

# Chronology of Federation

## ‘One people One destiny’ (Sir Henry Parkes)



- 1788–1859 British Colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria established.
- 1850 *Australian Colonies Government Act 1850* (‘For the better government of Her Majesty’s Australian Colonies’) passed in Britain. Representative Government granted to the Port Phillip District, renamed Victoria; and to South Australia and Tasmania.
- 1853 Last convicts transported to Tasmania and Eastern Colonies (Not until 1868 in Western Australia.)
- 1854 Eureka Rebellion., Ballarat, Victoria. Among many demands a call for the enfranchisement of men.
- 1855–1857 Constitutions proclaimed and parliaments opened in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania. Governors in each colony continued their Executive Functions.
- 1870 Intercolonial meeting to discuss a uniform system of tariffs. Some agreement reached. Royal Commission appointed in Victoria to consider federation. Last British troops withdrawn from Australian Colonies.
- 1871 Australian Natives Association (A.N.A) established in Melbourne. Formed by Australian born men to promote consciousness of Australia. The A. N.A later established Federation Leagues.
- 1885 Australasian Federal Council Act passed by the British Parliament.
- 1889 Sir Henry Parkes’ Tenterfield oration called for the colonies to ‘unit and create a great National Government for all Australia’.
- 1890 Australasian Federation Conference in Melbourne: agreement on a national convention to discuss a federal constitution.
- 1891 First Constitutional Convention: proposal for the colonies to surrender certain powers to a federal government (customs, defence and to create free trade across borders). Proposal for the establishment of two houses for a federal parliament: a lower house (Representatives), a upper house (Senate) and a supreme court.  
Adoption of the name **The Commonwealth of Australia**
- 1900 First delegates for a constitution met in March in London: Edmund Barton (N.S.W.) Alfred Deakin (Victoria) Charles Kingston (South Australia) Sir Philip Fysh (Tasmania) Stephen Parker (Western Australia).  
14 May, The Constitution Bill as approved by referendums in the colonies introduced into the House Commons.  
5 July, *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900* passed by British Parliament.  
17 September, Queen Victoria proclaimed that the Commonwealth of Australia comprising all six colonies would come into existence on 1 January, 1901.  
21 September, Lord Hopetoun appointed First Governor General of Australia in London by British Government.  
25 December, Lord Hopetoun appointed Edmund Barton interim Prime Minister and asked him to form the first Federal Ministry.
- 1901 *1 January, Proclamation of Commonwealth of Australia in Centennial Park, Sydney.*  
22 January, Queen Victoria died and was succeeded by Edward VII.  
20 March, First Federal Elections held. Edmund Barton returned as first elected Prime Minister.  
31 March, National Census: population 3,773,801 (excluded Aboriginals).  
9 May, Duke of Cornwall and York (later George V) opened First Federal Parliament in the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne.  
Federal Parliament met in Melbourne’s Parliament House until 1927 when Canberra was then established as the capital.  
3 September, Australia’s new national flag flown for the first time above the Exhibition Building in Melbourne.

Material for Timeline adapted from web site [www.naa.gov.au/publications/research](http://www.naa.gov.au/publications/research). Prepared by Marie Wood of the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts



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