How has Australia become a democracy over time?

By Dasun & Brayden
3100 – 2500 Million years ago
First Super continent Vaalbara

Vaalbara is theorized to be Earth's first supercontinent, beginning its formation about 3,600 million years ago, completing its formation by about 3,100 million years ago and breaking up by 2,500 million years ago. The name Vaalbara is derived from the South African Kaapvaal craton and the West Australian Pilbara craton. These cratons were combined during the time of the Vaalbara supercontinent.

Identical radiometric ages of 3,470 ± 2 million years ago have been obtained for the ejecta from the oldest impact events in each craton. Remarkably similar structural sequences between these two cratons have been noted for the period between 3,500 to 2,700 million years ago.

Paleomagnetic data from two ultramafic complexes in the cratons showed that at 3,870 million years the two cratons could have been part of the same supercontinent. The reconstructed apparent polar wander path for the two cratons shows marked similarities. Both the Pilbara and Kaapvaal cratons show extensional faults which were active about the same time during felsic volcanism and coeval with the impact layers.

Continental plates have periodically collided and assembled in geologic periods of orogenesis (mountain building) to form supercontinents. The cycle of supercontinent formation, breakup, dispersal and reformation by plate tectonics occurs every 450 million years or so.
200 Million years ago
Gondwana / Laurasie

**Gondwana**
In paleogeography, Gondwana originally Gondwanaland, is the name given to the more southerly of two supercontinents (the other being Laurasia) which were part of the Pangaea supercontinent that existed from approximately 510 to 180 million years ago (Mya). Gondwana is believed to have sutured between ca. 570 and 510 Mya, thus joining East Gondwana to West Gondwana. It separated from Laurasia 200-180 Mya (the mid-Mesozoic era) during the breakup of Pangaea, drifting farther south after the split.

**Laurasia**
In paleogeography, Laurasia was the northernmost of two supercontinents (the other being Gondwana) that formed part of the Pangaea supercontinent from approximately 510 to 200 million years ago (Mya). It separated from Gondwana 200 to 180 Mya (the late Triassic era) during the breakup of Pangaea, drifting further north after the split.
The First Fleet is the name given to the eleven ships that arrived at Australia, on the 13 of May 1787. The passengers consisted of: 10 civil officers, 212 Marines, an additional 28 wives and 17 children of the marines, 81 free people, 504 male convicts and 192 female convicts; the total number of free people was 348 and the total number of prisoners was 696, making the total of 1044 people on board the vessels. The Fleet was sent to New South Wales (as named by Captain Cook) in order to begin European immigration in Australia. Orders-in-Council for establishing the colony were issued in London on 6 December 1785. The fleet was commanded by former Captain (later Admiral) Arthur Phillip. The ships arrived at Botany Bay between 18 and 20 January 1788.
In 1824, the first convict colony was established at Redcliffe Point under Lieutenant Miller orders. Meanwhile, Oxley and Allan Cunningham explored further up the Brisbane River in search of fresh water, landing at the present location of North Quay. Only one year later, in 1825, the colony was moved south from Redcliffe to a peninsula on the Brisbane River, site of the present central business district, called "Meenjin" by its Toorbul inhabitants.

At the end of 1825, the official population of Brisbane was "45 males and 2 females". Until 1859, when Queensland was separated from the state of New South Wales, the name Moreton Bay was used to describe the new settlement and surrounding areas.
1835 Melbourne was Established

In 1837 the township of Melbourne was surveyed and named with magistrate, Captain William Lonsdale sent from Sydney to maintain law and order. The attempts to stop settlement had clearly failed and the administration of New South Wales was forced to deal with Victoria as a successful, and semi-autonomous, colony. This was converted into a reality in September 1839 when Charles La Trobe, the newly appointed Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, arrived from England. In his wake the colony established a separate police force, a customs office and, perhaps most importantly, a separate Lands Office.

By 1 July 1851, when the colony of Victoria was officially proclaimed, there were already more than 80 000 people living south of the Murray-Murrumbidgee and over 6 000 000 sheep in the well-established properties.
1850 Victoria separated from New South Wales

The first petition for the separation of the Port Phillip District (or ‘Australia Felix’) from New South Wales was proposed in 1840 by Henry Fyshe Gisborne and presented by him to Governor Gipps. Gipps, who had previously been in favour of separation, rejected the petition.

