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CHAPTER 1

PRE-HISTORY TO FEDERATION

Early knowledge and discovery of Australia

Pre-history

Humans entered the Australian continent from the South-East Asian area during the last glaciation at least 40,000 years ago, at a time when sea levels were much lower than they are today. Even so, these first migrations would have entailed a sea voyage of some 60 kilometres, making it possibly the world's earliest sea-borne migration. Settlement was well established 25,000 to 30,000 years ago and by 20,000 years ago almost the entire continent was inhabited.

The original Australians lived as hunter-gatherers, using tools of wood, bone, shell and stone. Archaeological evidence indicates, that a simple pan-continental toolmaking tradition existed characterised by stone ware tools; scrapers were used to fashion further tools out of wood. This tradition persisted until 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, at which time a range of more specialised small tools began to emerge. But, in Tasmania, isolated up until 12,000 years ago by the post-glacial rising seas, Aboriginals still maintained the culture of the late Pleistocene period, until subject to the influence of European settlement of the island.

Anthropologists estimate the number of Aboriginals in Australia at 1788 to vary from 250,000 to 300,000, they were divided into some 500 small groups and spoke a variety of languages and dialects. These groups or 'tribes' were further divided into 'bands' or clusters of family groups and formed the basic self-sufficient economic unit. Labour was divided between the sexes: the men hunted while the women foraged for roots and seeds and caught small animals which also formed a basic part of their subsistence. Local groups would congregate when food or water supplies were abundant or when ceremonial obligations demanded. Exchanges of goods at these ceremonial gatherings led to their wide dispersal. Religious and ceremonial activities relating to the land were a vital part of Aboriginal life and evidence suggests, they had developed the use of ochre as a ritual painting material as early as 25,000 years ago.

The physical barriers of distance and aridity within Australia itself, were cause in part, of the cultural isolation and linguistic diversity of its people. European exploration and settlement was for most Aboriginal societies their first contact with an outside culture. The impact of this settlement in those areas where the colonists established themselves, led rapidly to the disappearance of the traditional Aboriginal way of life.

Terra Australis

Although references to an Austral land are found in the works of writers in the early centuries after Christ, and evidence appears in maps, globes, and manuscripts from the Middle Ages onward, there is no definite evidence connecting this *Terra Australis* or southern land, as it was then known, with Australia. However Cornelius Wytfliet's global map of 1597, *see over*, indicates roughly the eastern and western coasts of Australia, as well as the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Early discoveries of Australia

The early maps indicate, that Portuguese mariners under Mendonca chartered part of the Australian east coast between 1521 and 1523. It has been suggested that the Arabs may have come to Australia even earlier, though there is no evidence to support this theory. For most purposes, the coastal exploration of Australia is taken as having begun with the Spaniards and the Dutch.

Discoveries by the Spanish

In 1606 the Spaniard, Quiros, on reaching the island of Espiritu Santo, the largest island of the New Hebrides group, thought he had discovered the great land of the south and therefore named the group *La Australia del Spirit u Santo*, in honor of Philip III of Spain, of the Austrian royal house.

After leaving the New Hebrides, Quiros sailed eastward, and therefore away from Australia, but Torres his second-in-command, took a westerly course and passed through the strait that now bears his name. In all probability Torres sighted the Australian continent, although no mention of it is made in his records.

Discoveries by the Dutch

The map published by Cornelius Wytfliet in 1597 and shown opposite, indicates roughly the eastern and western coast of Australia, as well as the Gulf of Carpentaria. However the Dutch first explored the coastline of Australia when, during 1606, the yacht *Duyfken* under the command of William Jansz having coasted along the southern shores of New Guinea, followed the west coast of Cape York Peninsula as far as Cape Keer-Weer (Turn Again). Subsequent visits were made by Hartog (1616), de Houtman (1619), Carstensz (1623), Thijssen (1627), Pelsaert (1629), Tasman and others (1642). By 1644 the Dutch had discovered and explored the Australian coast from Fowler's Bay in the South, to the tip of Cape York Peninsula, as well as the south of Tasmania.

More detailed information on discoveries by the Dutch can be found in Year Book No. 63.

