
Timeline

(Note: Democratic principles and institutions are noted here only for the colony or state in which they are first established; for information on all colonies, see table of Democratic Landmarks.)

- 1786 Britain, assuming New South Wales is *terra nullius*, plans convict settlement without recognition of Aboriginal ownership
- 1788 Convict settlement at Sydney, with Governor Arthur Phillip in charge
- 1823 Governor to be advised by nominated Legislative Council; Supreme Court established
- 1824 *Australian*, first independent newspaper
- 1831 Assisted migration of free working people
- 1833 Ex-convicts eligible to serve as jurors in criminal trials
- 1836 Governor Richard Bourke funds Catholic Anglican and Presbyterian churches on equal basis
- 1838 Myall Creek massacre of Aborigines; Governor George Gipps puts offenders on trial; seven hanged
- 1840 Transportation ceases to mainland Australia
- 1842 Two-thirds of members of Legislative Council to be elected on property franchise, ex-convicts eligible to vote and stand

APPENDICES

- 1847 First government ('national') schools
1849 Attempt to revive transportation
1850 Legislative Councils, two-thirds elected, for Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia
1851 Australasian League for the Abolition of Transportation formed; South Australia separates Church and State; discovery of gold
1852 Britain abandons transportation (except for Western Australia) and allows New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania to prepare constitutions with two houses of parliament for self-government
1856 Victoria adopts secret ballot; South Australia includes secret ballot and manhood suffrage (without plural voting) for Assembly in its constitution for self-government
1856–57 Self-government begins in four southeastern colonies, with ministers responsible to parliament
1859 Queensland separates from New South Wales and follows its constitution
1861 Land selection on time payment begins in New South Wales and Victoria
1865 Deadlock between Assembly and Council in Victoria over tariff
1870 Victoria adopts payment of members; Western Australia acquires partly elected Council
1872 Victoria stops state aid to private schools
1877 Deadlock between Assembly and Council in Victoria over payment of members
1884 Women's Suffrage Society established in Melbourne
1890 Western Australia becomes self-governing; trade unions defeated in Maritime Strike in eastern Australia
1891 Labor Party formed; federal convention draws up constitution for the Commonwealth of Australia (not adopted)
1894 South Australia adopts female suffrage
1896 Tasmania adopts Hare–Clark proportional representation for Assembly seats of Hobart and Launceston (and for whole state, 1907)
1897 Elections for second federal convention
1898 Referendum on Commonwealth constitution carried in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania (but with insufficient Yes votes in New South Wales)
1899 Referendum on revised Commonwealth constitution carried in all colonies except Western Australia

- 1900 Referendum on constitution carried in Western Australia
- 1901 Commonwealth of Australia inaugurated
- 1902 Adult suffrage (except for Aborigines) in both Houses of Commonwealth parliament
- 1903 High Court established
- 1904 Australian Women's National League forms (supporting non-Labor parties)
- 1907 Harvester judgement of Arbitration Court establishes basic wage
- 1909 Compulsory military training; Commonwealth old-age pensions; parties opposed to Labor combine as Liberal Party
- 1910 Labor Party wins majority in both Houses of Commonwealth parliament
- 1911 Labor government's attempt to increase powers of federal parliament fails at referendum
- 1913 Country Party begins in Western Australia
- 1915 Australian troops land at Gallipoli
- 1916 Referendum on conscription for war in Europe fails; Labor Party splits on conscription
- 1917 Labor conscriptionists combine with Liberals to form Nationalist Party
- 1918 Preferential voting for Commonwealth elections (allowing the new Country Party to compete with Nationalists without advantaging the Labor Party)
- 1920 Communist Party formed
- 1921 Edith Cowan first woman to be elected to an Australian parliament (in Western Australia)
- 1922 Nominated Legislative Council abolished in Queensland
- 1924 Compulsory voting for Commonwealth elections
- 1927 Commonwealth parliament sits for first time at national capital, Canberra
- 1929 Great Depression begins
- 1931 Statute of Westminster gives British self-governing dominions power over foreign policy and defence (Australia not adopting it until 1942); Isaac Isaacs appointed first Australian-born governor-general; Jack Lang, premier of New South Wales, defaults on payment of interest on loans to Britain; Lang and his party expelled from the Labor Party; New Guard, a private army opposed to communism and Lang, forms in Sydney; United Australia Party replaces Nationalist Party; Premiers' Plan is joint

