

# AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

<http://www.australia.com/about/culture-history/history.aspx>

## Aboriginal people dream on a timeless continent



<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/43876/Australian-Aborigine>

Australia's Aboriginal people were thought to have arrived here by boat from South East Asia during the last Ice Age, at least 50,000 years ago. At the time of European discovery and settlement, up to one million Aboriginal people lived across the continent as hunters and gatherers. They were scattered in 300 clans and spoke 250 languages and 700 dialects. Each clan had a spiritual connection with a specific piece of land. However, they also travelled widely to trade, find water and seasonal produce and for ritual and totemic gatherings.

Despite the diversity of their homelands - from outback deserts and tropical rainforests to snow-capped mountains – all Aboriginal people share a belief in the timeless, magical realm of the Dreamtime. According to Aboriginal myth, totemic spirit ancestors forged all aspects of life during the Dreamtime of the world's creation. These spirit ancestors continue to connect natural phenomena, as well as past, present and future through every aspect of Aboriginal culture.

## Britain arrives and brings its convicts

A number of European explorers sailed the coast of Australia, then known as New Holland, in the 17th century. However it wasn't until 1770 that Captain James Cook chartered the east coast and claimed it for Britain. The new outpost was put to use as a penal colony and on 26 January 1788, the First Fleet of 11 ships carrying 1,500 people – half of them convicts – arrived in Sydney Harbour. Until penal transportation ended in 1868, 160,000 men and women came to Australia as convicts.



*Governor Arthur Phillip hoists the British flag over the new colony at Sydney in 1788*  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_New\\_South\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_New_South_Wales)

While free settlers began to flow in from the early 1790s, life for prisoners was harsh. Women were outnumbered five to one and lived under constant threat of sexual exploitation. Male re-offenders were brutally flogged and could be hung for crimes as petty as stealing. The Aboriginal people displaced by the new settlement suffered even more. The dispossession of land and illness and death from introduced diseases disrupted traditional lifestyles and practices.

## Squatters push across the continent

By the 1820s, many soldiers, officers and emancipated convicts had turned land they received from the government into flourishing farms. News of Australia's cheap land and bountiful work was bringing more and more boatloads of adventurous migrants from Britain. Settlers or 'squatters' began to move deeper into Aboriginal territories – often with a gun - in search of pasture and water for their stock.



*Early settler hut in the Wielangta Forest, Tasmania*  
<http://www.bairdnet.com/australia.html>

In 1825, a party of soldiers and convicts settled in the territory of the Yuggera people, close to modern-day Brisbane. Perth was settled by English gentlemen in 1829, and in 1835 a squatter sailed to Port Phillip Bay and chose the location for Melbourne. At the same time a private British company, proud to have no convict links, settled Adelaide in South Australia.

## Gold fever brings wealth, migrants and rebellion

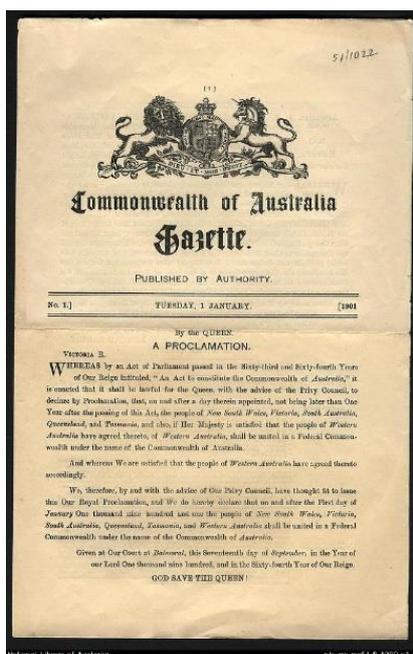
Gold was discovered in New South Wales and central Victoria in 1851, luring thousands of young men and some adventurous young women from the colonies. They were joined by boat loads of prospectors from China and a chaotic carnival of entertainers, publicans, illicit liquor-sellers, prostitutes and quacks from across the world. In Victoria, the British governor's attempts to impose order - a monthly licence and heavy-handed troopers - led to the bloody anti-authoritarian struggle of the Eureka stockade in 1854. Despite the violence on the goldfields, the wealth from gold and wool brought immense investment to Melbourne and Sydney and by the 1880s they were stylish modern cities.



Australian gold diggings circa 1855

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian\\_gold\\_rushes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_gold_rushes)

## Australia becomes a nation



<http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-government-gazettes/finding-government-gazettes-commonwealth>

Australia's six states became a nation under a single constitution on **1 January 1901**. Today Australia is home to people from more than 200 countries.

## Australians go to war

The First World War had a devastating effect on Australia. There were less than 3 million men in 1914, yet almost 400,000 of them volunteered to fight in the war. An estimated 60,000 died and tens of thousands were wounded. In reaction to the grief, the 1920s was a whirlwind of new cars and cinemas, American jazz and movies and fervour for the British Empire. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, social and economic divisions widened and many Australian financial institutions failed. Sport was the national distraction and sporting heroes such as the racehorse Phar Lap and cricketer Donald Bradman gained near-mythical status.



[http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WME7Z7\\_World\\_War\\_II\\_Memorial\\_Plaque\\_The\\_Athenaeum\\_Yackandandah\\_Victoria\\_Australia](http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WME7Z7_World_War_II_Memorial_Plaque_The_Athenaeum_Yackandandah_Victoria_Australia)

During the Second World War, Australian forces made a significant contribution to the Allied victory in Europe, Asia and the Pacific. The generation that fought in the war and survived came out of it with a sense of pride in Australia's capabilities.

## New Australians arrive to a post-war boom

After the war ended in 1945, hundreds of thousands of migrants from across Europe and the Middle East arrived in Australia, many finding jobs in the booming manufacturing sector. Many of the women who took factory jobs while the men were at war continued to work during peacetime.

Australia's economy grew throughout the 1950s with major nation-building projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme in the mountains near Canberra. International demand grew for Australia's major exports of metals, wools, meat and wheat and suburban Australia also prospered. The rate of home ownership rose dramatically from barely 40 per cent in 1947 to more than 70 per cent by the 1960s.

## Australia loosens up

Like many other countries, Australia was swept up in the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1960s. Australia's new ethnic diversity, increasing independence from Britain and popular resistance to the Vietnam War all contributed to an atmosphere of political, economic and social change. In 1967, Australians voted overwhelmingly 'yes' in a national referendum to let the federal government make laws on behalf of Aboriginal Australians and include them in future censuses. The result was the culmination of a strong reform campaign by both Aboriginal and white Australians.

In 1972, the Australian Labor Party under the idealistic leadership of lawyer Gough Whitlam was elected to power, ending the post-war domination of the Liberal and Country Party coalition. Over the next three years, his new government ended conscription, abolished university fees and introduced free universal health care. It abandoned the White Australia policy, embraced multiculturalism and introduced no-fault divorce and equal pay for women. However by 1975, inflation and scandal led to the Governor-General dismissing the government. In the subsequent general election, the Labor Party suffered a major defeat and the Liberal–National Coalition ruled until 1983.

## Since the 1970s

Between 1983 and 1996, the Hawke–Keating Labor governments introduced a number of economic reforms, such as deregulating the banking system and floating the Australian dollar. In 1996 a Coalition Government led by John Howard won the general election and was re-elected in 1998, 2001 and 2004. The Liberal–National Coalition Government enacted several reforms, including changes in the taxation and industrial relations systems. In 2007 the Labor Party led by Kevin Rudd was elected with an agenda to reform Australia's industrial relations system, climate change policies, and health and education sectors.