Discoveries by the English

The English had made their first appearance on the Australian coast in 1688, when the north-westerly shores were visited by William Dampier in the trading vessel *Cygnat*. In 1699 he again visited Australia in command of H.M.S. *Roebuck*. On his return to England, he published an account in which a description was given of trees, flowers, birds, and reptiles he had observed, and of his encounters with the natives.

Up until the end of the seventeenth century, it was not certain if Tasmania and New Zealand were parts of Australia or whether they were separated from it, yet formed part of a great Antarctic Continent. Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook's first voyage, though undertaken primarily for the purpose of observing the transit of Venus from Tahiti had also the objective of ascertaining whether the unexplored part of the southern hemisphere did in fact contain another continent. In command of H.M.S. *Endeavour*, and accompanied by botanist Sir Joseph Banks, naturalist Dr Daniel Solander, astronomer Charles Green, draughtsmen and servants, Cook, after observing the transit of Venus at Tahiti, turned towards New Zealand, sighting that land on 7 October 1769 in the neighbourhood of Poverty Bay.

On 20 April 1770, Cook sighted the Australian mainland at a place he called Point Hicks, naming it after his first-lieutenant, who saw it first. Coasting northwards, on 29 April 1770 he landed at Botany Bay. Cook resumed his voyage and sailed along the coast in a northerly direction for nearly 2,100 kilometres, before striking a coral reef in the vicinity of Trinity Bay where the *Endeavour* was seriously damaged. It was nearly two months before repairs were completed and Cook again set a course to the north through Torres Strait.

Detailed notes on Cook's voyages can be found in Year Book No. 63.

The annexation of Australia

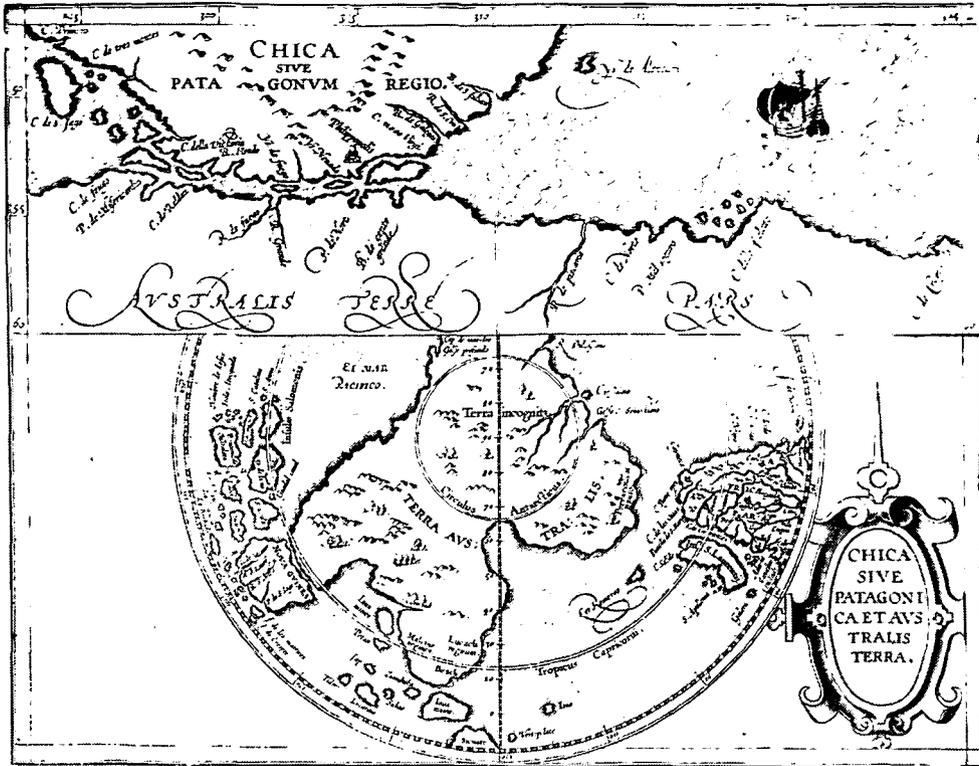
Possession taken of the eastern coast of Australia by Captain Cook

On 22 August 1770, Captain Cook took possession 'of the whole eastern coast, from latitude 38°S, to this place, latitude 10½°S, in right of His Majesty King George the Third', that is, over what now constitutes Victoria, the eastern parts of New South Wales and Queensland.

