



We Are Australian **SETTLERS AND EXPLORERS**

Wendy Graham

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WARNING: Indigenous Australian readers are warned that this publication may contain images of deceased persons.

When a word is written in **bold**, click on it to find its meaning.

We are Australian

Australia's identity has developed over time. People, historical events and the natural environment have contributed to the unique characteristics of this nation.

Australian is a proud and **patriotic** nation made up of many cultures, people and beliefs. The **diversity** and unity of its people are central to its identity as a nation.



Australian people celebrate their diversity.

Settlers and explorers

Australia was settled by the British in 1788, when a **penal colony** was established at Sydney Cove. Convicts were put to work building new settlements.

Later, **free settlers** arrived in Australia. Convicts were freed after they finished their sentences and they started new lives in the colony, too. Explorers and pioneers began to spread across the land and the nation began to grow.

aussie fact

A group of Australians from various backgrounds was asked, 'What does it mean to be an Australian?'. Some of the common ideas in their answers were:

- being willing to help others
- respecting other cultures
- loving Australia and having pride in the country
- being friendly and easygoing
- valuing mateship, having strong friendships and being loyal to friends and family.

The British began a settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788.



A new penal colony

British convicts were among the first Europeans to settle Australia. These convicts were British criminals who had received the punishment of **transportation** to Britain's new penal colony in Australia.

In the 1700s, British prisons were overcrowded. Prisoners were held in old navy ships, called hulks, but these ships had become overcrowded, too.

Britain had been transporting convicts to British **colonies** in North America to work on large crop farms, called plantations. In 1776, these colonies declared their independence and no longer accepted British prisoners. The British then decided to transport convicts to Botany Bay, in Australia.

The First Fleet

The eleven ships of the First Fleet sailed into Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip. Six of the ships were convict ships, three were store ships and two were warships, which guarded the fleet from pirates. Second and Third fleets of convict ships arrived in 1790 and 1791.

Lady Penrhyn was a First Fleet ship that carried 101 female convicts.



aussie fact

The First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay but Captain Phillip did not think it was a good place for a settlement. The Fleet sailed to nearby Port Jackson. They began a settlement on a site they called Sydney Cove.



Hundreds of convicts could be held on a hulk ship and transported to Botany Bay.

The convicts

Around 580 males and 200 females were aboard the First Fleet convict ships. Many of the convicts had committed minor crimes, such as stealing a loaf of bread. Some had not paid their debts. Many female convicts' crimes were picking pockets, which meant stealing from someone's pockets, or selling themselves. Other convicts had been convicted of crimes such as murder. They had been sentenced to death at first, but their sentences had been changed to transportation to Australia.

The settlement at Port Jackson

Arthur Phillip became the Governor of the new colony of New South Wales. When the convicts landed at Port Jackson, Phillip set them to work. They erected Phillip's house and set up tents for the troops to live in. Some convicts also lived in tents, but others lived in rough huts or small caves.

The British troops

The British troops were **marines** who had been based on the convict ships. They did not want to help build the settlement at Port Jackson. They believed their job was to defend the settlement. The marine commander, Major Ross, wrote to the British Government and reported that there was no worse place to settle a colony.

A chain gang of convicts is guarded by British troops.



aussie fact

Port Jackson is now more commonly known as Sydney Harbour.

Convict gangs

Convicts were put into gangs to clear the land, plant crops and build roads and fences. They cut down trees and dug up stones and clay from the bush for building material. Convicts were often chained together, especially while working.



The British settlers did not recognise that Indigenous Australians owned the land.

British attitudes towards Indigenous Australians

The British Government instructed Governor Phillip to live in harmony with the Indigenous people of Australia and to be kind to them. Any British subjects who offended or harmed the Indigenous Australians were to be punished.

The British Government did not recognise that the land belonged to Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians were not aware they had become British subjects and that they were expected to obey British law.

Governor Phillip and Bennelong

Governor Phillip tried to make friends with the people of the Port Jackson area, the Eora people. He captured some of the people, believing he could convince them of his good intentions. One man, Bennelong, did become friendly with Phillip. Phillip built a hut for him on the edge of the settlement. Later, Phillip took Bennelong and another Eora man, Yemmerrawannie, to England with him. Yemmerrawannie died in England. Bennelong later returned to Australia.

aussie fact

The area where Bennelong's hut stood is now called Bennelong Point. It is where the Sydney Opera House now stands.

The life of a convict

The lives of convicts in the Port Jackson settlement were very different to the lives they had led in Britain. At first, food in the settlement was in short supply. Crops did not grow easily and many of the farm animals died or just wandered into the bush. Many convicts became sick.



A man was punished for a minor crime by being flogged with the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Strict rules and harsh punishments

Governor Phillip's rules were strict and punishments were harsh, even for minor crimes such as stealing a hen or a piece of meat. A flogging with the cat-o'-nine-tails whip was a common form of punishment. Other punishments were chaining the convicts together or feeding the convicts only bread and water.



Convict men ploughed the land for farms.

