

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 2 — Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

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Why Britain founded colonies in Australia

VC2HH10K08

VC2HH10K08.E02

VC2HH10K08.E03

Scope note: this section teaches the content description as set out in the notice at the front of this book. Matters listed in that notice are outside this section and are not assessed here.

In 1770, no British colony existed anywhere near Australia. By 1836 there were five settlements around the coast, most of them full of convicts. This section asks the historian's question about that change: **why?** Not one "why" — several causes pushed Britain to establish colonies here, and your job is to find them, rank them and back them with evidence.

Theory

Part 1 — A prison problem at home: the need for penal colonies

By the 1770s Britain had a growing punishment problem. Courts sent people who broke the law to two kinds of place: gaols at home, and colonies overseas. For decades, tens of thousands of convicts had been sent to the American colonies. Then came the American War of Independence (1775–1783). The American colonies won their independence, and **transportation** — the sentence of being sent overseas as a punishment — to America stopped.

The result was a pile-up of people. Convicts who would once have been sent to America now stayed in England. Gaols overflowed. Old war ships, called **hulks**, were moored on the Thames as floating prisons under the Hulks Act of 1776, and conditions on them were brutal — disease spread fast in the crowded dark.

Pressure for a fix came from two directions at once:

- **Reformers**, like John Howard, whose book *The State of the Prisons* (1777) described the filth and cruelty of the gaols and argued for proper prisons built on work and discipline. Parliament passed the Penitentiary Act in 1779, planning two large prisons — but they were never built, because they were expensive and politicians quarrelled over them.
- **Judges and ministers**, who still had to deal with every person the courts sentenced. English law carried the death penalty for over 200 offences, mostly against property. Juries and judges often softened it: many death sentences were changed to transportation instead. But with America closed, transportation had nowhere to go.

So by the mid-1780s the government faced a forcing problem: it needed somewhere to send convicts, quickly and cheaply. A House of Commons committee inquired into the problem in 1785, and in August 1786 the Home Secretary, Lord Sydney, announced the answer: a colony at Botany Bay in New South Wales.

The road to the colonies — key events, 1770 to 1836

The founding causes and events of the British colonies in Australia



Figure 1. The road to the colonies — key events, 1770 to 1836.

Part 2 — Economic factors: what Britain hoped to gain

A prison colony 24,000 kilometres away looked like a strange choice — until you look at what Britain hoped the place would pay for. The Royal Navy was the biggest buyer in the British economy, and it needed two things it could not grow at home: **timber** for masts and spars, and **flax** for rope and sails. Britain's old flax supply from the Baltic could be cut off in any war.

Joseph Banks — the naturalist who had sailed with Cook in 1770 and was now president of the Royal Society — told the 1785 committee that Botany Bay could supply both, plus a harbour useful to trade. Other hoped-for profits were named too:

- a port on the east coast that could serve the **China trade** in tea and silk;
- the **whale fishery** of the southern oceans, which British ships already worked;
- new land and new markets for British goods.

Historians argue about how serious these hopes were. Some say the economic plans were mostly a cover story for dumping convicts. Others point out that ministers wrote about flax, timber and trade in their official letters again and again — people do not keep repeating a cover story for years. Either way, economic factors are part of the cause story the curriculum names, and you must be able to use them in a ranking.

Four families of causes

From VC2HH10K08.E02 — the four families of causes: competition with other powers · economic factors · what the Industrial Revolution changed · the need for penal colonies

1 · Overflowing prisons — the penal crisis • After 1776, convicts could no longer be sent to America. • Gaols and hulks overflowed; disease spread through them. • Over 200 offences carried the death penalty, but most death sentences were reduced to transportation instead. • Sending convicts to a distant colony looked cheap and made escape almost impossible. Key people: John Howard (prison reformer) · Lord Sydney (Home Secretary)	2 · Trade and naval stores — economic factors • The Royal Navy needed timber for masts and flax for rope and sails. • Banks told parliament that Botany Bay could supply flax and timber and offered a useful harbour. • A port on the east coast would help the China trade in tea and silk. • The southern whale fishery was another hoped-for profit. Key people: Joseph Banks (naturalist; president of the Royal Society)
3 · Industry changes Britain — the Industrial Revolution • The population grew and towns filled faster than work did (see Section 1A). • More poverty meant more property crime — and more convictions. • Factories wanted raw materials and new markets for their goods. • Industry's growth pushed on every cause in this section, slowly but for decades. Links to Section 1A: what made the modern world	4 · Watching France — competition with other powers • French ships explored the Pacific: La Pérouse reached Botany Bay in January 1788; Baudin surveyed the south coast in 1802. • Britain feared a rival base on the sea route to India and China. • A colony at Botany Bay would secure that route before anyone else arrived. Key people: Captain Arthur Phillip (first governor)

Figure 2. Four families of causes, from VC2HH10K08.E02.

Part 3 — Effects of the Industrial Revolution

Section 1A of this book teaches the Industrial Revolution itself. Here you need its **impacts** on this story, and they are mostly slow, background ones:

- Britain's population grew fast, and towns filled faster than work did, so poverty and homelessness grew in the cities.
- More poverty meant more theft of property — and English law punished theft harshly — so convictions rose and the prison pile-up of Part 1 got worse.
- Factories wanted **raw materials** from far away and **markets** to sell to, which sharpened interest in ports and trade routes across the world.

Notice the kind of cause this is. The prison crisis (Part 1) forced a decision *now*. The Industrial Revolution did not force anything in 1786 — it pushed slowly for decades, making the prison problem bigger and the trade prizes sharper. Historians call this a **long-term cause**, and ranking causes means noticing that different causes work on different clocks.

Part 4 — Competition with other powers: watching France

Britain was not the only European power in the Pacific. French ships were exploring the same oceans:

- **La Pérouse** sailed two French ships into Botany Bay in January 1788 — days after the British arrived — on a voyage of exploration that Britain watched closely.
- **Baudin** surveyed parts of the south coast in 1802, and his charts renewed British worry a few years later.

Why did this matter? The sea route from Europe to India and China was the richest trade route Britain had, and a rival base on that route was a threat in any future war. Establishing a colony meant a flag, a garrison and a harbour that no rival could take. This is a **strategic** cause — to do with the safety of trade routes and defence — and it helps explain both *where* colonies were placed (on harbours and sea routes) and *when* (quickly, before a rival could land first).

Part 5 — The 1786 decision: three options on the table

In 1785–86 the British government genuinely compared options. A good historian can state each option's strongest case before choosing between them:

- **Build prisons at home.** The reformers' case: convicts' labour would stay in Britain, and discipline and work could change people instead of burying them on the other side of the world. Its weakness: it was slow and expensive, and the Penitentiary Act's two prisons had still never been built nine years after the law passed.
- **A settlement in Africa.** The committee's case: closer than Australia, so cheaper to supply. Both the Gambia river and Das Voltas Bay on the south-west African coast were studied. Its weakness: an inspection in 1786 judged Das Voltas Bay dry, barren and unhealthy, and the idea died.
- **Botany Bay.** The case that won: it could start quickly and cheaply; it had a reported good harbour on a valuable trade route; it promised flax and timber; and escape from there was almost impossible. Its weakness: it was half a world away, supply ships would take about eight months each way, and almost nothing was truly known about the soil or climate.

Lord Sydney chose Botany Bay and announced it in August 1786. Captain Arthur Phillip was appointed governor of the new colony.

The 1786 decision — three options on the table

Each option had real arguments for and against — the strongest case won

A · Build prisons at home	B · A settlement in Africa	C · Botany Bay, New South Wales
For: keeps convicts' labour in Britain; reformers argued that discipline and work could change people. Against: slow and expensive — the Penitentiary Act's two prisons had never been built. Backed by: reformers such as John Howard; Jeremy Bentham argued the same case in print from 1791.	For: closer than Australia; the Gambia river and Das Voltas Bay were both studied. Against: a 1786 inspection judged Das Voltas Bay dry, barren and unhealthy. Outcome: the idea was dropped before the final decision.	For: cheap to start; a useful harbour on the trade route; hopes of flax and timber; escape almost impossible. Against: half a world away; supply ships took about eight months; the soil and climate were unknown. Outcome: chosen — announced by Lord Sydney in August 1786.
Decision: Lord Sydney announces Botany Bay in August 1786. Arthur Phillip is appointed governor. The First Fleet sails in May 1787.		

Historians still argue about which cause mattered most — your ranking task uses Figure 3.

Figure 3. The 1786 decision — three options on the table.

Which cause was *most* significant? That is an interpretation, and the curriculum wants you to make one and defend it (E02). Here is one defensible ranking with reasons — study the reasons as much as the order.

A worked ranking — which causes mattered most?

One defensible ranking with reasons, modelling VC2HH10K08.E02

Rank	Cause	Why it ranks here
1	The penal crisis	The forcing factor: by 1786 the government had to act, and act fast. Without the prison problem there was no plan at all.
2	Competition with other powers	Shaped the choice of place and timing: a harbour on the route to India and China, secured before France could move.
3	Economic hopes	Made the plan attractive — flax, timber, trade — but much of this promise never came true in the first years.
4	The Industrial Revolution	The long, slow background cause: a growing population, poverty and property crime, and factories needing raw materials and markets.

Ranking is interpretation, not fact — the skill is in the reasons you give. A different ranking with strong reasons earns the same marks (Section 8C teaches significance formally).

Figure 4. A worked ranking of the causes, modelling VC2HH10K08.E02.

Part 6 — From decision to settlement: the First Fleet

The decision of 1786 became eleven ships. The **First Fleet** — two naval escorts, six convict transports and three store ships — left Portsmouth on 13 May 1787 carrying about 1,500 people: more than 700 convicts, over 200 marines and their families, plus officers, officials and crew.

The First Fleet — eleven ships, one task

Left Portsmouth on 13 May 1787, carrying convicts, marines and supplies to Botany Bay



People on board: about 1,500 — more than 700 convicts, over 200 marines and their families, officers, officials and crew.

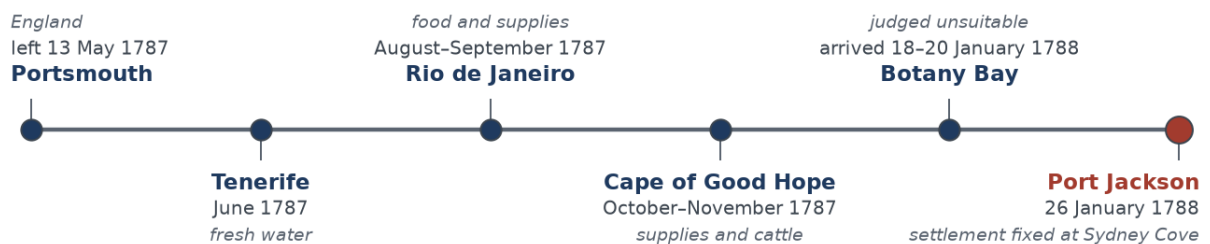
Ship roles and names after Watkin Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay (London: Debrett, 1789); people on board after Mollie Gillen, The Founders of Australia (Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1989) and John Cobley, The Crimes of the First Fleet Convicts (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1989).

Figure 5. The First Fleet — eleven ships, one task.

The route shows the cause story in miniature: the fleet called at Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope to take on water, food and cattle, then ran the long southern crossing to Botany Bay, arriving between 18 and 20 January 1788 — about eight months and about 24,000 kilometres after leaving England.

The voyage out — about eight months, about 24,000 kilometres

The First Fleet's route, 13 May 1787 to 26 January 1788



The fleet reprovisioned at each stop: water, food, cattle and stores for the final run across the Southern Ocean.

Route and dates from the fleet's shipboard logs and journals, as recorded in Watkin Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay (London: Debrett, 1789).

Figure 6. The voyage out — about eight months, about 24,000 kilometres.

Botany Bay, when Phillip saw it, was shallow, open and poor of soil and water. He examined Port Jackson a few kilometres north and moved the fleet there. At Sydney Cove in Port Jackson, on 26 January 1788, the colony of New South Wales began. Days later, La Pérouse's French ships appeared at Botany Bay — a small event that makes the strategic cause of Part 4 very easy to picture.

Part 7 — The colonies spread: types, locations, reasons

New South Wales was the first colony, but not the last. Over the next fifty years Britain established more settlements around the coast, and they were not all the same kind. A **penal colony** exists chiefly to hold convicts; a **military post** exists chiefly to plant a flag and guard a route; a **free settlement** is planned for settlers who pay their own way.

Where the colonies began — 1788 to 1836

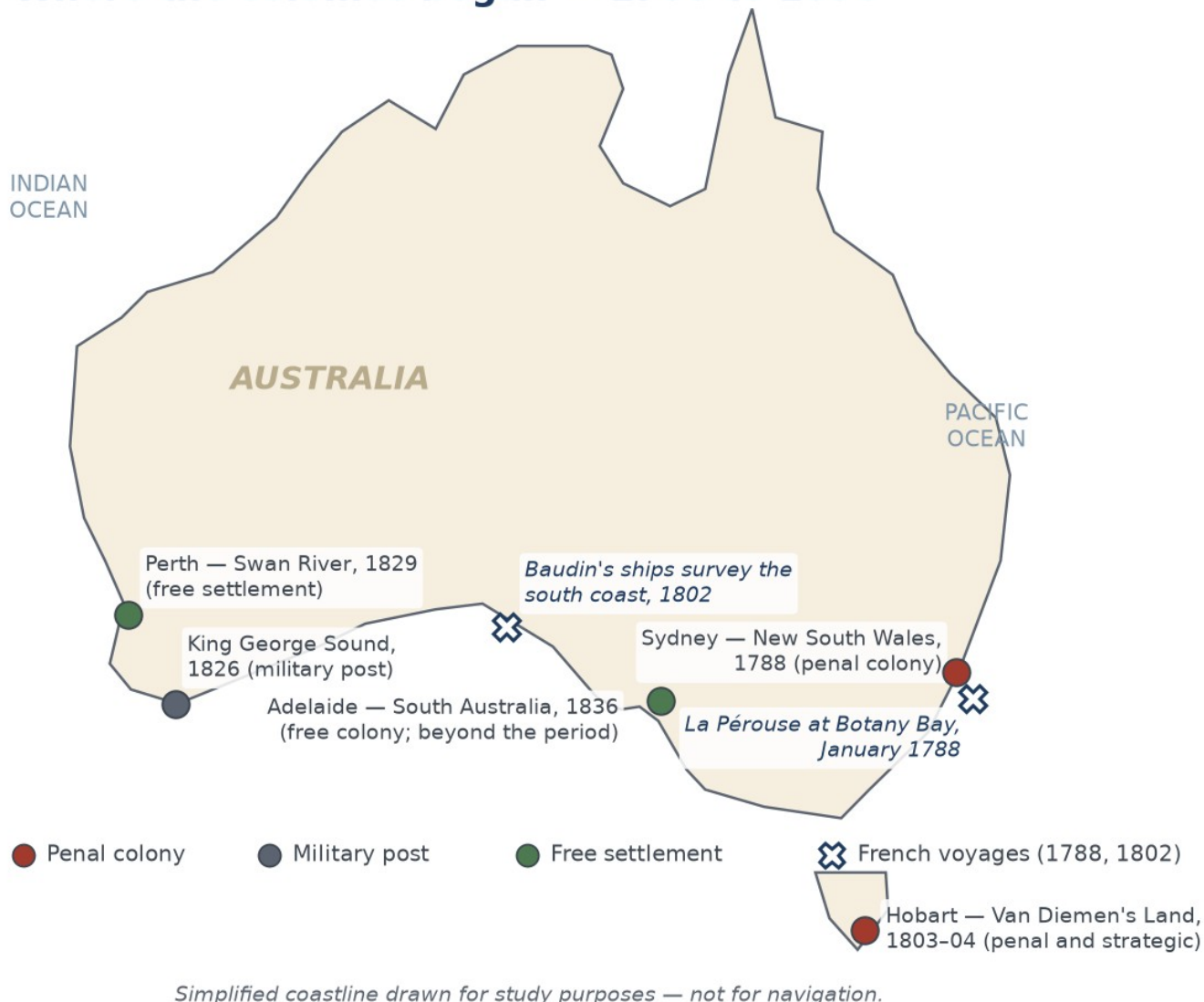


Figure 7. Where the colonies began — 1788 to 1836. Simplified coastline drawn for study purposes.

- **Van Diemen's Land (1803–04).** A small party landed at Risdon Cove near today's Hobart, and a second group followed in 1804. The reasons were strategic and penal at once: French ships had been surveying the south coast, and Britain wanted the southern sea route secured — and it needed another place for convicts as New South Wales filled. Van Diemen's Land became a separate colony with its own government in 1825.
- **King George Sound (1826).** A military post on the south-west coast, near today's Albany, established to block a possible French claim before one could be made.
- **Swan River (1829).** A free settlement at today's Perth: the plan was to attract settlers with grants of land, and settlers brought their own money and labour. No convicts were intended.
- **South Australia (1836).** A free colony at Adelaide, founded on a scheme called “systematic colonisation”: land sold to pay for free migrants, and no convict labour. Its proclamation in December 1836 sits just past the 1700s and early 1800s that this section covers — it is shown so you can see the whole pattern.

E03 wants you to hold this pattern in a table: type, location, reasons — **and the evidence behind each interpretation.** A claim without evidence is an opinion. Study the model table below, including the last column, before you build your own.

The colonies at a glance — a model table

Modelling VC2HH10K08.E03: types, locations, reasons — and the evidence behind each interpretation

Colony (year)	Type	Location	Reasons for establishment	Evidence
New South Wales (1788)	Penal colony	Sydney Cove, Port Jackson	Overflow of convicts at home; a strong harbour on the trade route; hopes of flax and timber.	Phillip's dispatch, 15 May 1788 (Source B); Tench's narrative, 1789.
Van Diemen's Land (1803–04; separate colony 1825)	Penal and strategic	Hobart (first Risdon Cove)	Secure the southern sea route after French ships surveyed the coast; a second place for convicts.	David Collins, <i>An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales</i> , Vol. 2 (1802).
King George Sound (1826)	Military post	Near today's Albany, south-west coast	Block a French claim before it could happen; guard ships passing to the east.	Lockyer's report to Governor Darling, 1827 (NSW Colonial Secretary's correspondence).
Swan River (1829)	Free settlement	Perth, west coast	Land grants to attract settlers who brought money and labour; British trade interests.	Stirling's letters; the colony's founding charter, 1829.
South Australia (1836)	Free colony (beyond the period)	Adelaide	'Systematic colonisation': land sold to pay for free migrants; no convicts.	South Australia Act 1834; the proclamation at Glenelg, 28 December 1836.

Use this table as a model: for each colony, find one primary or secondary source and say what it shows. South Australia (1836) sits just past the 1700s-to-early-1800s window and is shown for completeness.

Figure 8. The colonies at a glance — a model table, modelling VC2HH10K08.E03.

Part 8 — How we know: primary and secondary sources

Everything in this section rests on two kinds of source. A **primary source** was made at the time by someone who was there — a journal, a dispatch, a ship's log, an official record. A **secondary source** was made later, usually by a historian, using primary sources — a history book, a scholarly edition of journals.

Two sources anchor this section, and both appear in the source task at the end:

- **Source A** (Figure 9) is Captain James Cook's journal entry of 22 August 1770, in which he claimed the east coast for King George III and named it New South Wales. It is the legal claim Britain leaned on in 1788.
- **Source B** (Figure 10) is Governor Arthur Phillip's first dispatch to Lord Sydney, written from Sydney Cove on 15 May 1788 — an official report from the man on the spot to the minister who sent him.

When you use a source, always ask the same three questions: *What kind of source is it? Who was it made for, and why? What does it actually show?* A source can be biased and still useful. Phillip wanted his bosses to think well of the colony — that is bias — and his dispatch is still the best evidence we have of why Port Jackson was chosen over Botany Bay.

Contested and stipulated terms. *Colony* and *colonisation* are terms the Victorian Curriculum uses but does not define. In this book they are used as **stipulated** subject terms: a *colony* is a territory that Britain settled and ruled from far away, and *colonisation* is the process by which Britain established those colonies. These words carry strong feelings and wider debates; those debates are covered by the notice at the front of this book and are not part of this section. Inside this section's scope there is still a live, contested question — *which cause mattered most?* — on which historians genuinely disagree. Penal-crisis historians point to the 1785–86 paperwork, which is full of gaols and hulks and reads like an emergency. Strategic and economic historians point to the places chosen and the timing, which track trade routes and French ships. Both cases can be defended with evidence: what marks good history is the reasoning, not the conclusion you land on.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — Ranking the causes (E02)

Task: “Rank the four causes from VC2HH10K08.E02 in order of significance and explain your ranking.” Use Figures 2 and 4.

Working	Comment
Step 1: List the four causes named by the curriculum: the need for penal colonies; economic factors; effects of the Industrial Revolution; competition with other powers.	Start from the curriculum’s list so nothing is missed. Listing is not ranking — no marks yet.
Step 2: Rank the penal crisis first. Reason: without America closing in 1776–83, there is no crisis, no 1785 committee, and no August 1786 announcement. The cause that forces the decision to exist at all ranks first.	A rank earns marks only through its reason. “It forced the decision” is a reason; “it seems most important” is not.
Step 3: Rank competition with other powers second. Reason: it shaped <i>where</i> and <i>when</i> — a harbour on the route to India and China, claimed before France could act. La Pérouse arriving days after the fleet shows the race was real.	Notice the reason names evidence (La Pérouse, 1788), not just opinion.
Step 4: Rank economic hopes third, and concede the counter: much of the flax, timber and trade promise failed in the first years, which suggests ministers did not expect real profit quickly.	Conceding the other side’s best point makes your ranking stronger, not weaker.
Step 5: Rank the Industrial Revolution fourth. Reason: a long, slow background cause that made the prison problem and the trade prizes bigger, but forced nothing in 1786.	Different causes run on different clocks — say which clock each cause runs on.

Worked example 2 — Analysing Source B (E03)

Task: “What does Source B show about the reasons for establishing the colony at Port Jackson, and how useful is it as evidence?” Use Figure 10.

Working	Comment
Step 1: Classify the source. A dispatch written by Governor Phillip at Sydney Cove on 15 May 1788, four months after the landing. Made at the time, by the person in charge: a primary source , and an official one.	“Primary/secondary” must be justified with <i>when</i> and <i>by whom</i> , not just labelled.
Step 2: Identify audience and purpose. It is a report to Lord Sydney, the minister who sent him. Purpose: to explain what he did and to make the venture look well judged.	Purpose is where bias lives. An official report wants good news.
Step 3: Extract the evidence. Phillip judged Botany Bay unsuitable and moved the ships; he calls Port Jackson “the finest harbour in the world, in which a thousand sail of the fleet might ride in the most perfect security”. This is direct evidence of a strategic and economic reason: a harbour safe enough for a thousand ships is a naval and trade prize.	Quote the exact words that carry the point — “a thousand sail ... in the most perfect security” — and name which cause family they support.
Step 4: Judge usefulness with a limitation attached. Highly useful: the man on the spot, writing within months, on the official record. Limited: he is reporting to his own boss, so he has every reason to praise his own choice. Useful and biased at once — which is normal for	Never write “biased, therefore useless”. Write <i>what it is useful for</i> and <i>what you would check against another source</i> .

primary sources.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

1. Look at Figure 1. (a) Name the two events on the timeline that show transportation to America ending and its immediate effect. (b) Which theme colour on the timeline do those events belong to, and which theme do the 1826 and 1829 events belong to?
2. Figure 2 shows four families of causes. Match each of these pieces of evidence to the family it best supports: (a) “flax and timber for the navy”; (b) “hulks overflowing on the Thames”; (c) “French ships surveying the south coast in 1802”; (d) “towns filling faster than work did”.
3. Using Figure 5, state how many ships of each kind made up the First Fleet, and using Figure 6, list the three ports where the fleet took on supplies.
4. Figure 7 shows five settlements. For King George Sound and Swan River, state the *type* of each colony and one reason for its establishment.
5. Figure 3 gives each 1786 option a “for” and an “against”. State the strongest “against” point for the Africa option, and explain why it killed that option.
6. Figure 4 ranks the Industrial Revolution fourth. In one or two sentences, explain the reason given for that rank, using the words *long-term cause*.

Un scaffolded

7. “Which two causes of Britain’s decision to found colonies in Australia matter most, and why?” Write a short paragraph: two ranks, each with a reason and one piece of supporting evidence from this section. (E02)
8. A classmate says: “The whole Botany Bay decision was just a dumping scheme for convicts — the trade and strategy talk was decoration.” Write the strongest case you can for the *opposite* view (that strategic and economic causes genuinely drove the decision), then say which view you find more convincing and why. You will be marked on the strength of your reasoning, not on which side you choose.
9. Using Figures 7 and 8, identify one thing that *changed* and one thing that *stayed the same* in the types of colonies Britain established between 1788 and 1829.
10. Cook’s claim in Source A was made in 1770, eighteen years before the colony began. Explain one way Source A helps explain the causes of 1788, and one reason a historian would not rely on it alone.

Source task

Study Source A (Figure 9) and Source B (Figure 10), then answer the questions that follow.

Source A — Captain James Cook's journal, 22 August 1770
“...I once more hoisted English Coulers and in the Name of His Majesty King George the Third took possession of the whole Eastern Coast from the above Latitude down to this place by the name of New South Wales, together with all the Bays, Harbours, Rivers and Islands situate upon the said Coast...” <i>James Cook, journal entry, Possession Island, 22 August 1770; in J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, Vol. I (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1955). Spelling as in the original.</i>
Cook wrote this at the end of his first voyage. This claim was the legal base Britain acted on in 1788.

Figure 9. Source A — Captain James Cook's journal, 22 August 1770.

Source B — Governor Arthur Phillip's first dispatch to Lord Sydney, 15 May 1788
“[The fleet reached Botany Bay between 18 and 20 January 1788. Phillip judged the bay unsuitable and moved the ships to Port Jackson.] ...the finest harbour in the world, in which a thousand sail of the fleet might ride in the most perfect security...” <i>Arthur Phillip, first dispatch to Lord Sydney, Sydney Cove, 15 May 1788; reproduced in Historical Records of New South Wales, Vol. 1, Part 2 (Sydney: Government Printer, 1892). Original held in Colonial Office records (CO 201), The National Archives (UK).</i>
Phillip wrote this official report to the minister who sent him, four months after the landing.

Figure 10. Source B — Governor Arthur Phillip's first dispatch, 15 May 1788.

