

We Are Australian

NATION BUILDERS

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.

Nation builders

Australia has changed dramatically from the 1800s to today. Australia is a young nation, but development and population growth since European settlement has been rapid.

There are many people in Australia's history who helped build the nation. Many events in Australia's history shaped the nation, too. Some of these events tested the character of the Australian people, but also helped to strengthen the Australian identity.

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.



Two early settlers remove bark from a logged tree that they will use to build a house.

Early pioneers

During the 1800s, men and women **pioneers** helped to expand the Australian nation. Pioneers opened up areas of land by moving further and further inland. Other settlers followed them and **colonised** the land. Small country towns grew as they became connected to main settlements by road and rail.



Many pioneers set up large properties for grazing sheep, called sheep runs, and the Australian wool industry grew.

Establishing industry and business

The establishment of rural **industries** and businesses helped the Australian **economy** grow. The first big industries were agriculture, logging, sealing and whaling.

Settlers set up their own businesses, such as stock and station agencies, hotels and stores. People worked in trades, such as general building, shipbuilding, brick making and pottery making.

Roads, railways, ports and bridges were constructed, and hospitals, churches and banks were built in towns.



The construction of Australia's Government House began in 1837, in Sydney.

Transport

Early settlers used various types of transport. Boats, trains and coaches transported people and goods over long distances.

Boats and paddle steamers

Small boats, called store boats, transported goods to isolated pioneers and settlers. These goods ranged from foods, such as flour, to clothing and farm equipment.

The first paddle steamer began operating in 1853. Paddle steamers transported supplies to inland settlements and ferried out produce, such as crops and timber, along rivers such as the Murray River.



The *Marion* paddle steamer carried goods up and down the Murray River.



Steam trains linked industrial and farming areas with major towns and ports.

Trains

Trains powered by steam engines began operating in Australia in 1854. The network of railway lines expanded as people ventured further inland seeking farmland or searching for gold.

Coaches

Cobb and Co were horse-drawn passenger coaches that transported people between cities and small country towns. Changing stations were set up every 25 to 40 kilometres so that tired coach horses could be replaced. The Cobb and Co coaches operated between 1854 and 1924.

aussie fact

As well as transporting passengers, Cobb and Co coaches also delivered letters and parcels.

Gold diggers

The discovery of gold in 1851 brought great wealth to the Australian nation. People from all around the world flocked to the goldfields, hoping to find their fortune. Gold diggers were looking for a rich vein of gold.

The gold rushes

When gold was discovered near Bathurst, New South Wales, in 1851, the first gold rush began. About six months later, gold was discovered in Victoria.

People from around the world began arriving at the Australian goldfields. In 1852, 370 000 people **migrated** to Australia. They came from countries such as Britain, America, China, Italy, Germany and Poland.



People rushed to goldfields during the 1850s, such as the Eaglehawk goldfields near Bendigo, Victoria.



A DIGGER'S STORY

In 1851, Edward Hargraves set out to find gold near Bathurst, New South Wales. John Lister, who had already found a small amount of gold in the area, guided Hargraves to the site. Hargraves found more gold and was the first to report the find to the government. He received a £10 000 reward, plus a regular payment for the rest of his life. He wrote a book about his discovery, but he did not mention Lister's name.



Many gold diggers and their families lived in tents at the Mount Alexander goldfield in Victoria.

Life on the goldfields

Life was very harsh for people living on the goldfields. Gold diggers and miners lived in tents that covered the countryside around the goldfields. Doctors were rare in the early days. Many women had no medical help during childbirth.

As settlements grew around the goldfields, many people built slab huts or bark huts in which to live. People set up stores and places to buy alcohol. Blacksmiths, tinsmiths, doctors and chemists opened businesses to make a living. Clergymen came to the goldfields to preach.

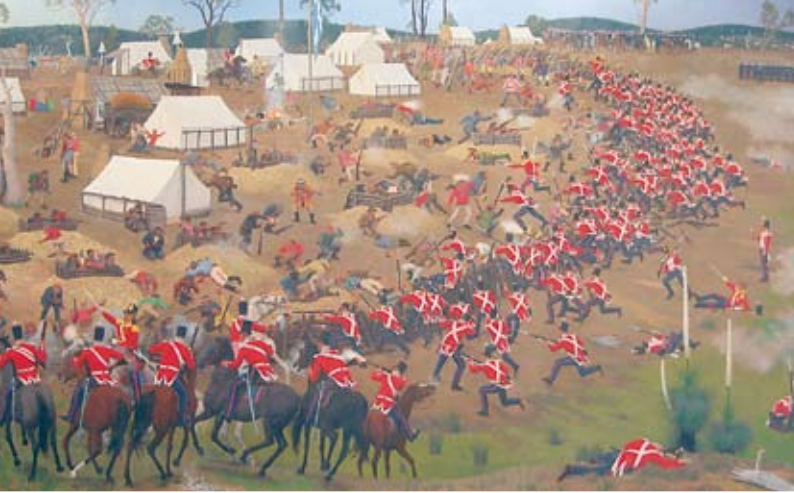
Gold diggers had to buy a licence from the government before they were allowed to dig. It entitled them to a 3.6-square-metre piece of land. The expensive licence fee had to be paid whether or not the digger found gold. This made life very difficult for most gold diggers.