Annexation of the eastern part of the Australian continent and Tasmania

Formal possession, on behalf of the British Crown, of the whole of the eastern part of the Australian continent and Tasmania was taken on 26 January 1788, when Captain Phillip's commission, first issued to him on 12 October 1786 and amplified on 2 April 1787, was read to the people whom he had brought with him in the 'First Fleet'. The commission appointed Phillip 'Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over our territory called New South Wales, extending from the Northern Cape or extremity of the coast called Cape York, in the latitude of ten degrees thirty-seven minutes south, to the southern extremity of the said territory of New South Wales or South Cape, in the latitude of forty-three degrees thirty-nine minutes south and of all the country inland, westward as far as the one hundred and thirty-fifth degree of east longitude, reckoning from the meridian of Greenwich, including all the islands adjacent in the Pacific Ocean within the latitudes aforesaid of ten degrees thirty-seven minutes south and forty-three degrees thirty-nine minutes south'.

By the middle of 1829, the whole territory, now known as Australia, had been constituted a dependency of the United Kingdom.



AUSTRALIS TERRE PARS

A reproduction of the original, by Cornelius Wytfliet in 1597, held in the Rare Map Section, National Library of Australia. Wytfliet describes the Australis Terre as 'the most southern of all lands' venturing the opinion that 'were it thoroughly explored it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world.' Two hundred years later colonial explorers were to prove his words correct.

PLATE 2

National Library of Australia

The exploration of Australia

Early exploration

From 1788, when Governor Phillip established his colony on the shores of Port Jackson, expeditions began to explore the immediate area of settlement in search of good farming land. Among suitable locations discovered were those just above the head of the Parramatta River, where the settlement of Rose Hill (later Parramatta) was established in November 1788, and the alluvial flats of the Hawkesbury River, which were explored in 1789.

Other minor exploratory journeys in the 1790s and early 1800s included: John Wilson's investigation of various parts of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, Lieutenant John Shortland's discovery of the Hunter River and the future site of Newcastle, and expeditions by Henry Hacking (1794), George Bass (1796), Francis Barrallier (1802) and George Caley (1804) in attempts to penetrate the mountain foothills west of the Nepean River.

After two decades of colonisation, settlement stretched along the east coast from the Hawkesbury River to the cedar forests of Illawarra yet reached barely 65 kilometres inland, where a seemingly impenetrable barrier was presented in the form of the Blue Mountains.

In 1813, Gregory Blaxland, Lieutenant William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth succeeded in finding a route through the mountain range, thereby allowing the later exploratory parties of George William Evans (1813 and 1815), John Oxley (1817 and 1818), Allan Cunningham (1823 and 1827), Hamilton Hume and William Hovell (1824) and others, to open the way for expansion from Port Phillip in the south, to the Darling Downs in the north.

Exploring the eastern rivers and to the south

From 1828 to 1841, exploration of south-eastern Australia was concerned mainly with establishing the existence or not of a large river system emptying into the sea on the south coast.

Between December 1828 and February 1829, an expedition led by Charles Sturt followed the Macquarie River to its meeting with the Darling River, Sturt also explored part of the Castlereagh River. On his next expedition, in 1830, Sturt pieced together more of the network of waterways which make up the Murray-Darling system by following the Murrumbidgee River from Jugiong down to the junction with the Murray, which he then followed as far as Lake Alexandrina and Encounter Bay on the southern coastline. Sturt completed his exploration of the Murray in 1838 by investigating, and charting its upper reaches.

Meanwhile, Captain John MacArthur and others, had discovered that merino sheep were naturally suited to the dry climate of inland Australia. The colony's wool industry flourished, and by 1831, 1,340,000 kilograms of fine wool was being exported annually. As a result of the wool boom, settlers became anxious to push further inland in the search for new pastures.

In three expeditions between 1831 and 1836 Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, explored the Liverpool Plains and discovered the Macintyre River; discovered well-grassed country at the junction of the Darling and Bogan Rivers; explored the Lachlan River to its meeting with the Murrumbidgee River, the Murray to its meeting with the Darling River, and south and south-east of the Murray through the region he called 'Australia Felix' to Discovery Bay on the southern coast.

