

Significant Events TO 1900

Historians and researchers in the History Trust of SA have compiled this database. Where possible, and if known, we have given precise dates rather than the year.

The History Trust of South Australia acknowledges the Indigenous Traditional Owners of South Australia. We aim to treat all Indigenous People, their customs and beliefs with respect.

As with any document of this nature it is a 'work in progress'. Consequently as new or missing information comes to light - or in the case of archaeological evidence it is uncovered - these will be added to the database. As the complexities associated with an event are often too great to analyse within the simplistic description in a chronology, we have just listed them.

If you have any suggestions regarding any historical events which you would like to have included, please contact:

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These Dates are Approximate Only	Significant Indigenous Sites
About 40,000 BP	Allen's Cave on the Nullabor Plain was occupied by Indigenous People about 40,000 years ago.
About 23,000 BP	Koonalda Cave, Nullabor Plain, a flint quarry that contains Pleistocene rock art. Hearths, charcoal and the residues of the quarrying process are evidence of Indigenous settlement from this era.
About 18,000 BP	Koonka, on the Murray River south of Blanchetown, an Aboriginal cemetery with Pleistocene material that indicate high levels of social and cultural complexity.
About 16,000 BP	Seton Cave, Kangaroo Island is a small limestone cave near a freshwater lagoon - a range of Karton tools suggest settlement of the region by Indigenous People until about 10,000 BP when the sea levels rose. Many of these tools are finely made and symmetrical 'suggesting that their manufacturers were superb crafts

	people with a strong aesthetic sense'. The word Karton is from the Indigenous name for Kangaroo Island which is Karta meaning Island of the Dead.
About 15,000 BP	Hawker Lagoon, Flinders Ranges, Kartan tools and fireplace pits indicate Indigenous settlement in this region.
About 12,000 BP	Cooper Creek, Lake Eyre Basin - hearths associated with stone artefacts were used by Indigenous People in this area.
About 10,000 BP	Wyrie Swamp, Millicent district, wooden artefacts were found in this peat swamp by archeologist Roger Luebbers in the early 1970s. These included digging sticks, pointed stakes, spears and boomerangs. The discovery of the boomerangs means that Indigenous People understood the principles of torque and aerodynamic flight.
About 1,000 BP	Indigenous People from the Lake Eyre Basin, Flinders Ranges and Coastal South areas formed part of a network of major trade routes for pearl and baler shells. These shells were items of enormous significance and were used in many sacred rituals.
1627	A Dutch East India Company vessel, the <i>Gulden Zeepaard</i> , outward bound for Batavia, made her landfall near Cape Leeuwin. Captain Thijssen chartered the coast eastwards for about 1000 miles before returning. Chartered and named St. Peter and St. Francis islands which now are known as Nuyts archipelago.
March 1802	Capt. Mathew Flinders on <i>HMS Investigator</i> visits Kangaroo Island and charts the coastline of SA as part of his circumnavigation of the Australian continent. He was closely followed in April by French explorer Captain Nicolas Baudin who was leading a scientific expedition on board <i>Le Geographe</i> .
Late 1802	Kangaroo Island settled by European sealers, who took with them Aboriginal women abducted from Tasmania and the adjacent mainland.
1829	Edward Gibbon Wakefield writes <i>A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia</i> in association with Robert Gouger. They argue that to encourage commercial enterprise in Australia that colonial lands should be sold in small allotments. Also, in order to ensure a desirable class and gender- balanced body of colonists that a planned-immigration scheme must be implemented with subsidies available for suitable migrants.
1830	Capt. Charles Sturt conducts an expedition down the Murray River and traces it to the sea.
1833	Robert Gouger forms the South Australian Association
1831	Capt. Collett Barker inspects the coast of the Gulf of St. Vincent and treks to Mount Lofty summit.