Children of gold miners pan for gold in a stream.

aussie fact

In Ballarat, Victoria, people can visit a model of a goldfield town, called Sovereign Hill. Visitors can pan for gold and take underground tours of gold mines. There are also stores and houses from the gold era.



Troops attacked the Eureka Stockade at dawn on 3 December 1854.

The Eureka Stockade

In 1854, 1000 Ballarat gold diggers rebelled against paying high licence fees to the Victorian Government. At the Eureka goldfields, the rebel diggers constructed a wooden barricade, called the Eureka Stockade. They gathered inside. The police believed the camp was in danger, and soldiers from Melbourne were brought in.

The soldiers attacked the stockade. The diggers lost the battle, but the public was on their side. The Government did not convict the leaders of the rebellion, and the licence fee was reduced.



aussie fact

At the Eureka Stockade, the gold diggers flew the Eureka flag. Before the battle, they made the oath:

'We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties'.

Riot at Lambing Flat

In 1861, at Lambing Flat in New South Wales, some diggers saw the arrival of huge numbers of Chinese as a threat to their chances of finding gold. Around 2500 European diggers rioted at the Chinese camp. They set fires, attacked Chinese diggers and destroyed their belongings. Police arrested three European diggers involved in the riot, but more trouble followed over the next few days. Huge numbers of police were needed to restore the peace.

Police try to restore the peace as 20 000 European diggers at Lambing Flat become hostile.

Indigenous Australians and the gold rushes

The lives of many Indigenous Australians were affected badly by the gold rushes. Many had already lost their land to European settlers. Now, their land and their environment were being destroyed by the huge number of people digging for gold.

Local Aboriginal people near the different goldfields wanted to continue their traditional ways of life. Some Aboriginal groups managed to continue to hunt and gather. Others worked on **pastoral** properties so they could stay in the area. The decline of traditional ways of life contrasted vastly with the good fortunes of the diggers.

Many Indigenous Australians were forced from their lands and lived on the edges of settlements.

aussie fact

The Victorian Government sold land worth £4 500 000 to European settlers in the first few years of the Victorian colony. Gold found on this land was worth £35 000 000 and farming earned millions more. The Indigenous Australians who had traditionally lived on the land were given only £1750.



Uniting the colonies

Before 1901, the British colonies of Australia were independent of each other and not united in any way. Colonies had their own **parliaments**, armies, navies, roads and railways. New laws still had to be approved by the British Government.

Politicians believed the six colonies should federate, or join together. The colonies would become states of one Australian nation.



A statue of Henry Parkes, called the 'father of Federation' was erected in Centennial Park in Sydney.

Henry Parkes, father of Federation

Henry Parkes was the Premier of New South Wales, and one of Australia's most well-known politicians. In 1889, Parkes made a speech in the town of Tenterfield, New South Wales. He asked for the colonies to 'unite and create a great national government for all Australia'. His speech, known as the Tenterfield address, began the movement towards Federation. It took about ten years for Federation to be finalised.

aussie fact

The population of the colonies in 1900, before Federation, was over 3.7 million, including about 93 000 Indigenous Australians.



The arch in Melbourne was built to celebrate Australia's Federation.

Australians vote for Federation

In 1899, the people of Australia voted in favour of Federation. Elections were held to appoint the Commonwealth of Australia's Parliament. The new Federal Parliament would govern the whole country.

Not everyone could vote in the elections. Women, Indigenous Australians and people of Chinese or Indian descent were not given the right to vote.

The Commonwealth of Australia was declared on 1 January 1901. A week of festivities took place as Australian people celebrated across the nation.

aussie fact

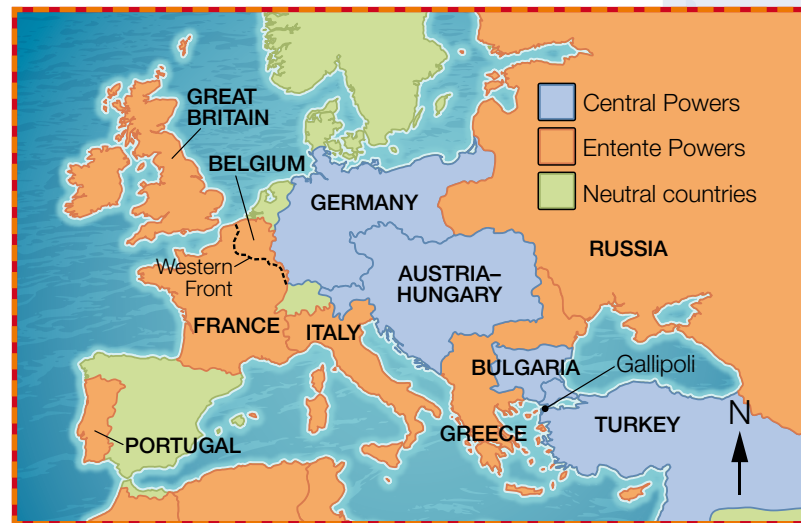
Federation celebrations included the opening of temporary Federation arches in each State.