The push south continued and, in 1838, Angus McMillan discovered a practicable route from Monaro to the southern coastline. In 1840, Paul Edmund de Strzelecki made a journey from the Murrumbidgee River, south to Melbourne, during which he discovered and named Mount Kosciusko.

Exploring the south

In 1831, Captain Collet Barker landed at what was to become Port Adelaide. Later cattle-droving journeys undertaken by Joseph Hawdon, Charles Bonney, Charles Sturt and E. J. Eyre established links between the settlement of Adelaide and other settlements in the east of the state.

In August 1844, Charles Sturt led a sixteen-man expedition from Adelaide into the interior with instructions to investigate a theory that an inland sea existed. After much hardship and near disaster during a period of exceptional heat in the region, Sturt found the channels of Cooper's Creek which formed part of the inland river system of Queensland. However, with the waters drying up rapidly in the November 1845 heat and his health deteriorating, Sturt was forced to retreat, mistakenly declaring the land to be worthless.

Exploring north-eastern Australia

In 1844 Ludwig Leichhardt left Jimbour Station on the Darling Downs, to lead an expedition on an epic 14½ month, 4,800 kilometre journey north and north-west to Port Essington, thereby winning a reputation for opening up large tracts of rich grazing land. In 1848, however, while on another expedition he and his party disappeared without trace, when attempting to cross the continent westwards to Perth. Paradoxically much valuable incidental exploration was carried out when search parties attempted to find them.

Meanwhile, Thomas Mitchell's fourth expedition, in 1846, had failed in its objective to find a river which flowed to the northern coast, but did lead to the opening up of good pastoral country in the Maranoa and Barcoo Rivers regions.

In 1848, E. B. Kennedy was speared to death by local Aboriginals while exploring the interior of Cape York Peninsula from Rockingham Bay to the Cape.

In the mid-to late-1850s, Angus C. Gregory led two expeditions: one, in 1855 across northern Australia in a west-east direction from the mouth of the Victoria River to the east coast at Port Curtis; and the other, in 1858, from the Barcoo River south to Adelaide.

Exploration of what was by then the new colony of Queensland was continued through the 1860s and 1870s by George Dalrymple, Ernest Henry, the Macdonald brothers, William Hann, James Venture Mulligan, R. L. Jack and others, these led to the founding of such towns as Bowen, Rockhampton and Mackay, and the opening up of much valuable farming land.

Across the continent south to north

In the late 1850s and early 1860s, most exploratory interest was concentrated on Central Australia, especially after John McDouall Stuart raised a Union Jack on what he considered to be the geographic centre of the continent Central Mount Stuart, in April 1860. The South Australian Government had previously offered a large reward to the first explorer to cross Australia from south to north.

In August 1860, Robert O'Hara Burke and W. J. Wills set out from Melbourne with a large party to take up the challenge. On 11 February 1861, four expedition members (Burke, Wills, John King and Charles Gray) reached a mangrove swamp on what appeared to be the coast at the Gulf of Carpentaria

(though they could not see the sea). After a succession of sorry incidents, however, Burke, Wills and Gray all died of exposure and starvation while on their return journey.

As in the case of Leichhardt, search parties sent out after Burke and Wills also discovered much valuable land in their own right: John McKinlay led an expedition from Adelaide to the north-east; William Landsborough from the Gulf of Carpentaria southward; and Frederick Walker from Rockhampton to the west.

Meanwhile, John McDouall Stuart had set out from Adelaide on his own expedition across Australia and, in July 1862, reached the sea at Van Diemen Gulf.

Exploring the west

As early as 1697, Willem de Vlamingh of the Dutch ship *Geelvinck*, carried out limited inland exploration on the west coast of Australia in the vicinity of the Swan River. However, the first major inland exploration in the colony of Western Australia took place 130 years later when, in 1827, Edmund Lockyer explored the watershed of the Kalgan River to within about 60 kilometres of its mouth.

In the 1830s, exploration and settlement was directed mainly to the south of the city of Perth (founded in 1829). Among the explorers during this decade were: Ensign Robert Dale, who found the rich agricultural land of the Avon Valley (1830); Lieutenant H. W. Bunbury, who opened the way to rich pastoral flats in the south-west (1836); and Captain George Grey, who discovered the rich hinterland that now serves Geraldton (1839).