Convict men

Convict workers were used to build bridges, courthouses and hospitals. Some convicts worked as carpenters, brickmakers or shepherds, or tended cattle. Educated convicts worked as record keepers. The Port Jackson settlement gradually became more established.

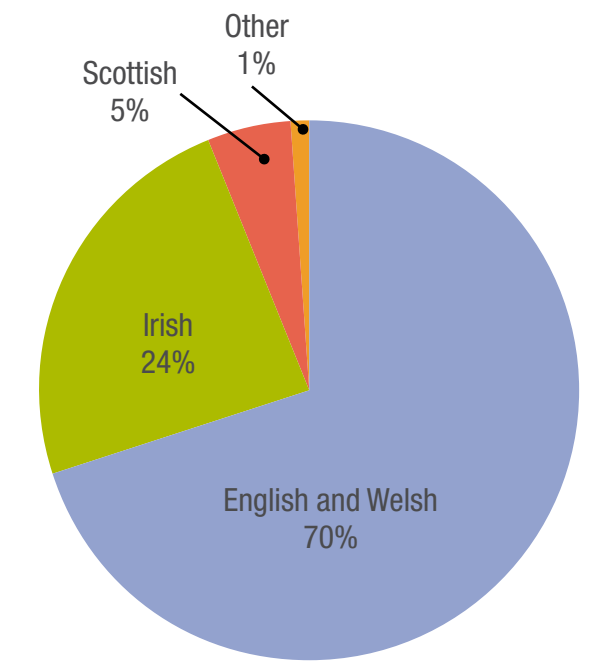
Convict women and young convicts

Women convicts usually worked as servants, either farming or cleaning, for military families or for free settlers. Sometimes, they helped to build roads. Some convict women and young girls were sent to the Female Factory where they were employed to make rope, sew or spin wool for blankets.

The colony began to grow as convicts helped build new farms.

Children in the colony

Children born to convict women in the New South Wales colony either stayed with their mothers or were sent to orphanages. The first school opened in 1789. The teacher was a convict. She taught the children of convicts, soldiers and settlers. A second school opened in 1791.



Nationalities of the convicts



Building more penal settlements

The Port Jackson settlement grew quickly. More penal settlements were built to hold the convicts who continued to be transported from Britain.

Secondary penal settlements

Secondary penal settlements were for transported convicts who continued to commit crimes. These penal settlements were especially severe so that they discouraged convicts from committing any more crimes.

Newcastle, NSW, established 1804

Newcastle was the site of the first penal settlement after Port Jackson. Convicts worked in coalmines and gathered seashells to make lime, which could be used to make soap or paint.

Port Macquarie, NSW, established 1821

Port Macquarie had a reputation for very harsh treatment of convicts. It was closed down in 1830.



Posters offered rewards for the capture of escaped convicts.

Moreton Bay, Queensland, established 1824

This penal settlement took Port Jackson's worst convicts. It closed down in 1839.

Norfolk Island, established 1824

The British Government re-settled Norfolk Island in 1824. The island had previously been settled and then abandoned by the British. The worst convicts of all were sent to Norfolk Island.

aussie fact

Convicts in penal settlements were given punishments such as wearing leg-irons and flogging. Extremely dangerous convicts had heavy iron balls fastened to them.

Port Arthur was one of the most severe convict prisons.



Port Arthur, Tasmania, established 1825

Port Arthur's reputation for brutality spread around the world. It delivered 'the harshest punishments short of death'. It received convicts from Port Jackson and also directly from Britain.

Point Puer, Tasmania, established 1835

This prison housed the increasing number of young male convicts who were transported from Britain. Around 3000 boys were sent to Point Puer between 1834 and 1849.



At Point Puer, young boys between 8 and 19 years old were sometimes kept in underground cells.

Penal colony in Western Australia

A free colony had been established at Swan River in Western Australia in 1829. In 1850, 75 male convicts arrived at Swan River. Over the next 18 years, 43 convict shipments were sent to the penal settlement.

The end of transportation

Convict transportation to Australia ended in 1868, when the last shipment of convicts disembarked in Western Australia. Since 1788, 162 000 men and women had been transported to Australia in 806 shipments.

aussie fact

British colonies were set up across the land. The British colonies were:

- New South Wales, established in 1788
- Van Diemen's Land (later called Tasmania), which separated from New South Wales in 1825
- Western Australia, established in 1829
- South Australia, established in 1856
- Victoria, which separated from New South Wales in 1851
- Queensland, which separated from New South Wales in 1859.

