ɛ/ and /e/ respectively. In Sidney /ɪ/ may be raised to /i/.
4. Diphthongs tend to be centralised, most noticeably in /eɪ/, pronounced /ɘɪ/ (cf. the name *Australia*).
5. Tendency to use /ə/ for both the unstressed syllable in *famous* and *village*, where many British and American dialects have /ə/ or /ɪ/.
6. /ɑ/ before fricatives in words like *class*, *bath*, *laugh*, but before nasals (e.g. *France*, *sample*), usage varies between /æ/ and /ɑ/.
7. Rising intonation typical of yes-no questions in simple statements.

### Samuel McBurney, *Christchurch Press*, October 5, 1887

I think it may be admitted that the pronunciation of the colonies as a whole is purer than can be found in any given district at Home...For months after I had commenced my investigation on this subject, the unfailing answer to my enquiries in the different Australian colonies was, "We can hear no distinction between ourselves and visitors." It was only since coming to New Zealand that I have been able to definitely say "There is another type here." Even this is difficult to define, and, as young people grow up, may alter and perhaps assimilate to that prevailing in Australia, as I found it doing in Wellington more than any other place.

### Features of New Zealand English

1. Non-rhotic, except in southern areas with heavy Scottish settlement.
2. /w/ and /hw/ are commonly distinguished.
3. Raising of /æ/ and /ɛ/ to /ɛ/ and /e/ respectively. /ɪ/ is increasingly pronounced /ə/.
4. Before /l/ contrasts between /o/, /ɑ/, and /ʌ/ are disappearing, so that *dole*, *doll*, and *dull* may be pronounced the same. Also before /l/ the contrast between /æ/ and /ɛ/ is disappearing, so that *mallow* and *mellow* may be pronounced the same.
5. /ɛ/ > /ɪ/ before /r/, so that words like *stare* are pronounced /stɪə/.
6. Maori loanwords, mostly for natural phenomena, the most familiar of which is *kiwi*. Slang largely shared with Australia.