# 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 |
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| 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

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| **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

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|---|---|
| **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 |