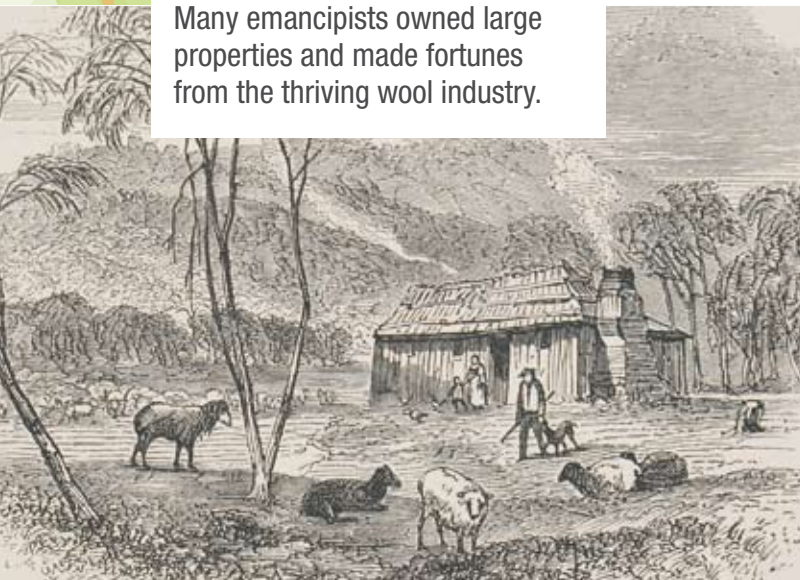
Emancipists and escaped convicts

Convicts who finished their sentence or were **pardoned** by the Governor were freed and given the same rights as free settlers. They were called emancipists. Other convicts tried to gain their freedom by escaping.

Emancipists

Although many emancipists became successful citizens, free settlers looked down on them because of their convict backgrounds. The emancipists believed they had the natural right to live in the colonies, because the colonies had been set up especially for them.

Many emancipists owned large properties and made fortunes from the thriving wool industry.



aussie fact

Because there were very few women in the colonies, women convicts were emancipated if they married free settlers.



AN EMANCIPIST'S STORY

When she was 13 years old, Mary Reibey stole a horse. As punishment, she was transported to Australia for seven years. Mary married a free settler and was **emancipated**. When her husband died, Mary took over his shipping business. She had seven children to care for, but she ran the business successfully by herself. Over time, she made a fortune.

NOTICE TO TICKET-OF-LEAVE MEN.

Police Department, 21st February, 1842.

NOTICE is hereby given, that I am authorised by the Lieutenant-Governor to offer the Indulgence of a Conditional Pardon to such well-conducted Ticket-of-Leave Men as will serve in the POLICE, as hereinafter stated, at the expiration of their respective terms of Service: viz.

TICKET-OF-LEAVE Men, whose term of Transportation is Seven Years—to serve with good conduct for

Six Months.	ditto	Fourteen Years—ditto One Year.
ditto	ditto	Life—ditto Fifteen Months.

It is, however, to be clearly understood, that no Pardon will be issued under these Regulations until such Ticket-of-Leave Men shall have been in the Colony for either Four, Six, or Eight Years respectively, according to their terms of Transportation being either for Seven Years, Fourteen Years, or for Life.

Men wishing to enter under these Regulations are to address their Applications to the CHIEF POLICE MAGISTRATE, and send them through the Police Magistrate of the District in which they may reside.

M. FORSTER,
Chief Police Magistrate.

A police magistrate could offer a ticket of leave to convicts who worked hard and behaved themselves.

Convicts with tickets of leave

Some convicts who behaved well qualified for a 'ticket of leave' or 'certificate of freedom'. They became emancipists and could earn their own living. They were watched, however, for the rest of their sentence. If they misbehaved, their ticket could be cancelled.

Escaped convicts

In the penal colonies, convicts were not kept behind bars. The thought of trying to survive in the Australian bush kept most convicts from escaping. Those who did escape often returned, starving.



AN ESCAPED CONVICT'S STORY

Convict William Buckley escaped in 1803. He was found starving and near death by the Wathawurung people. They believed he was a warrior who had returned from the dead and they welcomed him into their group. He lived with them for 32 years. One day, Buckley came across a camp of European settlers. He rejoined European society and became an interpreter and peacemaker.

Farming the land

In 1793, the first free settlers arrived in Australia from Britain. They hoped to establish new lives in the colony. These free settlers were known as exclusives.

More and more free settlers arrived in Australia and established farms. This meant more land was needed. This land was taken from the traditional inhabitants, the local Indigenous Australians.

Free settlers' houses were usually small wooden huts.



aussie fact

Until 1793, most free people in the colony were marines, emancipated convicts and their families. Most of these people came from Britain and Ireland.

The Eora people resist

The local Indigenous Australian group, the Eora people, were friendly towards the European settlers at first. When the land was cleared, however, food resources became hard to find. Their way of life was threatened and they began to resist the occupation of their land.



The Eora people's land was cleared to make way for the settlers' buildings and farms.



Many Indigenous Australians fought against the invasion of their land.

Pemulwuy

From 1792 onwards, the Eora people fought hard to keep their land. A long **campaign** was fought against the settlers, led by Pemulwuy of the Bidjigal clan. Pemulwuy was known as the Rainbow Warrior. A reward was offered for his death or capture and he was killed in 1802.

aussie fact

Smallpox was a deadly disease that passed from person to person. It produced fever and pus-filled spots. When smallpox was widespread in a community, it was called a smallpox epidemic.