15 Aug 1834	The <i>South Australian Colonization Act</i> received royal assent in Britain. It provided for the proposed colony to be jointly administered by the Colonial Office and colonisation commissioners. Local administration was to be shared by a lieutenant governor, assisted by a nominee council and a resident commissioner. Land was to be sold at a minimum of 12s. per acre and the proceeds were to be used to encourage immigration. There were to be no convicts.
15 Oct 1835	Board of Colonization Commissioners appointed; South Australia Company established
19 Feb 1836	Letters of patent issued
June/July 1836	First British colonisation voyages arrive Kangaroo Island
14 Nov 1836	<i>Africaine</i> lands settlers at Holdfast Bay
17 Dec 1836	Capt John Hindmarsh, his family and 160 emigrants arrived at Port Lincoln aboard the <i>Buffalo</i> to establish the new colony of South Australia. The Surveyor-General, Lieut. Col William Light had already rejected the site owing to its inaccessibility, in favour of the flat land under Mount Lofty.
28 Dec 1836	<i>The Buffalo</i> anchored at Holdfast Bay. A ceremony at Glenelg was held to proclaim the beginning of European settlement and the British Colony of South Australia.
10 Feb 1837	Public meeting held which supported the decision of surveyor-general Col William Light, to locate the town of Adelaide inland on the Torrens River, rather than on the coast as suggested by Governor Hindmarsh.
1837	Supreme Court of South Australia established.
1837	Adelaide surveyed.
14 July 1838	Governor Hindmarsh leaves is recalled by Colonial Office to England. George Gawler appointed as the new Governor of South Australia.
28 May 1838	The Theatre Royal opens in the ballroom of the Adelaide Tavern
7 June 1838	It became compulsory for all immigrants to the Australian Colonies to be vaccinated against smallpox at the time of their selection.
20 Nov 1838	First Lutherans arrive in Adelaide fleeing religious persecution in Germany. They established settlements on the River Torrens, and by 1842 at Hahndorf and in the Barossa Valley.
5 Dec 1838	A council of crown nominees, composed of the Governor, Colonial Secretary, Advocate-General, Surveyor-General, and assistant Commissioner of Lands was established in South Australia. It served both executive and legislative functions.
1838	South Australian School Society opens a school built on the parklands near Trinity Church, Adelaide. This school was closed in 1843
1839	Adelaide Chamber of Commerce founded; South Australian Agricultural Society founded.
1839	First permanent appointment of a Protector of Aborigines

18 June 1840	Edward John Eyre headed north from Adelaide to investigate the region to the east of Lake Torrens, unexplored by Europeans. In 1841 he made an East-West crossing from Fowler's Bay to King George Sound, WA.
Aug 1840	Adelaide's municipal corporation was established. It was the first municipal body in Australia whose members were elected rather than appointed by the crown.
July 1840	<i>Maria</i> wreck and massacre. 26 settlers who survived the wreck of their brig walked from present-day Kingston to Adelaide. They were killed on route by members of the Milmenrura clan, a group of Ngarrindjeri people. This was the first time that Indigenous People had responded with large scale violence to European intrusions into their lands. It is possible that this attack was motivated by the behaviour of some of the settlers or ships crew as they were politely escorted for the first few days by the Milmenrura clan.
Mar 1841	Silver lead ore found at Glen Osmond near Adelaide
1841	The Adelaide Savings Bank is opened and Wheal Gawler mined for silver and lead
Jan 1841	The Adelaide Hospital is founded with three wards, two male and one female. The building accommodated about 30 patients.
15 May 1841	Governor Gawler recalled and replaced by Governor George Grey aged 29 years
27 Aug 1841	<i>Rufus River</i> massacre. There were several violent Indigenous-European conflicts from April 1841 involving overlanders traveling from NSW to Adelaide and the Maraura People of the upper Murray district near Lake Victoria. Most colonists attributed Maraura aggression to the desire for livestock; few recognized it as an attempt to defend culturally significant country. In August a fourth police party was sent to the region under the Protector of Aborigines to police the region. When the policemen and the overlanders encountered a large Indigenous group tensions overflowed and 30 Indigenous men, women and children were killed.
1842	Civil registration of births, deaths and marriages begins
30 Jul 1842	The South Australia Act abolished the existing mode of government in which authority was shared by the Governor and the Resident Commissioner. Instead a Legislative Council was established vesting authority in the Governor and a Council of at least seven members who were nominated by the Crown.
Sep 1842	Copper discovered at several sites near Kapunda by Capt. Bagot and Francis Dutton. A mine was opened in 1844
July 1843	The British Parliament authorised all colonial governors to approve legislation accepting the evidence of 'Aboriginal People' in court.