Australians fight in World War I

By 1914, industry was booming in Australia. The Government had created a **welfare system** and people's lives were improving. In Europe, however, events were turning towards war.

On 1 August 1914, Germany declared war against Russia. Two days later, Germany invaded France, passing through Belgium. As a result, on 4 August 1914, Britain declared war against Germany.

World War I lasted from 1914 to 1918. Germany, Austria–Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria fought together as the Central Powers. They fought against the Entente Powers, which included France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy. As part of the British Commonwealth, Australian and New Zealand soldiers supported Great Britain.



Two groups of countries fought against each other in World War I.

The Anzacs

Australian soldiers were sent to Egypt for training. They were grouped with New Zealand soldiers and called the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or ANZACs. Many Aboriginal Australians also enlisted in the army and fought in World War I. Despite their history of persecution by the British, they wanted to support Australia.



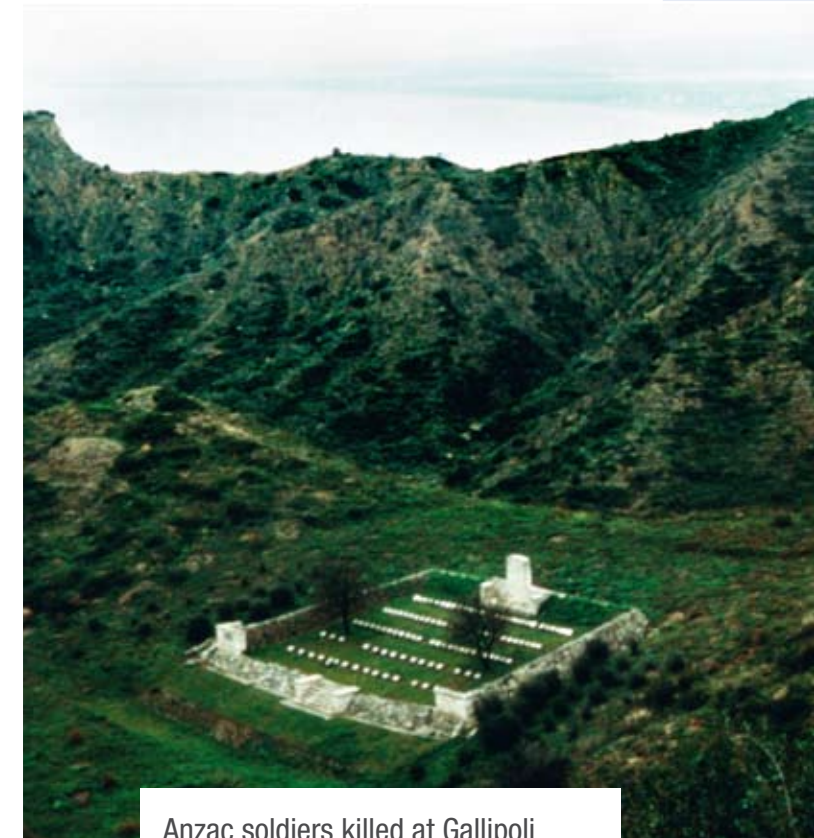
Anzac troops pose on donkeys in front of the Sphinx in Egypt, in 1914.

Anzacs at Gallipoli

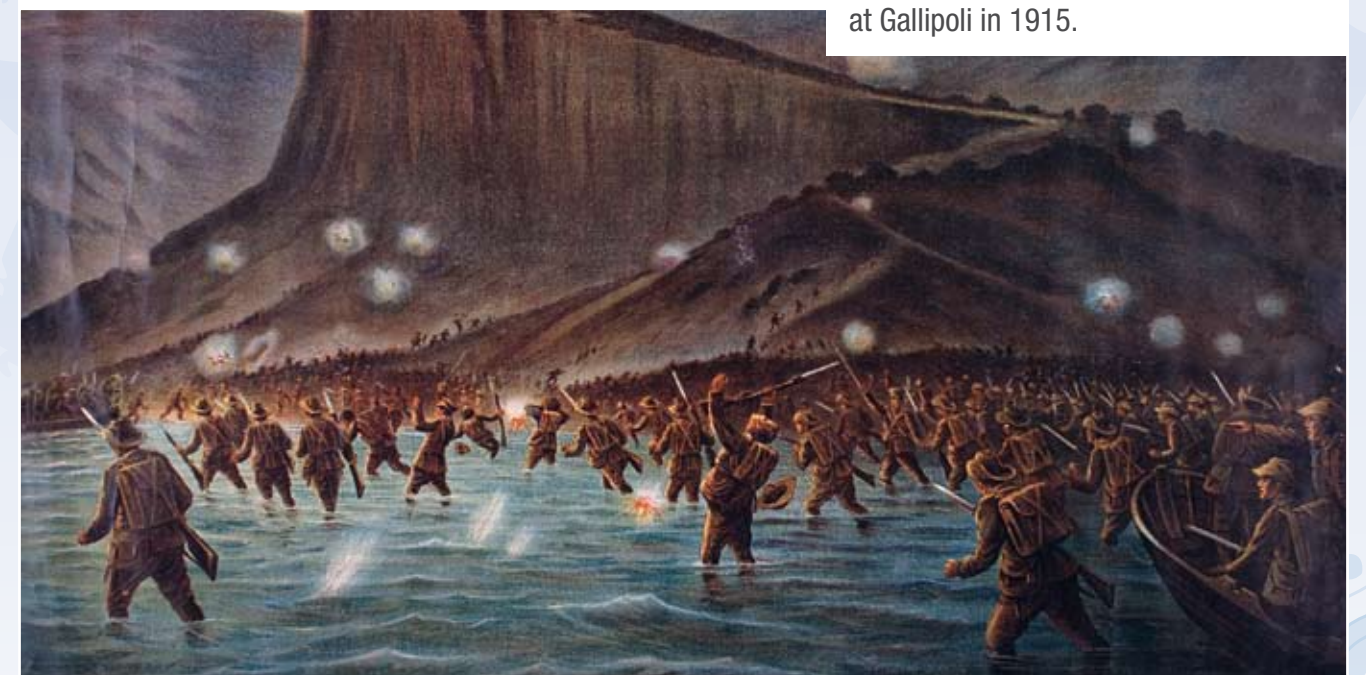
At dawn on 25 April 1915, Anzacs landed at Gallipoli, a peninsula separating Europe from Asia. The Anzacs were to support British and French troops already at Gallipoli.