Other effects of European settlement

The health of Aboriginal Australians suffered enormously during this time of European settlement. They had no resistance to the diseases introduced by the European people. Smallpox epidemics swept through the Indigenous Australian population, killing many people. Indigenous Australians faced death, illness, **displacement** and **dispossession**.

The life of a free settler

A free settler faced many hardships in the foreign environment of Australia. Settlers found Australia's harsh climate of droughts and extreme temperatures hard to cope with. Growing enough food to feed themselves and their families was difficult.

The settlers had to clear dense bushland and plough hard, rocky ground for their farms. Some settlers were assigned a convict to work for them, looking after sheep or building fences. Many settlers established themselves as **pastoralists**, leasing land from the government.



European settlers worked in tough conditions to build homes and farms in Australia.

Sheep farmers

Settlers tried introducing European crops and animals, such as sheep. They set up sheep runs wherever there was enough grass and water. The sheep industry grew rapidly. Soon, sheep flocks were in every colony. The wool was **exported** to Britain.

Whalers

By the 1830s, whale-hunting stations were set up along the Australian coastline. Whalers sold the oil, meat and whalebone from the whales they killed. Until 1833, whaling was more valuable than wool as the main export from the colonies.

Women settlers

Women found Australia's harsh environment difficult to live in, too. Wives of drovers faced an isolated existence while their husbands were away droving cattle.

Women often had to work alongside the men setting up farms. For women of higher social standing, this was something they had never done before.

Women settlers had to help their husbands set up farms.



aussie fact

Most free settlers arriving in Australia were men. To encourage single women and young married couples to move to the colonies, the British Government offered money, called a bounty.

More single women began to migrate to Australia, journeying for months on migrant ships.



Squatting on the land

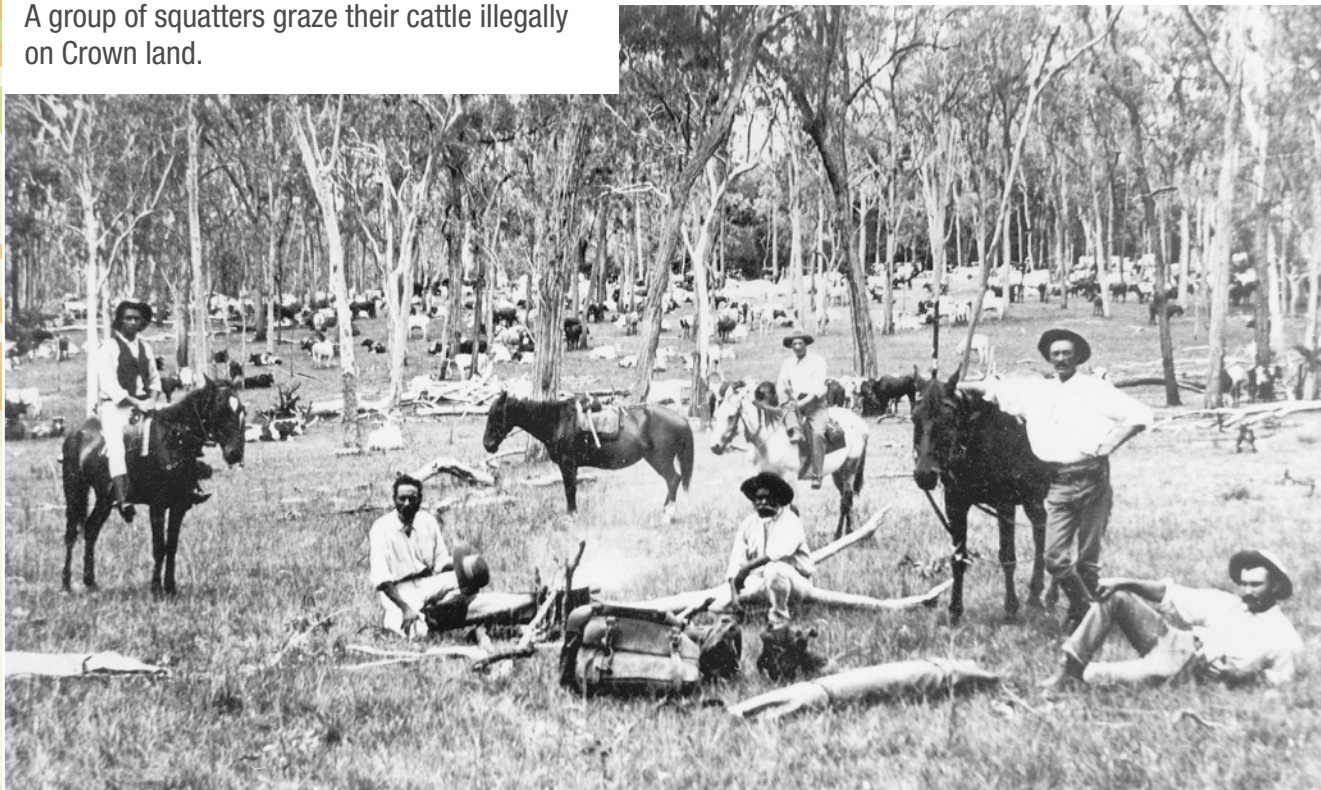
At first, government officials, officers and emancipists were granted land by the British. Land within the official area of settlement soon became occupied. As more land became available through exploration, many settlers grabbed the chance to make their fortunes by grazing sheep and cattle. New settlers had to travel further out, occupying land without permission. This was called squatting.

