

# Timeline of Australian history

This is a **timeline of Australian history**, comprising important legal and territorial changes and political events in Australia and its predecessor states. To read about the background to these events, see History of Australia. See also the list of Prime Ministers of Australia.

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## 16th century

Year	Date	Event
<u>1521</u>		Several writers have argued that <u>Portuguese expeditions visited Australia</u> at this time. <sup>[1][2]</sup> However, historians generally disagree and the evidence remains contentious. <sup>[3][4]</sup> (to 1522)

## 17th century

Year	Date	Event
<u>1606</u>	February/March	The Dutch East India Company (VOC) ship <i>Duyfken</i> , under Captain Willem Janszoon, explored the western coast of <u>Cape York Peninsula</u> , near what is now <u>Weipa</u> . This was the first recorded landfall by a European on Australian soil.
	August	Portuguese or Spanish seaman Luís Vaz de Torres sailed through the Torres Strait, between Australia and <u>New Guinea</u> , along the latter's southern coast. Torres reported 'shoals', some of which may have been the northernmost atolls of the Great Barrier Reef.
<u>1616</u>	25 October	Dutch captain Dirk Hartog in the <i>Eendracht</i> made the second recorded landfall by a European, at <u>Dirk Hartog Island</u> on the western coast of Australia. He left a commemorative plate, the <u>Hartog Plate</u> .
<u>1618</u>	July	VOC ship <i>Mauritius</i> under command of Supercargo Willem Janszoon, landed near <u>North West Cape</u> , near the modern town of <u>Exmouth</u> , and named <i>Willem's River</i> , later renamed <u>Ashburton River</u> .
<u>1622</u>	1 May	The English ship <i>Tryall</i> sighted <u>Point Cloates</u> on the west coast of Australia. <sup>[5]</sup>
	25 May	The <i>Tryall</i> was wrecked on <u>Tryal Rocks</u> , northwest of the <u>Montebello Islands</u> , crew spent seven days ashore before sailing a longboat to <u>Bantam</u> in Java – this was the first recorded shipwreck in Australian waters and first extended stay in Australia by Europeans. <sup>[5]</sup>
<u>1623</u>		Dutch captain Jan Carstensz navigated the <u>Gulf of Carpentaria</u> aboard the <i>Pera</i> and <i>Arnhem</i> . The <i>Arnhem</i> crossed the Gulf to reach and name <u>Groote Eylandt</u> .
<u>1629</u>	4 June	VOC ship <i>Batavia</i> wrecked on Houtman Abrolhos, off Geraldton. Mutiny ensued and at least 110 men, women and children were murdered. First European structure in Australia – <u>Wiebbe Hayes Stone Fort</u> on <u>West Wallabi Island</u> .
<u>1642</u>		Dutch explorer Abel Tasman explored the west coast of <u>Tasmania</u> , landed on its east coast and named the island <u>Anthoonij van Diemenslandt</u> .
<u>1656</u>	28 April	In 1656 the Vergulde Draeck struck a submerged coral reef midway between what are now the coastal towns of Seabird and Ledge Point, Western Australia. On board were 193 crew, eight boxes of silver coins worth 78,600 guilders and trade goods to the value of 106,400 guilders. Of the 193 crew, 118 are believed to have perished. The initial 75 survivors, including the ship's captain Pieter Albertszoon, and the under steersman, made it to shore. They had with them the ship's boat, a schuyt, along with a small amount of provisions and stores washed on shore. A number of rescue attempts was conducted by the Dutch East India Company once the loss was reported.
<u>1681</u>		English navigator <u>John Daniel</u> on the <i>New London</i> charted the west coast of Australia, including <u>Rottnest Island</u> and the <u>Wallabi Group</u> of the <u>Houtman Abrolhos</u> .
<u>1688</u>		English explorer <u>William Dampier</u> explored the west coast of Australia.
<u>1696</u>		Dutch explorer <u>Willem de Vlamingh</u> charted the southwestern coast of Australia, making a landfall at <u>Rottnest Island</u> and the site of the present-day city of <u>Perth</u> .

