

AUSTRALIA - IMMIGRATION HISTORY

The immigration history of Australia began with the initial human migration to the continent around 80,000 years ago when the ancestors of Aboriginal Australians arrived on the continent via the island of Maritime Southeast Asia and New Guinea. According to a study in 2013 by a team of researchers on indigenous Australians DNA genes reveal that a wave of migrants from India arrived in Australia about 4,230 years ago. Several thousand years ago the Melanesian, Torres Strait Islander peoples made contact by commerce with Australia and sporadic contact along the northern Australian coast was maintained by seafarers across the Timor and Arafura Seas. There was contact with Australia in the centuries prior to European arrival, as well as earlier contacts and exchanges by other groups such as from the Moluccan Islands and New Guinea, but these exchanges do not appear to have involved any extended settlement or migrations of non-Aboriginal peoples to the region.



From the early 17th century onwards, the continent experienced the first coastal landings and exploration by European explorers.

In the 18th Century after the loss of the United States, Britain experienced overcrowding of its prisons and sought to ease the problems by transportation of its prisoners. In 1787 11 ships and about 1350 people under the command of Captain Arthur Phillips sailed for Australia. Permanent European settlement began in 1788 with the establishment of a British penal colony in New South Wales. On 26 January 1788 a landing was made at Sydney Cove. The new colony was formally proclaimed as the Colony of New South Wales on 7 February. Other transport fleets bringing further convicts as well as free settlers to the colony followed. As a result of agitation by the free settlers in Sydney, transportation of convicts to Sydney ended in 1840. It continued to the colonies of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) (where settlement began in 1803) and Moreton Bay (founded 1824, and later renamed Queensland) for some years longer. The small settlement of Perth founded in 1829 on the Swan River in Western Australia by free settlers, failed to prosper and asked for convicts. In contrast, South Australia with its capital Adelaide founded in 1836, and Victoria, with its capital Melbourne founded in 1839, was settled only by free settlers. South Australia not only received British migrants, but also a significant influx of Prussian farmers and tradesmen, initially seeking freedom from religious persecution. By the end of the penal transportation in 1868, approximately 165,000 people had entered Australia as convicts.

From about 1815 Sydney began to grow rapidly as free settlers arrived from Britain and Ireland and new lands were opened up for farming. Despite the long and arduous sea voyage, settlers were attracted by the prospect of making a new life on virtually free land. Many settlers occupied land without authority; they were known as squatters and became the basis of a powerful landowning class.

The Gold Rush era from 1851 led to an enormous expansion in population, mainly British and Irish, Germans, Europeans and Chinese.

Migrants Disembarking from a Ship 1885



1928 Australian Government Poster issued by the Overseas Settlement Office to attract immigrants

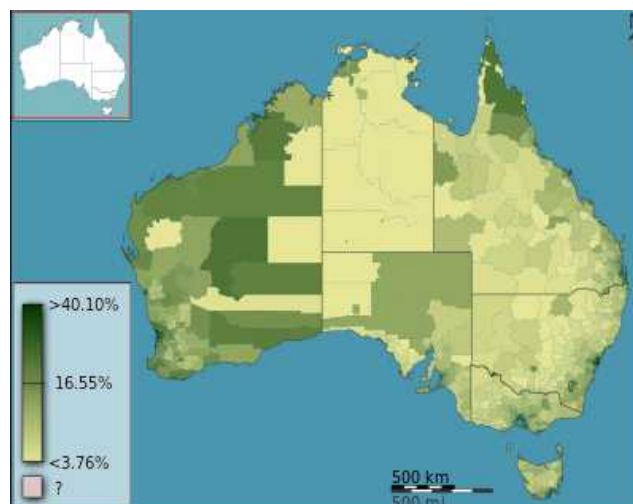


After the Second World War Australia launched a massive immigration programme believing that having narrowly avoided a Japanese invasion Australia must populate or perish. Hundreds of thousands of displaced Europeans migrated to Australia and over one million British subjects immigrated under the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, known as 'ten pound poms'. Migrants needed to be in sound health and under the age of 45 years. From the late 1970s there was a significant increase in immigration from Asian and other non-European countries.

Over the last decade leaders of the major Federal political parties in Australia have demonstrated support for high level immigration.






























In 2019 a poll found that over 40% of Australians say that the total number of migrants each year is too high, while around 13% say it is too low, although overall polls say that immigration has a positive impact on the economy.

People born overseas as a percentage of the population in Australia divided geographically by statistical local area – Source the 2011 Census



Overview

Foreign-born Australian residents by country of birth^[18]

#	1901		1954		2016	
1.	 United Kingdom	495 504	 United Kingdom	816 532	 United Kingdom	1 087 756
2.	 Ireland	184 085	 Italy	119 897	 New Zealand	518 462
3.	 German Empire	38 352	 Germany	85 422	 China	509 558
4.	 China	29 907	 Poland	56 584	 India	455 365
5.	 New Zealand	25 788	 Netherlands	52 035	 Philippines	232 391
6.	 Sweden-Norway	9 863	 Ireland	47 673	 Vietnam	219 351
7.	 South Sea Islands	9 128	 New Zealand	43 350	 Italy	174 042
8.	 British Raj	7 637	 Greece	25 862	 South Africa	182 450
9.	 United States	7 448	 Yugoslavia	22 856	 Malaysia	138 363
10.	 Denmark	6 281	 Malta	19 988	 Sri Lanka	109 860
-	Other	47 463	Other	215 589	Other	2 542 443