The Anzacs were set down at the wrong beach. They were expecting a flat beach but, instead, faced steep cliffs and constant enemy fire. The Anzacs had no cover from the gunfire and nowhere to escape. Over the next few days, about 20 000 soldiers landed in the area.

About 8141 Australian Anzac soldiers died over 8 months of fighting at Gallipoli. In one battle, at a place called Lone Pine, more than 2000 Australian Anzacs were killed. At the end of 1915, the Gallipoli campaign was abandoned. The surviving Anzacs were removed from the area.



Anzac soldiers killed at Gallipoli were buried in cemeteries around the battle area.



Anzac troops landed under heavy fire at Gallipoli in 1915.

Anzacs at the Western Front

After the Gallipoli campaign, most Anzacs were sent to France and Belgium to fight Germany. More troops from Australia were also sent to Europe.

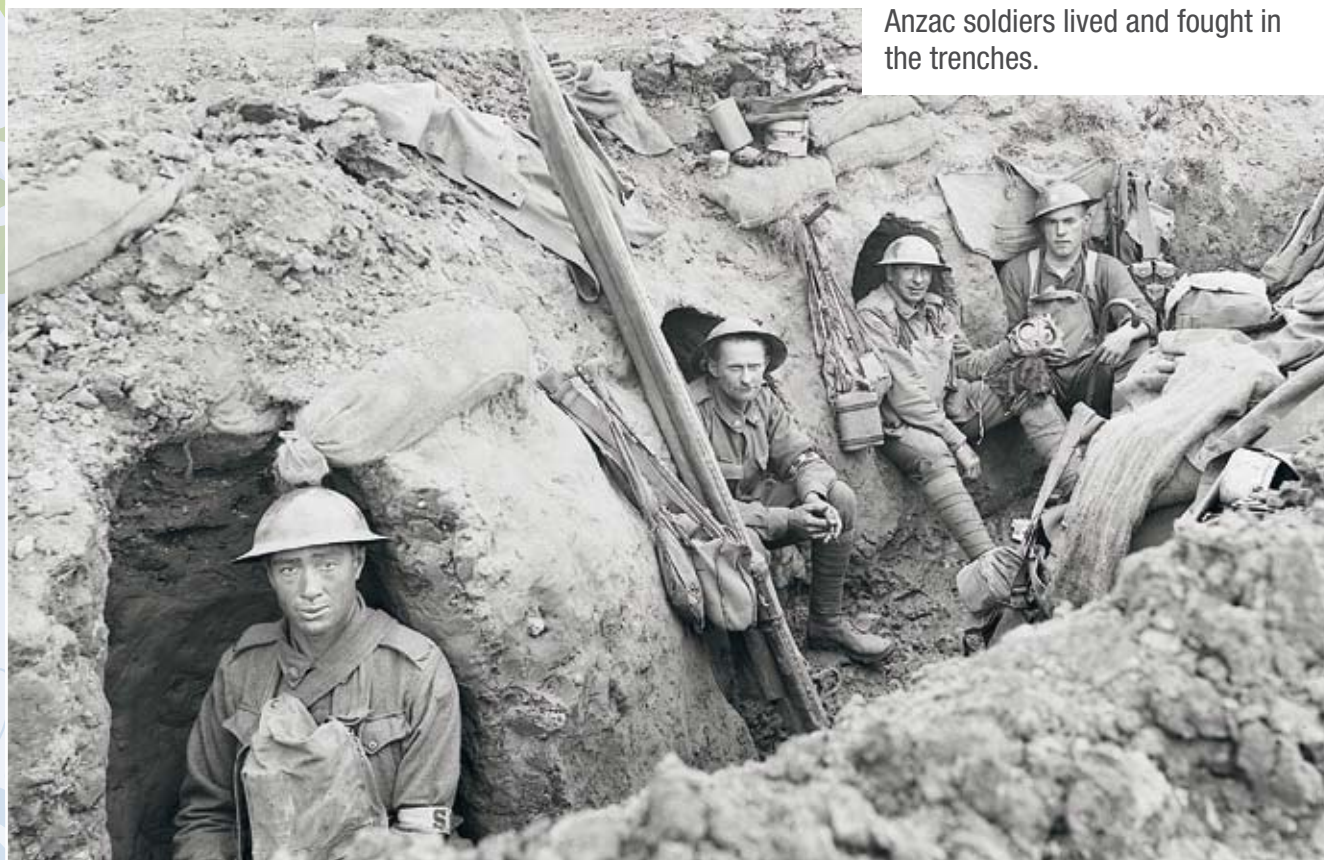
In fields in France and Belgium, enemy forces faced each other in trenches. The line of trenches stretched 700 kilometres, from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border. This line was called the Western Front.