Squatters

Squatters were people who squatted on the land. Squatting meant they lived on **Crown land** without government permission. Squatters built shepherds' huts and grazed cattle and sheep. Some squatters grazed stolen animals on their land.

In 1836, squatting became legal. Squatters paid an annual licence fee to use the land. Many squatters became very wealthy.

A group of squatters graze their cattle illegally on Crown land.



Batman signed a treaty with the Woiworing people of the Port Phillip area in Victoria.

Land ownership

In 1835, John Batman tried to transfer land ownership from the Woiworing people to himself through a **treaty**. Governor Bourke did not allow the treaty. He declared the land belonged to no one before the British Crown took possession of it. Land could only be distributed by the Crown.

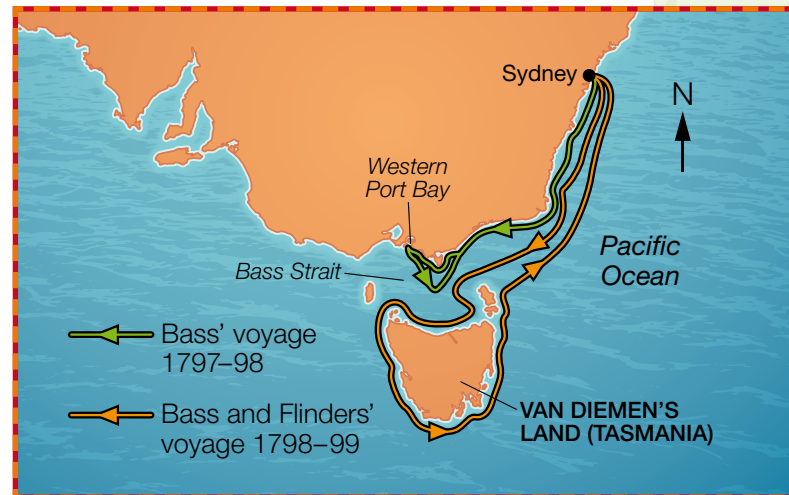
Many Aboriginal Australians had lost their homelands, sacred sites and hunting grounds. Most now lived on town edges, pastoral properties or **reserves**. Many suffered from introduced diseases and starvation.

Exploring the continent

The first explorers to Australia were the Indigenous Australians who arrived at least 40 000 years ago. Dutchman Willem Jansz was the first known European to travel to the Australian mainland, in 1606. Other early explorers include Abel Tasman and William Dampier.

In the early colonies, Australia's rugged landscapes were a challenge for many explorers. Some explorers tried to find suitable farmland for grazing and farming. Many explorers became famous and were rewarded for their efforts. Others perished in Australia's harsh climate and landscape.

Bass and Flinders were early explorers of Australia's coastline.



A settler looks out over the barrier of the Blue Mountains.



aussie fact

Many explorers surveyed Australia's coastlines by sea from 1788 onwards, such as:

- Frenchman Jean Lapérouse in 1788
- George Bass and Matthew Flinders between 1797 and 1799
- James Grant in 1800
- Phillip Parker King between 1817 and 1822
- George Grey in 1839.

Exploring the Great Dividing Range

Explorers tried to travel inland from the New South Wales colony, towards the west. They were blocked by the Blue Mountains, which is part of Australia's largest mountain range, the Great Dividing Range. They could not find a way through the mountains, deep valleys and huge cliffs.

aussie fact

The Indigenous Australians who had inhabited the Blue Mountains for about 14 000 years were pushed out of the area by settlers. Signs of their occupation of the area are rock engravings, stone tools and axe grinding grooves.

Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson

In 1813, three landholders succeeded in crossing the Blue Mountains. Gregory Blaxland, William Wentworth and William Lawson followed the high ridge of the mountains, instead of the valleys. They saw perfect grazing land to the west of the Blue Mountains.

Allan Cunningham

In 1827, **botanist** Allan Cunningham travelled north along the edge of the Great Dividing Range. He found rich grazing lands, now known as the Darling Downs.

In 1828, Cunningham explored inland from Moreton Bay. He found a gap through the mountains. Settlers could now travel to the Darling Downs with their livestock through the gap.