Nov 1843	John Ridley, a miller from Adelaide, invented a machine that reaped, threshed and winnowed wheat simultaneously.
1843	An Act is passed 'to Provide for the Maintenance and Relief of Deserted Wives and Children and other Destitute Persons'. The Act states that three generations of relatives are responsible for supporting family members who are unable to work.
1844	The first shipment of mineral ore from Australia was made when ten tones of silver-lead ore was exported from Glen Osmond Mine.
1844	Copper found by Thomas Burr at Montacute near Adelaide. Lead was also found at Rapid Bay.
1844	The first census of South Australia was conducted, but Indigenous People were not counted in the figures.
15 Aug 1844	Capt. Charles Sturt left Adelaide to explore the interior. The party travelled along the Murray and Darling rivers, the to the district of Menindie then to Fort Grey and back to Cooper Creek. They returned to Adelaide 19 Jan 1846 having failed to reach the centre of the continent, to find an inland sea or suitable country for farming.
8 Sep 1844	The first Catholic Bishop of Adelaide, Francis Murphy, was consecrated in Sydney. This was the first consecration of a Bishop in Australia.
May 1845	A large copper deposit was discovered at Burra bringing many miners and their families from England, particularly Cornwall, to the region. The mines closed in 1877.
17 July 1846	Governor Robe announced to the Legislative Council that from the financial year 1846-47 a sum was to be set-aside in the estimates for religious and educational purposes. The decision split the community and generated such hostility that Robe applied for transfer.
29 July 1846	Ainsworth Horrocks left Penwortham, SA with an expedition that included camels, hoping to discover useful farming country in the north of the state. Although the trip was cut short due to an accident, the camels proved their usefulness!!
1846	Australia's first Church of Christ was built in Adelaide
1846	The Lutheran Church, centred in South Australia, split into rival denominations which did not reunite until 1966
1846	The first 'hundreds' proclaimed in South Australia in an attempt to regulate the sale and occupation of Crown Lands.
1846	State provided schooling begins when Governor Frederick Holt Robe grants funds for religious denominations to build schools and pay teachers. It was continued on a non-denominational basis from 1851.
Jan 1847	Samuel Thomas Gill's drawings of the Horrocks expedition were raffled in Adelaide. Some of his other works formed the principal attractions at an exhibition that opened on 3 Feb 1847.

29 June 1847	The first Church of England Bishop of Adelaide, Augustus Short, was consecrated in Westminster Abbey, London.
July 1847	A Board of Education was established in Adelaide to superintend schools receiving state aid.
1847	The Savings Bank of South Australia established
1847	St. Peter's College founded
6 Jan 1848	The weekly <i>Die Deutsche Post fur die Australiscen Kolonien</i> (<i>German-Australian Post</i>) the first non-English language newspaper in Australia was published in Adelaide.
Feb 1848	The Destitute Board was established to care for the welfare of distressed immigrants
2 Aug 1848	Sir Henry Edward Fox Young became the first civilian Governor of South Australia.
1849	S.T. Gill produced a series of 22 lithographs of prominent SA citizens called 'Heads of the People'
1849	The Colonial Secretary writes to leading members of Church groups to invite them to join a Destitute Board to provide support to the needy from the huts in Emigration Square. By December 1849 the Board is able to provide indoor relief to 25 people and outdoor relief to 114 destitute people.
5 Aug 1850	The Australian Colonies Government Act received royal assent. For South Australia it meant a legislature could be created comprising of elected and nominated members, to have its own constitution with provisions for bicameral legislatures. It also allowed for two or more of the Australian colonies to enter into a federal union.
Sept 1850	The first Australian branches of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) were opened in Adelaide and Koorunga, SA.
1850	A 'Native Training Institution' was established at Poonindie
13 Jan 1851	Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy received new commissions as Governor of NSW, Van Diemen's Land, Victoria and South Australia as 'Governor General of all Her Majesty's Australian possessions ...'
6 Feb 1851	A serious bushfire spreads from Barwon Heads in Victoria to the Mount Gambier region of South Australia. At least 10 people died and vast numbers of domestic and wild animals perished.
From Feb 1851	Gold is found in Lewis Pond Creek and Yorky's Corner and then at the Turon River north of Bathurst NSW and over the next few months there is a 'rush' of gold miners from all parts of Australia.
20 Aug 1851	The new partly elected Legislative Council of SA opened
Aug 1851	James Regan finds gold at Ballarat and within months a goldfield is also established here with many miners arriving from South Australia
13 Dec 1851	There is a gold strike at Bendigo, Vic.