Life and death on the Western Front

The soldiers on the Western Front had to endure harsh living conditions. The trenches gave some protection from gunfire, but they gave little shelter from explosive artillery shells. Bombs were also dropped by planes.

Artillery shells, machine guns and poisonous gas were used by both sides on the Western Front. Men tunneled under lines of trenches to plant explosives. Hundreds were buried alive when explosions ripped the ground apart.

Men in the trenches were often waist-deep in mud. The winter of 1916 was so harsh that some Anzac soldiers froze to death. The surviving soldiers had to live among the dead bodies.



Anzac soldiers lived and fought in the trenches.



Australians lie wounded after the Battle of Menin Road in Belgium in 1917.

Battles fought on the Western Front

Anzacs fought in many battles on the Western Front, such as at Fromelles, Pozières, Hamel, the Somme, Bullecourt, Messines, Passchendaele, Dernancourt and Villers-Bretonneux.

The Battle of Fromelles

The Anzacs' first major battle was near Fromelles, France, in 1916. They had orders to attack the third line of German trenches. They captured the first two lines, but there was no third line, and the Germans fought back.

The Battle of Pozières

Pozières was a town in the Somme valley in France. The British tried to capture Pozières but failed. The Anzacs were sent to help. They fought for six weeks before they won. About 23 000 Australians were injured or killed.

World War I ends

On 11 November 1918, Germany and her **allies** surrendered. More than 330 000 Australians had served in World War I. About 60 000 died, 152 000 were wounded and 4 000 were taken prisoner.

Aussie fact

The British High Command prohibited the rescue of wounded soldiers in the open between the enemy trenches. The Anzacs disobeyed this rule and tried to rescue their injured mates. This contributed to the Anzacs' reputation of being courageous and helping their mates, no matter what.

Surviving the Great Depression

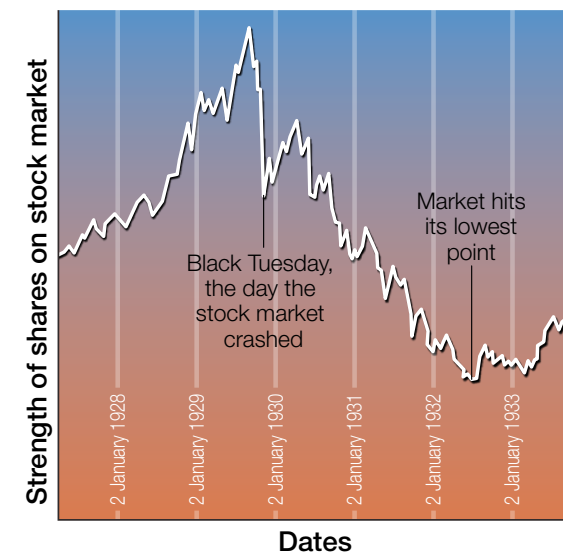
Times were hard for Australians after the war, but progress was seen as cities expanded, new suburbs appeared and more roads and railways were built. Soon, however, Australia was in the grip of a major **depression**.

The stock market crash of 1929

The Wall Street stock market crash in the United States in October 1929 led to less Australian goods being bought and **exported** to the United States. The Australian Government had borrowed a lot of money for public building works. After the crash, they were not making money to pay for this building. The people employed in these areas lost their jobs. With no income, they could not buy goods. The factories making the goods had to close, and even more people lost their jobs.

The unemployed

In 1932, one in three Australians was unemployed. People queued for food handouts. Families could not pay their rent and were forced onto the streets. Many men travelled the country, searching for work and sleeping out in the open.



This man lost his job during the Great Depression and sold pencils on the street to survive.



The Great Depression began on Tuesday 29 October 1929, known as Black Tuesday.

Children during the depression

Children often got jobs during the Depression because they were paid less than adults. Many children left school when they were around 13 years old to work in factories. More girls found work than boys, because girls were paid less than boys. Most child-workers lost their jobs when they turned 16 years old.



Many children left school early to work in factories during the Great Depression.



Bushmen survived by catching and selling rabbits during the Great Depression.

Survival and recovery

During the Great Depression, Australians coped in many ways. People made their own clothes and children made their own toys. Families grew some of their food, caught rabbits to eat and kept hens for eggs.

Recovery from the Great Depression was slow. Prime Minister James Scullin was unable to relieve the hardship of the Depression. He was voted out and Joseph Lyons became Prime Minister in January 1932. Gradually, Prime Minister Lyons brought stability to the economy. Unemployment dropped from around 30 per cent in 1932 to 10 per cent in 1939. Industry began to produce more and more goods again.