- S1. Classify each source as primary or secondary, justifying each answer with *when* it was made and *by whom*.
- S2. Source B names one feature of Port Jackson above all others. Identify it and state which cause family from Figure 2 (economic factors / penal need / industry / competition with other powers) it best supports, with a one-line reason.
- S3. Complete one row of an E03-style table for the colony of New South Wales: type of colony; location; two reasons for establishment; and for each reason, the evidence you would cite from Source A or Source B.

Answers

1.
 - (a) The American War of Independence (1775–1783) ends transportation to America; the Hulks Act (1776) puts convicts on floating prison ships as the immediate effect. (b) The first two belong to “government decisions” (the war) and “punishment and reform” (the Hulks Act); the 1826 and 1829 events belong to “colonies take shape”.
2.
 - (a) Trade and naval stores — economic factors. (b) Overflowing prisons — the penal crisis. (c) Watching France — competition with other powers. (d) Industry changes Britain — the Industrial Revolution.
3. Two naval escorts, six convict transports, three store ships. Supplies were taken on at Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope.
4. King George Sound: a military post, established to block a possible French claim and guard the sea route. Swan River: a free settlement, established to attract self-paying settlers with land grants.
5. The 1786 inspection judged Das Voltas Bay dry, barren and unhealthy. An option whose site fails inspection cannot go ahead, so the Africa plan was dropped before the final decision.
6. The Industrial Revolution is ranked fourth because it was a long-term cause: it grew the population, the poverty and the property crime that filled the prisons, and sharpened interest in raw materials and markets, but it forced no decision in 1786 itself.
7. Answers will vary. A strong answer ranks two causes (most often the penal crisis and either strategy or economics), gives a reason for each rank (“forced the decision” / “chose the place and timing”), and attaches evidence (e.g. the Hulks Act and the 1786 announcement for the penal crisis; La Pérouse in 1788 or Phillip’s harbour praise for strategy).
8. Answers will vary. The steelman should be genuinely strong: the places chosen were harbours on the India–China route; the timing tracks French voyages; ministers’ official letters repeat flax, timber and trade for years, which a mere cover story would not do; and a pure dumping scheme would not have sent marines, surveyors and store ships of seed and cattle. The choice between views must then be justified on reasoning.
9. Changed: the *type* of colony broadened — from penal (1788) to include military posts (1826) and free settlements (1829). Stayed the same: every site was chosen for a harbour or a sea route — coastal, strategic placement continued throughout.
10. It helps because it is the legal claim of ownership of the east coast that Britain acted on in 1788 — without it there was no claimed right to settle. A historian would not rely on it alone because it is one man’s claim, made in 1770 for a British audience, eighteen years before anyone acted on it; it needs to be checked against the 1785–88 records of the actual decision. S1. Both are primary. Source A: a journal entry made by Cook on 22 August 1770, at the time and on the spot. Source B: an official dispatch written by Governor Phillip at Sydney Cove on 15 May 1788, four months after the landing. S2. The harbour — “the finest harbour in the world”, safe for “a thousand sail”. It best supports competition with other powers / strategy (a naval prize on a trade route), and secondarily economic factors (trade needs safe harbours); the reason is that a harbour that size is valuable to navies and merchant fleets, not to prison discipline. S3. Type: penal colony. Location: Sydney Cove, Port Jackson. Reason 1: relief of the convict overflow at home — evidence: the 1786 announcement followed the hulks crisis (context from this section; Source B shows convicts landed and settled). Reason 2: a strategic harbour on the trade route — evidence: Source B’s “finest harbour in the world ... most perfect security”.

Full solutions

Question 7 — a model paragraph. Step 1: Choose the two causes to rank. The penal crisis and competition with other powers are the pair with the sharpest evidence. Step 2: Rank 1 — the penal crisis. Reason: it made the decision urgent and unavoidable; with America closed after 1783, gaols and hulks overflowed and the government announced the Botany Bay plan in August 1786 as a direct fix. Evidence: the Hulks Act of 1776 and the 1785 House of Commons committee. Step 3: Rank 2 — competition with other powers. Reason: it chose the place and the timing; Botany Bay sat on the route to India and China and had to be claimed before France could. Evidence: La Pérouse at Botany Bay in January 1788 and Baudin on the south coast in 1802, and the later garrison at King George Sound (1826) planted for the same reason. Step 4: Concede and close. Economic hopes mattered but mostly failed early, and industry worked slowly in the background — which is exactly why they rank below the two causes above.

Question 8 — a model steelman. Step 1: State the opposite view in full. Strategic and economic causes were real drivers, not decoration. Step 2: Argue it at full strength. (i) Place: every settlement chosen was a harbour or a sea-route point — Sydney, Hobart, King George Sound, Swan River — which is what strategy predicts, not what a dumping scheme predicts. (ii) Timing: British moves track French voyages — Phillip lands weeks before La Pérouse is seen, and 1802–03 French surveying is followed by the 1803 Van Diemen’s Land landing. (iii) Paperwork: ministers’ official letters repeat flax, timber, trade and the China route for years; a cover story is not usually maintained in private official correspondence. (iv) The fleet itself carried marines, surveyors and store ships of seed and stock — the kit of a colony meant to last and trade, not of a prison dump. Step 3: Choose and justify. A convict-first answer can still win by pointing out that no option was chosen until the prisons forced action in 1786 — but it must concede points (ii)–(iv). Marks go to the reasoning on both sides.

Question 9 — a model answer. Step 1: Change — type. 1788 begins with a penal colony; by 1829 Britain has also planted a military post (King George Sound, 1826) and a free settlement (Swan River, 1829), so the *purposes* of colonies widened. Step 2: Continuity — placement. Every colony sat on the coast at a harbour or a strait, chosen for ships and sea routes; that strategic, coastal logic is identical from Sydney Cove to Perth. Step 3: Tie to the big idea. Causes changed in mix but the strategic thread is a continuity across the whole period.

Question 10 — a model answer. Step 1: The help. Source A is the claim of possession of the east coast “in the Name of His Majesty King George the Third” — the legal base Britain pointed to in 1788, so it explains why Britain felt entitled to settle New South Wales. Step 2: The limit. It is a single British voice, written for a British record in 1770, eighteen years before the decision; a claim is not a cause, and the real causes live in the 1785–88 records (committee evidence, Sydney’s announcement, Phillip’s instructions). Step 3: The method point. Historians use primary sources in *conversations* with each other — Source A with the 1785–86 paperwork — never alone.

Source task — model responses. S1. Step 1: Source A was made on 22 August 1770 by James Cook, the person who did the thing described → primary. Step 2: Source B was made on 15 May 1788 by Arthur Phillip, the governor on the spot, within months of the events → primary. Step 3: A secondary source would be a later historian’s account built from such records — neither source is that. S2. Step 1: The feature is the harbour and its security for shipping. Step 2: It best supports competition with other powers (strategy): a harbour safe for a thousand warships is a naval prize on the route to India and China. Step 3: Secondly it supports economic factors, because merchant trade needs the same safe water. S3. Step 1: Type — penal colony; location — Sydney Cove, Port Jackson. Step 2: Reason 1, the convict overflow, evidenced by the 1786 announcement that followed the hulks crisis and by Source B’s account of convicts landed and settled. Step 3: Reason 2, the strategic harbour, evidenced by Source B’s “finest harbour in the world ... in the most perfect security”. Step 4: Check — each reason has a named piece of evidence, which is exactly what E03 requires.

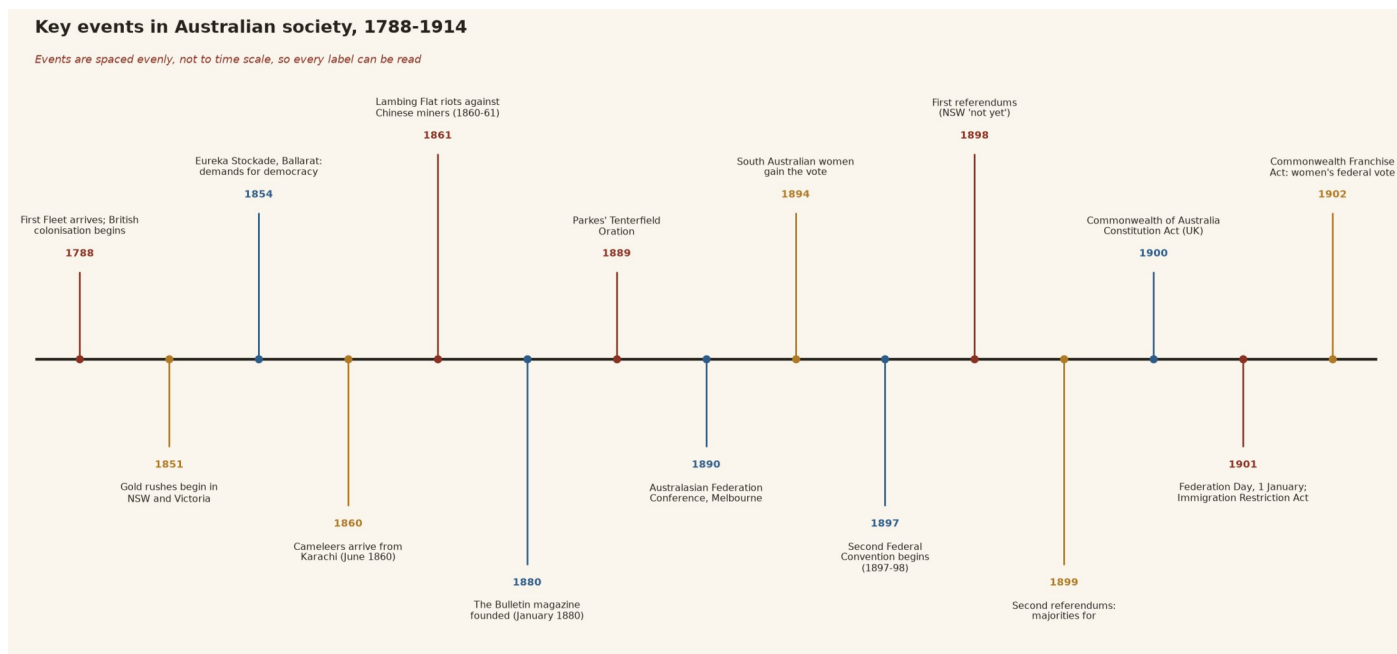
Australia 1750–1914: what stayed, what changed

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K09. Elaborations drawn on: .E03 (the curriculum’s one First Nations mention inside this elaboration is removed under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1, and the elaboration is taught through the other groups it names), .E04, .E05, .E06.

Scope note (§2A). Two of this description’s six elaborations are excluded under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content) and are recorded in this build’s §2A register, reported as ACCEPTED in the coverage audit and never silently dropped: .E01 (colonisation in Torres Strait and the pearling industry of the 1870s) and .E02 (Victorian frontier violence, for example the Eumeralla Wars). They are not taught in this book. This section teaches the remaining elaborations — the neutral remainder of the content description.

The words we must define first. This section keeps returning to two measuring words: **continuity** (what stays the same across a stretch of time) and **change** (what does not). The content description adds three more: an **event** is something that happens at a place on a date — a speech, a vote, a proclamation; an **idea** is a belief about how things are or should be — the idea of one Australian people, the idea that women should vote; a **movement** is a group of people who organise over years to push one change — the women’s suffrage movement, the movement to federate the colonies. A **group** is any set of people who share a position in society — Chinese migrants, cameleers, the working class, a church.

The section is also built on a handful of political words you will meet constantly, so here they are up front. **Federation** is the joining of the six separate British colonies into one nation, the Commonwealth of Australia, on 1 January 1901. A **constitution** is the basic law that sets out how a nation is governed. A **convention** is a meeting of delegates chosen to draft that constitution. A **referendum** is a vote in which the whole electorate decides a single yes-or-no question. The **franchise** is who is allowed to vote — **suffrage** means the same thing, and “winning the vote” means being admitted to the franchise. **Democracy** is government in which power rests with the people, exercised through voting and elected parliaments. **Egalitarianism** is the belief that people are of equal worth and should have equal rights and chances. Figure 1 lays the whole period out so you always know where you are.



Timeline of key events in Australian society, 1788 to 1914, evenly spaced rather than to time scale and alternating above and below a horizontal line: the First Fleet arrives and British colonisation begins 1788; the gold rushes begin in New South Wales and Victoria 1851; the Eureka Stockade at Ballarat makes demands for democracy 1854; cameleers arrive from Karachi June 1860; the Lambing Flat riots against Chinese miners 1860 to 1861; The Bulletin magazine founded January 1880; Parkes' Tenterfield Oration 1889; the Australasian Federation Conference in Melbourne 1890; South Australian women win the vote 1894; the second Federal Constitutional Convention begins 1897 to 1898; the first referendums with New South Wales not yet 1898; the second referendums return majorities for 1899; the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of the United Kingdom 1900; Federation Day 1 January and the Immigration Restriction Act 1901; the Commonwealth Franchise Act gives women the federal vote 1902

Figure 1. The road through this section. Events are spaced evenly, not to time scale, so the busy 1889–1902 decade stays readable. Notice how much of the change crowds into the last fifteen years.

Part 1 — Who built colonial Australia? The contribution of different groups (E03)

Between 1750 and 1914 Australian society was not built by one kind of person. It was built by many groups, each contributing in different ways, and the interaction between them is one of the engines of the section's continuity and change. Figure 2 sets the groups out with dated evidence.

Who built colonial Australia? Groups and their contributions (E03)

Every group below shaped what continued and what changed, 1750-1914

Group	Contribution to colonial society	Evidence (sourced)
Local-born colonists	First generations born in the colonies developed a distinct Australian identity and pushed for self-government and a wider franchise.	Eureka demands (1854); Australian Natives' Association (1871) for the Australian-born
Migrant groups: Chinese	Worked the goldfields from 1851; later ran businesses and industries in Melbourne and Sydney; faced restriction laws from 1855 and violence at Lambing Flat (1860-61).	11,493 Chinese arrivals at Melbourne in 1855; business leaders Mei Quong Tart, Lowe Kong Meng
Migrant groups: cameleers	Carried wool and goods through the inland; helped build the Overland Telegraph Line (finished 1872) and the railway later called the Ghan; supplied water and outback transport.	At least 15,000 camels with their handlers 1870-1900; cameleers Dost Mahomed and Esa Khan
Social classes	Wealthy pastoralists ('squatters') and a growing working class clashed over wages and conditions; workers organised unions, struck in 1890-94, then entered parliaments.	Australian Workers' Union formed 1894; its leader W. G. Spence elected to federal parliament 1901
Religious groups	Churches built schools, hospitals and charities; the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) organised for women's suffrage; some clergy criticised racist laws.	First WCTU formed Sydney 1882; Cardinal Moran called anti-Chinese laws 'un-Christian'
Differences in regions	The colonies had different economies - wool, gold, farming - and argued over customs duties and where the new capital should sit.	The 1899 premiers' bargain: capital in NSW at least 100 miles from Sydney; tariff revenue shared

Table titled *Who built colonial Australia*, with three columns — *Group*, *Contribution to colonial society*, and *Evidence (sourced)* — and six rows: *local-born colonists*; *migrant groups, Chinese*; *migrant groups, cameleers*; *social classes*; *religious groups*; and *differences between regions*, each with a short statement of its contribution and a dated example of evidence

Figure 2. Six groups and what each contributed. This is the brainstorm .E03 asks for, taught through the groups the elaboration names once its one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander referent is removed (§2A).

Read the table for the pattern, not just the rows. Three things stand out.

First, contribution and treatment did not match. Chinese migrants worked the goldfields from 1851 and later built businesses, yet they faced restrictive laws from 1855 and violence at Lambing Flat in 1860–61. The cameleers carried wool and supplies through the inland and helped build the Overland Telegraph Line (finished 1872) and the railway later called the Ghan — work no one else could do — yet they too were shut out by later migration laws. A group can build a society and still be treated as an outsider. Keep that tension in mind; it returns when we reach the ‘White Australia’ ideal in Part 2.

Second, class shaped politics. Wealthy pastoralists — often called **squatters**, the term used for those who ran large sheep and cattle runs — clashed with a growing working class over wages and conditions. Workers formed unions, struck in 1890–1894, and then took their cause into parliaments. That is a clear change: industrial conflict becoming political organisation.

Third, the colonies were different from one another — different economies (wool, gold, farming), different sizes, different interests — and those regional differences made Federation hard, because each colony had to give something up to join. Section 2C looks at the lived experiences and perspectives of these arrivals in depth; here we keep our eye on what each group contributed to continuity and change.

Part 2 — Why federate? The factors (E04)

By the 1880s the six colonies each ran their own British-style parliament, but they were also drifting toward a shared problem: they were six small populations on one big continent, watched by rival empires. Figure 3 sets out the six factors .E04 names.

Why federate? Six factors that pushed the colonies to unite (E04)

Each factor was a real argument made by real colonists in the 1880s and 1890s

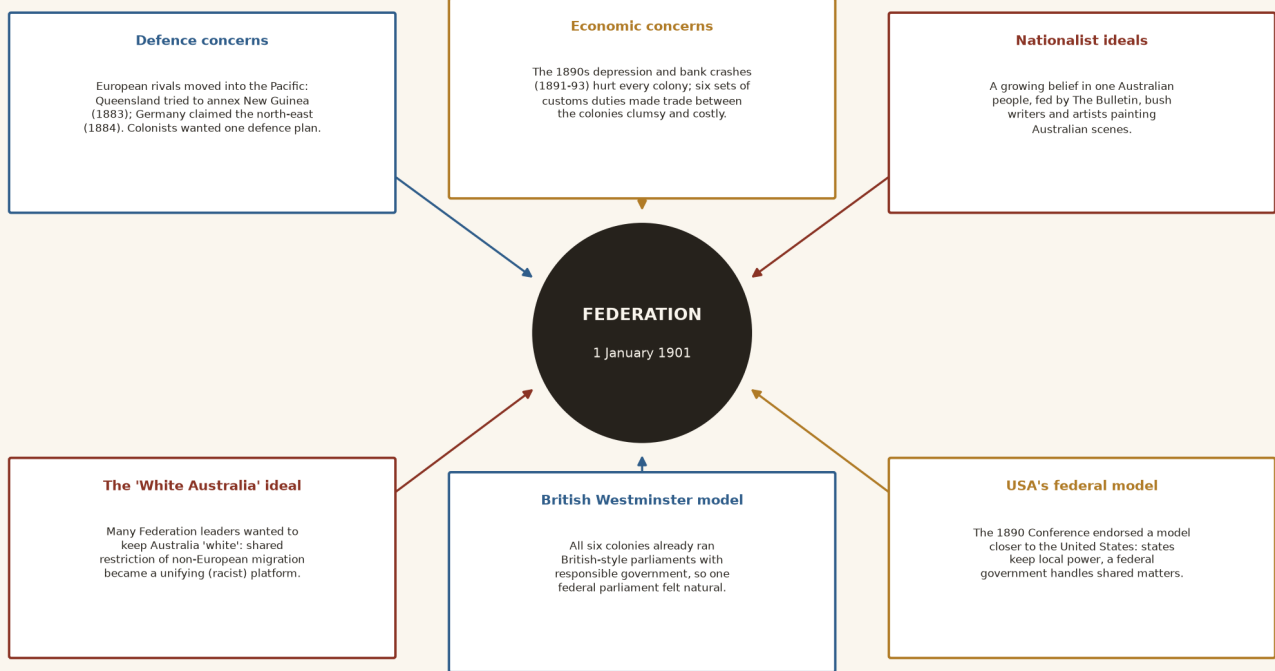


Diagram with a central dark circle labelled Federation, 1 January 1901, surrounded by six boxes, each naming a factor that pushed the colonies to unite with a one- or two-sentence explanation: defence concerns; economic concerns; nationalist ideals; the White Australia ideal; the British Westminster model; and the United States federal model

Figure 3. Six factors, each a real argument made by real colonists in the 1880s and 1890s.

The defence and economic factors were practical. European rivals were moving into the Pacific: Queensland tried to claim New Guinea in 1883, and Germany took the north-east of the island in 1884. Six separate colonies had no common defence plan. Economically, the 1890s depression and the bank crashes of 1891–93 hurt every colony, and six separate sets of customs duties made trade between the colonies clumsy and costly. Federation promised one defence plan and one market.

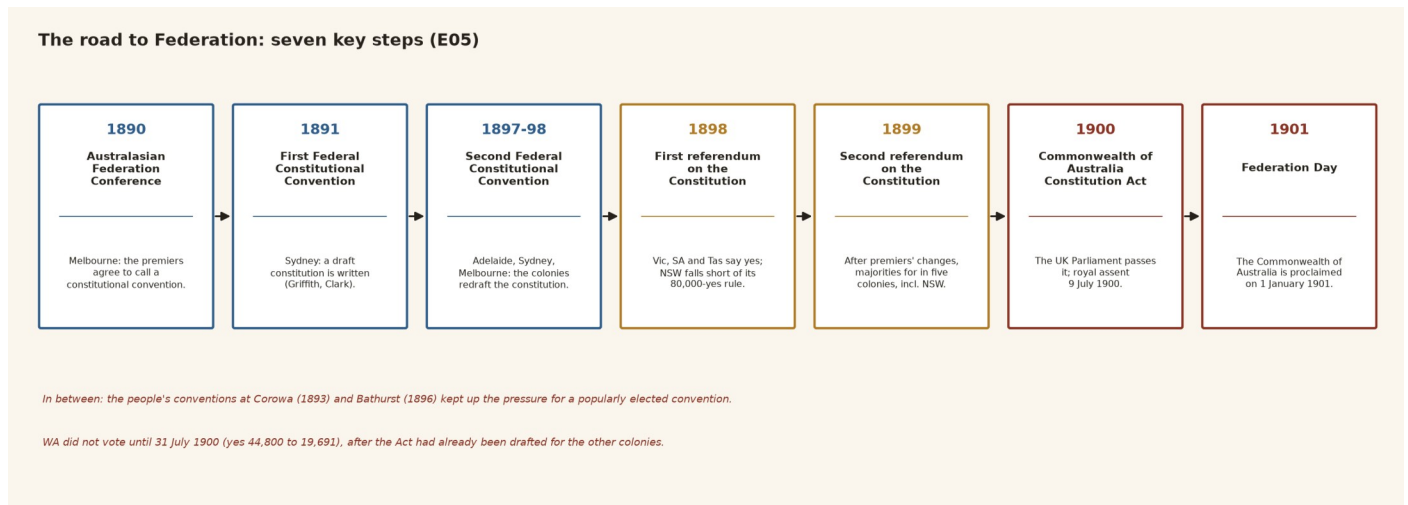
The factors about identity were the nationalist ideal and the belief in equality. A growing belief in one Australian people was fed by *The Bulletin* magazine, by bush writers and by artists painting Australian scenes. **Egalitarianism** — the idea that Australians were more equal than the class-bound British — became part of that story. These ideas made Federation feel like the natural next step for a people who already felt like one people.

Two factors need careful, honest handling. The first is the **'White Australia' ideal**. Many Federation leaders wanted to keep Australia "white": they supported restricting migration from outside Europe, and that shared aim helped bind the colonies together. This was racism made into policy, and saying so is not a modern slur on the past but an accurate description of what the policy was. Section 2C shows how these laws — above all the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 — ended the era of non-European labour that had helped build the colonies. Naming the ideal is necessary to understand the period; naming it is not support for it.

The second factor to handle precisely is the **model** question. The colonies already ran British-style parliaments with **responsible government** (a government that must hold the support of the elected lower house to stay in power), so a federal parliament felt natural — that is the British Westminster influence. But for how to divide power between the states and the new national government, the colonists looked to the United States: the 1890 Conference endorsed a federal model closer to the American one, in which the states keep local power and the federal government handles shared matters. Australia's new system was therefore a blend: British parliamentary habits inside an American-style federal frame.

Part 3 — The steps to Federation (E05)

The factors in Part 2 explain *why*. The steps explain *how*. Federation was not declared in a single moment; it was built through a sequence of conferences, conventions, referendums and laws. Figure 4 walks the seven key steps . E05 names.

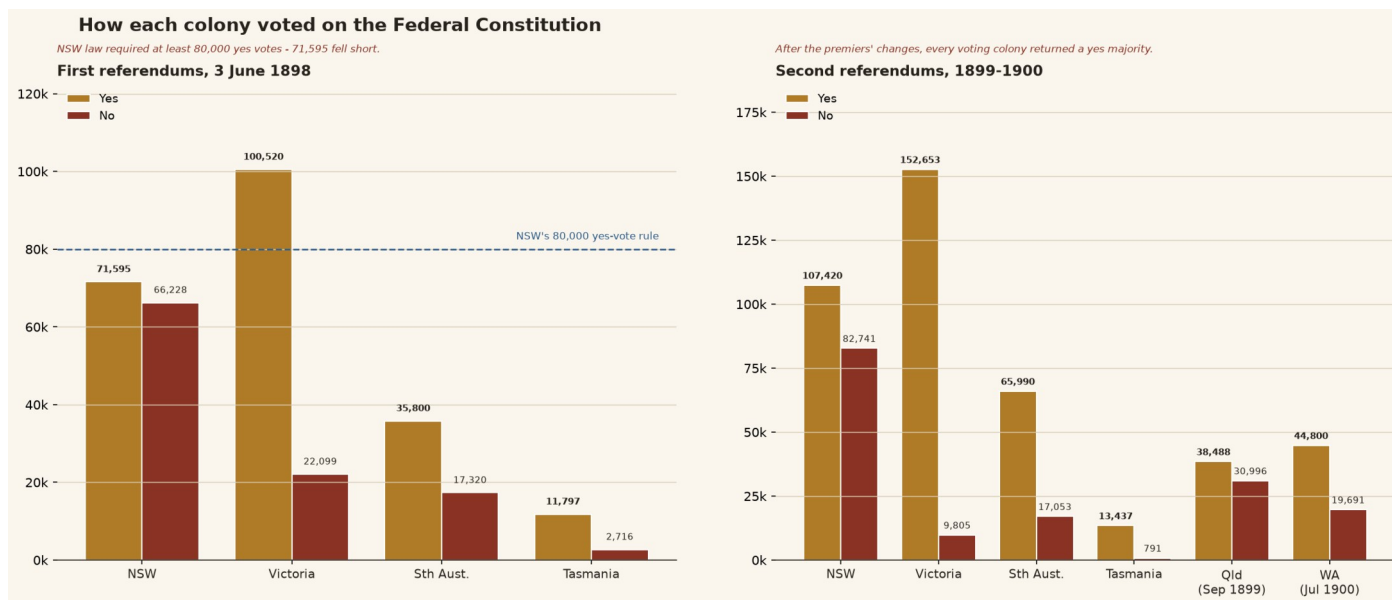


Seven connected boxes from left to right showing the steps to Federation: the Australasian Federation Conference 1890; the first Federal Constitutional Convention 1891; the second Federal Constitutional Convention 1897 to 1898; the first referendum on the Constitution 1898; the second referendum on the Constitution 1899; the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900; and Federation Day on 1 January 1901, with notes beneath on the Corowa and Bathurst people's conventions and on Western Australia's later vote

Figure 4. The road to Federation. In between the formal steps, people's conventions at Corowa (1893) and Bathurst (1896) kept up the pressure for a popularly elected convention.