1851	Annual occupation licenses in SA are replaced by pastoral leases
2 Jan 1852	The SA Education Act ended state aid to denominational schools
29 Jan 1852	SA passed the Bullion Act to attract gold to the colony by offering a higher price than was available in Vic.
1853	First SA postage stamp issued
1853	Adelaide Philosophical Society formed
August 1853	<i>Mary Ann</i> – a small wooden steamer became the first River Boat on the Murray River
29 Sep 1853	Legislative Council of SA passed a Bill to establish a bicameral legislature for SA with a legislative council of no fewer than 12 members nominated by the crown and a house of assembly of 36 members elected by the male inhabitants. The Bill is refused Royal assent because of its provision in limiting the Crown's right of disallowance of bills
1854	Last public hanging in South Australia
1854	First public railway (SA) horse drawn Pt Elliot to Goolwa
March 1854	Britain declares war on Russia and the Crimean War commences. It finishes early in 1856
3 Dec 1854	Eureka Stockade, Ballarat, Victoria
1855	New strikes of gold are found in Victoria most notably at Ararat which has one of Australia's richest lodes.
1855	Bridgewater village/town opened on land formerly known as Cox's Creek
8 June 1855	Sir Richard Graves McDonnell took office as Governor of SA replacing Sir Henry Young
June 1855	Chinese avoid landing tax of ten pounds by disembarking at Port Adelaide and walking to the Victorian goldfields. The Act was the first to attempt to legislate against Chinese immigration.
15 Aug 1855	The SA legislative council elected in 1851 is dissolved by proclamation to be recreated partly by nomination and partly by election, to draft a new constitution
2 Oct 1855	The river steamer <i>Albury</i> reached Albury from Goolwa SA, a distance of 3,000 Kilometres.
April 1856	Secret Ballot introduced to SA (First introduced to Victoria 19 March 1856)
21 April 1856	First steam operated railway in SA opened between North Terrace and Port Adelaide. The track was 12 kilometres long. There is a water painting by Henry Glover in the Mitchell Library, NSW, c1856 depicting it.
25 Oct 1856	The SA <i>Constitution Act</i> is proclaimed – this provides for two elective houses authorised to make laws for peace, order and good government. All appropriation and revenue Bills are to originate in the House of Assembly.
1856	First Govt. telegraph line Adelaide to Port Adelaide
1856	SA Institute precursor of the State Library, SA Museum and the Art Gallery of SA created. The Institute Building was occupied in 1860 on the corner of Kintore Ave and North Tce.

1857	Hahndorf Academy school was opened to cater for the children of German migrants.
1857	Adelaide Botanic Garden opened in its present (fourth) site.
1857	First elections under responsible government (most democratic in Australia).
22 Apr 1857	The first parliament of SA consisting of a Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly was opened with Boyle Travers Finniss as Premier.
1858	Non-Aboriginal population of Australia reaches 1 000 000.
1858	Licensed Victuallers Act required publicans to hold a general licence costing 25 pounds per annum. It stipulated that public houses had to provide suitable accommodation, stables and stockyards with a provision of hay and corn, keep a lamp burning in front all night and take in dead bodies when necessary!!
1858	Real Estate Property Act introduced 'Torrens Title' to simplify the registration and transfer of land titles.
14 May 1858	John McDouall Stuart led an expedition financed by the pastoralist William Finke to the area west of Lake Torrens in SA. The party reached Streaky Bay in August suffering from starvation. They had penetrated as far northwest as the present site of Coober Pedy. In response to rewards offered by the SA Government and with the assistance of landowners, in 1859 Stuart again explored large tracts in the north of the colony. On the journey he undertook in April 1859 he opened up a permanent 800-kilometre trail to the north.
12 July 1858	South Australian Advertiser commenced publication
August 1858	A public meeting in Adelaide formed the Aborigines' Friends Association, whose object was 'to promote the physical, moral and spiritual welfare of the Aborigines'.
29 October 1858	Telegraphic links completed between Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. In 1861 Brisbane was added to the network and Perth in 1877
1859	First Inter-colonial telegraph line to Melbourne opened
May 1859	Point McLeay Aboriginal Mission established by Rev George Taplin. Situated on a significant Indigenous site, the area was known as Raukkan meaning the Ancient Way. Many Ngarrindjeri People lived at this Mission.
July 1859	A 2,000 pound reward is offered by the SA Parliament for the first expedition to cross the continent from south to north
6 Aug 1859	On a journey from Port Adelaide to Melbourne the SS <i>Admella</i> is wrecked on a reef near Cape Northumberland, SA costing 83 lives.
Dec 1859	Copper discovered on the pastoral property Walla-Waroo and developed at Wallaroo Mines near Kadina. Mining commenced in 1860, this rich copper ore was discovered by Walter Hughes. These mines were operating until 1923. The Moonta lode was discovered in 1860.