Prime Minister Joseph Lyons led Australia out of the Great Depression.

Australians fight in World War II

In the late 1930s, the world was heading towards a second world war. Germany and Italy had invaded parts of Europe and Africa. Japan had invaded China and Manchuria.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Britain declared war on Germany. The Prime Minister of Australia, Robert Menzies, announced that Australia was also at war.

The Sun newspaper announced war on 2 September 1939.



aussie fact

Germany and Italy were dictatorships, which meant each was controlled by one self-appointed leader. Germany was governed by Adolf Hitler, and Italy was governed by Benito Mussolini.

Fighting in Europe, the Middle East and northern Africa

World War II was fought between 1939 and 1945. Australian troops were sent to the Middle East, Greece and northern Africa to fight against Germany and Italy.

In the Siege of Tobruk, in northern Africa, in 1941, Australian soldiers defended themselves against repeated attacks. They dug large networks of tunnels and shelters to hide in and store their weapons. The Germans mocked them as 'rats in their holes'.

The Australians adopted this title proudly, calling themselves the Rats of Tobruk. Australian troops also played a large part in defeating the Germans at the Battle of El Alamein.



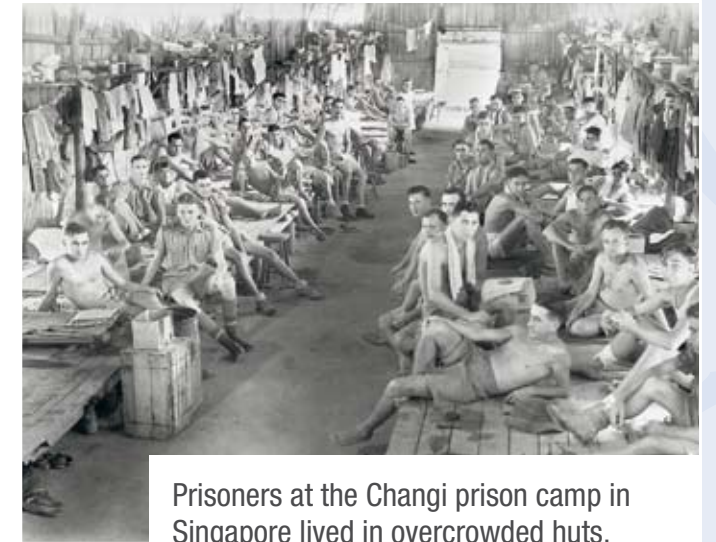
Australian soldiers patrolled the area of Tobruk, in modern-day Libya, in 1941.

Fighting in the Pacific

Australian soldiers faced battles close to home. In December 1941, Japan attacked the British colony of Malaya in South-East Asia and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Australian soldiers and their allies fought battles in Malaya, Singapore, New Britain (off the coast of New Guinea), Ambon, Timor, and Java in the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia).

Prisoners of war

More than 22 000 Australians became Japanese prisoners of war. They were sent to various prisoner-of-war camps, such as Changi in Singapore and Sandakan in Borneo. Prisoners were forced to work on the Thai–Burma Railway and in coalmines in Japan. They were treated badly and caught terrible diseases. Many died.



Prisoners at the Changi prison camp in Singapore lived in overcrowded huts.

Troops on the Kokoda Track

In 1942, Australian troops tried to stop Japanese troops advancing south along the Kokoda Track, a mountain trail in the New Guinea highlands. The soldiers hiked up steep ridges and into deep valleys in torrential rain and high humidity. Many caught tropical diseases such as malaria and more than 4000 died from sickness.



Local Papuan men, nicknamed 'Fuzzy Wuzzies', carried supplies and picked up wounded soldiers along the Kokoda Track.

Battle victories

In 1942, the US navy were victorious over the Japanese in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Shortly afterwards, Australian airmen and land troops were victorious over the Japanese at Milne Bay, in New Guinea.



A Japanese aircraft carrier is bombed during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The end of the war

On 6 August 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The city was destroyed. Three days later, the US dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. On the 14 August 1945, the Japanese surrendered.

Prime Minister Ben Chifley announced to Australians on 15 August 1945, 'Fellow citizens, the war is over'. About one million Australians served in World War II. About 36 000 died and about 30 000 were taken prisoner.

