

This page was added on 03 December 2012 to included the Disclaimer below.
No other amendments were made to this Product

DISCLAIMER

Users are warned that this historic issue of this publication series may contain language or views which, reflecting the authors' attitudes or that of the period in which the item was written, may be considered to be inappropriate or offensive today.

CHAPTER 1

DISCOVERY, COLONISATION AND FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

Early knowledge and discovery of Australia

The following paragraphs contain only a bare outline of the pre-history and of the more important facts relating to the early history of Australian discovery. A more detailed summary of the discovery of Australia may be found in Year Book No. 39 and earlier issues.

Pre-history

Man entered the Australian continent from the South-East Asian area during the last glaciation at least 40,000 years ago, when sea levels were lower than in recent times. Nevertheless, these first migrations would have entailed sea voyages of at least some 60 kilometres. Settlement was well established at least 25,000 to 30,000 years ago, and by 20,000 years ago almost all the continent was inhabited.

The original Australians lived as hunters and gatherers, using tools of wood, bone and stone. The archaeological evidence indicates that originally there was a simple, pan-continental toolmaking tradition characterised by stone core tools and scrapers used to make further tools of wood. This tradition persisted until 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, when a series of new influences became apparent. A range of more specialised and sophisticated small tools was added to the old technology. The dingo, the only animal domesticated by the Aborigines, also entered the continent at this time. These new influences never reached Tasmania, isolated for some 12,000 years by the post-glacial rising seas, where a few thousand Tasmanian Aborigines maintained the culture of the late Pleistocene period until the European settlement of the island.

The Aborigines probably achieved maximum exploitation of local resources within the limits of their technology. Population balance had apparently been attained long before European settlement, and anthropologists accept that there were at least some 250,000 to 300,000 Aborigines in Australia in 1788. They were divided into some 500 small groups, speaking a variety of languages and dialects. These 'tribes' were further divided into 'bands'—families or clusters of family groups—which formed the basic self-sufficient economic unit and ranged within territorial limits. Labour was divided between the sexes: the men hunted while the women foraged for the roots, seeds and small animals which formed a basic part of their subsistence. When abundant food or water supplies were available, or when ceremonial obligations demanded, local groups would congregate; in leaner times they scattered. Ceremonial exchanges of goods at these gatherings led to their wide dispersal. Religious and ceremonial activities related to the land were a vital part of Aboriginal life. There is evidence that they had developed the use of ochre as a ritual painting material as early as 25,000 years ago, while some forms of ritual burial was also practised at this time.

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 led rapidly to the disappearance of the traditional Aboriginal way of life in those areas where the colonists established themselves most successfully.

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 so-called *Terra Australis* with Australia. Cornelius Wytfliet's map of 1597, however, indicates roughly the eastern and western coasts of Australia, as well as the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Early discoveries of Australia

The Portuguese may have discovered part of the Australian coast before 1542, and it has been suggested that the Arabs may have come to Australia even earlier, though there is no evidence to support this theory. For all practical purposes, however, the coastal exploration of Australia may be taken as having begun with the Spaniards and the Dutch.

Discoveries by the Spanish

In 1606 the Spaniard, Quiros, on reaching the island that has retained the name 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 Spiritu Santo*. After leaving the New Hebrides, Quiros sailed eastward, but Torres, his second-in-command, took a westerly course and passed through the strait that now bears his name. In all probability he sighted the Australian continent, although no mention of it is made in his records.

Discoveries by the Dutch

A map published by Cornelius Wyfliet in 1597 had indicated roughly the eastern and western coast of Australia, as well as the Gulf of Carpentaria. In his *Descriptionis Ptolemaicae Augmentum*, Wyfliet wrote:

“The *Australis Terra* is the most southern of all lands. It is separated from New Guinea by a narrow strait. Its shores are hitherto but little known, since after one voyage and another, that route has been deserted and seldom is the country visited, unless when sailors are driven there by storms. The *Australis Terra* begins at one or two degrees from the equator, and is maintained by some to be so great in extent that, if it were thoroughly explored it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world”.

The Dutch first explored the coast of Australia when, during 1606, the yacht *Duyfken* 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).

In 1616, Dirk Hartog sailed the ship, *Eendracht*, along the west coast of Australia between latitudes 26° and 22° south. At a point now called Cape Inscription, on Dirk Hartog Island, Hartog set up a post to which was attached a common pewter plate inscribed with a record of his visit.

