
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