In the years 1842 and 1843 a severe financial crisis occurred, mainly due to the Government demanding from the banks the large rate of 7 per cent for all moneys deposited with them, the result of land sales. The banks had to charge their customers from 10 to 12 per cent for loans, very often on questionable securities. It was then accelerated by Lord John Russell's instructions that all lands out of town boundaries to be sold at only £1 per acre. Sheep that had been bought at from 30s to 40s per head are now sold at less than 2s. The Insolvent Court was rushed by all classes of the community.

The British Act of Parliament separating Victoria from New South Wales, and naming and providing a Constitution for the new Colony, was signed ten years later by Queen Victoria on 5 August 1850. It was followed by enabling legislation passed by the New South Wales Legislative Council on 1 July 1851.
The first gold rush in Australia began in 1844 when prospector Edward Hargraves claimed the discovery of payable gold near Bathurst, New South Wales at a site Edward Hargraves called Ophir. Eight months later, gold was found in Ballarat and Bendigo in Victoria Australia Victoria causing large influxes of prospectors. Australia's total population more than tripled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871.

In 1885, following a call by the Western Australian government for a reward for the first find of payable gold, a discovery was made at Halls Creek, sparking a gold rush in that state.
On 30 November another mass burning of licenses took place at a meeting on bakery hill. Under the leadership of Peter Lalor, the diggers then marched to the eureka diggings (named after the 'eureka lead', a deep lead of gold being mined by the diggers) where they constructed the famous stockade.

The stockade itself was a makeshift wooden barricade enclosing about an acre of the goldfields. Inside the stockade some 500 diggers took an oath on the southern cross flag, and over the following two days gathered firearms and forged pikes to defend the stockade.

Early in the morning of Sunday 3 December the authorities launched an attack on the stockade. Some weeks earlier the government had ordered the 12th and 40th regiments to the goldfields to support the police troopers. The diggers were outnumbered and the battle was over in twenty minutes. Twenty-two diggers and five troops were killed. The southern cross flag was pulled from the flagpole and souvenir by the victors. Peter Lalor escaped the scene even though his arm had been badly injured (later requiring amputation).

On 6 December martial law was declared, and the following day a commission into the goldfields was appointed. Thirteen diggers were committed for trial, but all were acquitted when they came to trial in February 1855. Peter Lalor avoided capture. The only person imprisoned as a result of the eureka stockade was the editor of the Ballarat Times, Henry Seekamp, who was found guilty of seditious libel.

In March 1855 the gold fields commission handed down its report, and the government adopted all of its recommendations. The commission resulted in all the demands of the diggers being met. A bill was passed in 1854 to extend the franchise (the vote) to diggers possessing a miner's right costing one pound, whereas previously a six months residency and an eight pound yearly mining license were required before a digger could register to vote. The hated gold commission was replaced by a system of mining wardens.
When Australia framed their constitutions in the 1850s they provided voting rights to all male British people over 21, which included Aboriginal men.

In 1894 South Australia and Northern Territory, made laws which allowed all adults to vote, including all women and therefore all Aboriginal women. And in 1895, when South Australia gave women the right to vote and participate in Parliament, Aboriginal women shared the right. Only Queensland and Western Australia repelled Aboriginals from voting.

Very few Aborigines knew their rights, so very few voted. In the 1890s, Aboriginal men and women voted at Point McLeay, a mission station near the mouth of the Murray River, in South Australian elections and voted for the first Commonwealth Parliament in 1901.
In 1851 a public meeting was held to consider Queensland’s separation from New South Wales. Queen Victoria gave her approval and signed Letters Patent on June 6, 1859 to establish the new colony of Queensland. On the same day an Order-in-Council gave Queensland its own Constitution. Queensland became a self-governing colony with its own Governor, a nominated Legislative Council and an elected Legislative Assembly. June 6 is now celebrated by Queenslanders as the day acknowledging the birth of Queensland.