2 Mar 1860	John McDouall Stuart leaves Chambers Creek, SA in an attempt to cross the continent from south to north. Although they did not reach their objective they did reach the geographic centre of Australia on 22 April.
186 Aug 1861	John McKinlay leaves Adelaide with a party to search for missing explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills. McKinlay finds the floodplains of the Diamantina River which he names Muellers Creek.
17 October 1861	George Waterhouse succeeded Thomas Reynolds as Premier. Throughout the year, the colony was faced with major conflicts and constitutional difficulties engendered by a judge of the supreme court, Benjamin Boothby
26 October 1861	John McDouall Stuart leaves Adelaide and opens up a route through to the northern coast near the present site of Darwin. Stuart reaches the Indian Ocean and the mouth of the Adelaide River on 24 July 1862.
4 Mar 1862	Sir Dominic Daly takes up his appointment as Governor of SA. He is an Irish Catholic who has to overcome some initial prejudice before winning support and respect for his political impartiality. He dies in office 19 Feb 1868.
Dec 1862	Stuart arrives back in Adelaide after his expedition exhausted and nearly blind
1862	South Australian Institute Museum opens
March 1863	Representatives from all the Colonies including South Australia attend an intercolonial conference in Melbourne. The arguments over tariff rates, free trade agreements, custom duties and protection policies were to divide political groups and the colonies until Federation.
22 June 1863	Adelaide has gas lighting
6 July 1863	The Northern Territory is separated from NSW and placed under the administration of South Australia.
18 June 1864	Geological survey undertaken by Edward Hargraves indicates that there is insufficient gold in SA to support a 'rush'.
9 Dec 1864	The SA Government passes a preservation order to protect several species of imported and native birds and animals
7 Feb 1865	Foundation stone of Stow Memorial Church laid in Flinders Street, Adelaide.
20 Jun 1865	Adelaide Town Hall is unofficially opened. The cost of the building is over 25,000 pounds.
August 1865	Wesleyan Jubilee Church at Kent Town opened by the Rev W. Taylor of California.
Sep 1865	John McKinley, began an exploration to the NT to report on a site for the first European settlement there.
Nov 1865	George Goyder, surveyor general of SA, was directed to devise a map indicating a demarcation line that would differentiate the areas affected by drought from districts with adequate rainfall levels. After extensive surveys, the map, featuring Goyder's Line, was published in 1866.

11 Dec 1865	Bank of Adelaide founded.
1865	Catherine Helen Spence published <i>Mr Hogarth's Will</i> under her own name. Spence, the first woman to write a novel about Australia, had already published <i>Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever</i> , anonymously in 1854.
19 Mar 1866	At Penola, Mary Helen MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods founded the Catholic religious order the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Sister Mary became the superior of the order, which was dedicated to the education of children from poor families and the care of the destitute.
9 Oct 1866	Lutheran missionaries leave Tanunda to take their beliefs to Indigenous People living in remote areas. In the following year with Moravian Brethren they establish mission stations at Koperamanna and Killalpaninna.
29 July 1867	Benjamin Boothby dismissed as a judge of the supreme court of SA by the SA Parliament
1867	Visit of Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, son of Queen Victoria to Adelaide.
1868	Point Pearce Mission established on the Yorke Peninsula
30 Jan 1869	Land reform legislation sponsored by Henry Strangways is passed in SA. <i>The Strangways Act</i> provides for the development of agricultural areas by extending easy terms of purchase to small settlers.
22 Jun 1869	Prince Alfred College opened by Wesleyans
1869	Mount Gambier residents have their first hospital
15 Sep 1870	The first pole of the overland telegraph from Darwin to Adelaide is ceremonially placed in position. Construction had begun in the NT earlier in the year. When completed the line spanned about 3000 kilometres across the continent.
1870	Deceased Wife's Sister Act passed in SA
7 Mar 1871	The Adelaide Synagogue is opened
Sep 1871	Cottage Homes Incorporated opened in Stanley Street, North Adelaide. This organization developed Australia's first almshouses to assist with housing some of the aged poor of the city
6 May 1872	The General Post Office was opened in Adelaide
2 Aug 1872	The overland telegraph line between Port Augusta and Port Darwin was completed when the southern and northern ends were joined at Frew's Ponds. The first cablegram from Britain was transmitted down the line on 21 October 1872.
21 Dec 1872	Adelaide's Deaf and Blind Asylum was founded
23 Apr 1873	A SA Government exploration expedition led by the surveyor William Christie Gosse discovered and named Ayers Rock. It is now called Uluru and is recognised as a sacred site of the Anangu People.