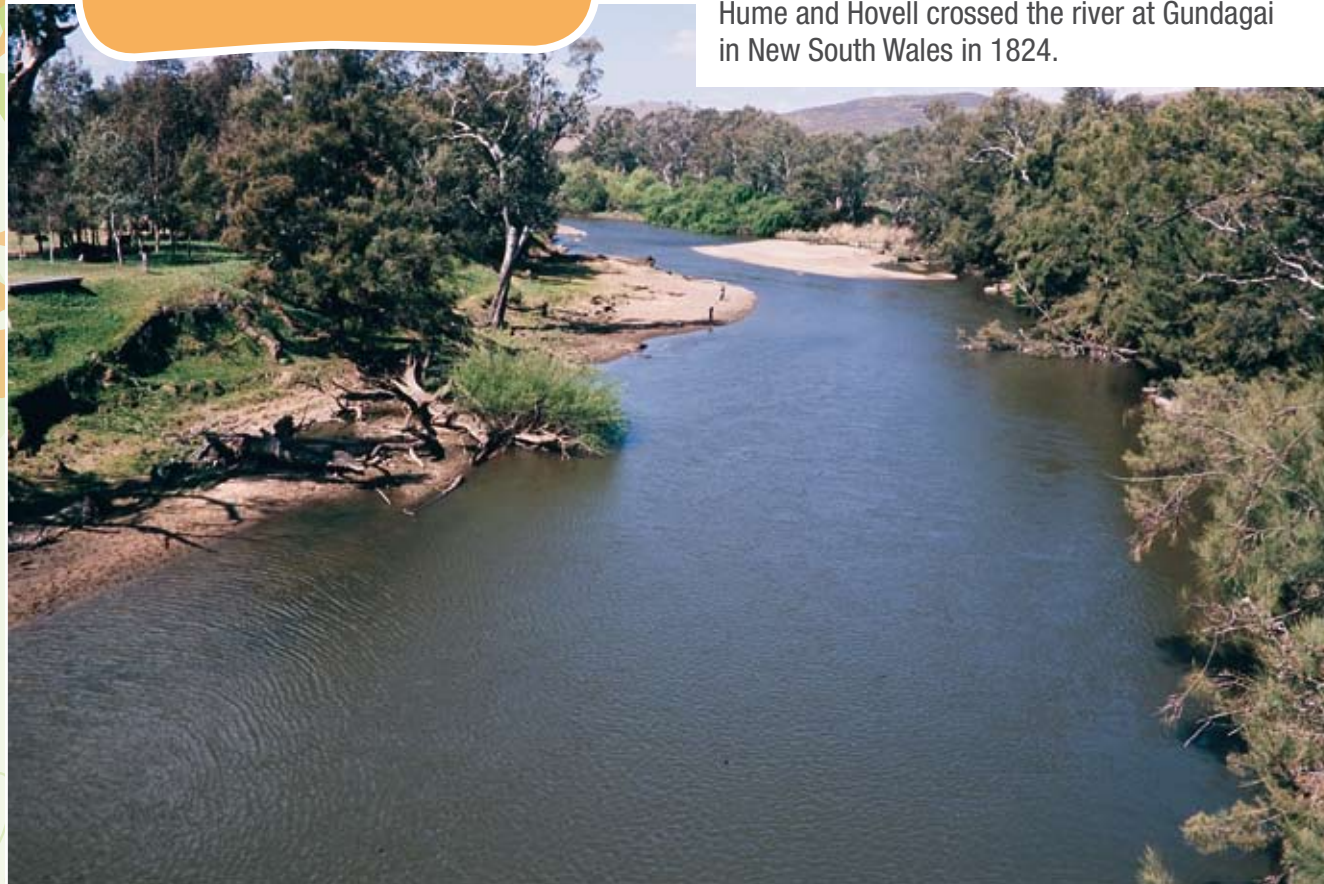
Settlers could travel between the Darling Downs and the coast through Cunningham's Gap.

Exploring south of Sydney

In 1824, Hamilton Hume and William Hovell left Sydney on an **expedition** south. They travelled for two months, with horses and bullocks, until they eventually reached Port Phillip, where Melbourne now stands.

aussie fact

Today, people can follow a 440-kilometre walking track between Yass in New South Wales and Albury in Victoria. The walking track follows part of the route travelled by Hume and Hovell.



Hume and Hovell crossed the river at Gundagai in New South Wales in 1824.

Crossing Australia from south to north

In 1859, the South Australian Government offered a reward of £2000 for the first explorer to cross Australia overland from south to north. There was great rivalry between Robert O'Hara Burke and John McDouall Stuart in their race to win the prize. Burke and Wills led a Victorian expedition and Stuart led a South Australian expedition.

Robert O'Hara Burke and William Wills

In 1860, an expedition party led by Robert O'Hara Burke and William Wills left Melbourne for the northern coast of Australia. Burke, Wills, Charlie Gray and John King made the last part of the journey north together. They reached the **estuary** of the Flinders River, five kilometres from the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Burke, Wills and Gray died on the return journey. King was found and looked after by the Yantruwanta people. After two and a half months, he was found by a search party sent from Melbourne.