The pattern to notice is the back-and-forth between politicians and people. The premiers agreed at the 1890 Melbourne Conference to call a convention; the 1891 Sydney Convention wrote a draft constitution (with Sir Samuel Griffith and Andrew Inglis Clark among its leading drafters); but the draft then stalled. It was people's conventions and the Federation leagues that pushed the cause forward again, leading to the second Convention of 1897–98, which redrafted the constitution and sent it to the voters.

The voters decided in referendums, and Figure 5 shows how each colony voted. This is worth slowing down for, because it shows Federation being *argued over*, not simply announced.



Two grouped bar charts of the Federation referendums. The first, titled *First referendums 3 June 1898*, shows yes and no votes for New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, with a dashed line marking New South Wales' 80,000 yes-vote rule that its 71,595 yes votes fell short of. The second, titled *Second referendums 1899 to 1900*, shows the same four colonies plus Queensland and Western Australia, every voting colony returning a yes majority

Figure 5. How each colony voted on the Federal Constitution. In 1898 New South Wales voted yes by a majority but failed a special rule requiring at least 80,000 yes votes; after the premiers made changes, the 1899–1900 referendums carried every voting colony.

In 1898, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania voted yes, but New South Wales — where a law required at least 80,000 yes votes — fell short at 71,595. The premiers then made changes, and in 1899–1900 every voting colony returned a yes majority. Western Australia did not vote until 31 July 1900, by which time the Act had already been drafted for the other colonies, but it too voted yes. The British Parliament then passed the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, which received royal assent on 9 July 1900, and on **1 January 1901** the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed: six colonies became six states under one national government. That day — Federation Day — is the hinge of the whole period.

Part 4 — The people, groups and movements behind Federation (E05)

Steps do not take themselves. Figure 6 gathers the individuals, groups and movements who made Federation happen, because .E05 asks you to *evaluate the contribution* of each — not just to list names.

People, groups and movements behind Federation (E05)		
Politicians and organisers	Writers and artists	Groups and movements
Sir Henry Parkes NSW premier five times; 'Father of Federation'; Tenterfield Oration, 1889	Banjo Paterson 'The Man from Snowy River' (Bulletin, 26 April 1890) - the romantic bush	Federation leagues People's pressure groups after Corowa (1893); organised rallies and pamphlets
Sir Samuel Griffith Qld premier; co-drafted the 1891 constitution; first Chief Justice, 1903-19	Henry Lawson 'The Drover's Wife' (1892) - the harsh bush; the 1892 Bulletin debate	Australian Natives' Association Founded Melbourne 1871; for the (Australian-born) white man; for Federation from 1885
Alfred Deakin Victoria's delegate and key negotiator; Prime Minister three times from 1903	Joseph Furphy Such Is Life (1903) as 'Tom Collins', 'offensively Australian'	The Bulletin Nationalist weekly from 1880; fed the idea of one Australian people - but also the racist 'White Australia' ideal
William Guthrie Spence Union leader (AWU); elected to the first federal parliament, 1901	Barbara Baynton Bush Studies (1902) - women's bush experience, published in The Bulletin	The women's suffrage movements WCTU and suffrage leagues; argued women must be part of any new democracy (see the suffrage timeline)
John Feltham Archibald Co-founded The Bulletin in 1880, the magazine that pushed the cause	Tom Roberts 'The Big Picture' (1903): the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament	
Catherine Helen Spence Suffragist; Australia's first female political candidate (1897 Convention)	McCubbin & Streeton Painted Australian light, bush and settlement in the 1890s	

Three columns of small cards titled *People, groups and movements behind Federation*. *Politicians and organisers*: Sir Henry Parkes, Sir Samuel Griffith, Alfred Deakin, William Guthrie Spence, John Feltham Archibald, and Catherine Helen Spence. *Writers and artists*: Banjo Paterson, Henry Lawson, Joseph Furphy, Barbara Baynton, Tom Roberts, and McCubbin and Streeton. *Groups and movements*: the Federation leagues, the Australian Natives' Association, The Bulletin, and the women's suffrage movements

Figure 6. The people, groups and movements behind Federation. Politicians drafted and negotiated; writers and artists made the idea feel real; leagues and associations organised the public.

Split them into two kinds of contribution. The **political** contribution was drafting, negotiating and organising. Sir Henry Parkes, five-time New South Wales premier and the "Father of Federation", used his 1889 Tenterfield Oration to call the question (analysed in Source inquiry A). Sir Samuel Griffith co-drafted the 1891 constitution and became the new nation's first Chief Justice in 1903. Alfred Deakin was Victoria's delegate and a key negotiator, later Prime Minister three times from 1903. William Guthrie Spence, a union leader, carried working-class support into the first federal parliament in 1901. Catherine Helen Spence, a suffragist, stood as a delegate to the 1897 Convention and became Australia's first female political candidate.

The **cultural** contribution was making "one Australian people" feel true. *The Bulletin*, co-founded by J. F. Archibald in 1880, pushed the cause and the nationalist idea. Banjo Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River" (1890) romanticised the bush; Henry Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" (1892) showed its hardship; Joseph Furphy's *Such Is Life* (1903) and Barbara Baynton's *Bush Studies* (1902) argued about it from different angles. Painters such as Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Arthur Streeton painted Australian light and bush. These writers and artists did not draft the constitution, but they supplied the *feeling* of nationhood that the politicians needed.

The groups supplied the pressure. The Federation leagues grew out of the Corowa conference of 1893 and organised rallies and pamphlets. The Australian Natives' Association, founded in Melbourne in 1871 for Australian-born members, had backed Federation since 1885. And the women's suffrage movements insisted that any new democracy must include women — which is where we end in Part 5.

Source inquiry A — a primary source: Parkes' Tenterfield Oration (1889)

A **primary source** is a record made at the time by people inside the events. Parkes' Tenterfield Oration is the classic primary source of Federation. Figure 7 reproduces two passages and works through how to analyse them.

Worked source analysis 1 - a primary source: Parkes' Tenterfield Oration (1889)

PRIMARY SOURCE

The great question which we have to consider is, whether the time has not now arisen ... for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian government and an Australian parliament.

Surely what the Americans have done by war, Australians can bring about in peace.

1889

Sir Henry Parkes, Tenterfield Oration, Tenterfield School of Arts, 24 October 1889 - a speech, reported in the colonial newspapers; text as recorded by Friends of Sir Henry Parkes School of Arts (via Wikipedia's 'Tenterfield Oration', retrieved 26 August 2026).

ORIGIN

Henry Parkes - five-time NSW premier, 'Father of Federation' - speaking in a country town hall in 1889, five years after Germany claimed New Guinea.

PURPOSE

To persuade colonial audiences the time to unite is NOW, and to build support for a federal convention.

CONTENT

He wants 'an Australian government and an Australian parliament'; he points to the USA, arguing Australians can unite in peace, not war.

CONTEXT

Six separate British colonies with their own parliaments and no common defence. Within months: the 1890 Conference and the 1891 Convention.

PERSPECTIVE

One politician's view. Women, workers, Chinese miners and cameleers are not in the room - their voices must be found in other sources.

Worked source analysis of a primary source. On the left a document panel quoting two passages from Sir Henry Parkes' Tenterfield Oration of 24 October 1889, with attribution and provenance. On the right, five labelled callout boxes apply origin, purpose, content, context and perspective to the speech, each with a short explanation

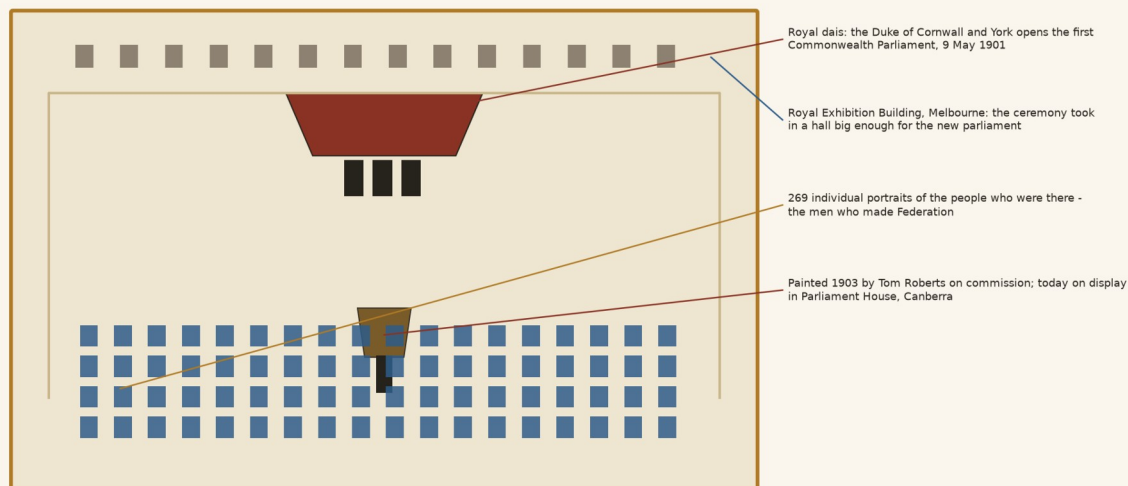
Figure 7. Source A: the Tenterfield Oration, analysed. Watch the method — the same origin, purpose, content, context, perspective frame that Sections 7C and 7D teach in depth.

Worked inquiry — how do you read a speech like a historian? Watch the moves. **Origin:** Henry Parkes, five-time New South Wales premier, speaking in a country town hall in 1889, five years after Germany claimed New Guinea. **Purpose:** to persuade colonial audiences that the time to unite is now, and to build support for a federal convention. **Content:** he wants “an Australian government and an Australian parliament”, and he points to the United States, arguing that what the Americans did by war Australians can bring about in peace. **Context:** six separate British colonies with their own parliaments and no common defence; within months came the 1890 Conference and the 1891 Convention. **Perspective:** this is one politician's view. Women, workers, Chinese miners and cameleers are not in the room — their voices must be found in other sources. That last point is the habit to keep: every source has **silences**, and a historian names them.

Source inquiry B — a visual source: Tom Roberts' 'The Big Picture' (1903)

A painting is a source too. Tom Roberts' *The Big Picture* records the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament and is one of the most famous images of Federation. Figure 8 gives an outline of the composition and shows how to read it.

Worked source analysis 2 - a visual source: 'The Big Picture' (Tom Roberts, 1903)



Reading a visual source

1. What is this painting celebrating, and how does its size and detail tell you that?
2. Who fills the room - and who is missing? In 1901 there were no women in either chamber (the first women were elected federally only in 1943) and no non-white members.
3. Is a celebration a reliable record, or a proud family portrait? A source shows both an event and the values of the people who chose to remember it.

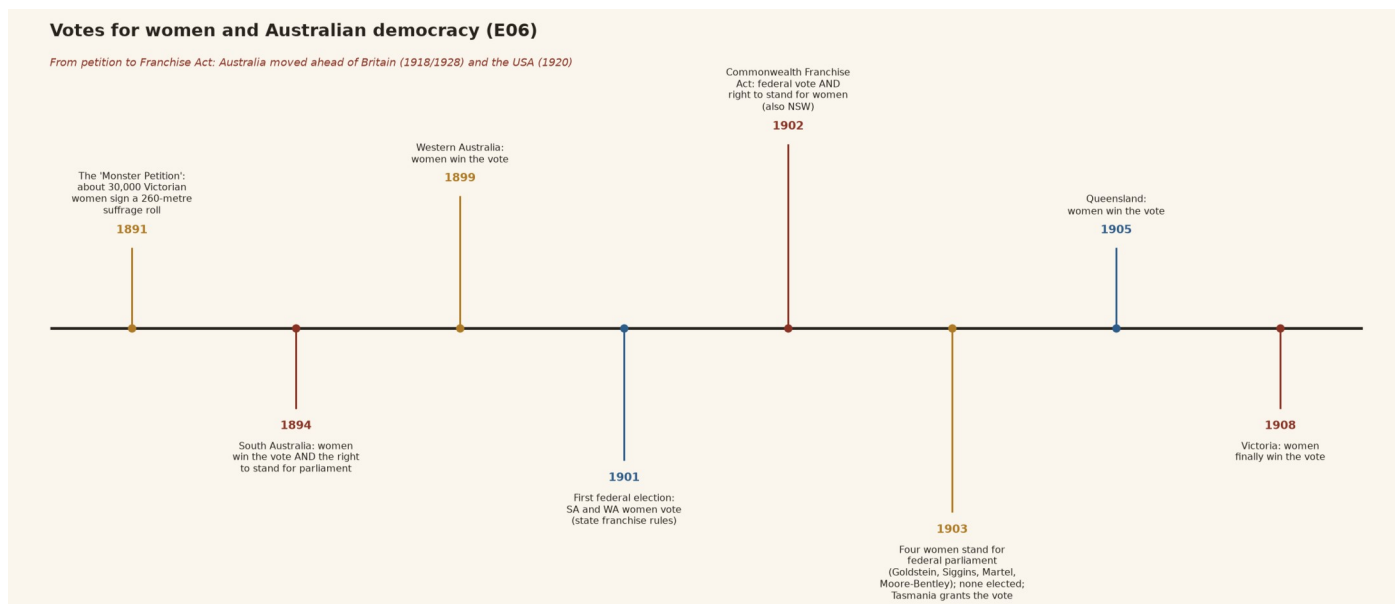
*Worked source analysis of a visual source. A simple outline of Tom Roberts' 1903 painting *The Big Picture* showing the royal dais, a lectern, rows of seated members and the gallery, with labelled callouts identifying the Duke of Cornwall and York opening parliament on 9 May 1901, the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, the 269 individual portraits, and the painting's history. A question box below asks how to read a visual source*

Figure 8. Source B: 'The Big Picture' (Tom Roberts, 1903), analysed as a visual source.

Worked inquiry — how do you read a painting? Roberts painted the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament by the Duke of Cornwall and York at Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building on 9 May 1901. He worked on commission from 1901 to 1903 and included 269 individual portraits of the people who were there. The painting is a record of an event — but it is also a celebration, and that is the critical question. **Who fills the room, and who is missing?** In 1901 there were no women in either chamber and no non-white members. **Is a celebration a reliable record, or a proud family portrait?** The honest answer is both: the painting shows a real event, and it also shows the values of the people who chose to remember it that way. A source always carries the perspective of its maker; a visual source is no exception.

Part 5 — Votes for women (E06)

The new nation's democracy was widened by one movement above all: the campaign for women's suffrage. Figure 9 tracks the advance.



Timeline of women's voting rights, 1891 to 1908, alternating above and below a horizontal line: the Monster Petition of about 30,000 Victorian women 1891; South Australian women win the vote and the right to stand for parliament 1894; Western Australian women win the vote 1899; South Australian and Western Australian women vote at the first federal election 1901; the Commonwealth Franchise Act gives women the federal vote and the right to stand 1902; four women stand for federal parliament and Tasmania grants the vote 1903; Queensland women win the vote 1905; Victorian women win the vote 1908

Figure 9. From petition to Franchise Act. Australia moved ahead of Britain (1918/1928) and the United States (1920) in giving women the vote.

The movement organised early and widely. In 1891 about 30,000 Victorian women signed the “Monster Petition”, a suffrage roll some 260 metres long. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union — the **WCTU**, a group that campaigned to limit alcohol and saw the vote as a way to win social reform — was one of the most effective organisers. South Australian women won the vote *and* the right to stand for parliament in 1894, among the first women in the world to hold both rights at that level; Western Australian women won the vote in 1899.

The **Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902** was the national milestone: it gave women the vote and the right to stand for federal parliament. At the 1903 election four women — Vida Goldstein, Selina Siggins, Nellie Martel and Mary Moore-Bentley — stood for federal parliament, among the first women in the world to do so; none was elected, but the right to stand was now real. Section 1E carries this story forward into the twentieth century; Section 1F traces the continuing effort to widen rights for those still excluded.

Why does this matter for the development of Australian democracy? Because it shows the franchise was not given once and fixed — it was *won*, group by group, through organised movements. The women’s suffrage movement expanded who “the people” meant in Australia’s democracy, and it did so before many older democracies. That is the significance. E06 asks you to analyse: not just the dates, but what widening the franchise does to a democracy.

Part 6 — Continuity and change: the weighing

You now know the key events and ideas, and the people, groups and movements behind them. The section’s big question is the one in the content description: what did they contribute to continuity and change? Figure 10 sorts the evidence into the two columns.



Two columns titled *Continuity and change in Australia, 1788 to 1914*. What changed lists: six colonies becoming one nation; a wider democracy; immigration opening then being restricted; faster connection by telegraph; and new kinds of work. What continued lists: the Crown; Westminster government; British-born migration; and a primary-produce economy

Figure 10. What changed — and what kept going. The same event, Federation, is a giant change and a managed continuity at the same time.

Historians genuinely weigh this period in different ways, and both answers deserve their strongest form. One position says the break was real: a nation was created, the franchise was widened to women, and a new federal parliament began to shape wages, migration and defence. The other position answers that beneath the institutions most things continued: the British monarch remained head of state, British law and habits shaped the new nation, most newcomers still came from the British Isles, and the economy still rode on wool, wheat and gold sold to the world.

Both lists are true, and the weighing that follows is the one most historians would accept: **institutions and rights changed fast around 1901; daily life and identity changed more slowly, and unevenly**. Federation is the clearest test case: the same event is a giant change (a nation is born) and a managed continuity (the Crown, the states and most daily power stay where they were). That unevenness *is* the pattern the words “continuity and change” ask you to explain.

Practice — scaffolded

1. Match the group to its contribution. Copy the table and complete it using Figure 2. One row is done for you.

Group	Contribution to colonial society
Cameleers	Carried wool and goods through the inland; helped build the Overland Telegraph Line
Local-born colonists	
Chinese migrants	
The working class (social classes)	
Religious groups (e.g. the WCTU)	

2. Read the factors. From Figure 3: (a) name the two *practical* factors; (b) name the two *identity* factors; (c) which factor involved restricting migration from outside Europe?

3. Order the steps. Using Figure 4, number these from 1 to 5 in order: the second referendum; the Australasian Federation Conference; Federation Day; the first Federal Constitutional Convention; the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.

4. Read the referendums. From Figure 5: (a) in 1898, which colony voted yes by a majority but still failed, and why? (b) what changed between 1898 and 1899–1900? (c) when did Western Australia vote?

5. Classify the contributors. From Figure 6, label each as political or cultural: Sir Samuel Griffith; Banjo Paterson; the Federation leagues; Tom Roberts; Catherine Helen Spence.

6. Source A. Using only Figure 7: (a) who gave the speech, and where? (b) in one sentence, what was its purpose? (c) name one silence in the source.

Practice — unscaffolded

7. Source B (reading a visual source). From Figure 8, write one paragraph (4–6 sentences) explaining what *The Big Picture* shows and why a historian must read it as both a record and a celebration. Name who fills the room and who is missing, and label any conclusion you draw as an **inference**.

8. The ‘White Australia’ ideal (E04). In two or three sentences, explain what the ‘White Australia’ ideal was and why it is described here as racism made into policy. Then, in one sentence, state why historians still need to name it to understand Federation. Do not soften or excuse it.

9. Significance of women’s suffrage (E06). In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), analyse how the advance of women’s voting rights reshaped Australian democracy. Use at least three dated facts from Figure 9 and explain *what widening the franchise does to a democracy*, not just what happened.

10. Evaluate continuity and change. In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), evaluate how far Australian society changed between 1750 and 1914. Use the moves in Figure 11 — claim, dated evidence, steelman, weighing, judgement — with your own dated facts from this section, not the model’s.

Answers

1. Local-born colonists — developed a distinct Australian identity and pushed for self-government and a wider franchise (e.g. the Eureka demands of 1854, the Australian Natives' Association of 1871). Chinese migrants — worked the goldfields from 1851 and later ran businesses and industries. The working class — organised unions, struck in 1890–94, then entered parliaments. Religious groups — built schools, hospitals and charities; the WCTU organised for women's suffrage.
2. (a) Defence concerns and economic concerns. (b) Nationalist ideals and the 'White Australia' ideal (accept egalitarianism as part of the identity side). (c) The 'White Australia' ideal.
3. 1 Australasian Federation Conference (1890); 2 first Federal Constitutional Convention (1891); 3 second referendum (1899); 4 Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (1900); 5 Federation Day (1 January 1901).
4. (a) New South Wales voted yes by a majority but failed a special rule requiring at least 80,000 yes votes (it reached 71,595). (b) The premiers made changes to the draft, and every voting colony then returned a yes majority. (c) 31 July 1900.
5. Sir Samuel Griffith — political; Banjo Paterson — cultural; the Federation leagues — political (a group/movement); Tom Roberts — cultural; Catherine Helen Spence — political.
6. (a) Sir Henry Parkes, at the Tenterfield School of Arts, 24 October 1889. (b) To persuade the colonies that the time to unite was now and to build support for a federal convention. (c) Any real silence — e.g. women, workers, Chinese miners and cameleers are not in the room.
- 7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: what the painting shows and the record-versus-celebration point, plus who is in the room and who is missing, with one labelled inference (7); an accurate description of the ideal, an honest statement that it was racist policy, and a reason historians must name it (8); three dated facts and an explanation of what widening the franchise does to a democracy (9); a claim up front, dated evidence, a fair steelman, a weighing that answers it, and a judgement that returns to the claim (10).

Model response (for task 10)

Australian society changed greatly between 1750 and 1914, but the change was fast in law and slow in daily life. On the side of change, six separate colonies became one nation on 1 January 1901, and the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 gave women the federal vote and the right to stand. Gold rushes from 1851 and the work of migrants and cameleers built new kinds of wealth, and the Overland Telegraph of 1872 connected Australia to the world in hours rather than months. On the side of continuity, the British monarch remained head of state, British law and habits shaped the new nation, and wool, wheat and gold still paid the country's way. The strongest case for "not much changed" is that most people kept the same work and the same British identity; the strongest case for "a great deal changed" is that a nation and a wider democracy were genuinely created. The weighing is that institutions and rights changed fast around 1901, while daily life and identity changed slowly and unevenly. Judgement: 1750–1914 was a period of real but uneven change — a new nation built on old foundations.

The moves in the model paragraph (task 10)

1. CLAIM

Say your answer up front.

'Australian society changed greatly between 1750 and 1914, but the change was fast in law and slow in daily life.'

2. EVIDENCE

Dated facts carry the claim.

'...six separate colonies became one nation on 1 January 1901, and the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 gave women the federal vote... the gold rushes from 1851... the Overland Telegraph of 1872.'

3. STEELMAN

The other side, in its strongest form.

'The strongest case for "not much changed" is that most people kept the same work and the same British identity; the strongest case for "a great deal changed" is that a nation and a wider democracy were genuinely created.'

4. WEIGHING

Answer the steelman, don't dodge it.

'The weighing is that institutions and rights changed fast around 1901, while daily life and identity changed slowly and unevenly.'

5. JUDGEMENT

Return to the claim and settle it.

'Judgement: 1750-1914 was a period of real but uneven change - a new nation built on old foundations.'

Steal the moves, not the facts.

Model paragraph for task 10 set out as five labelled cards: claim, evidence, steelman, weighing and judgement, each with a hint and the sentence from the model that performs it

Figure 11. The model paragraph of task 10, with its moves labelled. Steal the moves, not the facts.

Looking back. You can now define continuity, change, event, idea and movement and apply them to real cases; explain the contribution of different groups — local-born colonists, Chinese migrants, cameleers, social classes, religious groups and regions — to colonial society; explain the factors that pushed the colonies to federate, including the honest handling of the 'White Australia' ideal; describe the key steps to Federation and how each colony voted; evaluate the contribution of the people, groups and movements behind Federation; and analyse how the advance of women's voting rights reshaped Australian democracy. The lived experiences of these arrivals are Section 2C; the changes in daily life and institutions around 1900 are Section 2D; the "social laboratory" interpretation of this era is Section 2E; and the formal analysis of continuity and change is Section 8A, with source skills taught in depth in Sections 7C and 7D.

Sources for this section (all figures in this section are original, drawn for this book).

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Lives and views of colonists and migrants, 1750–1914

Curriculum: VC2HH10K10. This section teaches the content description through its local-born colonist and migrant referents, as recorded in the TOC (§2A).

Linked elaborations: VC2HH10K10.E04 VC2HH10K10.E05 VC2HH10K10.E06

Theory

Between 1750 and 1914 the Australian colonies grew from one small British settlement at Sydney into six busy colonies with a mixed population. This section looks at that growth from the inside: what life was actually like (**experiences**) and how different groups saw it (**perspectives**), and what **changed** and what **stayed the same** over those years.

Two broad groups carry the section. The first is the **local-born colonists** — the generations born in the colonies rather than overseas. The second is the **migrants** — the people who arrived to make new lives: convicts, free colonists from Britain and other parts of Europe, and the non-European arrivals named in the curriculum.