1 Sep 1873	The SA Government introduced the eight-hour day for its own workers.
1873	The SA Government developed Australia's first reforestation policy agreeing to pay two pounds an acre for forest planted
1873	South Australia replaces Cornwall as the British Empire's biggest copper producer
1873	SA Government passes the Public Health Act
6 Nov 1874	Credit selection of 'unoccupied' land in South Australia south of latitude 26 degrees became possible with the enactment of waste land legislation following settlers' demands for the scrapping of Goyder's Line. As a consequence, wheat was planted as far north as the Flinders Ranges until droughts disproved a contemporary theory that 'rain will follow the plough'.
1874	<i>University of Adelaide Act</i> is passed. The University's Act of Incorporation stipulates that it should be open to all denominations and classes of people. However, the power to confer degrees upon women was not granted by the University until 1880.
26 Feb 1875	Adelaide ratepayers participate in one of the first plebiscites in Australia, to decide whether steam trains from Glenelg should be allowed to terminate at Victoria Square in the centre of the city.
1875	The South Australian Education Act was passed which introduced compulsory elementary education for children.
25 April 1876	<i>University of Adelaide</i> is inaugurated. The foundation stone is laid on 30 July 1879.
1875	Adelaide Steamship Company is founded
9 Nov 1876	The stump-jump plough is exhibited at the Moonta agricultural show. The original drawings of the Stump Jump plough were drawn up by C.H. Smith who lived in Arthurton near Maitland on the Yorke Peninsula on the grounds of his employer Richard Smith. There was much controversy over which of these men was the inventor. However, the plough which was used on ground that had 'not been grubbed' was innovative and a highly successful adaptation.
1876	Adelaide Children's Hospital is founded.
1876	Trade Unions are given legal recognition
1877	Burra copper mine is closed.
May 1877	Hermannsburg Mission established on the Finke River (NT) by Lutheran Missionaries.
8 Oct 1877	Hans Heysen, Artist, Born in Germany.
1 Dec 1877	The overland telegraph line between Adelaide and Perth is completed. This connects all colonies for the first time enabling telegraphic messages to be sent between Perth and Europe.
1878	Edmund Wright House opened as the headquarters for the Bank of South Australia and the first passenger lift in Adelaide is operated.

1878	Horse drawn trams began operating (first line Adelaide-Kensington)
26 Mar 1879	The first road bridge opened across the Lower Murray river at Edward's crossing Murray Bridge. It was a 607 metre long wrought iron bridge. It was later adapted for rail in 1886. It served as a road-rail bridge until 13 Nov 1925 when a new rail bridge was built downstream.
6 Feb 1880	A regular fortnightly mail service between England and Australia is established.
11 Nov 1880	Ned Kelly hanged
1880	First telephone introduced to SA, first exchange opened in 1883.
3 Apr 1881	As part of the census of the British Empire the first simultaneous Australian census was undertaken. All colonies participated although not using uniform questions.
18 June 1881	Prince Albert Victor, grandson of Queen Victoria, opened the National Gallery of SA.
18 Nov 1881	Worried about an influx of Chinese migrants into the NT in search of gold, the SA government imposes immigration restrictions that had been agreed upon at an intercolonial conference held in January. Any Chinese person crossing an imaginary line 1600 kilometres south of Darwin had to pay a tax of ten pounds.
1881	Adelaide's water borne sewage system is opened.
1881	Creation of the Torrens Lake
1881	Adelaide University is the first Australian University to admit women to degrees on the same basis as men. First science degree awarded to Edith Dornwell in 1885, she was also the first woman graduate. She graduated with first class honors. Edith Dornwell was also awarded a special prize by the Chancellor for her academic achievement.
1882	The Fire Brigades Act established the South Australian Fire Brigades with funding and representation from government, the Corporation of the City of Adelaide and insurance companies. Initially, the funding for fire brigades only extended from the city's square mile to North Adelaide.
1883	Roseworthy Agricultural College founded.
1883	Adelaide Zoological Gardens opens on its present site.
1883	Adelaide telephone exchange opens.
May 1884	A soup kitchen was set up to provide for the city's destitute workers. As the SA government had difficulties in borrowing large sums of money on the London market unemployment in the building trades reached record levels.
14 Nov 1884	SA government imposes a flat-rate income tax. Income derived from physical exertion was to be taxed at the rate of 3d in the pound, and incomes from property taxed at 6d in the pound.

