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Making and transforming the Australian nation (1750–1914)

Student research guide

History | Year 9

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This guide is designed to help you discover items on topics studied in **Making and transforming the Australian nation** that you can access on site, from your school or home.

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- You can search our catalogue for [all items on Colonial Australia](#) or begin exploring by clicking on some of the featured items contained in this research guide.

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History • Colonisation

Colonisation

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White Australia Policy

The White Australia Policy refers to a series of racist laws that limited non-British migration to Australia. It was designed to uphold Australia as a predominantly white nation. The legislation was repealed from the 1960s to the 1970s, but continues to hold significant implications for the Australian economy, culture and national identity.



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Introduction

In December 1901 the Immigration Restriction Act became one of the first Commonwealth laws passed after Federation and came to be known as the White Australia Policy. The Act restricted immigration from non-European ethnic backgrounds, particularly targeting people from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

The policy emerged during a period when European colonial powers were extending their influence globally. During this time, attitudes towards individuals of different ethnicities were openly racist by today's standards. White Australians held the belief that non-white groups were morally and intellectually inferior. By 1901, the growth in non-white migration to the colonies, particularly during the gold rushes, triggered numerous negative reactions. This was especially pronounced as migrants moved from the goldfields to the cities, where they accepted lower wages and competed with white business owners. The desire of white Australians to assert control over the demographic composition of the population played a role in the formation of the Federation itself. The White Australia Policy, in turn, functioned as a mechanism to preserve the perceived racial purity of the nation and reflected prevalent racial biases of the time.

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How baseball helped shape Japanese migrants' experiences during the White Australia policy

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Oxford Reference

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The Oxford Companion to Australian History

Edited by: Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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John Hirst, editor
Stuart Macintyre, editor

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John Hirst is a Reader in History at La [More](#)

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free settlement in colonial Australia

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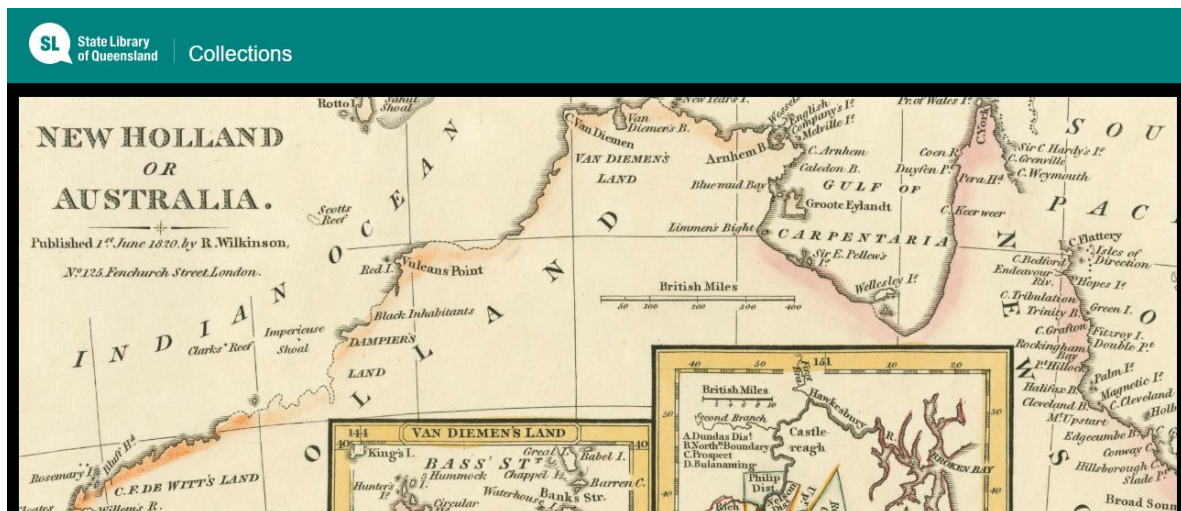
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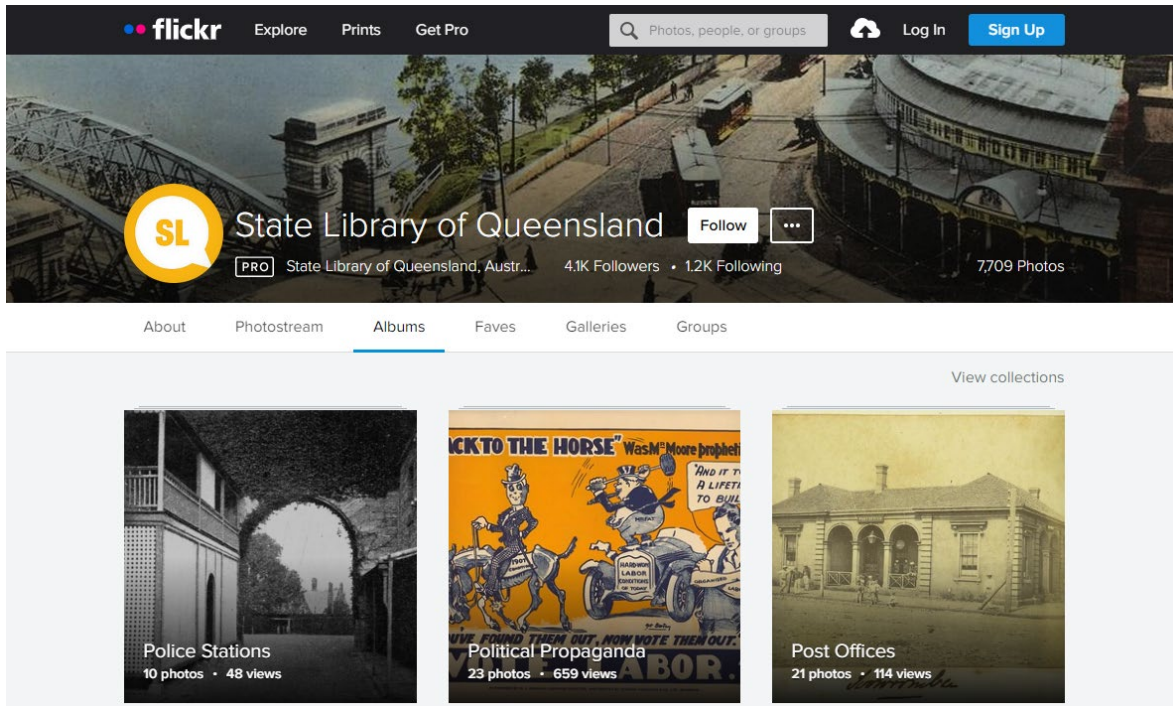


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