Key words

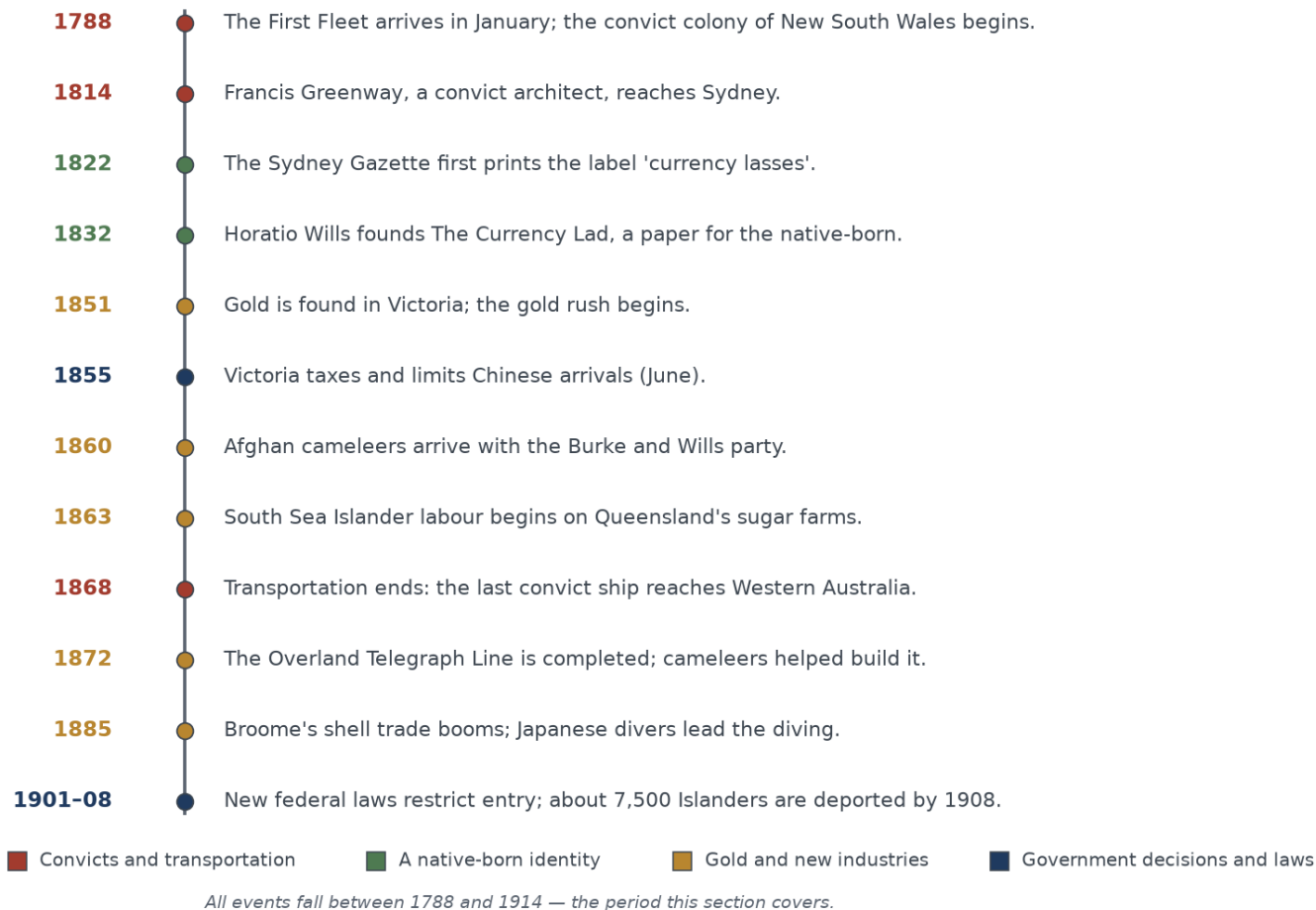
- **Experience** — what happened to a person or group, and how it shaped their daily life.
- **Perspective** — the way a person or group sees and makes sense of the world. A perspective is shaped by who someone is: their age, class, job, culture, beliefs and values. Two people can live through the same event and see it in very different ways.
- **Continuity and change** — what stayed the same and what changed over time. Historians study both; change is easier to spot, but continuity often matters just as much.
- **Colony** — a territory ruled by a distant country; a **colonist** is a person living in a colony.

- **Migrant** — a person who moves to a new place to live.

The timeline below gives the shape of the whole period at a glance.

Colonists and migrants in Australia — key events, 1788 to 1914

The experiences of the groups this section studies



Timeline from 1788 to 1914 showing twelve key events in the experiences of colonists and migrants

Part 1 — The first colonial generation: “currency” and “sterling” (the local-born referent of VC2HH10K10)

From the first years after 1788, children were born in the colony who had never seen Britain. By the mid-1800s this **local-born** generation was large and growing. Colonists marked the difference with two labels taken from money. People born in Britain were called **sterling**, after the British pound. People born in the colony were called **currency**, because colonial money (“currency”) was not British pound sterling. The label began as an insult — it suggested something of lower quality — but the local-born soon wore it with pride as a mark of their own identity. Its first known appearance in print was a letter in the *Sydney Gazette* on 13 September 1822, signed “Lydia Languish”, asking for social events for “currency lasses”.

'Currency' and 'sterling' — two labels for two generations

The local-born and the British-born in the colonies

Feature	CURRENCY — born in the colony	STERLING — born in Britain
Who they were	Children of convicts, ex-convicts and free settlers, born in the colony	Officials, soldiers, workers and settlers who arrived from Britain
Where the label comes from	From 'currency' — colonial money. Began as an insult, later worn with pride.	From 'sterling' — the British pound. Marked the British-born as the standard.
First in print	Sydney Gazette, 13 September 1822 — a letter signed 'Lydia Languish' asking for social events for 'currency lasses'	The label 'sterling' was used of the British-born in the same years
A voice	Horatio Wills, born Sydney 1811, founded <i>The Currency Lad</i> in 1832 to defend the native-born	Most officials and newspapers of the early decades were British-born
How they saw the colony	The only home they knew — they wanted equal rights and respect	A new place, measured against Britain
Both groups spoke English, lived under British law and kept British customs — a new identity (change) within a British way of life (continuity).		

Table comparing the currency and sterling labels used for colony-born and British-born colonists

The local-born generation wanted the same rights and respect as the British-born. One of its champions was **Horatio Wills**, born in Sydney in 1811, the son of an ex-convict. In 1832 he founded *The Currency Lad*, the first newspaper published in the colony that set out to protect the interests of the native-born.

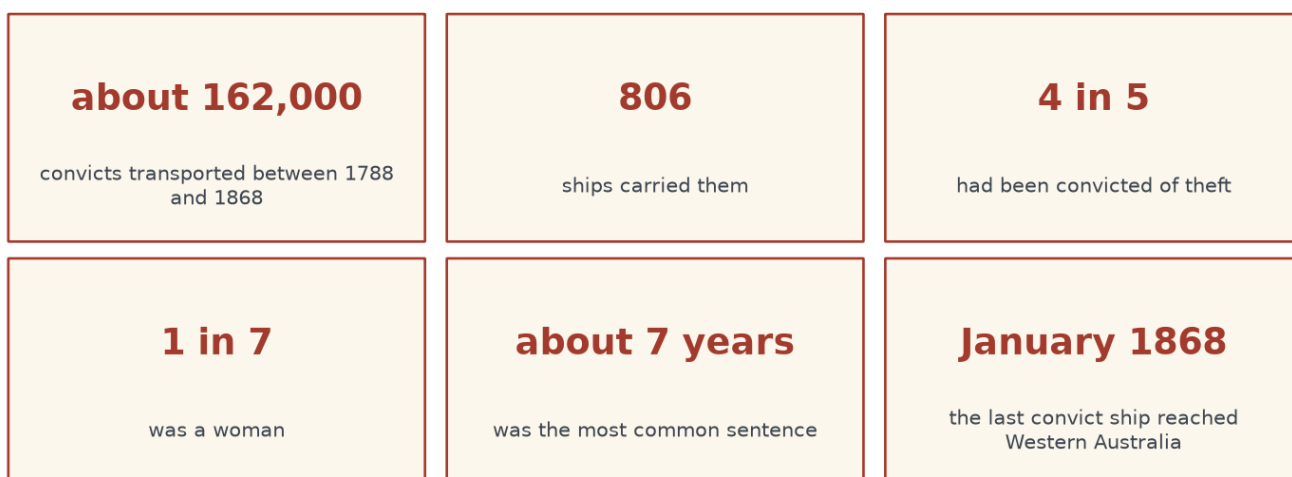
The experience of being local-born was one of belonging: these colonists knew no other home. Their perspective was increasingly distinct from that of new British arrivals, who saw the colonies with fresh eyes. Yet much stayed the same: the local-born spoke English, lived under British law and mostly kept British customs. In this one family of words — currency and sterling — you can see both **change** (a new identity being born) and **continuity** (a British way of life carried on).

Part 2 — Convict arrivals: punishment and new lives (VC2HH10K10.E04, VC2HH10K10.E05)

Between 1788 and 1868, about **162,000 convicts** were transported to the Australian colonies on 806 ships. The First Fleet arrived in January 1788; the last convict ship reached Western Australia in January 1868. Most convicts — about four in five — had been convicted of theft. About one in seven was a woman. Most sentences were for seven years.

The convict tide — the numbers at a glance

Convict transportation to the Australian colonies, 1788 to 1868



Figures compiled from the historical record of convict transportation (see the Sources section).

Panel of key statistics about the convicts transported to Australia between 1788 and 1868

Figures compiled from the historical record of convict transportation (see Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026).

Experiences. Convicts worked on government projects — building roads, bridges and public buildings — or were assigned to work for private employers. Good conduct could earn a **ticket of leave**, which allowed a convict to work for wages before the sentence ended; harsh conduct could bring severe punishment. For most, transportation meant years of hard labour far from home.

Perspectives — a new life away from class. In Britain at this time, class was rigid: the class you were born into usually fixed the life you could live. The colonies worked differently. Once a sentence was served, a person with skill and drive could rise in ways that would have been almost impossible at home. E05 names two famous examples, and both show how large that change could be.

Francis Greenway (1777–1837) was an English architect convicted of forging a financial record. His death sentence was changed to transportation for 14 years, and he reached Sydney in February 1814. Governor Lachlan Macquarie saw his skill and made him the colony’s official architect. Greenway designed many of Sydney’s finest early buildings, including Hyde Park Barracks, St James’ Church, Macquarie Lighthouse and the General Hospital (known as the “Rum Hospital”). He was emancipated (formally freed) in December 1817. His story ended hard: he lost his post in 1822, fell into poverty and died near Newcastle in 1837. His buildings, several still standing, are his lasting contribution.

Francis Greenway — the convict who shaped Sydney

Some of the public buildings he designed (VC2HH10K10.E05)

Francis Greenway (1777–1837) — arrived as a convict in February 1814, set free in December 1817, appointed the colony's architect by Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

Building	What it was for
General Hospital (the 'Rum Hospital')	The colony's main hospital in Sydney
Macquarie Lighthouse	The colony's first lighthouse, near Sydney
Hyde Park Barracks (1817–1819)	Housing for convicts who worked for the government
St James' Church	A church that still stands in Sydney today
Supreme Court building	The colony's highest law court

A building is evidence too — see Analysis 2 (Source B: Hyde Park Barracks).

Table of Sydney buildings designed by the emancipated convict architect Francis Greenway

Samuel Terry (c. 1776–1838) was sentenced in 1800 for stealing 400 pairs of stockings. After his sentence he built a fortune: a farm by 1808, inns, trading, land, bank shares and flour mills. By the time he died in 1838 he was by far the richest man in the colony, with a personal estate valued at £250,000 and over £10,000 a year from Sydney rentals. No one in England would have expected a convicted stocking-thief to end his life among the wealthy; in the colony, it happened.

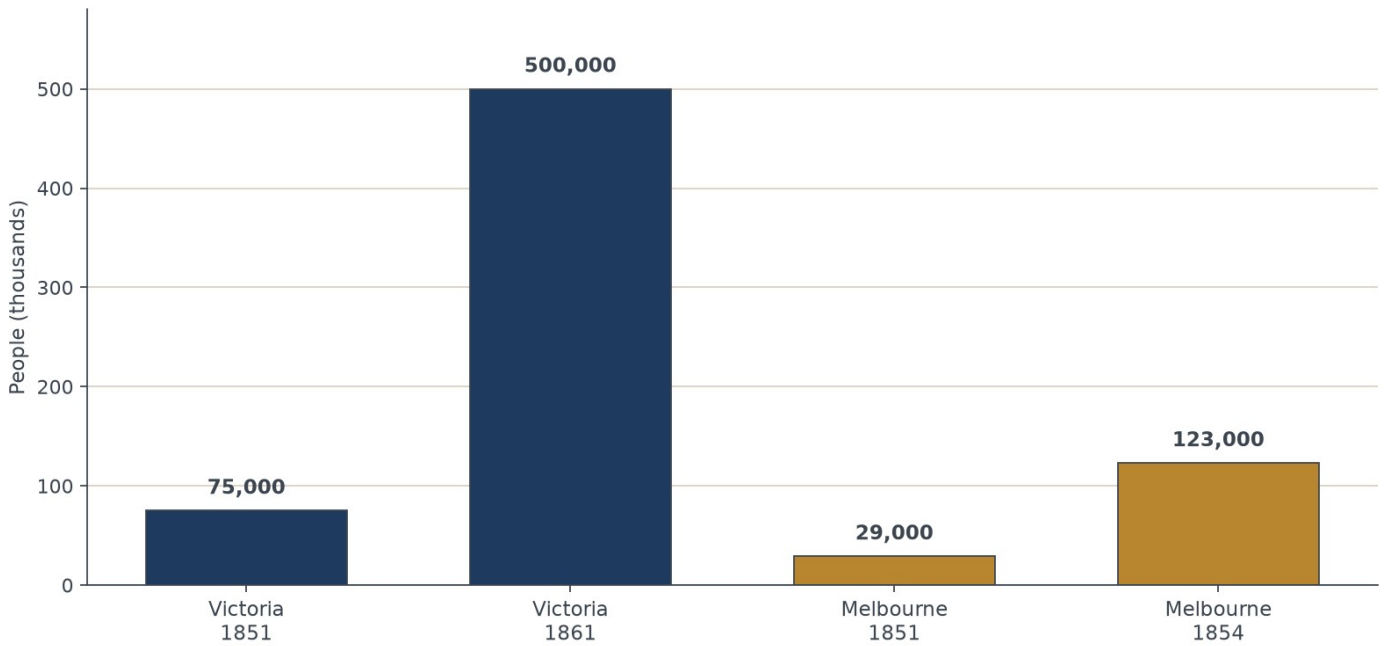
Emancipists and exclusives. Convicts whose sentences had ended were called **emancipists**. The free settlers and officers who wanted power and status kept for the British-born were called **exclusives**. The two groups clashed over whether emancipists should hold land, sit on juries and enjoy equal standing. Emancipists argued that a served sentence should end a person's punishment and that skill and hard work earned respect. Exclusives argued that the colony's reputation depended on keeping convicted people down. Historians see this clash as one engine of colonial change: step by step, emancipists won rights.

Part 3 — Free colonists (VC2HH10K10.E04)

Not everyone arrived in chains. **Free colonists** chose to come: farmers, workers, tradespeople and merchants drawn by land, wages and a fresh start. Some colonies were founded as **free colonies** that never received convicts: the settlement that became Perth from 1829 and South Australia (Adelaide) from 1836. Free colonists also settled the Port Phillip district (Melbourne) from 1835, and from 1869 a settlement grew at Darwin.

The gold rush changed Victoria fast

Recorded population of Victoria and of Melbourne; gold was found in 1851



Population figures from the record of the Victorian gold rush (see the Sources section).

Chart showing Victoria's population growing from 75,000 in 1851 to 500,000 in 1861 during the gold rush

Population figures from the record of the Victorian gold rush (see Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026).

Gold changed everything. Gold was found in Victoria in 1851 (after an earlier find at Clunes in 1850), at fields including Castlemaine and Beechworth. Victoria's recorded population rose from about **75,000 in 1851 to about 500,000 in 1861**, and Melbourne grew from about 29,000 people in 1851 to about 123,000 by 1854. The gold rush pulled free colonists from Britain, Europe, North America and China. For many arrivals the experience was hope mixed with hardship: hard digging, rough camps, and for some disappointment; for others, a new life built in a few years.

Part 4 — Non-European arrivals before the 1900s (VC2HH10K10.E06)

The colonies were never only British. The table below puts the main groups of arrivals side by side, and the map after it shows where the four non-European groups named in E06 worked.

The arrivals at a glance

The main groups this section studies, side by side

Group	When they came	Where they worked and settled	What they experienced
Convicts	1788-1868 (about 162,000)	Sydney, Hobart, Moreton Bay and other centres	Forced labour on government works or for employers; many began new lives once their sentence ended
Free colonists	from the 1820s; grew fast after gold in 1851	Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and the goldfields	Came by choice for land, wages and a fresh start
Local-born ('currency')	from the first years after 1788	Every colony	A new generation with its own identity, asking for equal rights and respect
Chinese miners	mostly 1850s-1880s	Goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales	Worked the goldfields; faced entry taxes, shipping limits and violence
Afghan cameleers	from 1860	The dry interior of central Australia	Camel trains carried wool and supplies; helped build the Overland Telegraph Line
Japanese pearlers	from the 1870s	Northern waters: Darwin, Broome, Thursday Island	The main diving workforce in the shell trade; dangerous work
South Sea Islanders	1863-1904	Queensland's sugar plantations	Harsh conditions; about 7,500 deported, mainly 1906-08

The map below shows where the four non-European groups named in VC2HH10K10.E06 worked.

Overview table of the main groups of arrivals with when they came, where they settled and what they experienced

Where the four non-European groups worked



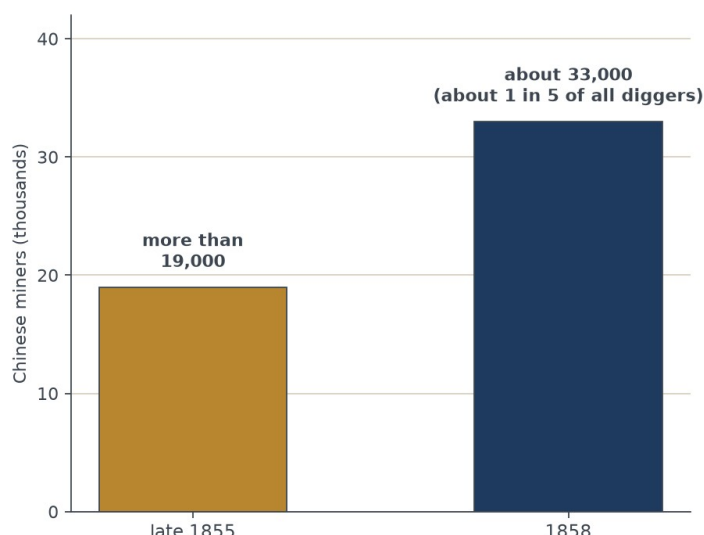
Simplified coastline drawn for study purposes — not for navigation.

Simple map of Australia marking where Chinese miners, Afghan cameleers, Japanese pearlers and South Sea Islanders worked

Chinese miners on the goldfields. The gold rushes drew tens of thousands of Chinese migrants. In 1855, 11,493 Chinese people arrived in Melbourne; by 1858 about 42,000 had arrived in Victoria. By late 1855 there were more than 19,000 Chinese miners on the Victorian goldfields, and by 1858 about **33,000** — **roughly one in five of all diggers**. Many worked claims other miners had given up, and many later stayed on as market gardeners, growing the vegetables that fed the goldfields towns.

Chinese miners on the Victorian goldfields

Estimates of miners working the fields



Arrivals, not just miners:

In 1855, 11,493 Chinese people arrived in Melbourne.

By 1858, about 42,000 had arrived in Victoria.

Most came through Melbourne and walked to the goldfields.

Miner estimates from the record of the Victorian gold rush (see the Sources section).

Chart showing Chinese miners on the Victorian goldfields rising from over 19,000 in late 1855 to about 33,000 in 1858

Miner estimates from the record of the Victorian gold rush (see Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026).

Their experience included open hostility. In June 1855 Victoria passed a law to limit Chinese arrivals: a **£10 entry tax on each Chinese passenger** and a limit of **one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of a ship's weight**. New South Wales followed with its own poll taxes and shipping limits from 1861. Violence broke out at Buckland River in Victoria in 1857 and at Lambing Flat in New South Wales in 1860–61, when mobs of European miners attacked Chinese camps. From 1875 to 1888 the colonies tightened the limits further, and by 1888 every colony restricted Chinese entry.

Two perspectives were at work, and it is worth stating each plainly. Chinese miners saw the goldfields as a chance to earn for their families, and they kept working despite the tax and the violence. Many European miners saw Chinese arrivals as competition for gold and jobs, and they pressed their government to act. Historians judge the second view harshly: the hostility was built on prejudice, and the laws singled out one group by race. The effects lasted long after the gold ran out.

Afghan cameleers in Central Australia. From 1860, when camel drivers arrived for the Burke and Wills expedition, **cameleers** from Afghanistan and nearby regions became the carriers of the dry interior, where horses and bullocks struggled. About 3,000 arrived during the 1860s; by 1901 there were between 2,000 and 4,000. Their camel trains carried wool, supplies and gear to remote stations and mines, and they hauled materials for the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin, completed in 1872, and for the inland railways that followed. They built places of worship too: a mosque at Marree from 1861, the Central Adelaide Mosque in 1888–89 and the Perth Mosque in 1905. Australia's famous inland train, the **Ghan**, keeps their name — it came from “the Afghan Express”, a railway nickname first recorded in 1923.

Japanese pearlers in the north. From the 1870s, migrants from Japan joined the oyster-shell trade of northern waters, working from ports including Darwin, Broome and Thursday Island. (The shell of the oyster was prized for buttons and ornaments.) Broome boomed from the 1880s, and by 1910 about 3,500 of the town's roughly 5,000 people worked in the trade. Japanese divers were the main diving workforce. The work was dangerous: divers worked deep water in heavy suits, and Broome's Japanese cemetery records 919 Japanese divers who died.

South Sea Islanders on Queensland's sugar plantations. Between **1863 and 1904**, between **55,000 and 62,500** labourers from more than 80 Pacific islands — mostly the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands — were brought to Queensland to work in the sugarcane fields. The curriculum's word for this labour trade needs care.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term **blackbirding** but does not define it. In this section, *blackbirding* is used to mean **the recruiting of Pacific Islander labourers for Queensland in cases that ranged from paid, willing workers to people who were tricked or taken by force**; every question here is answerable on that definition alone.

How did Islander labourers come to Queensland?

Two positions, each stated in its strongest form

Position 1 — Much of the trade was willing work

- Islanders signed contracts for wages.
- The 1868 Act set pay at £6 per year, plus food, housing and clothing.
- Some came knowing what to expect; some went home and came back.
- In later years, recruiting was controlled by law.

Position 2 — Much of the trade was blackbirding

- A significant share were tricked or taken by force.
- Conditions on the plantations were harsh.
- Even willing recruits often did not understand the contract.
- Recruiters dealt from a position of much greater power.

Historians accept both truths at once: the trade mixed willing and forced labour — which is exactly why the word 'blackbirding' needs a careful definition before we use it.

Debate diagram presenting the strongest form of two positions on how South Sea Islander labourers came to Queensland

Historians disagree about how much of the trade was willing and how much was forced, and each position has a fair case, shown in the diagram above. What is not in dispute is that the conditions were harsh, and that some Islanders were kidnapped or tricked. The Queensland government tried to regulate the trade with the **Polynesian Labourers Act 1868**: labour was limited to three-year contracts, with wages of £6 per year plus food, housing and clothing.

Then came a hard change. The **Pacific Islander Labourers Act 1901**, part of the new federal parliament's first laws, ordered that most Islanders leave Australia. At the time there were about 9,800 Islanders in Queensland; about **7,500 were deported**, mainly in 1906–08, and entry stopped after 1904. Many had lived in Queensland for decades and had families there. Historians judge the deportation as a grave injustice, done to people who had built the sugar industry with their labour.

South Sea Islanders in Queensland, 1863 to 1908

The labour that built the sugar industry

Key dates

1863	First labourers brought to Queensland's sugar fields
1868	Polynesian Labourers Act: 3-year contracts, £6 per year
1901	Pacific Islander Labourers Act orders most Islanders to leave
1904	Entry stops
1906	Deportations begin
1908	About 7,500 have been sent away

Key figures

55,000–62,500

labourers brought between 1863 and 1904

over 80

islands they came from

New Hebrides and Solomons

now Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands — the biggest sources

about 9,800

Islanders still in Queensland when the 1901 Act passed

sugarcane

the crop they worked in Queensland

Figures compiled from the historical record (see the Sources section).

Timeline and statistics of South Sea Islanders brought to Queensland's sugar plantations from 1863 to 1908

Figures compiled from the historical record of the South Sea Islander labour trade (see Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026).

The “White Australia policy”. The deportation law sat beside the **Immigration Restriction Act 1901**, which used a written test — a 50-word passage in any language an officer chose — to refuse entry to unwanted arrivals. Historians give these laws the name the **White Australia policy**: the use of law to keep Australia British and white. The term describes a real set of laws and attitudes of the time; naming it is not support for it. For the non-European groups in this section, these laws marked the end of one era: their labour had helped build the colonies, and now their presence was being written out of the country's future. Keep that date — 1901 — in mind when you compare what changed and what stayed the same.

Part 5 — Continuity and change, 1750–1914

The organiser below pulls the section together in the language of the content description.

What changed and what stayed the same, 1750 to 1914

The continuity-and-change organiser for this section

CHANGE — what was different by 1914	CONTINUITY — what stayed the same
• Transportation ended: the last convict ship came in 1868. • A native-born generation grew up with its own identity. • Gold pushed Victoria's population from 75,000 to about 500,000 in a decade. • Non-European workers built whole industries: sugar, shells and inland transport. • From 1901, new federal laws restricted who could enter.	• British law, language and customs stayed in place. • British-born officials held most of the power for decades. • Unequal treatment of non-European groups ran through the whole period. • Farming, wool and mining stayed at the heart of the economy.

Change is easier to spot — but continuity often matters just as much.

Organiser listing what changed and what stayed the same for colonists and migrants between 1750 and 1914

Notice the pattern: the biggest **changes** were in *who was in Australia and what they could do* — the end of transportation (1868), the rise of the local-born, the gold-rush boom, and the non-European workers who built whole industries. The strongest **continuities** were British law, language and customs, and — for many groups — unequal treatment that lasted across the whole period.

Worked source analyses

Analysis 1 — Source A: the Victorian Chinese Immigration Act, June 1855 (scaffolded)

Source A — Victorian law restricting Chinese immigration, June 1855 (summarised)

- Every Chinese passenger arriving by sea must pay a tax of £10.
- A ship may carry no more than one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of its weight.
- Arrivals from Britain face no such tax or limit.