John McDouall Stuart

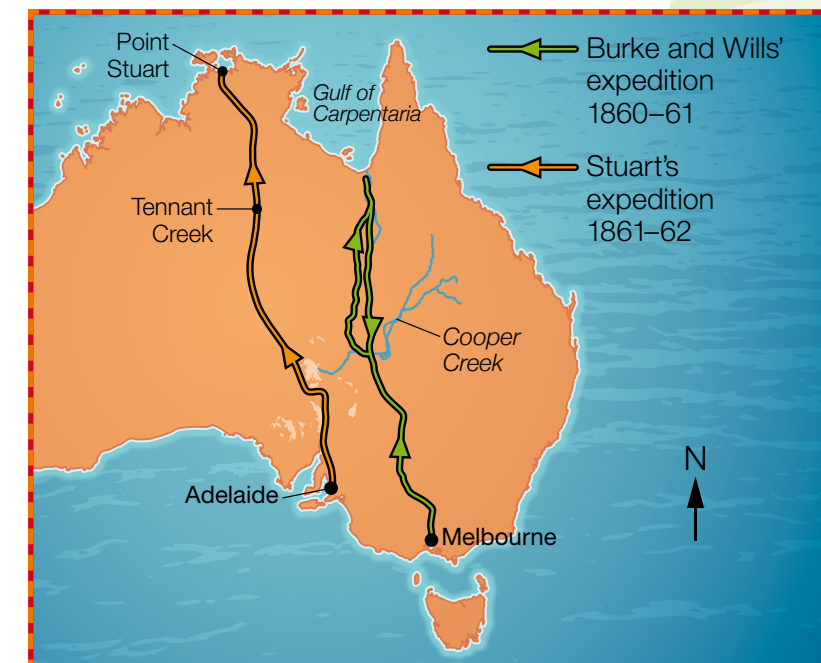
In 1860, John McDouall Stuart and his expedition party left Adelaide to cross Australia from south to north. After reaching Tennant Creek, they had to turn back. Later that year, Stuart and his party tried again but failed. In 1862, on his third attempt, Stuart succeeded in reaching the northern coast near Darwin.

aussie fact

The journeys of Australia's explorers caused great interest back in England. Many kept journals of their expeditions to be published later.



Burke, Wills, Gray and King prepare to leave Cooper Creek in Queensland for the last and hardest part of their journey north.



Expeditions from South Australia and Victoria raced to cross Australia from south to north.

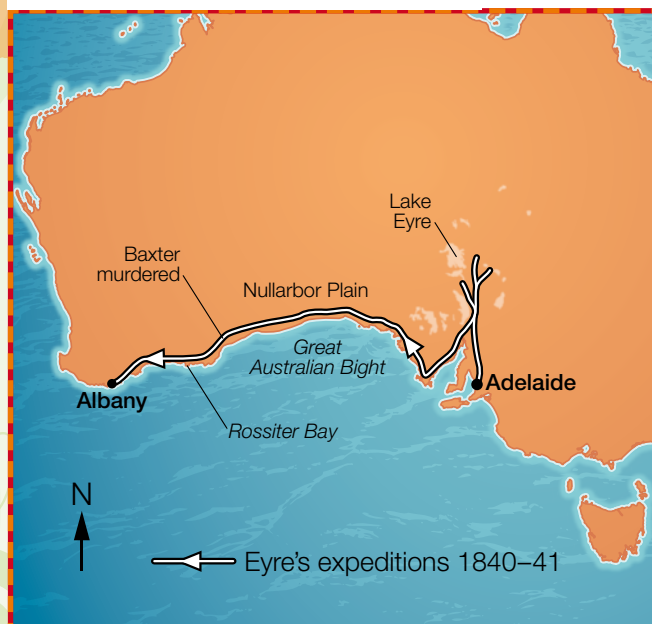


Captain Rossiter meets Eyre and Wylie at Rossiter Bay.

Crossing Australia from east to west

Edward John Eyre was the first explorer to cross Australia from east to west along the southern coast. Friedrich Ludwig Leichhardt explored from the Darling Downs across to Port Essington, along the northern coast.

Eyre travelled from Adelaide to Albany in 1841.



Edward John Eyre

After an abandoned expedition to reach Central Australia in 1840, Edward John Eyre set out again in 1841. This time he wanted to cross the Nullarbor Plain. He was searching for an overland route from Adelaide to Albany, in Western Australia. His expedition party included John Baxter and three Aboriginal teenagers.

Baxter was murdered by two of the teenagers, who then deserted the party. Eyre and the remaining boy, Wylie, eventually reached a bay in the south-east of Western Australia. They were rescued by a French whaling ship. After recovering from their ordeal, Eyre and Wylie eventually reached Albany.

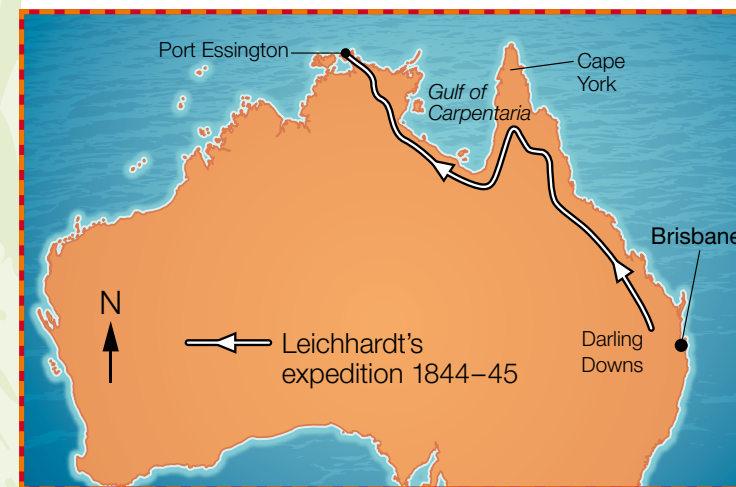
aussie fact

Eyre named Rossiter Bay in Western Australia after the captain of the French whaling ship, Captain Rossiter.