In 1848, J. S. Roe, who had also conducted several exploratory journeys in the 1830s, discovered good grazing country while on a 2,900 kilometre York-Pallinup River, Russell Range-Bunbury-Perth trek.

During the 1850s and 1860s the south-west was extensively occupied as far south as Albany and Kojonup, while to the north the Greenough district rapidly developed into the principal wheat-producing region of the State.

Due largely to the efforts of Grey in the 1830s, the Gregory brothers in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, and the Forrest brothers in the 1860s and 1870s, pastoralists were able to gradually push further north and occupy the Murchison, Gascoyne and De Grey districts. By the 1880s, again due largely to exploration by the Forrest brothers, the Kimberley region was also settled.

Exploring the hinterland

In 1875, Ernest Giles set out from Beltana, South Australia, and made a 4,000 kilometre journey to Perth. Two years previous, two other parties, led by Peter Egerton Warburton and W. C. Gosse had explored west from the MacDonnell Ranges to the Oakover River, and from Alice Springs to Perth respectively.

Exploration of the hinterland was continued by W. P. Goddard (1890), J. H. Rowe (1895), A. W. Canning and others into the early twentieth century.

Exploring Tasmania

In 1793 Lieutenant John Hayes, commander of the *Duke of Clarence* expedition sailed up the Derwent River to the foot of Mt Direction from where he proceeded by boat up to the present site of New Norfolk, he became the first explorer to journey more than a few kilometres inland from the coast of Van Diemen's Land (by which name Tasmania was known until 1856). Then, as always, the island's rugged topography hindered any extensive exploration, and it was not until 1807 that Lieutenant Thomas Laycock crossed the island from Port Dalrymple to Hobart.

Much early exploration was carried out either, with the encouragement of Lieutenant-Governor William Sorell (including expeditions aimed primarily at discovering the nature of the west coast and determining its suitability for a future penal settlement), or under the auspices of the Van Diemen's Land Company which fostered efforts to find land suitable for agricultural settlement.

Some of the most noteworthy of Tasmania's early explorers were official surveyors, including John Oxley, G. W. Evans and Thomas Scott who, between 1820 and 1837, examined parts of the east, north-west and west coasts and, no doubt, influenced decisions to establish the infamous penal settlements at Macquarie Harbour (in 1822) and Port Arthur (in 1830).

Between 1820 and 1840 a considerable amount of incidental exploration resulted both from expeditions to round up the remaining Tasmanian Aborigines following the declaration of martial law against them in 1828; and from the personal encouragement by Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Franklin of scientific expeditions to Tasmania in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

During 1840 and 1850, licensed surveyor N. L. Kentish was responsible for opening up the rich pastoral areas between the north-west coast and the high mountains, while Assistant-Surveyor James Scott explored much of the north-east.

The years 1860 and 1870 were marked by a number of exploratory journeys in search of minerals, including those of Charles Gould (1862), who found traces of silver, lead and gold in the Franklin and Gordon Valleys; James Smith (1871), who discovered tin at Mt. Bischoff, destined to become the richest mine of its kind in the world; and C. P. Sprent (1876-77), who found gold, copper, osmiridium and platinum while prospecting between the Arthur and Pieman Rivers.

The establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia

Federation

On 1 January 1901, the colonies, with the exception of New Zealand, were federated under the name of the 'Commonwealth of Australia', the designation of 'Colonies'—except in the case of the Northern Territory, to which the designation 'Territory' applied—being at the same time changed to that of 'States'.

Transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth

On 7 December 1907, the Commonwealth and the State of South Australia entered into an agreement for the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth, subject to approval by the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and the State. This approval was given by the South Australian Parliament under the *Northern Territory Surrender Act, 1907* and by the Commonwealth Parliament under the *Northern Territory Acceptance Act 1910*. The Territory was formally transferred to the Commonwealth on 1 January 1911, and became the Northern Territory of Australia.