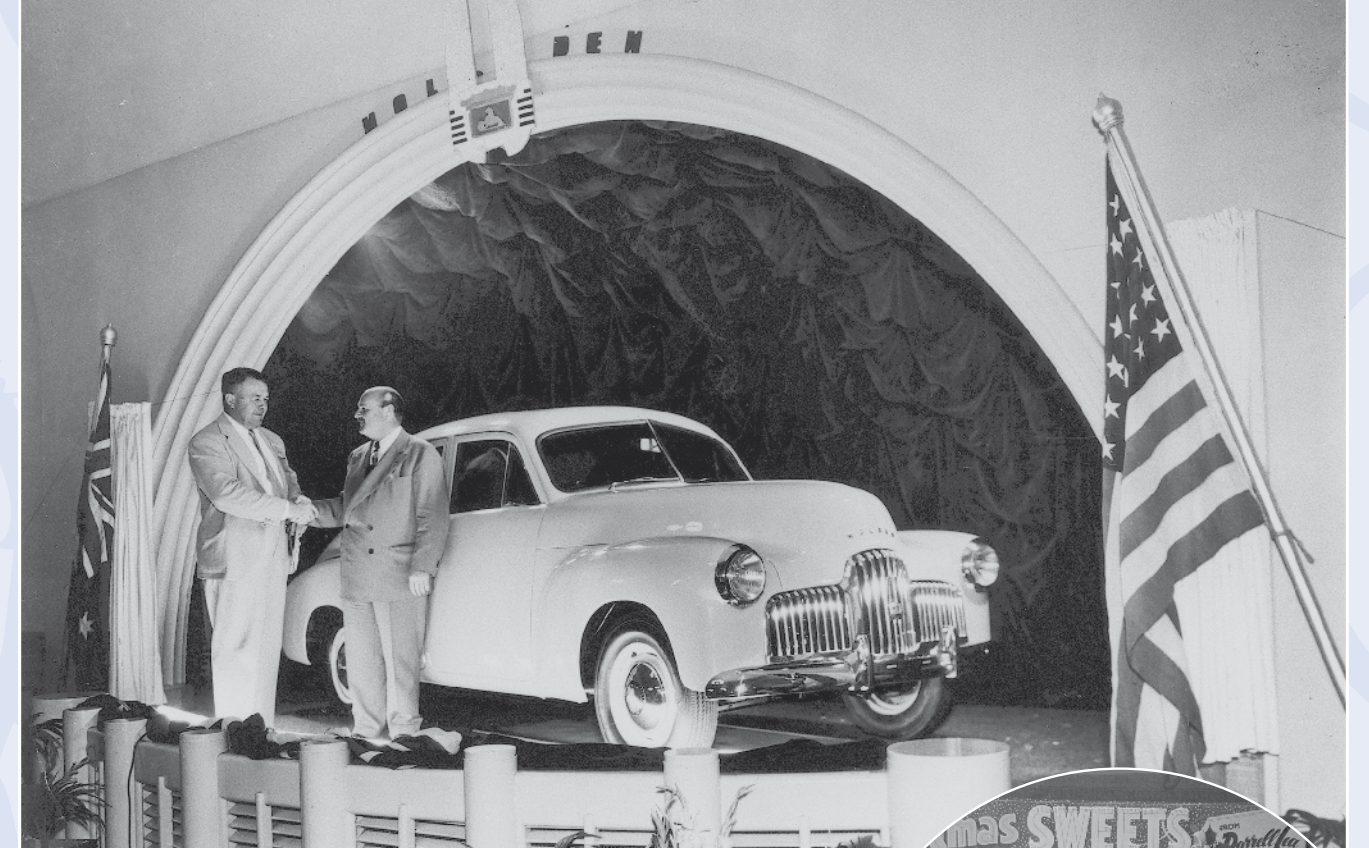
aussie fact

The war in Europe ended months before the war in the Pacific ended. Both events were named and celebrated:

- 8 May 1945 is known as VE (Victory in Europe) Day
- 15 August 1945 is known as VP (Victory in the Pacific) Day. It is also known as VJ (Victory over Japan) Day.



Australians celebrated on VP day, dancing in the streets and throwing streamers.



The FX Holden became the most popular car in Australia.

Looking forward to a better life

Australians looked forward to a better life now that World War II was over. Jobs were found for returned soldiers, and some soldiers settled on the land.

Australia's population began to grow. More schools, hospitals and houses were needed and this meant an increase in employment. People began to have more money to purchase goods.

In the years following World War II, new industries, factories and businesses were established. The Australian economy thrived. In 1948, a new, cheap family car, called the FX Holden, was introduced. It was made in Australia by the American company General Motors. Australia was entering times of growth and wealth.



In the late 1940s, people had more money to spend on goods.

aussie fact

In late 1945, the leaders of the world's nations met in San Francisco, in the United States, and formed the United Nations. All member countries were dedicated to 'the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'.

Post-war growth and immigration

Australia's economy was thriving, but a major growth in population was needed to ensure the future of the country. More people were needed to work in the new industries that were being established.

Migration to Australia

The government began a large-scale immigration program to encourage people to come to Australia. Assisted passage was offered, where a migrant paid about £10 towards their fare to Australia and the government paid the rest. By 1950, almost 200 000 migrants had come to Australia, including **displaced** people from war-torn Europe.

Immigration had great benefits for Australians. The economy was improved by more people buying goods. Manufacturing and business grew. Governments increased health services, education and welfare. Migrants brought skills and new business ideas to Australia.

aussie fact

Like all Australians, migrants pay taxes. Migrants pay more tax than they use through tax-funded services, such as health and welfare services. The extra money that is raised in tax helps the economy grow.



A ship of migrants arrives in Australia in 1947.



