The Australian Government gave itself increased powers in 1914 to manage the war effort and ground living in Australia. One section of the people of German, Austrian or Turkish background is reproduced below.

War Precautions Act
Dealing with the enemy

1. The Governor-General may by order published in the Gazetteer make provision for any matters which appear necessary or expedient with a view to public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth, in particular —
(a) for prohibiting aliens, either generally or as regards specified places, and either absolutely or except under specified conditions and restrictions, from landing or embarking in the Commonwealth;
(b) for deporting aliens from the Commonwealth;
(c) for requiring aliens to reside and remain within certain places or districts;
(d) for prohibiting aliens from residing or remaining in any areas or districts;
(e) for requiring aliens residing in the Commonwealth to comply with such provisions as to registration, change of abode, travelling, residing or otherwise as are specified in the order; and


Source 1.24
Dealing with the enemy

'It was thought that aliens living in Australia were a threat to our security and that strong measures were needed to keep them in check. As the war dragged on and propaganda increased, these foreigners also became more of a target — people upon whom Australian patriots could vent their anger. As the population tired of a war 16,000 kilometres away, it became necessary to push the idea of an 'enemy within' — enemy spies and agents under cover in Australia.'

Source 1.25

The idea of the 'enemy within' was a way of making sure that people realised that the threat of the enemy was right on their doorstep and not just on the other side of the world where it did not concern them. Reactions against anything associated with Germany and those who were German-born were often extremely hostile.

Source 1.26

A sausage by any other name...

'I asked for German sausage; the shop had none, but it did have Belgian sausage. As I was being served a lady in a fur coat waited with her dachshund on a lead. In came a couple of eighteen-year-olds and kicked the dog — 'horrible German dog' — and its owner could do nothing to protect it from patriotism.'


German churches and schools were shut down and German place names were changed: German Creek became Empire Bay; Mueller Park became Kitchener Park. There were many other examples. Thousands of alien citizens were also interned and many were deported after the war had ended. According to the law, even if you were born in Australia but your parents or grandparents had come from Germany, you could be interned. There were cases where this happened. Many people with foreign surnames lost their jobs as fellow workers went on strike demanding that they be sacked. There is no doubt that most people discriminated against these foreigners also became more of a target — people upon whom Australian patriots could vent their anger. As the population tired of a war 16,000 kilometres away, it became necessary to push the idea of an 'enemy within' — enemy spies and agents under cover in Australia.'

Source 1.27

The internment camp at Holdsworthy, New South Wales, 1915 (Australian War Memorial neg. no. H17352)

'The internment camp at Holdsworthy, New South Wales, 1915. The internment of aliens in Australia during wartime was a threat that German-born were often extremely hostile.'