By Imperial Order in Council dated 23 July 1931, Ashmore Islands, known as Middle, East and West Islands, and Cartier Island, situated in the Indian Ocean off the north-west coast of Australia, were placed under the authority of the Commonwealth. The islands were accepted by the Commonwealth on 10 May 1934, in the *Ashmore and Cartier Islands Acceptance Act 1933*, under the name of the Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands. The Act authorised the Governor of Western Australia to make ordinances having the force of law in and in relation to the Territory. An amendment to the Act in July 1938 annexed the islands to the Northern Territory, whose laws, ordinances, and regulations, then applied, where applicable. On the attainment of self-government by the Northern Territory on 1 July 1978, the Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands was retained as Commonwealth Territory.

Ashmore Reef is approximately 150 kilometres square. It is situated 350 kilometres off the western coast of Australia, and 850 kilometres west of Darwin. Cartier Island is approximately 9 square kilometres in area (to the limit of the reef), and is situated 290 kilometres off the western coast of Australia, 790 kilometres west of Darwin.

Transfer of the Australian Capital Territory to the Commonwealth

On 18 October 1909, the Commonwealth and the State of New South Wales entered into an agreement for the surrender to and acceptance by the Commonwealth of an area of 2,359 square kilometres as the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth. In December 1909, Acts were passed by the Commonwealth and New South Wales Parliaments approving the agreement, and on 5 December 1910 a proclamation was issued vesting the territory in the Commonwealth on and from 1 January 1911.

By the *Jervis Bay Territory Acceptance Act 1915*, an area of 73 square kilometres at Jervis Bay, surrendered by New South Wales according to an agreement made in 1913, was also accepted by the Commonwealth and was transferred as from 4 September 1915.

Present composition of Australia

In 1973, the total area of Australia and of the individual States and Territories was determined by the Division of National Mapping as 7,682,300 square kilometres. Some historical dates and the present areas of the several States and Territories and of Australia are shown in the following table.

AUSTRALIA: COMPONENT STATES AND TERRITORIES

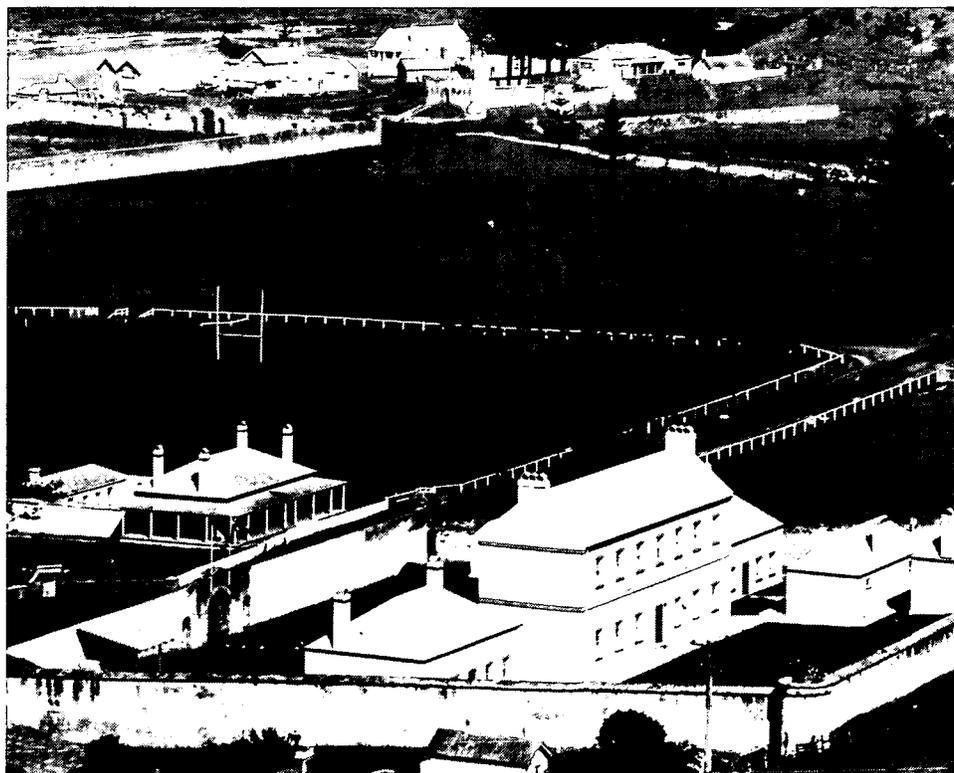
<i>State or Territory</i>	<i>Year of annexation</i>	<i>Year of first permanent settlement</i>	<i>Year of formation into separate Colony or Territory</i>	<i>Year in which responsible government was granted</i>	<i>Present area in km²</i>
New South Wales	1770	1788	1786	1855	801,600
Victoria	1770	1834	1851	1855	227,600
Queensland	1770	1824	1859	(a) 1859	1,727,200
South Australia	1788	1836	1834	1856	984,000
Western Australia	1829	1829	1829	1890	2,525,000
Tasmania	1788	1803	1825	1855	67,800
Northern Territory . . . . .	..	..	(b) 1863	..	1,346,200
Australian Capital Territory . . . . .	..	..	(c) 1911	..	2,400
Australia . . . . .	..	..	..	(d)	7,682,300