Parliament of Victoria, June 1855. Provisions summarised for this workbook from the historical record (see the Sources section).

Victoria passed this law in the middle of the gold rush, when Chinese arrivals were growing fast. Read it using the five steps in Analysis 1.

Source A, a summary of the key provisions of the Victorian Chinese Immigration Act of June 1855

Step 1 — What kind of source is it? It is a **primary source**: an official law made in June 1855 by the Victorian parliament, summarised here so you can see its key provisions. Laws are strong evidence of what a government actually did.

Step 2 — What is its purpose? To reduce the number of Chinese people arriving in Victoria during the gold rush, by making arrival expensive (a £10 tax per passenger — a large sum for the time) and by limiting how many could come on each ship.

Step 3 — What does it say (content)? Every Chinese passenger arriving by sea had to pay £10, and a ship could carry no more than one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of its weight. Together these rules made Chinese migration slower and costlier than migration from Britain, which faced no such tax.

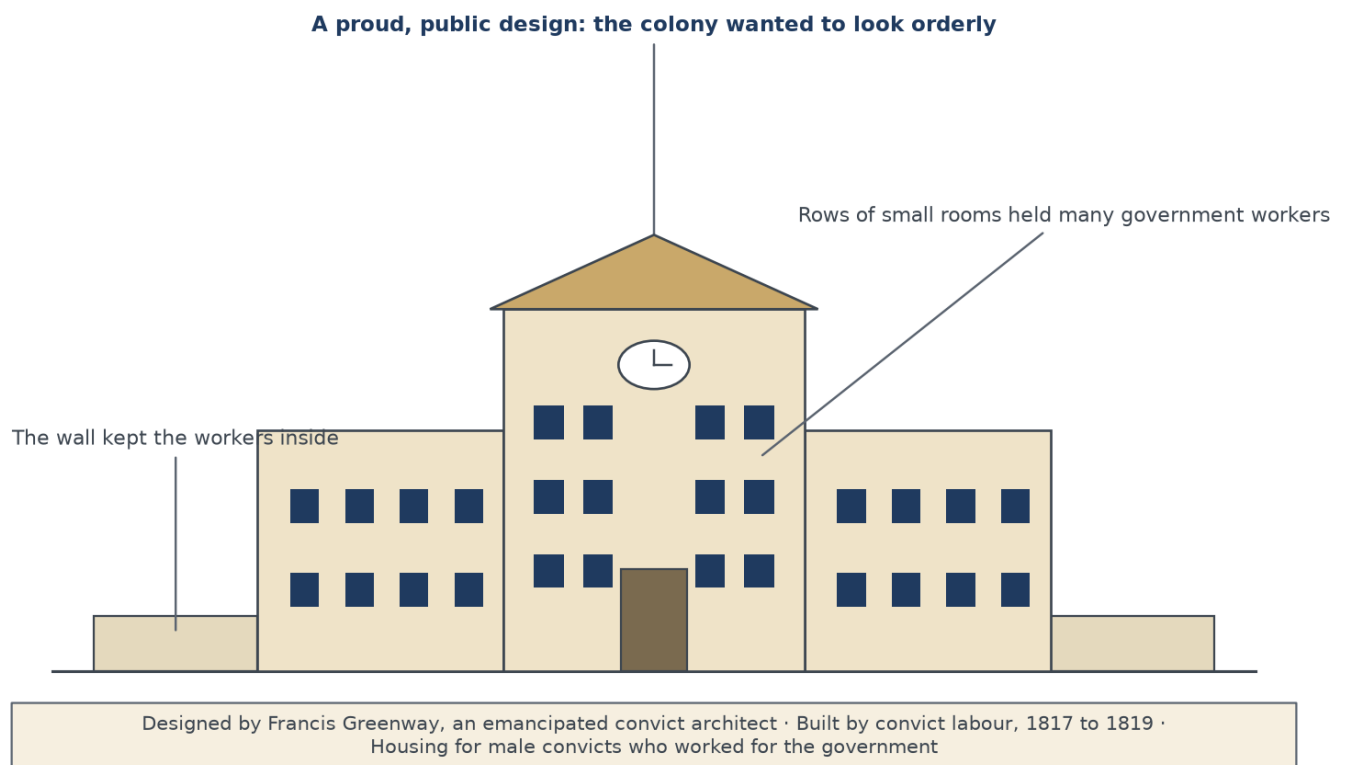
Step 4 — What is its perspective? The perspective of the colonial government, acting under pressure from European miners and residents who wanted Chinese arrivals limited. The law shows that view winning. What it does not show is the perspective of the Chinese miners themselves, who had to pay the tax and live under the law — for that you need other sources, such as letters, newspapers or the records of Chinese communities.

Step 5 — How valuable is it as evidence? Very valuable for showing official action and the attitudes behind it: a government willing to single out one group by race. It matches other evidence in this section (the later NSW laws of 1861 and the riots at Buckland River and Lambing Flat). Its limit is that it tells you what the government did, not how Chinese miners experienced it. A historian would **check it against** other sources before drawing conclusions about Chinese miners' lives.

Analysis 2 — Source B: Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney (scaffolded)

Source B — Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney (stylised drawing)

Drawn for this workbook to show the features historians read as evidence



Source B — Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney. A building is a primary source: evidence of the people who made it and used it.

Source B, a labelled drawing of Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, designed by Francis Greenway and built by convict labour between 1817 and 1819

Step 1 — What kind of source is it? A **primary source** of a different kind: not a written document but a **built structure**. Hyde Park Barracks was designed by Francis Greenway and built by convict labour between 1817 and 1819, to house male convicts who worked for the government. Buildings are evidence of the people who made them and used them.

Step 2 — What was its purpose? To house and control government convicts in one place in the centre of Sydney, so their labour could be put to work on public projects, and to show visitors that the colony was becoming orderly and impressive.

Step 3 — What does it show (content)? It shows that convicts were not only punished — they were the workforce that built the colony. Skilled convict labour produced one of the colony’s finest buildings, to a design by an emancipated convict architect. The building tells you something about both sides of convict life: discipline and control on one hand, and skill and contribution on the other.

Step 4 — What perspectives does it carry? Governor Macquarie’s perspective is in the building’s proud, public design: he wanted the colony to look civilised and believed emancipated convicts could help build it. The convicts’ own perspective is harder to hear — they left few written records — but the building itself stands as evidence of their work. A historian reads it alongside written records such as musters and tickets of leave.

Step 5 — How valuable is it as evidence? Very valuable as evidence of convict labour and of Macquarie’s vision, and it still stands today, which makes it direct, physical evidence. Its limit is that a building cannot tell you how the convicts who built it and slept in it felt about their lives; for that, written sources are needed.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Look at the timeline. Write down what happened in (a) 1851, (b) 1855 and (c) 1863. (*Hint: read the timeline year by year.*)

Q2. Using the currency and sterling table, state (a) what each label meant, and (b) where the labels first appeared in print. (*Hint: the answer is in the table’s notes.*)

Q3. From the convict statistics panel: (a) about how many convicts were transported between 1788 and 1868? (b) about what share were women? (c) what had most convicts been convicted of? (*Hint: read each tile in turn.*)

Q4. Using the Greenway table and Part 2: (a) which governor appointed Francis Greenway as the colony’s architect? (b) name two buildings he designed. (c) What did Samuel Terry build his fortune from? (*Hint: look for names of places and businesses.*)

Q5. Look at the Chinese miners chart. (a) About how many Chinese miners were on the Victorian goldfields by 1858? (b) About what share of all diggers was that? (*Hint: the share is written above the second bar.*)

Q6. Using the “where they worked” map, match each group to its main place of work: (a) Afghan cameleers; (b) Japanese pearlers; (c) South Sea Islanders; (d) Chinese miners. (*Hint: match group to region label.*)

Without a scaffold

Q7. Explain how the experience of the local-born (“currency”) generation differed from that of British-born (“sterling”) arrivals, and describe the perspective the local-born developed about themselves. Use one named example from Part 1.

Q8. “For convicts, transportation was a punishment — but for some it also became an opportunity.” Explain both halves of this statement, using Francis Greenway or Samuel Terry as your example.

Q9. Choose Source A or Source B. Using the five steps as a guide, write a short analysis of your chosen source as evidence of the experiences of arrivals in colonial Australia.

Q10. Look at the debate diagram about how South Sea Islander labourers came to Queensland. Explain each position in its strongest form, then say which you find more convincing and why. You may reach either conclusion; marks are given for the quality of your reasoning and evidence.

Q11. Compare the experiences of two non-European groups from Part 4 (for example, Chinese miners and Afghan cameleers). What was similar about their experiences, and what was different? Give at least one specific fact for each group.

Q12. “Between 1750 and 1914, the population of Australia changed more than anything else about colonial life.” Do you agree? Use the continuity-and-change organiser and one specific example to support your answer.

Answers

Q1. (a) 1851: gold was found in Victoria, starting the gold rush. (b) 1855: Victoria passed its law taxing and limiting Chinese arrivals (and Chinese miners passed 19,000). (c) 1863: the first South Sea Islander labourers were brought to Queensland's sugar plantations.

Q2. (a) Sterling = British-born; currency = born in the colony. (b) The *Sydney Gazette*, 13 September 1822 (a letter signed "Lydia Languish" asking for social events for "currency lasses").

Q3. (a) About 162,000. (b) About one in seven. (c) Theft (about four in five).

Q4. (a) Governor Lachlan Macquarie. (b) Any two of: Hyde Park Barracks, St James' Church, Macquarie Lighthouse, the General Hospital ("Rum Hospital"), the Supreme Court building. (c) Farms, inns, trading, land, bank shares and flour mills — by 1838 he was the richest man in the colony, with an estate valued at £250,000.

Q5. (a) About 33,000. (b) About one in five of all diggers.

Q6. (a) Afghan cameleers — the dry interior of central Australia. (b) Japanese pearlers — northern waters, including Darwin, Broome and Thursday Island. (c) South Sea Islanders — Queensland's sugarcane coast. (d) Chinese miners — the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales.

Q7. Model points: the local-born knew no home but the colony, while British-born arrivals saw it with fresh eyes and measured it against Britain; the local-born developed a proud identity of their own, marked by the word "currency" (first an insult, then worn with pride), and they wanted equal rights and respect. Example: Horatio Wills, born in Sydney in 1811, founded *The Currency Lad* in 1832 to defend the interests of the native-born.

Q8. Model points: punishment side — loss of freedom, years of hard labour on government works or for employers, harsh penalties for re-offending, usually about seven years. Opportunity side — once the sentence ended, the colony's looser class structure let people rise. Greenway: transported for forgery, became the colony's official architect under Macquarie and designed Sydney's finest early buildings. Terry: transported for stealing stockings, became the colony's richest man. A good answer covers both halves and ties them to the example.

Q9. Model points (Source A): a primary source (an official law of June 1855); purpose to limit Chinese arrivals; content a £10 tax per Chinese passenger and one passenger per ten tons of ship; perspective of the colonial government under pressure from European miners, not of the Chinese miners themselves; valuable as evidence of official action and racial attitudes, limited because it cannot show Chinese miners' own experiences — check it against other sources. Model points (Source B): a primary source (a building, 1817–1819); purpose to house government convicts and display an orderly colony; content shows skilled convict labour and an emancipated convict architect; carries Macquarie's perspective, while the convicts' own voices are mostly absent; valuable as physical evidence of convict labour, limited because a building cannot report feelings.

Q10. Model points: Position 1 (much of the trade was willing work): Islanders signed contracts for wages (£6 a year plus food, clothing and housing under the 1868 Act) and many came knowingly, some returning home and some coming back again; in later years recruitment was regulated. Position 2 (much of it was blackbirding): a significant share of Islanders were tricked or taken by force, conditions were harsh, and even "willing" recruits often did not understand the contracts; the recruiting itself took place between unequal parties. A good answer states each position in its strongest form, picks one, and supports it with at least one fact from the section. Historians accept both truths at once: the trade mixed willing and forced labour, which is exactly why the word needs a careful definition.

Q11. Model points: similarities — both groups did work British-born colonists were less willing to do, both faced limits and prejudice despite their contribution, and both helped build whole industries. Differences — Chinese miners worked the goldfields of the south-east from the 1850s and faced entry taxes (1855) and riots (1857, 1860–61); Afghan cameleers worked the dry interior from 1860 with camel trains, carried materials for the Overland Telegraph (completed 1872) and built mosques (Marree from 1861; Adelaide 1888–89). Any two groups with at least one specific fact each.

Q12. Model points either way. Agree: the population changed from mostly British-born arrivals to a mixed society — transportation ended in 1868, the local-born became a large share, gold brought the population of Victoria from 75,000 to about 500,000 in a decade, and non-European workers built the sugar, shell-diving, pastoral and inland transport industries. Disagree (or agree only in part): British law, language and customs continued throughout, and unequal treatment of non-European groups continued and even hardened, ending in the laws of 1901 — so institutions and attitudes show strong continuity. A good answer takes a clear position and supports it with the organiser and one specific example.

Sources

All facts in this section were checked against the following Wikipedia articles (en.wikipedia.org) on 26 August 2026:

- Convict transportation totals, offence profile and dates — *Convicts in Australia*.
- Francis Greenway — *Francis Greenway*.
- Samuel Terry — *Samuel Terry*.
- Currency and sterling labels, Horatio Wills — *Currency lad*.
- Victorian gold rush population and Chinese miner figures; June 1855 entry tax and shipping limits — *Victorian gold rush*.
- Chinese arrival numbers, restrictive laws and goldfields violence — *Chinese Australians* and *White Australia policy*.
- Afghan cameleers, the Overland Telegraph, mosques and the Ghan — *Afghan cameleers in Australia*.
- Japanese arrivals and the shell trade at Broome — *Japanese Australians* and *Broome, Western Australia*.
- South Sea Islander numbers, origins, the 1868 Act and the 1901 deportation — *South Sea Islanders*, *Blackbirding* and *White Australia policy*.

Figures were drawn for this workbook from the values shown above; no figure is copied from a published source.

Australia around 1900: daily life, institutions and culture

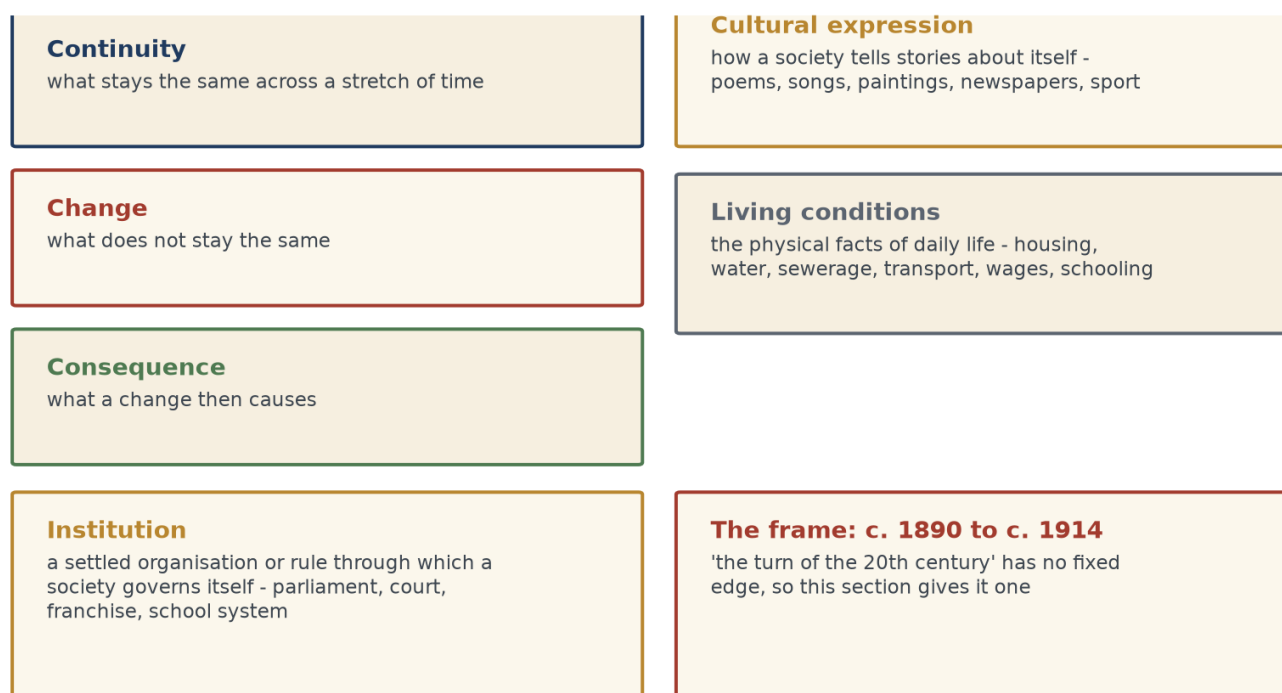
Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K11. Elaborations drawn on: .E01, .E02, .E03, .E04.

The words we must define first. This section is built on three measuring words historians use: **continuity**, **change** and **consequence**. A **continuity** is what stays the same across a stretch of time; a **change** is what does not; a **consequence** is what a change then causes. Historians do not ask “did things change?” as a yes-or-no question — different parts of a society change at different speeds, so the real question is always *what* changed, *what* stayed, and *for whom*.

The curriculum’s time frame for this content is the turn of the 20th century. That phrase is frame-dependent, like “near” or “recent” — it has no fixed edge until we give it one. In this section the frame is **c. 1890 to c. 1914**: from the great strikes and the Federation debates of the 1890s, through the birth of the Commonwealth on 1 January 1901, to the first federal wage and pension laws. (*c.* is short for the Latin *circa*, “around”).

The other key terms: **institutions** are the settled organisations and rules through which a society governs itself — parliaments, courts, the franchise (who is allowed to vote), the school system; **cultural expression** is how a society tells stories about itself — poems, songs, paintings, newspapers and sport; **living conditions** are the physical facts of daily life — housing, water, sewerage, transport, wages and schooling. Figure 1 holds the set.

The measuring words of this section

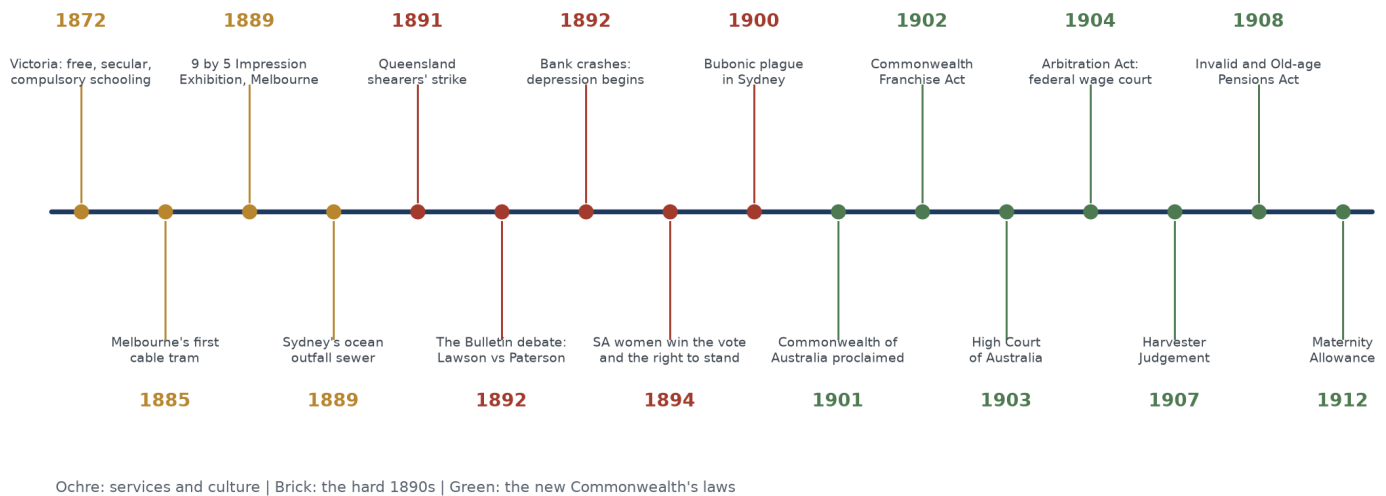


Seven definition cards: continuity; change; consequence; institution; cultural expression; living conditions; and the time frame c. 1890 to c. 1914, each with a one-line plain-language definition

Figure 1. The measuring words of this section. The frame c. 1890–c. 1914 is stated, because “the turn of the century” has no edge of its own.

Figure 2 gives you the whole road at once — the reforms and events this section will unpack.

Reform, culture and crisis: the road through this section, 1872-1912



Timeline, 1872 to 1912, alternating above and below the line: Victoria's free secular compulsory Education Act 1872; Melbourne's first cable tram 1885; the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition 1889; Sydney's ocean outfall sewer 1889; the Queensland shearers' strike 1891; the Bulletin debate 1892; bank crashes 1892 to 1893; South Australian women win the vote and the right to stand 1894; bubonic plague in Sydney 1900; Federation 1 January 1901; Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902; High Court 1903; Arbitration Act 1904; Harvester Judgement 1907; Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908; Maternity Allowance 1912

Figure 2. The road through this section: laws, services and events, 1872–1912.

Part 1 — Life and work around 1900 (E01)

In March 1901 the first census of the new Commonwealth counted about 3.8 million people (3,765,339, to be exact) spread across six states that had been six British colonies the year before. Most were of British or Irish birth or descent. Sydney and Melbourne each held about half a million people, and Australia was already one of the most city-dwelling societies on earth — even though its wealth still rode on the sheep's back. Wool, wheat, meat and dairy were the exports that paid for nearly everything else.

.E01 asks you to compare **different settings** using sources of the time: photographs, paintings, diaries and newspapers. Three settings make the point (Figure 3).

Three Australias around 1900: comparing settings

	A wealthy city household	A working-class inner-city family	A rural shearing district
Housing	A two-storey villa in a new suburb, with servants' rooms	A rented two-room terrace or cottage, with a shared yard	A slab or weatherboard hut, roofed with corrugated iron
Water and sewerage	Piped water; connected to the new sewerage by 1900	A yard tap or a shared well; night-soil collection, no sewer	Tank water; no sewerage at all
Work and wages	Income from a business, property or a profession	A weekly wage, paid Saturdays; wives and children worked too	Seasonal work - shearing, fencing, droving, carrying wool
Schooling	Private school, then perhaps secondary school or university	State school until about 12 to 14, then paid work	A small state school if one was near - often it was not
Transport	Private carriage; first-class rail; travel overseas	Walking; cable tram; crowded train to work	Horse and cart; rail in stages; coastal ships carried the wool

The same year, three different lives. VC2HH10K11.E01 asks you to compare settings using sources of the time.

Table comparing three settings around 1900 — a wealthy city household, a working-class inner-city family, and a rural shearing district — across five rows: housing, water and sewerage, work and wages, schooling, and transport

Figure 3. Three Australias around 1900. The same year, three different lives.

One famous painting is a source you can read like a document. Tom Roberts spent 1888 and 1889 sketching in a shearing shed at Brocklesby station, near Corowa in New South Wales, and in 1890 he showed the finished canvas, *Shearing the Rams*, in Melbourne. It shows a sunlit shed, a ringer at his board, shed hands at work, and wool stacked for the season — the old hand-blade way of shearing, at the very moment machine shearing was beginning to spread through the industry. Roberts kept painting the older way, because it was the way most sheds still worked. Notice what that means for our measuring words: a single source can hold continuity (hand shears, the shed routine) and change (machines arriving) at the same time.

At the other end of the scale, the living conditions of the poor were sometimes forced into the open by disaster. In January 1900 bubonic plague broke out in Sydney, striking hardest in the crowded lanes of The Rocks and Darling Harbour. The outbreak killed about 100 people in Sydney that year, and it exposed how bad inner-city housing could be. The state government resumed slum areas around The Rocks and Darling Harbour; more than 3,800 houses, buildings and wharves were inspected and hundreds were pulled down. Disease, in this case, became the cause of reform.

These are the source types .E01 names, and each has its strength: photographs show a street as it stood; a painting shows how an artist chose to see work; a diary shows one person's days from the inside; a newspaper shows what a city argued about. The National Library of Australia has digitised millions of old newspaper pages (Trove, trove.nla.gov.au) — you can read the same pages readers read in 1900. One habit to start now: when a source suggests something it does not say outright, your conclusion is an **inference** — and you must label it as an inference, never present it as a stated fact.

Part 2 — One hundred years of change: c. 1800 and c. 1900 compared (E03)

To see how far living and working conditions had moved by 1900, .E03 sets them against early colonisation, around 1800. Figure 4 runs the comparison feature by feature.

Living and working conditions: c. 1800 and c. 1900 compared

Feature	Around 1800 (early colonisation)	Around 1900
Housing	Tents and timber slab huts; a few brick houses for officials at Sydney Cove	Terrace houses in city streets; suburban villas; workers' cottages roofed with corrugated iron
Sanitation	Streams, wells and water tanks; no sewers	Piped water; Sydney's ocean outfall sewer from 1889; Melbourne's scheme from the late 1890s; night-soil collection still common
Transport	On foot, by horse and cart, and by coastal sailing ship	Railways from 1854 and 1855; cable trams in Melbourne from 1885; steamships; horses still did most local hauling
Education	No public schools; a few church and charity schools	Free, secular, compulsory state schools - Victoria 1872, New South Wales 1880
Agriculture	Small farms around the Hawkesbury River; the first merino flocks; wool not yet the staple	Wool, wheat, and - after refrigeration in the 1880s - frozen meat and dairy exports
Industry	Convict workshops (bricks, ships); almost no factories	Factories in Melbourne and Sydney: clothing, boots, machinery, processed food
Government	A governor ruling under instructions from London; no elected parliament	Self-governing colonies; from 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth with an elected federal parliament

Table with seven rows — housing, sanitation, transport, education, agriculture, industry, and government — in two columns: around 1800 (early colonisation) and around 1900

Figure 4. Housing, sanitation, transport, education, agriculture, industry and government: c. 1800 and c. 1900, compared. These are the features named in VC2HH10K11.E03.

Read the table down, not across. Every row shows change, but the rows changed for different reasons and at different speeds. Sewerage and clean water came late — Sydney's ocean outfall sewer began work in 1889, and Melbourne's sewerage scheme only in the late 1890s, after decades of wells, water tanks and night-soil collection. Railways came fast: the first line in Victoria opened in 1854, in New South Wales in 1855, and by 1900 rail lines reached most country towns. Melbourne's cable trams began in 1885 and grew into one of the largest cable-tram systems in the world. Education changed in one stroke of the pen: Victoria's Education Act of 1872 made schooling free, secular (not controlled by any church) and compulsory (required by law) — one of the first such laws anywhere in the world — and New South Wales followed with its Public Instruction Act of 1880.