In 1618, the *Zeewolf* found land in latitude 20° 15' south, and a party from the *Mauritius* landed on a peninsula shown on later charts as Cloates Island on the western side of the present Exmouth Gulf. In the following year, Frederik de Houtman discovered the reefs and islands off the west coast now known as Houtman Rocks (or Houtman's Abrolhos, a Portuguese term meaning, literally “eye-opener”).

The voyage of the ship *Leeuwin* in 1622 made known the coast from Cape Leeuwin to Cape Gantheaume. In 1623, an expedition under Jan Carstenz set out in the yachts *Arnhem* and *Pera* to check on the findings of the *Duyfken* some seventeen years earlier. The Carstenz expedition discovered that part of the Northern Territory now known as Arnhem Land, and sailed along the Gulf of Carpentaria which it so named in compliment to Pieter de Carpentier, Governor of the Indies.

In 1627, the ship *Gulden Seepaart* under the command of Francois Thijssen, cruised along the south coast of Australia now known as the Great Australian Bight, and the following year, Gerrit de Witt, commander of the *Vyanen* discovered land on the north west in about latitude 21° south.

In 1629, the *Batavia*, commanded by Francois Pelsaert, was wrecked on the Abrolhos reef. Pelsaert and some of the crew set out in a long-boat in an epic voyage to Djakarta to seek help for the remainder of the crew. He was the first to carry to Europe an authentic account of the west coast, which he described in the most unfavourable terms.

In 1642 Abel Janszoon Tasman set out from Batavia to ascertain the extent of the great southern continent. He named Van Diemen's Land (changed to Tasmania in 1856), imagining it to be part of Australia proper, and, sailing north-easterly, discovered New Zealand before returning to Batavia. In his second voyage in 1644, Tasman visited the northern coast of Australia, sailing around the Gulf of Carpentaria and along the north-west coast as far south as the Tropic of Capricorn. This voyage of Tasman's may be said to have ended the period of Dutch discoveries, although there were subsequent visits by the Dutch to Australia (de Vlamingh in 1696 and Van Delft in 1705). Even so, 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.

Discoveries by the English

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

At the end of the seventeenth century it was uncertain whether Tasmania and New Zealand were parts of Australia or whether they were separated from it but themselves formed part of a great Antarctic Continent. Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook's first voyage, though undertaken primarily for the purpose of observing from Tahiti the transit of Venus, had also the objective of ascertaining

whether the unexplored part of the southern hemisphere was only an immense mass of water or whether it contained 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. Circumnavigating the North and South Islands, he proved that New Zealand was connected neither with the supposed Antarctic Continent nor with Australia, and took formal possession of it in the name of the British Crown.

Discovery of Australia by Captain Cook

On 20 April 1770 Cook sighted the Australian mainland at a place he called Point Hicks, naming it after his first-lieutenant, who first saw it. Coasting northwards, on 29 April 1770 he discovered Botany Bay, where he landed. Cook sailed along the coast in a northerly direction for nearly 2,100 kilometres until 11 June 1770, when the *Endeavour* was seriously damaged by striking a coral reef in the vicinity of Trinity Bay. Repairs occupied nearly two months, and the *Endeavour* then again set her course to the north, sailing through Torres Strait and eventually anchoring in the Downs on 13 July 1771. In 1772 Cook was put in command of the ships *Resolution* and *Adventure* with a view to ascertaining whether a great southern continent existed. Having satisfied himself that, even if it did, it lay so far to the south as to be useless for trade and settlement, he returned to England in 1774. Cook's last voyage was undertaken in 1776. He met his death on 14 February 1779, by which date practically the whole coast of Australia had been explored. The only remaining discovery of importance, the existence of a channel between the present State of Tasmania and the mainland of Australia, was made by Bass and Flinders in 1798.

The annexation of Australia

Possession taken of eastern coast of Australia by Captain Cook

Although representatives of the nations mentioned in the previous section landed or claimed to have landed on the shores of Australia on various occasions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was not until 22 August 1770† that the history of Australia was brought into definite political connection with western civilisation. It was on that date that 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', i.e. over only what are now the eastern parts of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Annexation of eastern part of 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 not taken until 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'.

Extension of New South Wales westward

On 17 February 1824 Earl Bathurst notified Sir Thomas Brisbane that he had recommended to His Majesty the dispatch of a ship of war to the north-west coast of New Holland for the purpose of taking possession of the coast between the western coast of Bathurst Island and the eastern side of Coburg Peninsula. Captain James J. Gordon Bremer of H.M.S. *Tamar*, who was selected for the purpose, took possession on 20 September 1824 of the coast from the 135th to the 129th degree of east longitude. On 16 July 1825 the whole territory between those boundaries was described in Darling's commission as being within the boundaries of New South Wales.