Friedrich Ludwig Leichhardt

In 1844, Leichhardt and his party left Darling Downs in Queensland. They made their way around the Gulf of Carpentaria. After 14 months, they reached Port Essington in the Northern Territory. One party member was killed and two others were injured on the journey when local Aboriginal people attacked their camp.

Leichhardt attempted to cross Australia from east to west in 1846 but failed. Disease forced his party to return. In 1848, he made another attempt. The entire party disappeared and was never seen again.



Leichhardt crossed Australia from the Darling Downs to Port Essington on the north coast.

aussie fact

From 1836 to 1848, John Roe carried out expeditions to the north and east of Perth. In 1848, he explored south-east of Perth and north-east of Albany. He covered 1800 miles and was away for about five months.



Leichhardt and his party famously disappeared on an exploration in 1848.

Searching for an inland sea

For many years, people thought an inland sea existed in Australia. They thought it must exist because all the rivers flowed inland, not towards the coast.

aussie fact

The Murray River forms part of the 3750-kilometre-long Murray–Darling river system. This river system drains most of inland Victoria, New South Wales and southern Queensland.

Sturt made three expeditions searching for an inland sea.



Charles Sturt

In 1828, Charles Sturt left from Wellington, New South Wales, to solve the ‘riddle of the rivers’. He found that the Macquarie and the Castlereagh rivers drained into the Darling River. He did not find an inland sea, but the myth remained.

In 1829, Sturt’s second expedition party set out from Sydney. They explored the Lachlan–Murrumbidgee river system and continued through to the Murray River. They eventually reached a large saltwater lake, Lake Alexandrina, but again found no inland sea.

In 1844, Sturt led another expedition to search for the inland sea. They travelled deep into the desert, north of Adelaide. A drought trapped the party at Preservation Creek for six months, before they returned to Adelaide. Finally, Sturt accepted there was no inland sea.

Sturt leaves Adelaide on his final expedition to find the inland sea.

Opening up the land for settlement

Explorations of Australia meant new routes were found and roads could be built. Settlement spread. The colonies of Australia began to expand.

A timeline of exploration

1813	Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson cross the Blue Mountains
1817	Oxley explores the Lachlan River
1817–22	King explores the northern coastline
1823	Oxley discovers the Tweed and Brisbane rivers, and the site of the city of Brisbane
1824	Hume and Hovell leave on their expedition
1827	Cunningham discovers the Darling Downs
1828	Cunningham discovers Cunningham’s Gap
1829	Sturt finds the Darling River
1830	Sturt discovers the junction of the Murray River with the Darling River and the mouth of the Murray
1831	Mitchell discovers the Barwon River
1835	Batman and Fawkner explore the Yarra River and settle Port Phillip Bay
1836–48	Roe explores inland from Perth
1841	Eyre makes his expedition across the Nullarbor Plain
1844	Sturt makes his expedition into central Australia, looking for the ‘inland sea’
1860	Burke and Wills make their expedition from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria
1862	McDouall Stuart crosses Australia from south to north

Burke and Wills set out on their expedition in 1860.



We are all Australian

The period of European settlement was a time of great change in Australia's history. Convicts and new settlers helped to clear the land and build a new British colony. The colonies expanded with the arrival of more free settlers.

Explorers set out on expeditions, curious about this new and strange land. A route was found through the Great Dividing Range and settlements began to spread further inland. The colonies began to thrive. The settlers and explorers of this time contributed to the development of the country that Australians call home today.



Many small towns were established by 1850.

Glossary

botanist

scientist who studies plants

campaign

organised actions taken to achieve a goal

colonies

settlements that are under the control of another country, such as Britain

Crown land

land owned by the British Empire

displacement

forced removal of people from their home

dispossession

having something taken away, especially land

diversity

wide range of different types of people or things

emancipated

set free

estuary

mouth of a large river, where the fresh water meets the saltwater tide

expedition

journey taken by a group of explorers

exported

sent to another country to be sold

free settlers

people who moved to the colonies freely, not as convicts

marines

troops who serve on both land and sea as part of a navy

pardoned

officially excused or forgiven

pastoralists

sheep or cattle farmers

patriotic

expressing pride in one's country

penal colony

settlement where convicts are sent to carry out their sentence

reserves

areas where Indigenous Australians were forced to live

transportation

taking a convict to another part of the world to work as punishment for a crime

treaty

signed agreement between countries

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