## 18th century

Year	Date	Event
<u>1770</u>		English Lieutenant James Cook's expedition in HMS <i>Endeavour</i> charted the eastern coast, and claimed it for the British Crown. Australia was dubbed "terra nullius" <sup>[6]</sup> i.e., according to the European legal precepts of the era, it was unclaimed by any sovereign nation.
<u>1787</u>	13 May	The First Fleet of 11 ships, led by <u>Governor Arthur Phillip</u> , departed from Great Britain for Australia to begin European colonisation. <sup>[7]</sup>
<u>1788</u>	3 January	Captain Arthur Phillip of the (First Fleet), having decided to sail ahead of the rest of the fleet to prepare for the new settlement, sighted the coast of <u>Van Diemen's Land</u> .
	18 January	At 2:15 pm, the brig HMS <i>Supply</i> anchored on the northern side of <u>Botany Bay</u> . He began exploring the surrounding countryside and made contact with the <u>Aboriginal Australians</u> .
	19 January	In the morning, the transports <i>Alexander</i> , <i>Friendship</i> and <i>Scarborough</i> arrived at Botany Bay, watched by a large number of Indigenous Australians who gathered on <u>Point Solander</u> .
	20 January	The remaining seven ships of the <u>First Fleet</u> , led by HMS <i>Sirius</i> , anchored in Botany Bay.
	21 January	Deciding that Botany Bay was unsuitable for settlement, Captain Arthur Phillip set out with a party in three open boats to seek out another site. He later reported to <u>Lord Sydney</u> , British Secretary of State; "We got into <u>Port Jackson</u> early in the Afternoon, and had the satisfaction of finding the finest harbour in the world, in which a thousand Sail of the line may ride in the most perfect security." He selected a cove with a stream and named it <u>Sydney Cove</u> .
	24 January	The French ships <i>Boussole</i> and <i>Astrolabe</i> commanded by <u>Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse</u> appeared off <u>Botany Bay</u> .
	25 January	Captain Phillip sailed out of Botany Bay aboard the <i>Supply</i> and reached Sydney Cove in the evening.
	26 January	Early in the morning, Captain Phillip took a party ashore at Sydney Cove, raised the British colours and formally proclaimed British sovereignty over New South Wales. This day is now celebrated as <u>Australia Day</u> . In a ceremony at sunset Phillip and the officers drank to the health of the king and the royal family, and success to the new colony. In the meantime, <u>La Perouse</u> entered Botany Bay as the remaining British ships prepared to leave.
	27 January	Convicts disembarked at Sydney Cove and helped clear the ground.
	28 January	17 Wives of marines and 14 children disembarked from <i>Prince of Wales</i> . They were the first women and children to land. The first of the livestock was brought ashore.
	3 February	Rev. <u>Richard Johnson</u> held the colony's first religious service 'on the grass'.
	6 February	The women convicts came ashore. There followed a 'scene of debauchery and riot', accompanied by a violent thunderstorm.
	7 February	The whole party assembled on the west side of Sydney Cove, where the deputy judge-advocate <u>David Collins</u> read the King's commission establishing Phillip's governorship over the colony and the <u>letters patent</u> establishing civil and criminal courts. Phillip addressed the convicts, wishing them 'reformation, happiness, and prosperity, in this new country'.
	11 February	At the first criminal court, Samuel Barnsley was sentenced to 150 lashes for assault and Thomas Hill to confinement in irons on a small rocky island at the head of the cove for stealing bread.
	14 February	Lt. Philip <u>Gidley King</u> sailed with a party of 23 including 15 convicts, in <i>Supply</i> to found a settlement on <u>Norfolk Island</u> , where native flax was to be harvested and others grown.
	17 February	Rev. Johnson celebrated Holy Communion for the first time in the colony, according to the rites of the church of England. The Communion took place in the tent of Lt. <u>Ralph Clark</u> . Lt. <u>Henry Ball</u> , commander of the <i>Supply</i> on its way to Norfolk Island, discovered an island that he named after <u>Admiral Lord Howe</u> .
	27 February	Thomas Barratt was hanged for stealing in stores, the first execution.
	29 February	James Freeman was pardoned for stealing flour, on the condition that he became public executioner.
	2 March	Phillip set out to explore <u>Broken Bay</u> . On this trip he visited and named <u>Pittwater</u> .
	6 March	Lt. King took possession of Norfolk Island. British settlement founded.
	10 March	The two French ships left Botany Bay, and were later wrecked near <u>Santa Cruz</u> (Solomon Islands).
	March	Phillip issued the first government conservation order: that no trees should be cut down within 50 feet (15 metres) of the stream that ran into <u>Sydney Cove</u> .
	26 April	An exploring party led by Phillip sighted and named the <u>Blue Mountains</u> .
	6 May	Following an outbreak of scurvy, HMS <i>Supply</i> sailed for Lord Howe Island to catch turtles to supplement the settlement's meat supply. Having failed to catch any, it returned on 25 May.