- government response to Depression (cutting spending, wages and pensions and requesting bondholders to accept lower interest)
- 1932 Francis de Groot of the New Guard opens Sydney Harbour Bridge ahead of Lang; Lang dismissed by Governor Game
- 1933 New South Wales nominated Legislative Council replaced by one for which members of the Assembly and Council elect one-third of Council members every three years
- 1936 Lang Labor and official Labor combine in New South Wales
- 1938 Aborigines mark 150th anniversary of European settlement with day of mourning and request for Commonwealth control of Aboriginal affairs; legislation for National Insurance (contributory welfare scheme) passes parliament but United Australia government decides not to proceed with it; communist trade unionists attempt to stop export of pig iron to Japan
- 1939 New South Wales Labor parliamentarians remove Lang as leader; conscription for home defence
- 1940 Australia appoints first ambassadors (to Japan and the United States); Communist Party banned for opposing the war
- 1941 B.A. Santamaria forms secret organisation, 'the movement', to combat communism in the trade unions
- 1942 Australian forces in Pacific put under command of General Douglas MacArthur of the United States; ban on Communist Party lifted (as it now supported war)
- 1943 Conscription for overseas service (but only for defined zone to Australia's north)
- 1944 Labor government fails at referendum to increase greatly the powers of Commonwealth parliament; Labor government introduces welfare payments on non-contributory basis; Liberal Party replaces United Australia Party
- 1945 Communist Party reaches maximum membership
- 1947 Immigration program accepts non-British people; Labor government attempts to nationalise the banks
- 1949 Senate elected by proportional representation; communist-led miners' strike defeated by use of troops; Australian citizenship established
- 1950 Victoria's upper house the first in the states to be elected by adult suffrage
- 1951 Referendum to give Commonwealth power to ban Communist Party fails

- 1954 Labor Party splits when its leader H.V. Evatt denounces the anti-communist movement; Democratic Labor Party forms
- 1962 Aboriginal people gain right to vote in Commonwealth elections
- 1963 Commonwealth government gives state aid to private schools
- 1964 Conscription reintroduced (to include service overseas)
- 1966 Conscripts sent to Vietnam War
- 1967 Referendum carried to give Commonwealth power over Aboriginal affairs and for Aborigines to be counted in census
- 1970 Moratoriums to protest at Vietnam War
- 1971 Western Australia establishes ombudsman
- 1972 Women's Electoral Lobby forms; Arbitration Court establishes principle of equal pay for work of equal value
- 1973 South Australia's Legislative Council elected by proportional representation (with state voting as one)
- 1975 Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act; Whitlam government dismissed by Governor-General Sir John Kerr
- 1977 Foundation of Australian Democrats; referendum on National Anthem won by 'Advance Australia Fair'; Queensland government bans street marches
- 1978 Referendum carried in New South Wales to make Legislative Council directly elected by the people (with proportional representation and the state voting as one); Northern Territory becomes self-governing
- 1981 Commonwealth Human Rights Commission established
- 1982 Commonwealth establishes freedom of information
- 1984 Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act; Country Party everywhere now known as National Party
- 1987 Western Australia's Legislative Council elected by proportional representation (with state divided into regions)
- 1988 New Parliament House opens in Canberra; Australian Capital Territory becomes self-governing
- 1989 Fitzgerald commission recommends new institutions to ensure democratic government in Queensland
- 1992 High Court overturns doctrine of *terra nullius* in Mabo case
- 1999 Referendum on republic fails