Migrant workers built the many tunnels in the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Workers on the Snowy Mountains Scheme

The Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme was developed to generate more electricity for south-east Australia and to provide water for **irrigation**. Construction on the scheme began in 1949 and was completed in 1974. More than 100 000 workers from 30 countries worked on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Melting snow and rain from the Snowy Mountains is diverted through mountain tunnels before passing through power stations to create electricity. Water is then released into the Murray River and the Murrumbidgee River. Thousands of workers were hired to build tunnels through the mountains and dams.

aussie fact

Today, the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme covers over 5124 kilometres. It has 16 major dams, 7 power stations, a pumping station and 225 kilometres of tunnels, pipelines and channels.

Australians in more recent times

Since the 1950s, Australia has grown rapidly due to population increases. New generations contributed to a more modern and uniquely Australian identity.



Betty Cuthbert, a sprinter, won three gold medals for Australia at the Melbourne Olympic Games.

Growing wealthy

During the 1950s, a lot of building and construction took place. More people were able to afford new homes. The arrival of television in 1956 was an exciting event for Australian people. In 1956, the Olympic Games were held in Melbourne.

Iron ore was discovered in the Pilbara region and oil was discovered in Exmouth Gulf off the coast of Western Australia. These natural resources brought great wealth to Australians.

Soldiers sent to the Korean War

In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The United Nations asked its members to defend South Korea. Australia sent over 17 000 soldiers to fight in the war. There were 339 Australian soldiers killed and about 1200 wounded in the war. The war ended in 1953.

Rock'n'rollers

Australian rock'n'roll bands began to do well in the music charts, both locally and overseas. The Easybeats were the first Australian rock'n'roll band to score an international pop hit when they released 'Friday on My Mind' in 1966.



aussie fact

In 1964, British band The Beatles toured Australia. Australian fans were hysterical. Adelaide is famous for an appearance by The Beatles on the balcony of the town hall. They attracted a crowd of 300 000 fans.

Huge crowds of Australian fans turned out to meet the Beatles when they toured in 1964.



This Australian soldier met his son for the first time when he returned from the Vietnam War.

Soldiers sent to the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was fought between **communist** North Vietnam, supported by its communist allies, and South Vietnam, supported by countries such as the United States. Australian soldiers fought in the Vietnam War between 1962 and 1972 to support the United States. Many people were angered about Australia's involvement, especially because **conscripted** soldiers were sent to fight. Large protest marches were held in the late 1960s and early 1970s. About 521 Australians died in Vietnam and 2398 were wounded in battle.

Protesters

The 1970s were full of change in Australia. Protests were held in support of peace, the environment, and equal rights for women and for Indigenous Australians. The influence of American popular culture became widespread in Australia. American films and television programs, music, fashion and fast-food restaurants spread across Australia.



Young women march for women's rights in Melbourne in 1975.

The conservation movement

In the 1980s, people became increasingly concerned about conservation. In Tasmania, the Government wanted to flood the Franklin River and build a dam to produce cheap hydro-electricity. Thousands of people objected and the dam was not built.

Australians in film

Australia's film industry grew in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. *Gallipoli* (1981), directed by Peter Weir, made the actor Mel Gibson famous. *Muriel's Wedding* (1994) launched the careers of Toni Collette and Rachel Griffiths. *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), starring Guy Pearce, remains one of Australia's most well-known films.

The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert was an international success.



Indigenous Australian land rights

In 1985, the Commonwealth Government gave the Anangu people the land rights to Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park. The Anangu granted the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service a 99-year lease on the land.

In 1992, the High Court overturned the theory of *terra nullius*. This was the theory that nobody inhabited Australia in 1788 when the British arrived. The High Court granted land rights to Torres Strait Islander Eddie Mabo for the lands of his ancestors.



Uluru is a sacred site to the Anangu people.

The nation's apology

On 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd formally apologised to Australia's Stolen Generations. The Stolen Generations are the Indigenous Australian children who were removed from their families between the late 1800s and the late 1900s.

aussie fact

Today, Australia has the highest greenhouse gas emissions per person in the world. Water shortages, climate change and pollution affect all Australian people.



Prime Minister Rudd speaks with Lowitja O'Donoghue, a member of the Stolen Generations, after the national apology.

We are all Australian

The Australian identity has been shaped by the people who struggled and worked hard throughout Australia's history. Indigenous Australians, early pioneers, Anzac soldiers and post-war migrants are some of the Australians who helped build the nation.

Australians have had the strength and courage to survive two world wars and the Great Depression. They have protected the environment, succeeded in film and music, and worked towards equal rights for all.



Young and old Australians struggled and worked hard to build today's Australia.

Glossary

allies

countries that join together to fight the same enemy

colonised

built settlements in a country in order to take control of the land

communist

using a system of government in which all property is owned by the people and all business is run by the government

conscripted

forced to join the armed services

depression

time when many businesses close and people lose their jobs

displaced

removed from one's home

diversity

wide range of different types of people or things

economy

the wealth and resources of a nation

exported

sent to another country to be sold

industries

companies and businesses that make goods to sell, often in factories

irrigation

taking of water from a storage area to spread over the land

migrated

moved from one country to live in a new country

parliaments

bodies of elected representatives that make laws

pastoral

related to sheep or cattle farming

patriotic

expressing pride in one's country

pioneers

people who lead the way forward for others

welfare system

system by which the government protects its citizens' health and wellbeing, such as by providing medical care and unemployment payments

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