	21 May	Aboriginal peoples killed a convict and seriously injured another.
	30 May	The bodies of two <u>rushcutters</u> , William Okey and Samuel Davis, were found pierced with spears and beaten, evidently on reprisal for stealing a canoe belonging to Aboriginals. The next day Phillip led a party to apprehend the murderers, but he was unable to identify them.
	June	Owing to the neglect of the convict who was supposed to look after them, two bulls and four cows strayed from the settlement and were lost.
	5 July	In a despatch to the under-secretary of state, <u>Evan Nepean</u> , Phillip recorded the rations for marines and male convicts. For seven days each received 7 pounds of bread or in lieu thereof 7 pounds of flour, 7 pounds of beef or in lieu thereof pork, 3 pins of pease, 6 ounces of butter, 1 pound of flour or in lieu thereof 12 pounds of rice. The women received two-thirds of this amount and the children generally had one-third although some received as much as the women.
	20 August	Lt. William Bligh in HMS <i>Bounty</i> , en route to Tahiti, anchored at Adventure Bay, Van Diemen's Land. The party planted apple trees, fruit stones and various vegetables before departing on 4 September.
	28 September	Phillip decided to send <u>HMS Sirius</u> to <u>Cape Town</u> for urgently needed food supplies.
	September	The last remaining cow was killed.
	2 November	A party of marines from the <u>New South Wales Marine Corps</u> and 10 convicts left to establish a farming settlement at <u>Rose Hill</u> (Later called <u>Parramatta</u> ).
	19 November	The last two ships of the <u>First Fleet</u> , <u>Golden Grove</u> and <u>Fishburn</u> , sailed for England with despatches and reports.
	11 December	Phillip set out to explore <u>Botany Bay</u> , where he examined the Cook's, George's and Woronora Rivers.
	31 December	Because the Aboriginal Australians could not be coaxed into the settlement, one named <u>Arabanoo</u> was captured and held in confinement. Phillip hoped to learn his language and so to promote good relations between Aboriginal Australians and Europeans.
<u>1790</u>	3–28 June	5 of 6 ships of the beleaguered <u>Second Fleet</u> arrived. The colony was gripped by a food crisis.
<u>1791</u>	9 July	The first ship of the <u>Third Fleet</u> arrived at Sydney Cove.
<u>1792</u>		Two French ships, <u>Recherche</u> and <u>Espérance</u> , anchor at <u>Recherche Bay</u> , near the southernmost point of <u>Tasmania</u> .
		Governor Philip returned to England, accompanied by <u>Bennelong</u> , who became the first Australian-born person to sail to Europe.
<u>1797</u>		<u>Sydney Cove</u> was wrecked and some survivors travelled from Bass Strait to Port Jackson, enabling the rescue of others. This also furthered knowledge of the geography of Australia.
<u>1798</u>		<u>George Bass</u> and <u>Matthew Flinders</u> sailed from Sydney and circumnavigated Tasmania, thus proving it to be an island. (to 1799)

## 19th century