Annexation of Western Australia

Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling, then Governor of New South Wales, sent an expedition under Major Lockyer to found a settlement at King George Sound. The expedition sailed from Sydney on 9 November 1826, landed at the Sound on 26 December following, and on 21 January 1827

† In all issues up to Year Book No. 56 this date was incorrectly shown as 23 August 1770.

hoisted the British flag. Captain Stirling, in command of H.M.S. *Success*, arrived at Sydney a few weeks after the departure of the expedition to King George Sound. He obtained the Governor's permission to visit Swan River with a view to seizing a position on the western coast and reporting upon its suitability as a place of settlement. Captain Stirling left Sydney on 17 January 1827 and, on his return in the following April, submitted a glowing report on what he described as a 'rich and romantic country', urging its occupation for the purpose of settlement. He left for England in July 1827, continuing his advocacy—notwithstanding much discouragement—with unabated enthusiasm. He was at last successful, the result being due mainly to the formation of an association of prospective settlers having capital at their disposal. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor and with a party of settlers arrived at Garden Island, near the Swan River, in the ship *Parmelia* in June 1829. On the second of the preceding month, Captain Fremantle, in command of H.M.S. *Challenger*, arrived and hoisted the British flag on the south head of Swan River, again asserting possession of 'all that part of New Holland which is not included within the Territory of New South Wales'. Thus, before the middle of 1829, the whole territory now known as Australia had been constituted a dependency of the United Kingdom.

The creation of the several Colonies

New South Wales

In Governor Phillip's commission of 1786, the mainland of Australia was divided by the 135th meridian of east longitude into two parts. The earliest colonists believed that the present State of Tasmania was actually joined to the mainland, and it was not until 1798 that the contrary was known. In that year Bass and Flinders proved that it was an island by sailing through Bass Strait. The territory of New South Wales as originally constituted consisted of 4,103,568 square kilometres, including Van Diemen's Land (67,897 square kilometres) and New Zealand (269,003 square kilometres), the latter being included although Cook's annexation was not properly given effect to until 1840. A further area of 1,341,971 square kilometres was added in 1825 when the western boundary was extended to 129th east meridian. The territory was subsequently reduced by the separation of various areas to form the other colonies, and at the time of the establishment of the Commonwealth the area of New South Wales was 803,863 square kilometres. Following the transfer of the Australian Capital Territory and an area at Jervis Bay to the Commonwealth in 1911 and 1915 respectively, the area was further reduced to 801,431 square kilometres.

Lord Howe Island, which is a dependency of New South Wales and for political purposes is included in one of the electorates of Sydney, is situated in latitude 31° 32' south, longitude 159° 05' east (about 800 kilometres east-north-east of Sydney) and has an area of 1,625 hectares.

Tasmania

Van Diemen's Land, first settled in 1803, was politically separated from New South Wales and constituted a separate colony on 14 June 1825. The area of the colony was 67,897 square kilometres. The name of the colony was officially changed to Tasmania in 1856 when responsible government was established. Following a re-survey of local government areas, the area of Tasmania was determined at 68,332 square kilometres at the end of 1964.

Macquarie Island, about 1,550 kilometres south-east of Hobart, together with a few rocky islets nearby, has been a part of Tasmania since the nineteenth century. In December 1911 five members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition landed on the island and remained there until 1915. On 3 March 1948 another party was landed to man a new station which has since been maintained as a scientific base. The island is about 33 kilometres long and 6 kilometres wide.

Western Australia

The territory westward of the 129th meridian, comprising 2,527,633 square kilometres, was constituted a colony under the name of Western Australia in June 1829. It was always distinct and independent of New South Wales, except for the settlement on King George Sound (*see* page 3), which remained under the jurisdiction of New South Wales until 1831.

South Australia

On 15 August 1834 the Act 4 and 5 William IV., cap. 95, was passed, creating South Australia a 'province'. Settlement took place towards the end of 1836. The first Governor, Captain Hindmarsh, R.N., arrived at Holdfast Bay on 28 December 1836, and on the same day the new colony was officially proclaimed. The new colony embraced 802,511 square kilometres of territory, lying south of the 26th parallel of south latitude and between the 141st* and 132nd meridians of east longitude.

* The actual surveyed boundary between South Australia and Victoria is at 140° 58' east longitude.