Agriculture and industry changed because of two inventions more than anything else. Refrigeration, from the 1880s, meant meat and butter could survive the long sea trip to Britain — the ship *Strathleven* reached London with a cargo of frozen Australian meat in 1880 — which turned sheep runs and dairy farms into export businesses. And the factories of Melbourne and Sydney, which in 1900 made clothing, boots, furniture, machinery and processed food, gave city workers a new kind of working life: wages paid weekly, hours set by the clock.

Two pressures of the 1890s shaped what came next, and they connect to Section 2B. The great strikes of 1890–1891 (the shearers' strike in Queensland above all) and the bank crashes of 1892–93 brought unemployment and hardship — but they also pushed workers into politics, and the Labor Party grew out of that decade. Hard times were one cause of the new laws you meet in Part 6.

Part 3 — A new nation: institutions at Federation

Institutions changed fastest of all. During the 1890s the six colonies debated joining together in one nation — that joining is what Australians call **Federation**. Elected delegates met at conventions (1891, then 1897–98) to draft a **constitution** — the basic law that sets out how a nation is governed — and the voters of each colony approved the draft in **referendums**, votes in which the whole electorate decides a single question, between 1898 and 1900. The British Parliament then passed the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, which became law on 9 July 1900.

On **1 January 1901** the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed at Centennial Park in Sydney: six colonies became six states under one national government. Edmund Barton led the first federal ministry, the first federal election was held in March 1901, and the first federal parliament opened on 9 May 1901 in Melbourne’s Royal Exhibition Building.

Figure 5 sorts out what was new and what carried over.

Federation, 1 January 1901: what changed, and what stayed

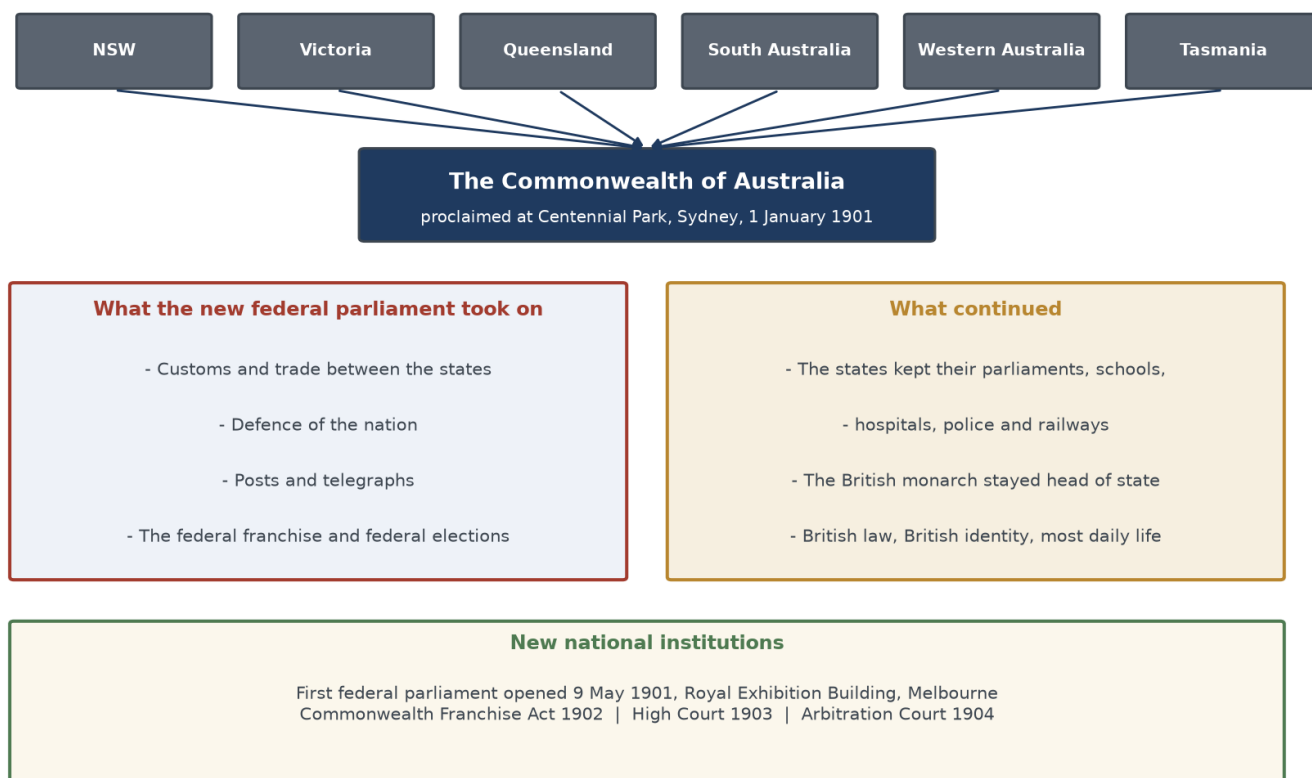


Diagram of institutional change at Federation: six colonies feed into one Commonwealth dated 1 January 1901; left panel lists what the new federal parliament took on; right panel lists what continued unchanged; a base band lists the new national institutions and their dates

Figure 5. What Federation changed — and what it left standing.

The change was real: a new parliament, a new High Court (1903), a new federal court to settle industrial disputes (1904), and a federal franchise. The **Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902** gave women the vote and the right to stand for federal parliament. The ground had been laid by the colonies: South Australian women had won both the vote and the right to stand for parliament in 1894–95, and Western Australian women the vote in 1899 — among the first women in the world to hold such rights at that level.

The continuities were just as real. The states kept their parliaments, their schools, their hospitals and their police. The new nation kept the British monarch as head of state, kept British law and British habits, and most of its people still called themselves British. Federation is the section’s clearest test case: the same event is a giant change (a nation is born) and a managed continuity (most daily power stays where it was).

Source inquiry A — the preamble of the Constitution

A **primary source** is a record made at the time by people inside the events. The preamble — the opening statement — of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 is one sentence long, and it is worth slowing down for (Figure 6).

SOURCE A

One sentence that made a nation

'WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania have humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established.'

Preamble, Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (UK), which became law on 9 July 1900. Drafted at the Australian constitutional conventions of 1891 and 1897-98, and approved by the voters of the colonies in referendums, 1898-1900.

Document reproduction of the preamble of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, quoting the full sentence beginning *Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania*, with attribution and the date of royal assent, 9 July 1900

Figure 6. Source A: the preamble of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (UK), as enacted.

Reading Source A like a historian

ORIGIN

Who passed this Act? Where was its wording drafted, and who approved it?

CONTENT

What does 'indissoluble' claim? On whose authority does the union stand?

PURPOSE

Why put these claims into the opening sentence of a law?

AUDIENCE

Who was meant to read and accept this sentence in 1900?

SILENCES

Whose voices are absent? Which groups had almost no seat at the conventions?

CHECKS

Which records could test each claim? (Referendum results; convention debates.)

An **INFERENCE** is a conclusion you draw from the evidence - not a fact the source states.
Draw inferences freely, but always label them as inferences.

Six question boxes and an inference band for reading Source A: origin, content, purpose, audience, silences, and checks, each with a guiding question

Figure 7. The questions to put to Source A before inferring anything from it — the same frame Sections 7C and 7D teach in depth.

Worked inquiry — how do you read one sentence like a historian? Watch the method. **Origin:** a British Act of Parliament, 1900 — but drafted in Australia, at the conventions of 1891 and 1897–98, and approved by colonial voters in referendums. **Content:** the people “agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth” — the word *indissoluble* (unable to be broken apart) is doing heavy work: the union was meant to be permanent. **Purpose:** to make

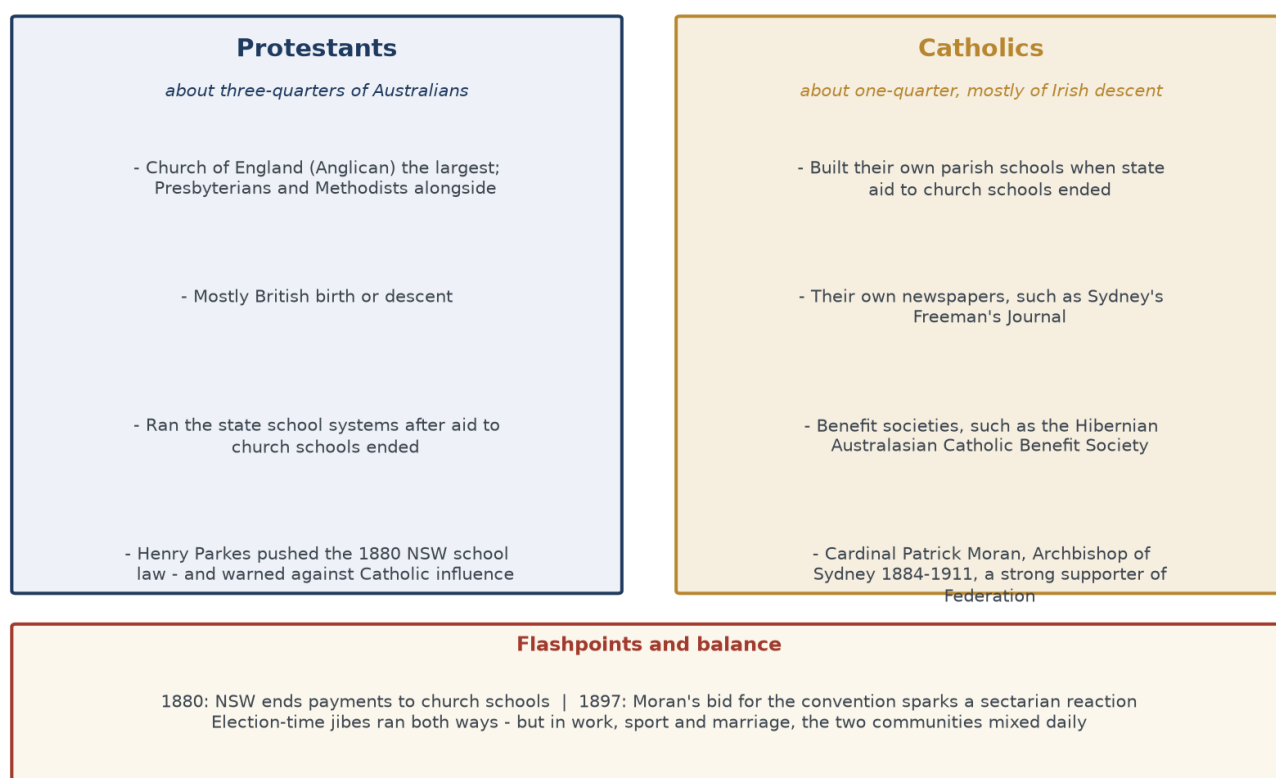
Federation law, and to say whose authority it stood on — the people, the Crown and the new Constitution, in that order in the sentence. **Silences:** the sentence names peoples and parliaments, but the convention halls were filled with politicians and lawyers; women and working people had almost no seat at the table where the words were chosen. **Checks:** the referendum results of 1898–1900, and the convention debates, let you verify each claim the sentence makes. Notice the pattern: provenance — who made a source, where, when and for what — is not extra decoration; it is part of the evidence.

Part 4 — Protestants and Catholics: religious sectarianism (E02)

One division ran under the surface of the new nation. **Sectarianism** is hostility and division between religious groups; in Australia at this time it meant the tension between Protestants and Catholics. The word is used in that sense here — tension, not war; in daily life the two groups mixed constantly, and the division was loudest in politics, schooling and the press.

The numbers first. Around 1900, roughly three-quarters of Australians were Protestant — Church of England (Anglican) was the largest group, with Presbyterians and Methodists alongside — and about one-quarter were Catholic, most of them of Irish birth or descent. Each side had its own institutions: churches and schools, newspapers (Catholics had papers such as Sydney's *Freeman's Journal*), and benefit societies that paid members in sickness and at funerals, such as the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (Figure 8).

Two communities, one nation: Protestants and Catholics around 1900



Two-panel figure on religious sectarianism around 1900: left panel, Protestant majority (about three-quarters) with its churches, schools and politics; right panel, Catholic minority (about one-quarter, mostly Irish descent) with its churches, schools, newspapers and benefit societies; a base band lists three political flashpoints and one balancing point about daily mixing

Figure 8. Two communities, one nation: the Protestant–Catholic divide around 1900.

Three flashpoints show the social and political impact. The first was schooling. When the colonies built free state schools, the schools were secular. In New South Wales, the Public Instruction Act of 1880, pushed through by Premier Henry Parkes, ended government payments to church schools as well as making schooling compulsory. Catholic bishops answered by building their own system of parish schools, staffed by religious orders of teaching brothers and

nuns. The result was a lasting consequence of that decision: two school systems, side by side, for the rest of the century and beyond.

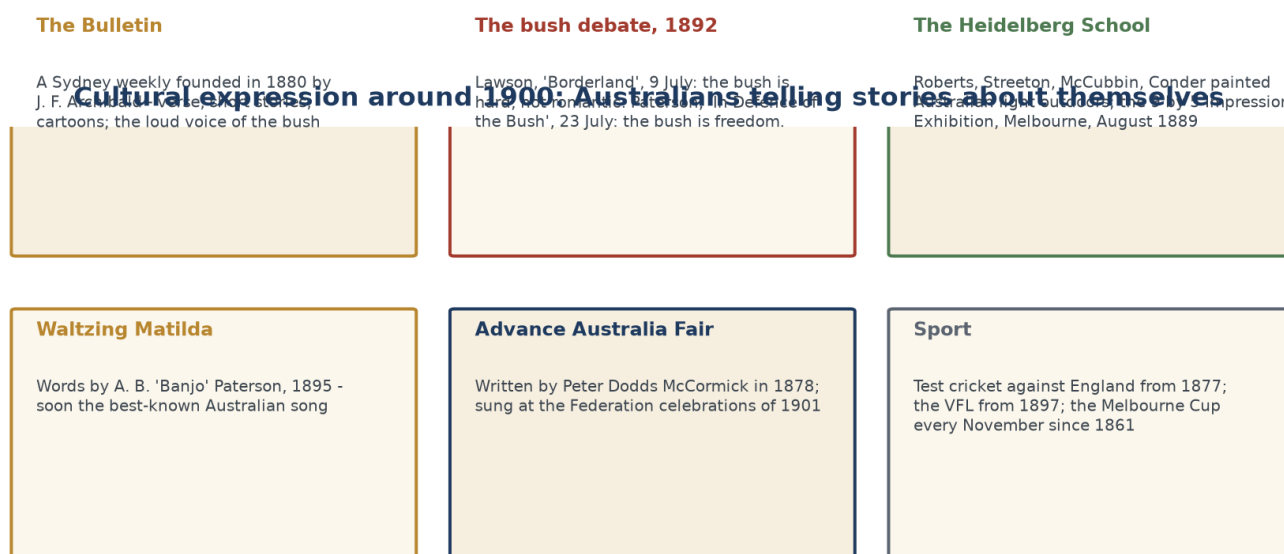
The second was politics. Parkes also publicly warned against Catholic influence in politics in the late 1880s, and the jibe worked both ways: Labor drew much of its support from Irish-Catholic workers, while its opponents sometimes painted the whole party as a Catholic interest.

The third brings sectarianism right into the formation of the nation. Cardinal Patrick Moran, the Irish-born Archbishop of Sydney from 1884 to 1911, was a strong supporter of Federation — he attended the People’s Federal Convention at Bathurst in November 1896 — and in March 1897 he stood for election as a delegate to the constitutional convention. His decision to stand sparked a sectarian reaction — hostility aimed at him because he was Catholic: Protestant newspapers and politicians attacked the idea of a Catholic cardinal helping to write the nation’s constitution, and he finished thirteenth, outside the elected spots. The episode is a precise answer to .E02: sectarianism did not stop Federation, but it shaped how the nation was argued over.

Keep the balance, though. The strongest form of the other view — that sectarianism has been overstated — deserves a hearing: most Protestants and Catholics worked together, played sport together and married across the line; the division sharpened at elections and in newspapers far more than in streets and workplaces. Both positions rest on real evidence; your job in task 8 is to weigh them, not to pick a team.

Part 5 — Cultural expression: the bush debate, painting, song and sport

Cultural expression around 1900 was busy arguing about what Australia was. The liveliest argument ran inside a magazine. *The Bulletin*, a Sydney weekly founded in 1880 by J. F. Archibald, printed verse, short stories and cartoons, and in 1892 it hosted a famous exchange between two writers about the bush — the outback and its ways of life (Figure 9).



Six cards of cultural expression around 1900: The Bulletin magazine; the Lawson–Paterson bush debate of 1892; the Heidelberg School and the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition of 1889; Waltzing Matilda; Advance Australia Fair; and sport — cricket, football and the Melbourne Cup

Figure 9. How Australians expressed themselves around 1900.

Henry Lawson attacked the romantic bush. In “Borderland” (9 July 1892) he wrote: “*I am back from up the country—very sorry that I went,*” and in later verses he mocked city writers who praised a bush they had never worked in. A. B. “Banjo” Paterson answered in “In Defence of the Bush” (23 July 1892), closing with the barb: “*For the bush will never suit you, and you’ll never suit the bush.*” Read it as two **perspectives** — points of view shaped by what each man had seen and lived through — on one way of life: Lawson, the son of a droving family’s hard years, saw drought, loneliness and broken selection blocks; Paterson saw freedom, horsemanship and mateship. Both men used real Australia; neither wrote the whole of it. Later historians kept arguing about exactly this — whether the bush legend described life as it was, or life as city readers wished it were.

Painting ran the same argument. The artists of the Heidelberg School — Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Frederick McCubbin and Charles Conder — painted Australian light, bush and work outdoors, and in August 1889 they held the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition in Melbourne, so called because many of the panels were painted on cigar-box lids 9 by 5 inches. Song did its part too: Banjo Paterson wrote the words of “Waltzing Matilda” in 1895, and Peter Dodds McCormick’s “Advance Australia Fair” (1878) was sung at Federation celebrations in 1901. Sport was cultural expression with crowds: Australians and Englishmen had played Test cricket against each other since 1877, the Victorian Football League began in 1897, and the Melbourne Cup had stopped a nation every November since 1861.

Notice what all five strands share: they were making a national culture that was *about* Australia, written and painted by Australians for Australian audiences — itself a change, and a consequence of the coming of the new nation.

Part 6 — The federal parliament changes working life (E04)

The new federal parliament used its power quickly, and the laws it made reached into wages and living standards (Figure 10 and Figure 11).

SOURCE B

What a fair wage must satisfy

‘... a fair and reasonable wage ... must satisfy the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being in a civilised community.’

Justice H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, in the Harvester Judgement (Ex parte H. V. McKay), 8 November 1907. Wording abridged from the judgement.

Document reproduction of Source B: the Harvester Judgement wording of Justice H. B. Higgins, 8 November 1907, that a fair and reasonable wage satisfies the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being in a civilised community, with attribution and case details

Figure 10. Source B: the line from the Harvester Judgement that defined a fair wage — abridged from the judgement of 8 November 1907.

The federal parliament changes working and living conditions, 1904-1912

Law or decision	What it did	Consequence for working families
Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904	Created a federal court to settle disputes between employers and unions, and to set fair wages	Disputes could end in a decision, not only in strikes and lockouts
Harvester Judgement 1907	Fixed the benchmark for a 'fair and reasonable' wage: seven shillings a day (forty-two a week) for an unskilled labourer	A floor under wages - the idea of the 'basic wage', which shaped wage-setting for most of the century
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908	A means-tested pension, up to ten shillings a week, for people aged 65 and over, and for those too ill to work	Old age no longer meant only family, charity or the asylum
Maternity Allowance Act 1912	Paid mothers five pounds for each new baby	Help with costs in the weeks around a birth

The amounts were modest and the tests were strict - but the direction of change was unmistakable. VC2HH10K11.E04.

Table of four federal laws and decisions, 1904 to 1912: the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904; the Harvester Judgement 1907; the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908; and the Maternity Allowance Act 1912, each with what it did and its consequence for working families

Figure 11. Four federal interventions in working and living conditions, and what each meant.

Worked inquiry — what was the Harvester Judgement? The Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1904 had created a federal court to settle disputes between employers and unions and to set fair wages. **Arbitration** is that method — an independent decision-maker settling a dispute that the two sides cannot settle themselves. In 1906 the federal parliament passed an Excise Tariff Act: makers of farm machinery paid a tax (an excise) on their goods unless they paid “fair and reasonable” wages. Hugh Victor McKay, owner of the Sunshine Harvester Works near Melbourne, applied for the exemption. The court’s president, Justice H. B. Higgins, heard witnesses — including workers’ wives on what a family budget actually needed — and on 8 November 1907 he refused McKay’s claim. In doing so he fixed a benchmark: a fair and reasonable wage for an unskilled labourer was seven shillings a day, forty-two shillings a week. The High Court struck down the Excise Tariff Act itself in 1908, but the idea survived: the **basic wage** — a floor below which no wage should fall — became the centre of Australian wage-setting for most of the twentieth century.

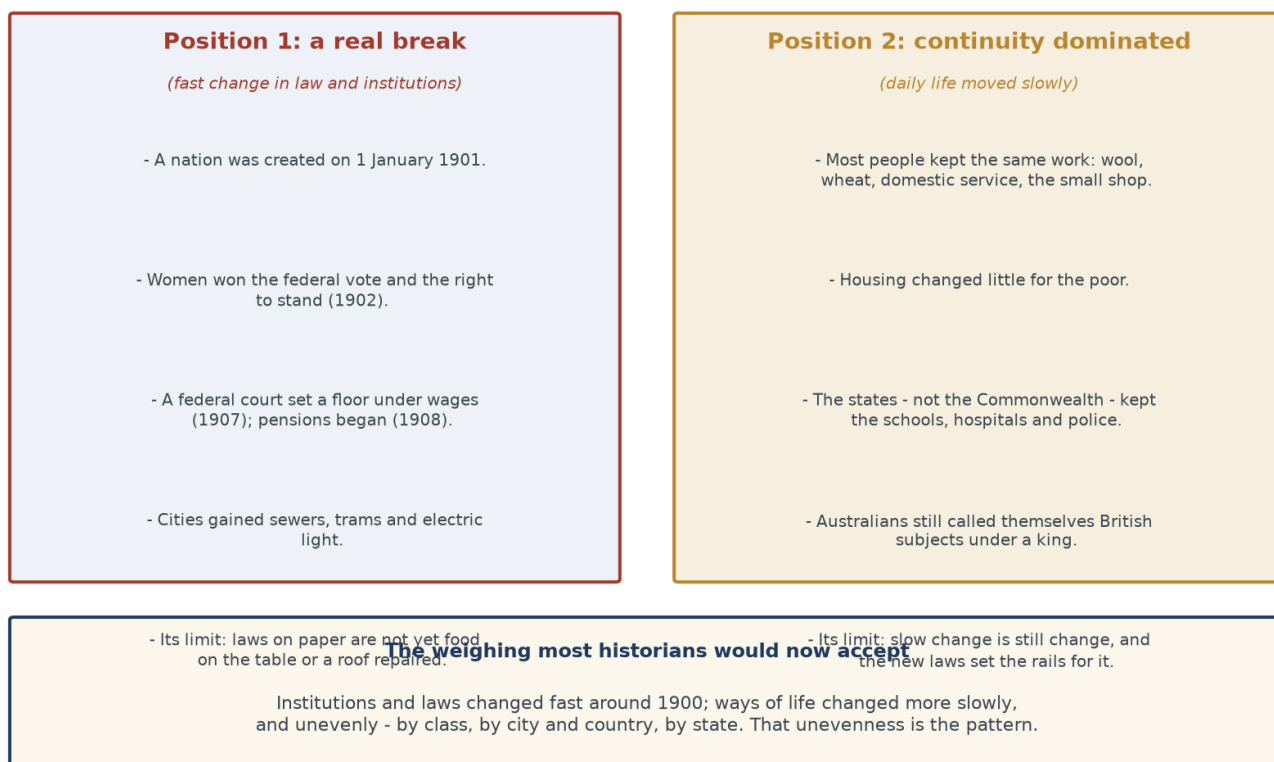
Source B shows why the case is remembered beyond the money. Wages, Higgins wrote, must meet the needs of the worker “regarded as a human being in a civilised community” — the worker’s humanity, not the labour market alone, was put into the scales. Whether that was the court’s proper job was contested at the time, and historians still weigh it; what is not contested is the consequence — a wage floor that shaped standards of living for generations.

The pension laws worked the same way on the other end of life. Before 1908, Australians too old or too ill to work relied on family, charity or the grim prospect of the asylum. The **Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908** gave a means-tested pension — paid only to those whose income and property fell below a set level — of up to ten shillings a week to people aged 65 and over. The **Maternity Allowance Act 1912** paid mothers five pounds for each new baby. Each law had limits that we should name honestly: the amounts were modest, the tests were strict, and a person’s record and character were judged before payment. Still, the direction of change is unmistakable — the state had accepted a duty to keep citizens out of destitution, and that duty is a consequence we still live with.

Part 7 — How much did life really change? The historians’ weighing

You now have the evidence to face the section’s big question. Historians genuinely answer it in different ways, and both answers deserve their strongest form (Figure 12).

How much did life really change around 1900?



Two panels and a synthesis band: Position 1, the c. 1900 years were a real break, stated with its strongest evidence and its limit; Position 2, continuity dominated, stated with its strongest evidence and its limit; below, a synthesis — institutions changed fast while daily life changed slowly and unevenly

Figure 12. The question of the section, steelmanned. Each position is stated as its own advocates would recognise it.

Position 1 says the break was real: a nation was created; women won the federal vote and the right to stand; a federal court began setting a floor under wages; pensions and the maternity allowance made the state responsible for the old, the ill and new mothers; cities gained sewers, trams and electric light. Position 2 answers that beneath the institutions, most lives moved slowly: most people kept the same work — wool, wheat, domestic service, the small shop; housing changed little for the poor; the states, not the Commonwealth, kept schools, hospitals and police; and Australians still thought of themselves as British subjects under a king. Both lists are true. The weighing that follows is the one most historians would now accept: institutions and laws changed fast around 1900; ways of life changed more slowly, and unevenly — by class, by city and country, by state. That unevenness *is* the pattern; it is what the content description (VC2HH10K11) asks you to explain.