(a) As part of New South Wales in 1855; as a separate colony in 1859. (b) Previously part of New South Wales; brought under the jurisdiction of South Australia in 1863; transferred to the Commonwealth in 1911. (c) Previously part of New South Wales. (d) Constituted as from 1 January 1901.

The external Territories of Australia

Norfolk Island

In 1856, Norfolk Island was created a distinct and separate settlement under the jurisdiction of New South Wales. In 1897, it was made a dependency under the Governor of that colony and finally, by the passage of the *Norfolk Island Act 1913*, it was accepted as a Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia. The island is situated in latitude 29° 02' S., longitude 167° 57' E., and comprises an area approximately 36 square kilometres. It served as a penal station from 1788-1813 and from 1825-1855.



The old Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island.

Australian Antarctic Territory

An Imperial Order in Council of 7 February 1933 placed under Australian authority 'all the islands and territories other than Adelie Land which are situated south of the 60° S. latitude and lying between the 160° E. longitude and the 45° E. longitude'.

The Order came into force with a proclamation issued by the Governor-General on 24 August 1936, after the passing of the *Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act 1933* by the Commonwealth Parliament. The boundaries of Adelie Land were definitely fixed by a French Decree of 1 April 1938 as latitude 60° S., longitude 136° E., and longitude 142° E. For map *see* chapter 27 of this Year Book.

Heard and McDonald Islands

Heard Island and the McDonald Islands, approximately 4,100 kilometres south-west of Fremantle, were transferred from United Kingdom to Australian control as from 26 December 1947. Heard Island is approximately 43 kilometres long and 20 kilometres wide, while the McDonald Islands, about 43 kilometres to the west of Heard Island, are small, rocky and precipitous.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands

The *Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act 1955* provided for the acceptance of the Cocos Islands as a Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia and was parallel to an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament transferring authority over the islands to the Commonwealth. On 6 April 1984 the Cocos Malay community, in an Act of Self Determination which took the form of a referendum, observed by the United Nations, chose to integrate with Australia. Day-to-day affairs in the Territory are managed by an Administrator appointed by the Governor-General and responsible to the Minister for Territories and Local Government. The 27 coral islands of the territory have an area of about 14 square kilometres, and are situated in the Indian Ocean in latitude 12° 05' S. and longitude 96° 53' E.

Christmas Island

The *Christmas Island Act 1958* provided for the acceptance of Christmas Island as a Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia. Complementary legislation having been passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, the island was transferred to the Australian administration on 1 October 1958. Day-to-day affairs in the Territory are managed by an Administrator under delegation from the Minister for Territories and Local Government. The area of the island is about 135 square kilometres and it is situated in the Indian Ocean in latitude 10° 25' S. and longitude 105° 40' E.

Coral Sea Islands

The Coral Sea Islands were declared to be a Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia by the *Coral Sea Islands Act 1969*. The scattered reefs and islands, often little more than sandbanks, spread over a sea area of about 1 million square kilometres with only a few square kilometres of actual land area, between the Great Barrier Reef, latitude 12° S. and longitude 157° 10' E. The Minister for Territories and Local Government is responsible for matters affecting the Territory.

More detailed information on Australia's external Territories can be found in Chapter 27, *The Territories of Australia*.

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia

Information regarding the development of the Constitutions of the various Colonies (now States), together with a brief history of the federal movement in Australia, was embodied in this chapter in earlier issues of the Year Book. A complete copy of the revised Constitution is included in Year Book No. 67, pages 2-22.