1884	Married Women's Property Act passed allowing married women to own property in their own name.
1884	United Trades and Labor Council formed.
27 Feb 1885	A public meeting was held in Adelaide Town Hall to discuss the distressing level of unemployment in the city. The SA government announced that it could provide relief work on the railways for only a few hundred men.
10 Aug 1885	The area where Charles Rasp had discovered silver and lead is proclaimed the township of Broken Hill.
1885	The first woman – Edith Dornwell BSc – graduates from the University of Adelaide.
24 Feb 1886	The Commercial Bank of South Australia suspends payments. This leads to the collapse of many small building societies and an increase in unemployment. This is further exacerbated by a poor harvest. Wages for artisans fall over the next few months by 20%. Other banks raise their interest rates as a precaution against further collapses.
6 May 1886	The Broken Hill Proprietary Co. opens its silver and lead smelting works in Broken Hill.
1886	The State Children's Council is formed.
1887	Thomas Playford's Liberal Government passes legislation forming all settled districts into local government councils with responsibility for local roads and public health.
1887	Renmark Irrigation Colony established by the Chaffey Brothers.
1887	Adelaide to Melbourne railway opens.
1887-1888	Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition opens to highlight produce and manufactured goods in the Colony.
2 Jan 1888	The privately built Silverton Tramway was opened, connecting Broken Hill, NSW with Cockburn, SA
April 1889	The copper price in London falls substantially and wages are reduced by 10% at the Moonta and Wallaroo mines.
20 June 1889	The inaugural Arbor Day is celebrated in the South Parklands of Adelaide. In recognition of the rapid loss of vegetation across SA, groups of school children are encouraged to learn about conservation and to plant trees in designated areas
1889	The School of Mines and Industry is opened
1889	Port Pirie lead smelters are operational
16 Aug 1890	An Australian maritime strike begins in four colonies including SA and involves 50,000 miners as well as transport, pastoral workers. There was some violence due to the strike at Port Adelaide. Eventually the strikers were defeated due to the employment of non-union workers. However, it helped to galvanise the unionists into forming the United Labor Party in 1891.
7 January 1891	The entry of organised Labour into Australian politics is marked when the United Trades and Labour Council elected Labor candidates for the SA legislative council.

9 May 1891	3 United Labor Party candidates win seats in the elections making them the first Labor party members elected to an Australian Parliament.
1891	Cremation is legalised in South Australia.
1892	State education made free
4 Apr 1893	The Commercial Bank of Australia one of the country's largest suspends operations. Twelve other banks follow in quick succession as depositors attempt to retrieve their savings. Only some of them re-open leaving many thousands of small depositors distressed.
21 Dec 1894	An Act to Amend the Constitution enable women in SA to vote and to stand for both houses of parliament on the same terms as men. SA was thus the first Australian colony to extend the franchise to women. The Federal Parliament did not allow women to vote and to stand for election until 1902.
21 Dec 1894	The SA Parliament passes an Act to Facilitate the Settlement of Industrial Disputes. This established a statutory authority which was the model for all later arbitration acts in Australia.
1894	All Australian Colonies abolish co-existing time zones within the State. In SA a common time zone is established at 135 degrees longitude east of Greenwich.
25 Apr 1896	Women voted for the first time in Australia at an election for the house of assembly.
1896	State Bank of South Australia opens.
1896	'Moving pictures' shown for the first time in Adelaide
22 Mar 1897	The first session of the second federal convention meets in Adelaide. Catherine Helen Spence is a candidate.
22 Jun 1887	Sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne – British colonies everywhere send their congratulations.
May – Sep 1899	A second round of referendums took place to constitute a Commonwealth of Australia. The majority approved it including WA in July 1900.
31 Oct 1899	The first SA contingent left Adelaide for service in the Boer War.
1899	The first electric power station commences operations at Port Adelaide
1899	Mining commences at Iron Knob