Practice — scaffolded

1. Match the term to the case. Copy the table and complete it using the definitions in Figure 1. One row is done for you.

Case from this section	Term
The states kept their parliaments and schools after 1901	continuity
Melbourne's cable trams begin in 1885	
The plague outbreak led to slum resumptions and demolitions	
The High Court and the Arbitration Court are created	

“Waltzing Matilda” and the Bulletin verse argue about what Australia is

2. Read the timeline. From Figure 2: (a) which came first — women winning the vote in South Australia, or the Commonwealth Franchise Act? (b) Name three federal laws or institutions from after 1 January 1901. (c) Which two events on the timeline sit inside the 1890s depression years?

3. Read the settings. From Figure 3, state one difference between the wealthy household and the working-class family for each of: housing, sewerage, and schooling.

4. Read the comparison. From Figure 4: (a) pick two rows and name what changed in each; (b) pick one row and name what did *not* fully change by 1900 (hint: look for the words “still”, “began” and “only”); (c) which row’s change was driven most by refrigeration?

5. Source A origin questions. Using only Figures 6 and 7: (a) who passed the Act, and whose work drafted it? (b) what does the word *indissoluble* claim about the new union? (c) name one silence in the sentence.

6. Source B content questions. From Figure 10: (a) whose needs does Higgins say a fair wage must meet? (b) in one sentence, why was this more than a money question?

Practice — unscaffolded

7. Comparing settings (E01). In one paragraph (4–6 sentences), compare the living and working conditions of *two* settings from Figure 3, using at least two dated facts from this section and one **inference** labelled as an inference. Name the source types (photographs, paintings, diaries, newspapers) a historian could use to check your comparison.

8. Sectarianism, weighed (E02). Figure 8 and Part 4 give both sides. Write two sentences beginning “The strongest case that sectarianism shaped the new nation is ...”, then two sentences beginning “But the strongest case that it has been overstated is ...”. Do not caricature either side.

9. Continuity or change? For each item, label it continuity, change or both, and give the dated evidence: the monarchy; the state school systems; the federal franchise; wool exporting.

10. Evaluate the change (continuity/change). In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), evaluate how far ways of life in Australia changed around the turn of the 20th century. Use the moves in Figure 13 — claim, dated evidence, steelman, weighing, judgement — with your own dated facts from this section, not the model’s.

Answers

1. Cable trams — change. Plague leading to resumptions — consequence. New courts — change (new institutions). Bulletin verse and song — cultural expression.

2. (a) South Australia first (1894–95), then the Commonwealth Franchise Act (1902). (b) Any three of: Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902; High Court 1903; Arbitration Act 1904; Harvester Judgement 1907; Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908; Maternity Allowance 1912. (c) The shearers' strike (1891) and the Bulletin debate (1892) sit beside the bank crashes of 1892–93 — any two from the strike, the debate and the crashes are accepted.

3. Accept any row-correct contrast from Figure 3 — for example: terrace villa with piped water and sewerage versus a rented two-room house with a shared yard and night-soil collection; state school to about 12–14 for both, but the wealthy child might continue to a private secondary school while the working child went to paid work.

4. (a) Any two correct rows — e.g. transport: horse, foot and coastal shipping → railways and cable trams; education: church schools → free, secular, compulsory state schools. (b) Any honest limit — e.g. sanitation: night-soil collection still served many country towns and inner-city lanes; transport: horses still did most local haulage. (c) Agriculture (frozen meat and dairy exports).

5. (a) The British Parliament passed it; Australian convention delegates drafted it, and colonial voters approved it in referendums. (b) That the union could not be broken apart — it was meant to last. (c) Accept one real silence — e.g. no mention of women, who had almost no seat at the conventions.

6. (a) The normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised community. (b) Any fair version of: it put the worker's humanity — not just the market price of labour — into the reasoning about wages.

7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: two dated facts and one labelled inference, plus named source types (7); both positions stated in their strongest form, neither caricatured (8); each label backed by a dated fact — monarchy and states' schools are continuity; the federal franchise is change; wool exporting is both, because refrigeration changed how it was sold (9); a claim up front, dated evidence, a fair steelman, a weighing that answers it, and a judgement that returns to the claim (10).

Model response (for task 10)

Ways of life in Australia changed around the turn of the 20th century, but the change was fast in law and slow in daily life. The new Commonwealth moved quickly: the Franchise Act of 1902 gave women the federal vote, the Harvester Judgement of 1907 set a basic wage of seven shillings a day, and the Pensions Act of 1908 paid up to ten shillings a week to the old and the ill. Cities changed too — Sydney began its ocean outfall sewer in 1889, and Melbourne's cable trams ran from 1885. Against this, most people kept the same work and the same modest housing: wool and wheat still paid the nation's way, the states still ran the schools, and Australians still called themselves British. The weighing is in the difference between the two kinds of change: laws can be made in a year, while housing, wages in the pocket and habits of a lifetime move across generations. Judgement: c. 1900 was a genuine turning point for institutions and rights, but for most families the change arrived slowly, one reform at a time.

The moves in the model paragraph (task 10)

1. CLAIM	<i>Say your answer up front.</i>
'Ways of life in Australia changed around the turn of the 20th century, but the change was fast in law and slow in daily life.'	
2. EVIDENCE	<i>Dated facts carry the claim.</i>
'The Franchise Act of 1902 ... the Harvester Judgement of 1907 ... the Pensions Act of 1908 ... Sydney's sewer, 1889 ... Melbourne's cable trams, 1885.'	
3. STEELMAN	<i>The other side, in its strongest form.</i>
'Against this, most people kept the same work and the same modest housing; the states still ran the schools; Australians still called themselves British.'	
4. WEIGHING	<i>Answer the steelman, don't dodge it.</i>
'Laws can be made in a year, while housing, wages in the pocket and habits of a lifetime move across generations.'	
5. JUDGEMENT	<i>Return to the claim and settle it.</i>
'c. 1900 was a genuine turning point for institutions and rights, but for most families the change arrived slowly, one reform at a time.'	

Steal the moves, not the facts.

Model paragraph for task 10, with its moves labelled: five sentence cards labelled claim, evidence, steelman, weighing and judgement

Figure 13. The model paragraph of task 10, with its moves labelled. Steal the moves, not the facts.

Looking back. You can now define continuity, change and consequence and apply them to real cases; compare living and working conditions across settings around 1900 and against c. 1800; explain what Federation changed in institutions and what it left standing; weigh how sectarianism between Protestants and Catholics affected social and political life; and explain how the Harvester Judgement, the pensions of 1908 and the maternity allowance of 1912 changed working conditions and living standards. The people and events behind these changes are examined in Sections 2B and 2C; the “social laboratory” interpretation of this era is Section 2E; the formal analysis of continuity and change is Section 8A, and the source skills you practised here are taught in depth in Sections 7C and 7D.

Sources for this section (all figures in this section are original, drawn for this book).

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 9 and 10: VC2HH10K11 with elaborations .E01–.E04 (VCAA export, 29 July 2026).
- Wikipedia, “Harvester Judgement”: the decision of 8 November 1907; Justice Higgins; H. V. McKay and the Sunshine Harvester Works; the Excise Tariff Act 1906; seven shillings a day and forty-two shillings a week; *R v Barger* (1908); retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Wikipedia, “Federation of Australia”: referendums of 1898–1900; Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act passed 5 July 1900, royal assent 9 July 1900; proclamation at Centennial Park, Sydney, 1 January 1901; Edmund Barton; first federal election March 1901; first parliament at the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne; retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Wikipedia, “Women’s suffrage in Australia”: South Australian women’s vote and right to stand (Act passed December 1894, royal assent February 1895); Western Australian women’s vote 1899; Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902; retrieved 2026-08-26.

- Wikipedia, “Patrick Francis Moran”: Archbishop of Sydney 1884–1911; created cardinal 1885; supporter of Federation; People’s Federal Convention, Bathurst, November 1896; his decision to stand in the convention election of March 1897 and the sectarian reaction to it; retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Wikipedia, “The Bulletin Debate”: Lawson’s “Borderland” (“Up the Country”), 9 July 1892, and its opening line; Paterson’s “In Defence of the Bush”, 23 July 1892, and its closing line; retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Wikipedia, “The Rocks, Sydney”: the 1900 plague outbreak; resumption of areas around The Rocks and Darling Harbour; more than 3,800 buildings inspected, hundreds demolished; retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Wikipedia, “1900 in Australia”: population figure 3,765,339; electric street lighting in Adelaide, 3 January 1900; retrieved 2026-08-26.
- Text of the preamble, Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (UK).
- Tom Roberts, *Shearing the Rams*, 1890, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (painted from sketches made at Brocklesby station, near Corowa, 1888–1889).
- 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition, Buxton’s Rooms, Melbourne, August 1889 (Roberts, Streeton, McCubbin, Conder).
- National Library of Australia, Trove digitised newspapers (trove.nla.gov.au) — the newspaper and diary source types named in VC2HH10K11.E01.

Laboratory or paradise? Arguing about Australia before 1914

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K12. The description offers a choice of two branches. The first — elaborations .E01, .E02 and .E05 — is built on First Nations history and is **excluded** from this book under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1; it is recorded in this build’s §2A register and reported as ACCEPTED in the coverage audit, never silently dropped. This section teaches the curriculum’s own alternative branch: .E03 and .E04 — the two contested characterisations of Australia (the world’s “social laboratory”, a “working man’s paradise”) that this section examines as historical debates.

The words we must define first. This section is about how historians read the past, so its two key words are **interpretation** and **debate**. An **interpretation** is a historian’s account of what the past *means* — it is built from evidence, but it is shaped by the questions asked, the evidence chosen and the views of the person asking. An interpretation is not a lie and it is not the whole truth: it is a constructed account that can be tested against the evidence. A **debate** is what happens when two or more interpretations of the same past disagree, and the disagreement itself becomes worth studying.

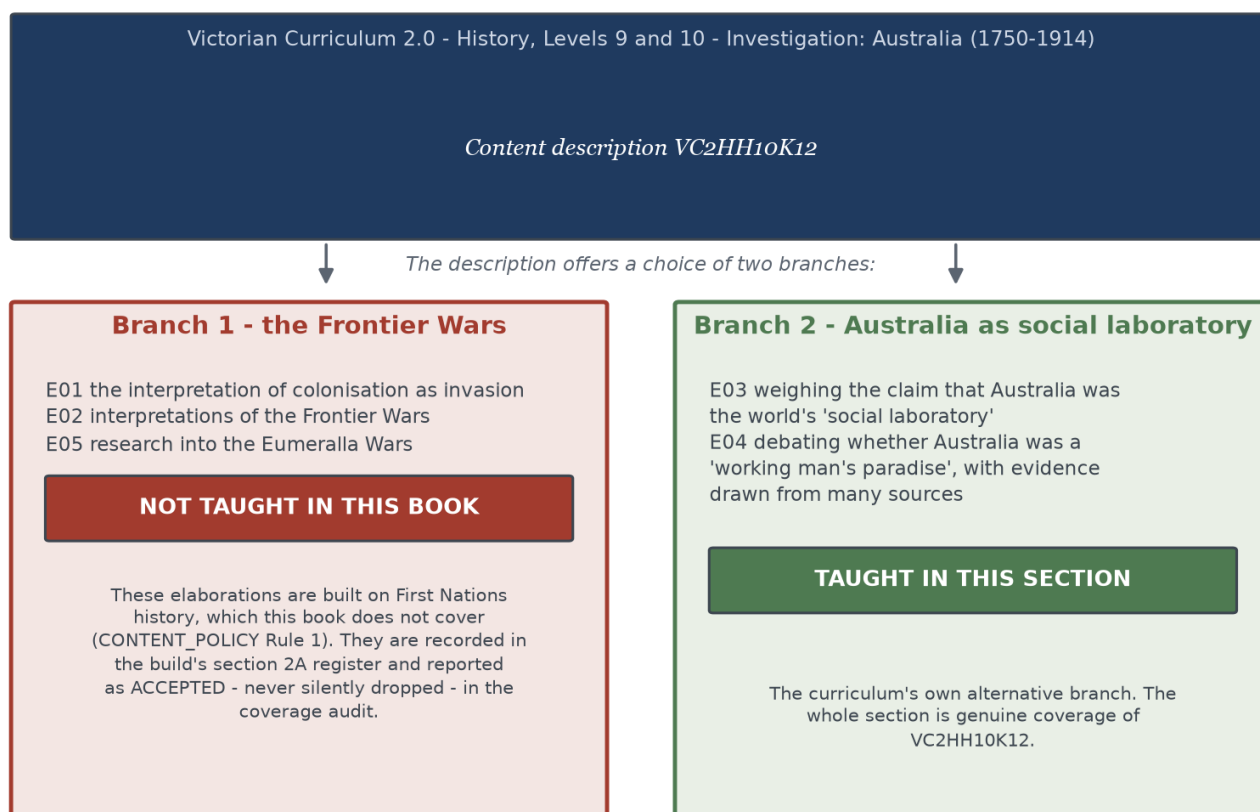
The curriculum then hands us two striking phrases it does not define: “**social laboratory of the world**” and “**working man’s paradise**”. Both are **contested terms** — labels about which reasonable people, then and now, genuinely disagree. A contested term is not a measuring word like “1856” or “seven shillings”: choosing what it means changes what you conclude. So this section fixes their meanings up front:

- **social laboratory** (as used here): a society in which new ideas about votes, work and welfare were trialled in real governments while older countries watched the results;
- **working man’s paradise** (as used here): the claim that in Australia an ordinary working man could earn good pay, live with dignity and enjoy rights that workers in older countries lacked.

You will meet both phrases used as a **boast** and turned into a **barb** — and that double life is exactly what makes the debate worth having. The other terms you need: **suffrage** (the right to vote; the **franchise** is the same idea as a legal rule), **secret ballot** (voting in private, so no one can check or pressure your vote), **arbitration** (an independent umpire settling a dispute the two sides cannot settle themselves), **basic wage** (a wage floor fixed by a court, below which pay should not fall) and **inference** (a conclusion a source suggests but does not state outright — always label it as an inference).

Figure 1 is the scope record for the page: exactly which part of VC2HH10K12 is taught here and which is excluded.

The scope record for this section: VC2HH10K12



Scope record for the section: content description VC2HH10K12 named by code, with its two branches shown below it; Branch 1, the Frontier Wars elaborations E01, E02 and E05, stamped NOT TAUGHT IN THIS BOOK under CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1 and recorded in the section 2A register; Branch 2, Australia as social laboratory, elaborations E03 and E04, stamped TAUGHT IN THIS SECTION as the curriculum's own alternative branch

Figure 1. The scope record. The CD offers a choice of branches; the book's §2A register excludes the first, so the second is the genuine coverage taught here.

Figure 2 is the machine this section runs: how a past event becomes evidence, becomes an interpretation, becomes a debate.

How interpretations work: four steps up from the past

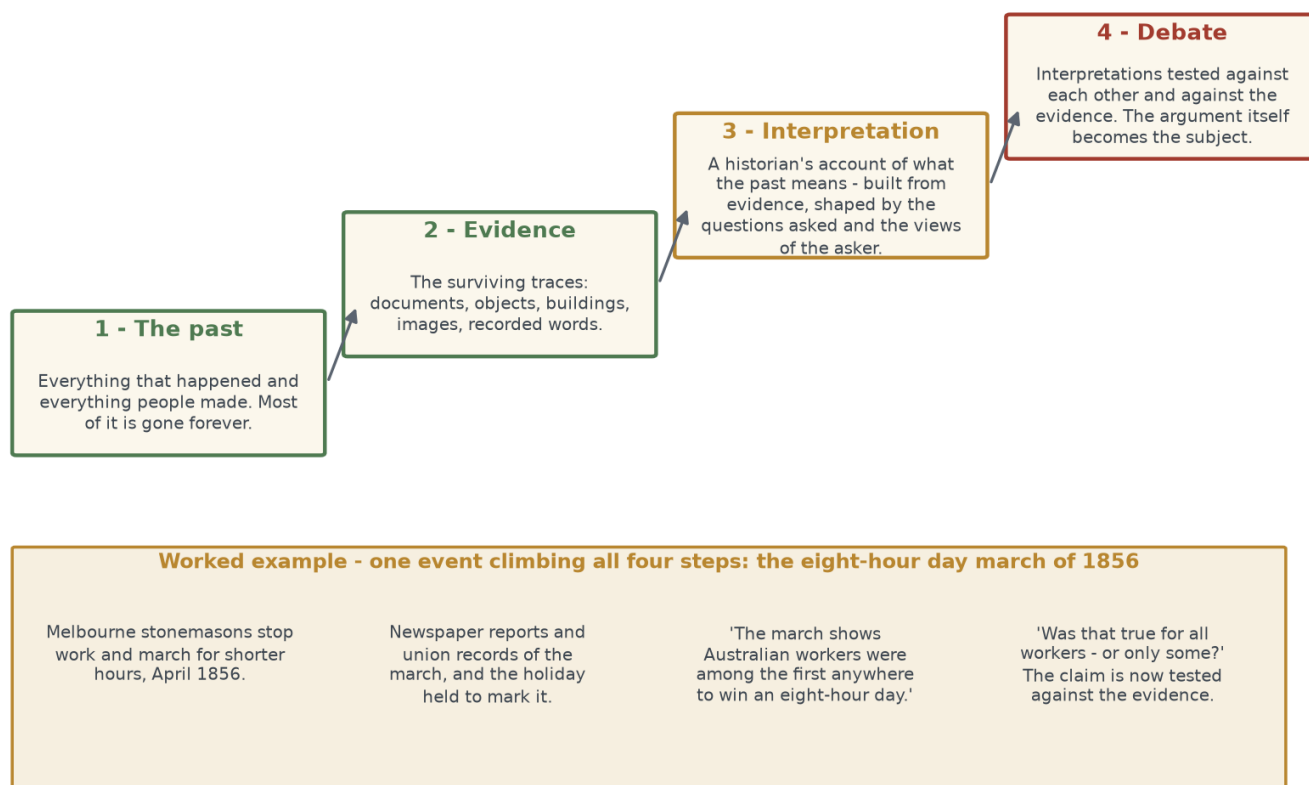


Diagram of four rising steps from the past to evidence to interpretation to debate, each step defined; below, a worked example carrying the eight-hour day march of 1856 up all four steps: the march itself; newspaper and union records of it; the claim that Australian workers were among the first to win an eight-hour day; and the question of whether that was true for all workers or only some

Figure 2. The interpretation ladder. Everything in this section is one climb up these four steps.

Part 1 — The same past, different readings

In April 1856 the stonemasons of Melbourne — skilled workers who cut and set stone, many of them veterans of British Chartism, the movement for the people's charter of votes and rights, like their leader James Stephens — downed tools and marched to Parliament House demanding eight hours of work, eight of rest and eight of recreation, with no loss of pay. The government agreed for public works, the practice spread through the building trades, and from 1879 Victoria marked the win with a public holiday. The march is a fact. What the march *means* is an interpretation — and interpretations of Australia's labour record are what this section studies.

Two readings of 1856 sit side by side in the history books. Reading one: Australian workers were among the first anywhere to win an eight-hour day, decades before Britain or the United States — evidence of a society that treated its workers far better than most. Reading two: the win came to skilled city tradesmen first; the shearer in Queensland and the labourer in the bush waited a generation longer — evidence that the record was uneven. Both readings use the same march. The difference is not in the facts but in the frame: who counts as “the worker”, and what counts as winning. That is how interpretations work (Figure 2): evidence does not change, the question does.

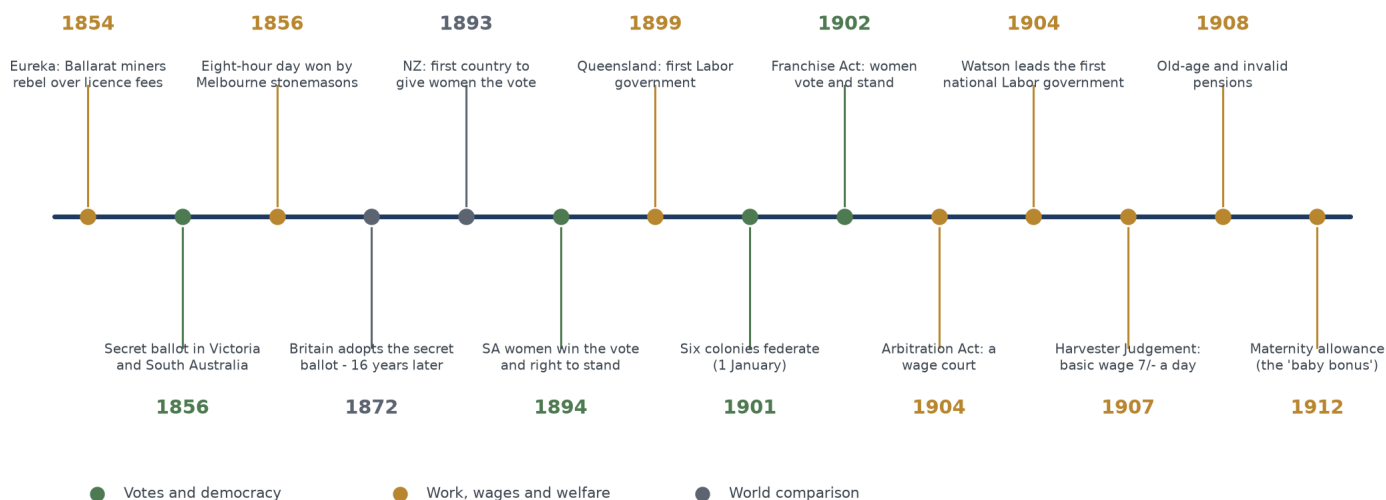
The same split runs through the two famous phrases. “Australia as social laboratory” and “the working man's paradise” were not invented by historians being poetic; they grew out of what the colonies actually did between the 1850s and the 1910s. Part 2 lays out that record.

Part 2 — The record: what the “laboratory” trialled (E03)

.E03 asks you to evaluate a description of Australia as a “social laboratory of the world”. You cannot weigh a description against nothing, so first the evidence. Between 1854 and 1912 the Australian colonies, then the new

Commonwealth, passed a run of political and labour reforms that most older countries had not yet tried. Figure 3 sets them out in order, with two world comparisons added so you can see why outsiders watched.

The reforms that built the 'social laboratory' name, 1854-1912



Timeline of reforms from 1854 to 1912, alternating above and below the line and colour-coded as votes and democracy, work wages and welfare, and world comparison: Eureka, Ballarat miners rebel over licence fees, 1854; secret ballot in Victoria and South Australia, 1856; eight-hour day won by Melbourne stonemasons, 1856; Britain adopts the secret ballot sixteen years later, 1872; New Zealand first country to give women the vote, 1893; South Australian women win the vote and right to stand, 1894; Queensland first Labor government, 1899; six colonies federate on 1 January, 1901; Franchise Act gives women the federal vote and right to stand, 1902; Arbitration Act creates a wage court, 1904; Watson leads the first national Labor government, 1904; Harvester Judgement sets a basic wage of seven shillings a day, 1907; old-age and invalid pensions, 1908; maternity allowance, 1912

Figure 3. The reforms that built the reputation, 1854–1912. The grey points are the world looking over Australia's shoulder.

The secret ballot is the clearest case. Victoria and South Australia introduced it in 1856; Britain followed only in 1872; in the United States the method spread state by state from 1888 under the nickname the “Australian ballot”. A voting method that other countries copy is strong evidence that they saw something worth copying. The same pattern runs through the rest of the table (Figure 4).

What the 'laboratory' trialled - and why the world took notice

The reform	Where and when	Why the world took notice
Secret ballot	Victoria and South Australia, 1856	Voting in private, free from pressure. Britain followed in 1872; overseas it became known as the 'Australian ballot'.
Eight-hour day	Melbourne, 1856	Stonemasons won eight hours of work with no loss of pay - among the first wins anywhere.
Women's vote and right to stand	South Australia, 1894	The first place in the world where women could stand for parliament.
Women's federal vote	Commonwealth, 1902	Most women could vote and stand in federal elections from 1903.
Wage-fixing court	Commonwealth, 1904; basic wage 1907	An independent court set a fair wage floor (7/- a day) instead of leaving pay to bargaining.
Old-age and invalid pensions	Commonwealth, 1908	Government support in old age and illness, without the workhouse.
Maternity allowance	Commonwealth, 1912	A payment of five pounds to the mother of each new baby - the 'baby bonus'.

Facts covered in depth in Sections 2B and 2D. Here they are the evidence an interpretation must account for.

Table of seven reforms with where and when each happened and why the world took notice: the secret ballot, Victoria and South Australia 1856, voting in private with Britain following in 1872 and the method known overseas as the Australian ballot; the eight-hour day, Melbourne 1856, among the first wins anywhere; women's vote and right to stand, South Australia 1894, the first place in the world where women could stand for parliament; women's federal vote, Commonwealth 1902, most women voting and standing federally from 1903; a wage-fixing court, Commonwealth 1904 with the basic wage in 1907, an independent court setting a fair wage floor of seven shillings a day instead of leaving pay to bargaining; old-age and invalid pensions, Commonwealth 1908, government support without the workhouse; maternity allowance, Commonwealth 1912, five pounds to the mother of each new baby

Figure 4. What the "laboratory" trialled. These same facts are taught in depth in Sections 2B and 2D; here they are the evidence an interpretation must account for.

The votes-for-women record makes the same point in chart form (Figure 5).