On 10 December 1861, by authority of the Imperial Act 24 and 25 Vict., cap. 44, the western boundary of South Australia was extended to coincide with the eastern boundary of Western Australia, namely the 129th east meridian. The area of the extension was approximately 181,870 square kilometres. On 6 July 1863, the Northern Territory, comprising 1,356,176 square kilometres, was brought under the jurisdiction of South Australia, which thereupon controlled an area of 2,340,557 square kilometres. The Territory was transferred to the Commonwealth on 1 January 1911 (*see below*). Following a re-survey of the Northern Territory notified in 1964, the area was reduced by 8,651 square kilometres.

New Zealand

Although Captain Cook had taken possession of the North Island of New Zealand in November 1769 and of the South Island in January 1770, it is doubtful whether, at the time Captain Phillip's commission was drawn up, New Zealand was considered as one of the 'islands adjacent in the Pacific Ocean' (*see page 4*). The fact that under the Supreme Court Act (Imperial) of 1823 British residents in New Zealand were brought under the jurisdiction of the Court at Sydney, and that in 1839 there was a proposal on the part of the British Government to appoint a consul in New Zealand, leaves this an open question, as nothing more than extra-territorial jurisdiction may have been intended. New Zealand does not appear to have become British territory unequivocally until 1840, when Captain Hobson arrived at the Bay of Islands and, on 30 January, read his commissions which extended the boundaries of the Colony of New South Wales so as to embrace and comprehend the islands of New Zealand. In February 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi, made with the native chiefs, was signed. Finally, on 21 May 1840, British sovereignty over the islands of New Zealand was explicitly proclaimed. New Zealand remained a dependency of New South Wales until, by letters patent of 16 November 1840, it was constituted a separate colony under the powers of the Act 3 and 4 Vict., cap. 62, of 7 August 1840. Proclamation of the separation was made on 3 May 1841.

Victoria

In 1851 the 'Port Phillip District' of New South Wales was constituted the colony of Victoria, 'bounded on the north and north-west by a straight line drawn from Cape Howe to the nearest source of the River Murray, and thence by the course of that river to the eastern boundary of the colony of South Australia'. The area of the new colony was 227,620 square kilometres, and its separate existence took effect from 1 July 1851.

Queensland

The northern squatting districts of Moreton, Darling Downs, Burnett, Wide Bay, Maranoa, Leichhardt, and Port Curtis, together with the reputed county of Stanley, were granted an independent administration and formed into a distinct colony under the name of Queensland by letters patent dated 6 June 1859, although separation from New South Wales was not completed until 10 December of the same year. The territory comprised by the new colony was 'so much of the colony of New South Wales as lies northwards of a line commencing on the sea-coast at Point Danger in latitude about 28° 8' south, running westward along the Macpherson and Dividing Ranges and the Dumaresq River to the MacIntyre River, thence downward to the 29th parallel of South latitude, and following that parallel westerly to the 141st meridian of east longitude, which is the eastern boundary of South Australia, together with all the adjacent islands, their members, and appurtenances in the Pacific Ocean'. The area of the colony thus constituted was 1,435,637 square kilometres. By letters patent dated 13 March 1861, forwarded by the Colonial Secretary to the Governor of Queensland on 12 April 1862, the area of Queensland was increased by the annexation of 'so much of the colony of New South Wales as lies to the northward of the 26th parallel of south latitude, and between 141st and 138th meridians of east longitude, together with all the adjacent islands, their members, and appurtenances, in the Gulf of Carpentaria'. With this addition the area of Queensland became 1,736,595 square kilometres. Following a thorough revision of the area of each local government area of Queensland, based on the most recent maps available, the Surveyor-General in 1958 determined the area of Queensland as 1,727,530 square kilometres—a reduction of 9,065 square kilometres from the area previously determined.

The establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia

Federation

On 1 January 1901 the colonies mentioned, 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, wherever applicable, thereupon applied.

The area of Ashmore Reef is approximately 150 square kilometres (to the limit of the reef), and 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 and 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 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 below.

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. Later, in 1896, 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° 03' S., longitude 167° 57' E., and comprises an area approximately 36 square kilometres.

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 60th degree of South Latitude and lying between the 160th degree of East Longitude and the 45th degree of East 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.

Heard and McDonald Islands

Heard Island and the McDonald Islands, all about 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. Consequent on the passing of these Acts, Her Majesty, by Order in Council, specified 23 November 1955 as the date of transfer. From that date the islands came under Australian administration. Day to day affairs in the Territory are managed by an Administrator under delegation from the Minister for Home Affairs. 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 Home Affairs. The area of the island is about 140 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 Home Affairs is responsible for matters affecting the Territory.

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 issues of the Year Book up to and including No. 22. A complete copy of the revised Constitution is included in Year Book No. 62, pages 7-24.

