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Sommario/riassunto	The six Australian colonies united on 1st January 1901 to become the Commonwealth of Australia. One of the reasons given for this federation was that the Commonwealth could provide a common defence. William Rooke Creswell argued that, as an island continent, Australia could not defend itself without a navy. He saw no point in having a 70,000 strong army if only one enemy battleship could destroy port cities and disrupt maritime trade and sea communications.