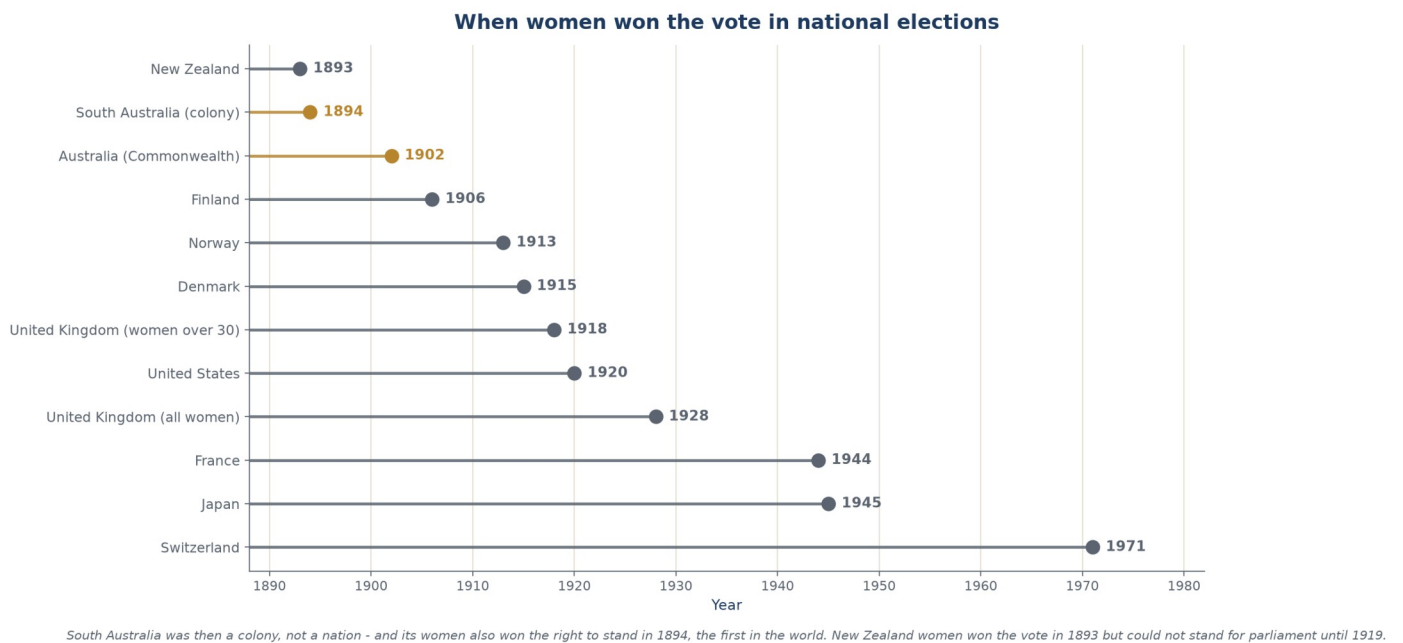


Chart of the years women won the vote in national elections, Australia's rows highlighted: New Zealand 1893, South Australia as a colony 1894, Australia as a Commonwealth 1902, Finland 1906, Norway 1913, Denmark 1915, United Kingdom for women over 30 in 1918, United States 1920, United Kingdom for all women in 1928, France 1944, Japan 1945, Switzerland 1971; with a note that South Australian women also won the right to stand in 1894, the first in the world, and that New Zealand women could not stand until 1919

Figure 5. The world comparison. Australian women were voting federally while British and American women were still campaigning; the women's movement behind this is Section 1E.

And here is the outside voice that gives .E03 its name. William Pember Reeves was a New Zealand reformer who had been that colony's Minister of Labour; from London he wrote up the Australian and New Zealand reforms for British readers as a set of state experiments (Source C). The book is evidence twice over: evidence of the reforms it describes, and evidence that an overseas observer of 1902 saw the colonies as a testing ground.

SOURCE C

The outside verdict: a New Zealand reformer writes for British readers

STATE EXPERIMENTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

by W. P. Reeves

London, 1902 - two volumes

Reeves was a New Zealand reformer (Minister of Labour, 1892-1896) who had watched the Australian colonies at close range. His book set out what the colonies were trying - wages courts, pensions, votes for women - so that readers in Britain could see the experiments and judge the results.

Document reproduction of a book title page: State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand by W. P. Reeves, London 1902, two volumes; with a note that Reeves was a New Zealand reformer, Minister of Labour 1892 to 1896, who set out what the colonies were trialling, wages courts, pensions, votes for women, so that British readers could see the experiments and judge the results

Figure 6. Source C: the outside verdict. The title itself— “state experiments” — is the laboratory idea in 1902 dress.

Historians later carried the label forward. In 1972 Patricia Grimshaw titled her study of the women’s vote *Women’s Suffrage in Australia: A Social Laboratory?* — the question mark doing honest work. The label was never a fact; it was always a claim to be tested. That testing is Part 4.

Source inquiry A — the Harvester Judgement as evidence (E03, E04)

The single best source for the laboratory idea is a judgement of a court. The facts of the case are worked through in Section 2D (Source B there): the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1904 created a federal court to settle wage disputes; an excise law of 1906 let manufacturers escape a tax if they paid “fair and reasonable” wages; Hugh Victor McKay, owner of the Sunshine Harvester Works near Melbourne, applied; and the court’s president, Justice H. B. Higgins, heard the case and refused McKay’s claim on 8 November 1907, fixing a basic wage of seven shillings a day for an unskilled labourer.

What 2D teaches as a change in living conditions, 2E reads as evidence in a debate. Source A is the heart of the judgement.

SOURCE A

A judge rejects the market as the only guide to wages

'... cannot be left to the "higgling of the market" for labour, with the pressure for bread on the one side, and the pressure for profits on the other.' The standard the judge fixed: a wage 'enough to support the wage earner in reasonable and frugal comfort.'

Justice H. B. Higgins, Harvester Judgement (Ex parte H. V. McKay), Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, 8 November 1907. Abridged.

Document reproduction of Source A, the Harvester Judgement of Justice H. B. Higgins, 8 November 1907, abridged: that wages cannot be left to the higgling of the market for labour, with the pressure for bread on the one side and the pressure for profits on the other; and that the standard fixed was a wage enough to support the wage earner in reasonable and frugal comfort

Figure 7. Source A. Read it the way 7C teaches: origin, content, purpose, audience.

Work the four moves of source analysis on it:

- **Origin.** A judge, in a federal court created by the Arbitration Act, deciding a case brought by an employer in November 1907 — the middle of the laboratory years.
- **Content.** Higgins names two “pressures” — for bread (the worker’s need to eat) and for profits (the employer’s need to earn) — and says the contest between them, the bargaining of the market, cannot be the only guide to wages. He replaces it with a standard: pay must be enough for the worker to live in “reasonable and frugal comfort” — the same judgement that Section 2D studies as its Source B.
- **Purpose and audience.** A legal judgement: its audience was the parties, the parliament and the public. Its purpose was to fix a lawful standard — and, read between the lines, to state a principle: fairness is a matter for law, not only for the market.
- **Inference (labelled as one).** It is an inference, not a stated fact, that Higgins saw Australia as a laboratory; he never uses the phrase. What the source *does* show is the laboratory’s signature move — a court setting a floor under wages that market bargaining had not produced.

The judgement is also the cleanest evidence for the “working man’s paradise” reading: a court fixing a wage floor on the ground that a worker is a human being, not something to be bought and sold. And it is the cleanest target for the doubting reading, because Higgins himself admits why the floor was needed — the pressure for bread against the pressure for profits was not producing fair wages on its own. One source, two readings: that is what a debate looks like from the inside.

Part 3 — The “working man’s paradise”: boast and barb (E04)

.E04 asks you to discuss a second interpretation — was Australia a “working man’s paradise”? — using the evidence in this section. Start with who used the phrase. It circulated as a boast: wages higher than Britain’s, cheap land, the vote, the secret ballot, unions strong enough to win the eight-hour day. Visitors and locals repeated it, and workers’ own politicians gave it weight — Queensland formed the world’s first Labor government in 1899 (it lasted only days),

Chris Watson led the world's first national Labor government in 1904, and Andrew Fisher's Labor majority of 1910 governed in its name.

But the phrase also had an ironic life, and the man who gives us that irony is William Lane. Lane was a Brisbane journalist who founded *The Boomerang* in 1887 and *The Worker* in 1890, and helped found the Australian Labour Federation. In 1892, under the pen name "John Miller", he published *The Workingman's Paradise*, a novel that borrows the boast and turns it into a question. Source B is its sharpest scene.

SOURCE B

The phrase turned against itself: poverty inside the boasted paradise

'In Sydney, in 1889, in the workingman's paradise, she stood on the kerb, this blind girl, and begged - begged from her own people.'

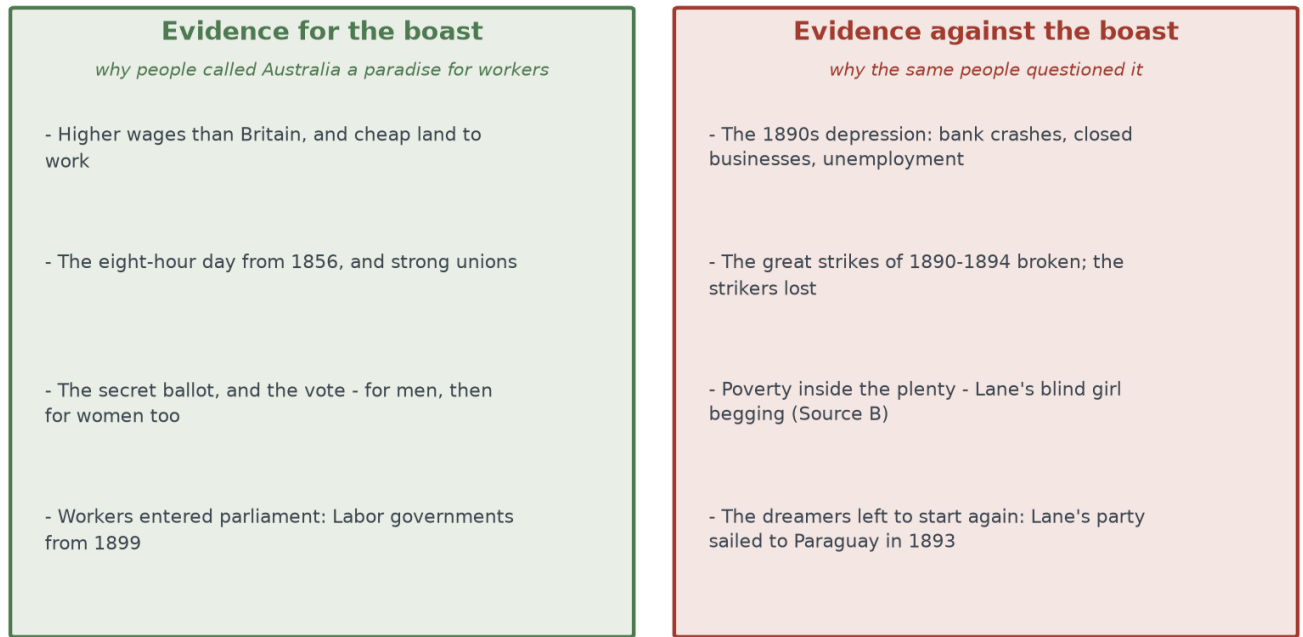
'John Miller' (William Lane), *The Workingman's Paradise: An Australian Labour Novel*, Brisbane, 1892.
A scene watched by two of the novel's characters.

Document reproduction of Source B, a passage from The Workingman's Paradise by John Miller, the pen name of William Lane, published in Brisbane in 1892: in Sydney in 1889, in the workingman's paradise, a blind girl stood on the kerb and begged, begged from her own people

Figure 8. Source B. The boast, repeated in order to be broken.

Notice the sentence's machinery: the phrase "workingman's paradise" sits inside a scene of begging, so the boast is made to condemn the society that made it. Lane's point was that poverty lived inside the plenty — and he did not stop at writing. In July 1893 he led more than two hundred settlers out of Sydney on the ship *Royal Tar* to found "New Australia", a co-operative settlement in Paraguay: paradise, in effect, attempted from scratch. The settlement struggled and split, but the attempt itself is evidence of how much the phrase mattered to people. Figure 9 sets the two evidence piles side by side.

The 'working man's paradise': the evidence on both sides



The same phrase carried both readings at once. That is what makes it a contested term.

Two-panel figure, the evidence on both sides of the working man's paradise. For the boast: higher wages than Britain and cheap land to work; the eight-hour day from 1856 and strong unions; the secret ballot and the vote for men then for women too; workers in parliament with Labor governments from 1899. Against the boast: the 1890s depression with bank crashes, closed businesses and unemployment; the great strikes of 1890 to 1894 broken with the strikers losing; poverty inside the plenty, Lane's blind girl begging, Source B; the dreamers leaving to start again, Lane's party sailing to Paraguay in 1893. A base line notes that the same phrase carried both readings at once, which is what makes it a contested term

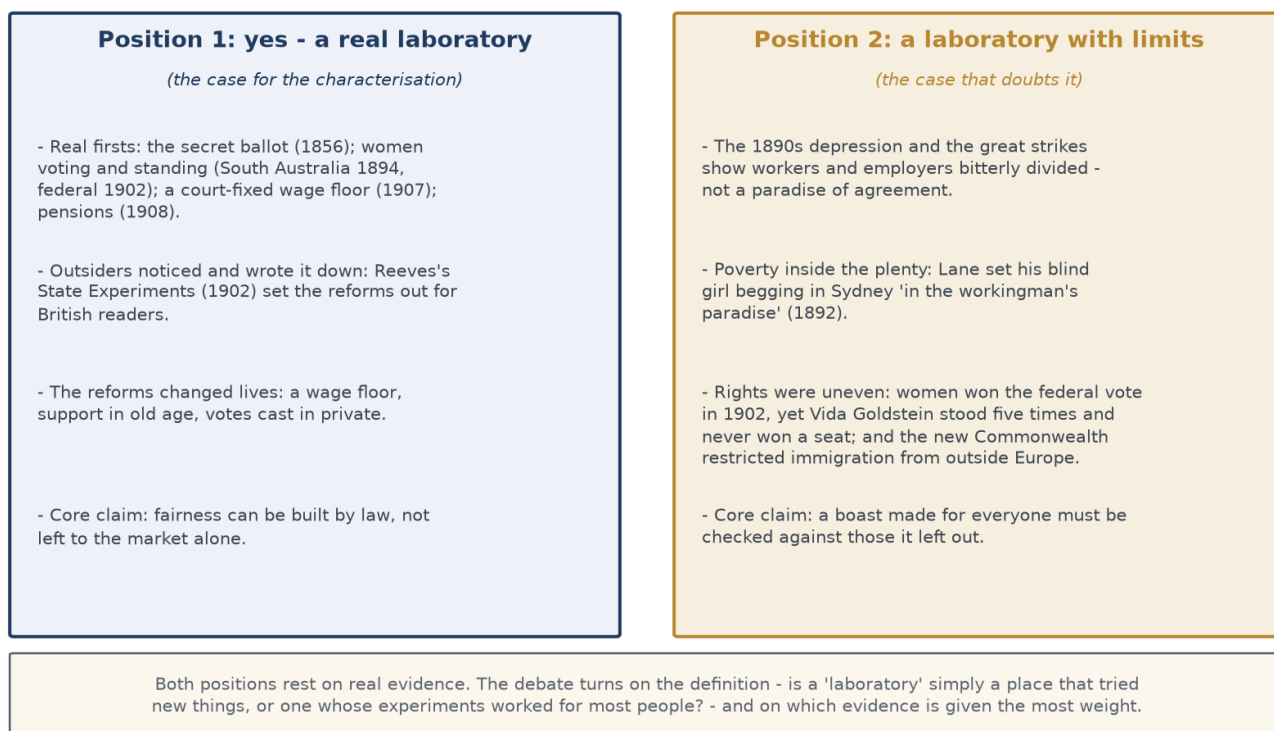
Figure 9. The two evidence piles. A contested term is one both piles get to use.

The strikes matter, so name them: the maritime strike of 1890 and the shearers' strikes of 1891 and 1894 ended in defeat for the unions, in a depression that closed banks and businesses after 1892 and threw thousands out of work. The "paradise" of the boast had, in those years, the look of a hard bargain — which is exactly why the defeated strikers turned to politics and built the Labor Party of the 1890s. The boast and the barb are not two Australias; they are two readings of the same one.

Part 4 — Weighing the description: the debate steelmanned (E03)

.E03 uses the verb *evaluate*. To judge a debate well, each side must first be stated in its strongest form — the house rule is to steelman, not to caricature. Figure 10 does that for the laboratory question; the same structure carries the paradise question, because the two phrases stand or fall together.

Was Australia really the world's 'social laboratory'? Both sides in their strongest form



Two-panel figure stating both sides of the debate in their strongest form. Position 1, yes, a real laboratory: real firsts, the secret ballot in 1856, women voting and standing in South Australia in 1894 and federally in 1902, a court-fixed wage floor in 1907, pensions in 1908; outsiders noticing and writing it down, Reeves's State Experiments of 1902; the reforms changing lives with a wage floor, support in old age and votes cast in private; the core claim that fairness can be built by law, not left to the market alone. Position 2, a laboratory with limits: the 1890s depression and the great strikes showing workers and employers bitterly divided; poverty inside the plenty, Lane's blind girl begging in Sydney in 1892; rights uneven, women winning the federal vote in 1902 yet Vida Goldstein standing five times and never winning a seat, and the new Commonwealth restricting immigration from outside Europe; the core claim that a boast made for everyone must be checked against those it left out. A synthesis band: both positions rest on real evidence; the debate turns on the definition of a laboratory, and on which evidence is given the most weight

Figure 10. The question of the section, steelmanned. Each position is stated as its own advocates would recognise it.

Two names from Figure 10 deserve their full story, because they carry the doubting side. **Vida Goldstein** (1869–1949) was a Melbourne suffragist who had helped gather the 1891 Victorian women's suffrage petition and edited the paper *Woman Voter*; in 1903 she became one of the first women in the world to stand for a national parliament. She stood five times in all — 1903, 1910, 1913, 1914 and 1917 — and was never elected. The right to stand was real; the road to being chosen was long. And the new Commonwealth's first parliaments also passed the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, limiting migration from outside Europe — a law many boosters of the “paradise” boasted about at the time, and one historians now count against the boast. Rights that are real for most and denied to some are the strongest evidence the doubting side has.

How is the debate then judged? By the quality of the reasoning, never by which side you pick. A good evaluation defines its terms (is a “laboratory” a place that *tried* new things, or one whose experiments *worked* for most people?), states each side in its strongest form, keeps its inferences labelled, and weighs the evidence rather than counting it. On that test, a defensible judgement looks like this: the description “social laboratory of the world” is earned as a description of **trials** — the firsts in Figure 3 and 4 are real and were seen as experiments by observers like Reeves — and it is contested as a description of **results**, because the depression, the broken strikes, Goldstein's five defeats and the 1901 restriction law all sit in the same thirty years. The phrase is true as a record of experiments attempted, and arguable as a record of experiments shared. That split — attempted versus shared — is the weighing E03 asks for.

Part 5 — Then and now: what the laboratory left (continuity and change)

The section closes with continuity and change, the method Section 8A formalises. Figure 11 tracks what lasted from the laboratory years into present-day Australia, and what changed shape while lasting.

Then and now: what lasted from the laboratory years

Then (1856-1912)	What lasted	Now (2026)
Basic wage of 7/- a day, fixed by a court (1907)	<i>the idea of a wage floor</i>	A national minimum wage, reviewed each year by the Fair Work Commission
Arbitration court settling wage disputes (1904)	<i>an independent umpire for workplace disputes</i>	The Fair Work Commission
Old-age and invalid pensions (1908)	<i>government support without the workhouse</i>	The Age Pension and disability support
Secret ballot (1856)	<i>voting in private</i>	Still used - and still called the 'Australian ballot' overseas
Women's federal vote and right to stand (1902)	<i>women at the polling place and in parliament</i>	Voting by all adult citizens; women serve in every parliament
The 'social laboratory' and 'workingman's paradise' stories	<i>the habit of testing the boast</i>	Still debated: is Australia fair for all?

Continuity and change together: the institutions lasted; the debate they started has never stopped. (Formal continuity-and-change method: Section 8A.)

Table of six rows comparing then, 1856 to 1912, with what lasted and now, 2026: the basic wage of seven shillings a day fixed by a court in 1907 becomes the idea of a wage floor and now a national minimum wage reviewed each year by the Fair Work Commission; the arbitration court of 1904 becomes an independent umpire for workplace disputes and now the Fair Work Commission; old-age and invalid pensions of 1908 become government support without the workhouse and now the Age Pension and disability support; the secret ballot of 1856 becomes voting in private and now remains in use, still called the Australian ballot overseas; women's federal vote and right to stand of 1902 become women at the polling place and in parliament and now voting by all adult citizens with women serving in every parliament; the social laboratory and workingman's paradise stories become the habit of testing the boast and now the still-running debate about whether Australia is fair for all

Figure 11. Then and now. The institutions lasted; the argument they started never stopped.

Read Figure 11 against Figure 2 and the section's logic closes: the institutions on the left are the evidence pile; the question on the bottom row — is Australia fair for all? — is the debate, still on the fourth step of the ladder. Continuity lives in the institutions, change lives in who they reach, and the interpretation lives in us, still weighing.

Practice — scaffolded

1. Match the term to the case. Copy the table and complete it using the definitions at the top of this section. One row is done for you.

Case from this section	Term
Higgins's account of what a fair wage must meet	interpretation
The march of 21 April 1856 itself	
Newspaper reports and union records of the march	
"The win came to skilled city tradesmen first"	

Two readings of the same march that cannot both be the whole story

“Social laboratory” and “working man’s paradise”, whose meanings change the conclusion

2. Read the timeline. From Figure 3: (a) how many years passed between Victoria’s secret ballot and Britain’s? (b) name the two reforms of 1856. (c) which world-comparison point comes immediately before South Australia’s 1894 law, and what does the ordering show?

3. Read the table. From Figure 4: (a) which reform travelled overseas under the nickname the “Australian ballot”? (b) which row put a floor under wages, and in what year? (c) which two rows give evidence that the state accepted a duty to support people in old age and in motherhood?

4. Read the chart. From Figure 5: (a) name the first country where women won the national vote. (b) name three countries where women waited until after Australia’s 1902 federal law. (c) what extra right did South Australian women hold in 1894 that New Zealand women lacked until 1919?

5. Source A origin and content. From Figure 7: (a) who wrote the words, in which court, on what date? (b) which two “pressures” does the judge name? (c) what does he refuse to leave wages to?

6. Source B content and purpose. From Figure 8: (a) who wrote the novel, and under what name? (b) in the quoted sentence, is “workingman’s paradise” used as a boast or a barb? Give one reason from the sentence itself.

Practice — unscaffolded

7. The paradise, discussed (E04). Using Source B and Figure 9, write two sentences beginning “The strongest case that Australia deserved the name ‘working man’s paradise’ is ...”, then two sentences beginning “But the strongest case that the name was a boast is ...”. Neither side may be caricatured.

8. The laboratory, steelmanned (E03). Figure 10 states both positions. Add one dated fact of your own from this section (or from Sections 2B–2D) to each side, and write one sentence explaining which piece of evidence each side would find hardest to answer.

9. Continuity or change? Label each item continuity, change, or both, and give the dated evidence from Figure 11: the wage floor; the secret ballot; women in parliament; the debate about whether Australia is fair.

10. Evaluate the description (E03). In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), evaluate the description of Australia as a “social laboratory of the world”. Use the moves: claim, dated evidence, a fair steelman of the other side, a weighing, and a judgement. Use at least two dated facts not used in the model response below.

Answers

1. The march itself — the past (the event). Newspaper and union records — evidence. “The win came to skilled city tradesmen first” — interpretation (one reading of the evidence). Two readings that cannot both be the whole story — debate. The two phrases whose meanings change the conclusion — contested terms.
2. (a) Sixteen years (1856 to 1872). (b) The secret ballot (Victoria and South Australia) and the eight-hour day (Melbourne stonemasons). (c) New Zealand, 1893: Australian colonies were not first for women’s national vote — New Zealand was — so the laboratory reading must give New Zealand its place, while South Australia adds the world-first right to stand.
3. (a) The secret ballot. (b) The wage-fixing court row; the basic wage was fixed in 1907 (seven shillings a day). (c) Old-age and invalid pensions (1908) and the maternity allowance (1912).
4. (a) New Zealand (1893). (b) Any three of: Finland 1906, Norway 1913, Denmark 1915, United Kingdom 1918 (over 30) and 1928 (all), United States 1920, France 1944, Japan 1945, Switzerland 1971. (c) The right to stand for parliament.
5. (a) Justice H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, 8 November 1907. (b) The pressure for bread and the pressure for profits. (c) The “higgling of the market” for labour — bargaining between the two pressured sides.
6. (a) William Lane, writing as “John Miller”. (b) A barb: the phrase is placed around a scene of begging “from her own people”, so the boast is made to accuse the society that made it. Any fair reading of the sentence’s irony is accepted.
- 7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: both sides stated in their strongest form with dated evidence and neither caricatured (7); one added dated fact per side plus one hardest-to-answer evidence per side (8); wage floor — continuity (1907 floor to today’s minimum wage); secret ballot — continuity (1856 to now); women in parliament — change then continuity (absent before 1902, now in every parliament); the debate — continuity (the argument has never stopped) (9); and a claim up front, dated evidence, a fair steelman, a weighing that answers it, and a judgement that returns to the claim, with the attempted-versus-shared split or an honest equivalent (10).

Model response (for task 10)

The description of Australia as a “social laboratory of the world” is earned for what was tried, and arguable for what was shared. For the description: Victoria and South Australia’s secret ballot of 1856 was copied by Britain in 1872 and nicknamed the “Australian ballot” in the United States; South Australian women won the vote and the right to stand in 1894, first in the world; and an outsider, W. P. Reeves, wrote the whole run up in 1902 as state experiments. The strongest doubting answer is that the same years held the broken strikes of 1890–94 and Vida Goldstein’s five defeats at the ballot box, so the experiments did not reach everyone. Weighing the two piles, the doubt attacks the results, not the trials: no strike defeat removes the fact that a wage court, a secret ballot and votes for women were tried early and watched closely. Judgement: as a description of trials, the “social laboratory” is true; as a description of results it is contested — and saying exactly that is the evaluation the curriculum asks for.

Looking back. You can now define interpretation, debate, contested term and inference, and apply them to real sources; state the two phrases “social laboratory of the world” and “working man’s paradise” with their meanings fixed up front; describe the reform record of 1854–1912, including the secret ballot, the eight-hour day, votes for women, the arbitration court, the basic wage and the pensions; read the Harvester Judgement and Lane’s novel as evidence for and against the boast; steelman both sides of the laboratory debate and weigh them; and track what lasted into the present. The events and people behind this record are taught in Sections 2B, 2C and 2D, and the women’s movement in Section 1E; the formal skills are Sections 7C and 7D (sources), 7E (perspectives), 7F and 8C (interpretations and debates), 8A (continuity and change) and 8D (sustained interpretations); and the same skills run again on the post-1945 world in Section 6F.

Sources for this section (all figures in this section are original, drawn for this book).

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