

My Place Website – Timeline Overview
1850s

Decade Years	Decade Summary	Decade Key Event	Decade Snapshot
1850s	<p>The 1850s was a decade dominated by the discovery of gold, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. The gold rushes and the subsequent riches that came from these significant finds changed the social, political and economic fabric of the colonies.</p> <p>Western Australia was established as a penal settlement, and in 1856, Van Diemen's Land was renamed Tasmania.</p> <p>Between 1851 and 1852, mainly male migrants from Europe, the USA and Asia flooded the goldfields, which had an enormous impact on the populations of the colonies. Men left their jobs in droves to search for a fortune, thus causing a labour shortage in the city and country alike. These hopeful miners were from a variety of occupations and from every section of society. Others saw an opportunity to make money by providing the necessary provisions and equipment that miners needed to survive on the goldfields.</p> <p>This was also a decade that saw an increase of Chinese people arriving in the colonies.</p> <p>Intolerance and prejudice against them exploded into violence on the Buckland River goldfield in Victoria, leading to the passing of anti-Chinese laws. Miners also resented the licence system and the government troopers who checked that all had paid for their right to mine. This resentment reached a peak in a battle known as the Eureka Rebellion.</p> <p>The wealth from gold brought a community desire to design and erect new and ornate buildings, memorials, parklands, museums, libraries and galleries. By the end of the decade, small towns such as Bendigo and Ballarat had grown into</p>	<p>History and Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Eureka Stockade • Unionism • Anti-Chinese sentiment <p>Society and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and population • Education • Indigenous events • Sport <p>Science and Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and communications • Gold • Science and exhibitions 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A telephone line opened between Sydney GPO and South Head. <p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New South Wales followed the lead of Victoria and South Australia to become the third colony to introduce the principle of manhood suffrage of parliamentary elections. <p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A huge gold nugget named the Welcome Nugget weighing 68.98 kilograms found in Ballarat. <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) was formed at a public meeting in Adelaide in South Australia. <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first recorded game of Australian Rules football was played between Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar. <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First intercolonial electric telegraph line officially opened between Adelaide and Melbourne.

<p>large country centres. Melbourne's population soared from about 29,000 in 1851 to 123,000 in 1854. This was also a time of advancements in transport and communications. Improved roads, railways and river transport shortened the travel time both within and between the city and regional towns. This decade saw the invention of the electric telegraph and telephone, and the introduction of trams.</p> <p>During the 1850s, the British relinquished direct control of the colonies and divested power to governors, a move that eventually resulted in self-government. Victoria and Queensland separated from New South Wales and became colonies in their own right. In 1855, the four colonies of New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria became self-governing British colonies and voting (for men) by secret ballot was introduced in Victoria and South Australia.</p> <p>In 1855, the colonies struggled to maintain a regular mail and communication network with Britain, particularly when the Crimean War (1854–56) demanded so many of the mother country's resources, for example ships, troops and supplies. In preparation for an invasion and to strengthen Sydney's defences, fortifications were built at Kirribilli Point and on Pinchgut Island, which was renamed Fort Denison.</p>		
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