AUSTRALIA

HISTORY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived in Australia for at least 65,000 years. Britain started a colony here in 1788. In 1901, Australia became its own country.



The First Australians

Aboriginal peoples lived all over the land. They spoke more than 250 languages. They hunted kangaroos and emus, fished, and gathered seeds and plants. They used fire to clear land so new grass would grow. Dreaming stories tell how the land, animals and laws came to be. Rock paintings show these stories. Torres Strait Islanders lived on islands in the far north, where they fished and grew gardens.

Ships from Far Away

In 1606, a Dutch ship led by Willem Janszoon (VIL-em YAHN-sohn) landed on the far north coast. More Dutch sailors mapped the west coast and called the land New Holland. In 1642, Abel Tasman reached the island now named Tasmania after him. Traders from Makassar (muh-KAS-er), in today's Indonesia, also sailed to the north coast to collect sea cucumbers.



Cook and the First Fleet

In 1770, British explorer James Cook sailed up the east coast and claimed it for Britain. Britain's jails were crowded, and it could no longer send prisoners to America. So it decided to send **convicts**, people found guilty of crimes, to Australia. In January 1788, eleven ships called the First Fleet reached Botany Bay. The new **colony** of New South Wales began at Sydney Cove.



The Colonies Spread

For about 80 years, Britain sent convicts to Australia. Port Arthur, in Tasmania, opened in 1830 as a prison for convicts who broke the law again. Free settlers came for land. They raised sheep and sent wool to Britain. As farms spread, Aboriginal peoples lost much of their land. Some fought to keep it, and settlers and soldiers fought back. Many Aboriginal people also died of new diseases such as smallpox. By 1859, there were six colonies.



Gold!

In 1851, gold was found in New South Wales and then in Victoria. A **gold rush** began. People sailed from Britain, China, America and many other places to dig for it. In ten years, the number of people in Australia more than doubled. Melbourne grew rich and built the Royal Exhibition Building in 1880 for a world's fair.

One Country

On January 1, 1901, the six colonies joined in a **federation** called the Commonwealth of Australia. Edmund Barton was the first prime minister. A new capital, Canberra, was built, and Parliament moved there in 1927. Since then, millions of people from around the world have moved to Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live all across Australia today and keep their cultures alive.

AUSTRALIA THROUGH TIME

1606	1642	1770	1788	1830	1851	1901	1927	1973
Dutch sailors land in the north	Tasman reaches Tasmania	Cook maps the east coast	The First Fleet arrives	Port Arthur opens	The gold rush begins	Australia becomes a country	Parliament moves to Canberra	Sydney Opera House opens

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Bennelong	Wangal man, friend of Governor Phillip
Arthur Phillip	First governor of New South Wales
Caroline Chisholm	Helped new settlers find homes and jobs
Edmund Barton	First prime minister of Australia
Albert Namatjira	Aboriginal artist who painted the desert

WORDS TO KNOW

convict	a person found guilty of a crime
colony	land ruled by a faraway country
gold rush	a time when many people hurry to a place to dig for gold
federation	a group of states that join under one government