

APPROVED DESTINATION STATUS (ADS) SCHEME

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Sydney

Look hard enough in Sydney and you can still find evidence of Sydney's original inhabitants, who predated European settlers by at least 50,000 years. Traditional art can still be found on rock faces and traces of shell middens have been left behind by local Aboriginal people, who hunted, gathered and fished in the area's well-wooded surroundings and sheltered harbour.

Early contact with the outside world may have included sightings of ships from Portugal and China, but James Cook's arrival in 1770 changed Sydney forever. Captain James Cook claimed the east coast of the continent for Britain and 18 years later, Captain Arthur Phillip led the 11 ships of the First Fleet into Port Jackson on 26 January 1788.

The aim was not to build a great city but to establish a prison settlement for British convicts. Soldiers and prisoners worked to carve out a rough and ready settlement using European knowledge. They ignored the local people's skills, who had lived there for so long and who were now being decimated by new European diseases. On several occasions the new settlement came close to starvation.

Today, signs of these early years remain in the city, with some of the original tracks hewn through the bush now forming main roadways. The eastern 'official' side of the original settlement still contains the buildings that denote power and control – government offices, the governor's residence, the houses of parliament.

The western side of the town was altogether more unruly. Today, the crooked streets of The Rocks, which mark the early settlement's western extremity, evoke a different kind of society. Here, convicts made a life as best they could building rough cottages. Sailors who'd spent months at sea, then caroused in the numerous small public houses, some of which still serve drinkers today.

Some of the finest buildings of this early convict period were built during Lachlan Macquarie's tenure as governor (1810–1821). Macquarie wanted to build a city and got himself recalled to London for his troubles, accused of spending too much money.

But despite London's meddling, Sydney was becoming a city. Free settlers began to arrive, convicts earned emancipation and the economy evolved with schools, churches, markets, stores, theatres and a library appearing among the prison infrastructure. The post-penal economy was driven by industries such as whaling, sealing and the lucrative wool trade. The transportation of convicts from Britain ended in 1840.

In 1842, the City of Sydney was established with elections, offices and all the trappings of a free society. When gold was discovered in 1851 people began pouring into the city from Europe, North America and China. There was a flurry of building in the city, much of it shonky, as people improvised with scarce building materials and rudimentary skills. It was a more certain way of making money than digging for gold. Many did make fortunes and the history of the city at this time is rich in stories of wild parties and extravagant celebrations that would have been unimaginable a few years earlier.

Exuberance in architecture is a legacy of the prosperous decades that followed, with Victorian edifices being built to house a burgeoning society. The public symbol of this period of enthusiastic growth is the mellow golden local Sydney sandstone used to build places such as Town Hall, the General Post Office and the rapidly multiplying offices of the civil service in the eastern side of the city.

By the end of the 19th century Sydney was one of the largest cities in the western world, with a population of half a million people. While it did not maintain that position in the 20th century, the City's harbour, enhanced by the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House, has made Sydney an instantly recognisable city worldwide.

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Melbourne

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges that it is located on the traditional land of the Kulin Nation. This special place is now known by its European name of Melbourne. For the Wurundjeri, Boonerwung, Taungurong, Djajawurrung and Wathaurung which make up the Kulin Nation, Melbourne has always been an important meeting place and location for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

Melbourne was created through the enterprise and foresight of some settlers from Tasmania. Land suitable for pastoral purposes was becoming overstocked. The settlers formed the Port Phillip Association for the purpose of pastoral exploration at Port Phillip.

One of its members, John Batman sailed from Launceston to Port Phillip in May 1835. He aimed to negotiate a treaty with the Aborigines by which means he claimed large tracts of land in the Melbourne and Geelong area on behalf of the Association's members. This is the south-eastern side of Melbourne.

The Batman party relocated its initial settlement from Indented Head to a Melbourne site on the Yarra River. There they discovered another party, initiated by Launceston banker and businessman John Pascoe Fawkner, had set up a settlement just below the Yarra Falls on 30 August 1835.

The resulting debate as to who was the founder of Melbourne has been carried on since the early claims of John Pascoe Fawkner to this title.

On 25 May 1836, Governor Bourke received a report on the settlement on what is now Melbourne. The report stated it comprised 13 buildings, three weatherboard, two slate, and eight turf huts. The European population comprised 142 males and 35 females. The stock were 26,900 sheep, 57 horses and 100 horned cattle. There were 11 ships in port, which were engaged in bringing stock from Tasmania.

Victoria came under the administration of New South Wales, being known as the Port Phillip District of New South Wales.

William Lonsdale was appointed Police Magistrate and Commandant in 1836, and Charles Joseph La Trobe was appointed Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in 1839. His powers however were limited as real authority rested in the Governor of New South Wales.

On 4 March 1837, the New South Wales Governor, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Bourke arrived with Assistant Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle, and instructed him to lay out the town. Governor Bourke named the town Melbourne, in honour of the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne.

Hoddle designed the streets to be 90 feet wide. Bourke insisted every second street running north and south be a little street. This legacy required Melbourne Council in the 1930s to put in place legislation to be able to buy back sections of the little streets when the properties were being redeveloped to ensure no reduction of the road width.

On 12 August 1842, Melbourne became the Town of Melbourne. In 1853 the Town of Melbourne became the City of Melbourne.

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Brisbane

The Jagera and Turrbal Aboriginal clans had lived around the Brisbane River for a considerable time period before European settlers arrived, but the exact length is hard to pin down. Aboriginal occupation of Australia dates back around 40,000 years (according to most scholars at least) and there is no evidence to suggest that the Brisbane river and Moreton Bay region, with its ample supply of food, would have been left uninhabited once discovered.

Surveyor General John Oxley 'found' the river in 1823 after a tip-off from some ex-convicts who had found their way to the region and had been mixing with the local Aborigines. He named it after the Governor of New South Wales at the time, Thomas Brisbane (in 1823 the state of Queensland didn't exist).

Europeans didn't settle the region until the first convict jail was built in Redcliffe in 1824, but even that was quickly moved to the site of the present-day Brisbane CBD in 1825 after officials realised the natural bend in the river provided a pretty good barrier against escape.

Free settlement didn't begin in the Brisbane region until 1842 because the Government initially wanted the jail kept isolated from the wider community. The usual assortment of entrepreneurs and ex-convicts quickly followed and a town began to grow around the river. By the late 1880's Brisbane was the main centre of commerce and the capital of the colony of Queensland and it was beginning to develop its own distinctive architecture and culture

The city grew steadily until World War II when it became the main allied headquarters in the South Pacific and an influx of Australian and American servicemen stretched the population to three quarters of a million. Industry flourished and continued to boom post war and Brisbane firmly staked its claim as the third largest city in the country.

The 1982 Commonwealth Games were hosted in Brisbane and the city received a massive infrastructure and sporting facilities boost as a result.

In 1988 the world expo, "Expo '88", was hosted at what is now South Bank (across the river from the CBD), and the event also helped put Brisbane 'on the map' so to speak.

Brisbane has always struggled behind Sydney and Melbourne in the cultural stakes, but the city now has a thriving arts scene and is responsible for some of the best live music and bands in the country.

The Brisbane River has played an important part in the settlement, development and evolution of Brisbane.

Flooding of major rivers is almost a given, especially in sub-tropical climates. The Brisbane River has flooded numerous times with several serious floods resulting in loss of life and massive repair bills.

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Information sources

Sydney https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/sydneys-history
Melbourne https://www.governor.nsw.gov.au/governor/former-governors/ http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bourke-sir-richard-1806 https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/history-city-of-melbourne.pdf https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/Victoriasearlyhistory/europeansettlement
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