On December 10, Queensland’s first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, officially proclaimed Queensland to be a separate colony from New South Wales.

In 1860 Queensland Parliament sat for the first time and was also the year when Queensland elections were held and when Ipswich and Rockhampton were officially declared towns.
Indigenous children were taken away from their parents for many reasons but the policy's foundation was essentially a racist one. The white authorities believed that Indigenous parents were unable to look after their children properly and so they were taken away to an orphanage. The importance and worth of Indigenous culture was once more completely ignored by the government and those who were supposed to be 'protecting' the Indigenous people. Again, as with the earlier protection policies, many people thought they were doing the right thing by the children when they took them away from the only family they knew.
Kelly was born in Victoria to an Irish convict as a father, as a young man he clashed with the Victorian police. Following an incident at his home in 1878, police parties searched for him in the bush. After he killed three policemen, the colony proclaimed Kelly and his gang wanted outlaws.

A final violent confrontation with police took place at Glenrowan on 28 June 1880. Kelly, dressed in homemade plate metal armour and a helmet, was captured and sent to jail. He was convicted of three counts of wilful murder and hanged at Old Melbourne Goal in November 1880.
1891 Australian Labor Party founded

Labor as a parliamentary force dates back to 1891 in New South Wales. In New South Wales in 1891, the first election contested by Labor candidates, 35 of 141 seats were won by Labour candidates. Labor was in a balance of power position and had a stance of government support in exchange for policy concessions with the colonial Protectionist and Free Trade parties. In 1899, Anderson Dawson formed a minority Labor government in Queensland, the first in the world, which lasted one week while the conservatives regrouped after a split.

The colonial Labor parties and the trade unions were mixed in their support for the Federation of Australia. Some Labor representatives argued against the proposed constitution, claiming the Senate as proposed was too powerful, similar to the anti-reformist colonial upper houses and the British House of Lords. They feared federation would further entrench the power of the conservative forces. The first Labor leader and Prime Minister, Chris Watson, however, was a supporter of federation.

After Federation, the federal parliamentary Labor Party (informally known as the Caucus) first met on 8 May 1901 at Parliament house, Melbourne, the meeting place of the first Federal Parliament. This is now taken as the founding date of the federal Labor Party, but it was some years before there was any significant structure or organisation at a national level.
1901 Australia became a federation called the Commonwealth of Australia

The Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, persuaded the other premiers of Australia to discuss federation, and in 1890 the Australasian Federation Convention, including representatives from New Zealand, was held in Melbourne. Next, the National Australasian Convention was held in Sydney in 1891. Each colony sent several representatives. Work began on an Australian constitution. A draft was drawn up by a committee: Edmund Barton (New South Wales), Andrew Inglis Clark (Tasmania), Samuel Griffith (Queensland), and Charles Kingston (South Australia). They looked at the constitutions of Great Britain, the United States, Canada and Switzerland.

The major laws affecting Australia were still made by the British Parliament, which would have to make a new law to allow federation. In 1900 a delegation of five, plus an observer from Western Australia, took the draft constitution to London. In May, the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 was passed by the British Parliament, and was signed by Queen Victoria on 9th July 1900, and so became law. The Act declared that on 1st January 1901, the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania would be united and known as the 'Commonwealth of Australia'.
1901 New flag competition

On 1st January, 1901 the Commonwealth Government announced a Federal Flag design competition for the new nation on 29th April, 1901. The review of the Review for Australasia, a Melbourne journal, had initiated an Australian flag competition in 1900, a unique event at the time. It was agreed that the entries received by this journal would be accepted in the Government’s competition. The contest attracted 32,823 entries from men, women and children. An expert panel of judges assessed the entries using guidelines which included history, heraldry, distinctiveness, utility and cost of manufacture. On 3rd September, 1901, a public ceremony was held at the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, where Lady Hopetoun, wife of the Governor-General, opened a display of the entries in the competition. The Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Edmund Barton, announced that five entrants, who had submitted similar designs, were to share the honour of being declared the designers of Australia’s own flag. They were: Ivor Evans, a fourteen-year-old schoolboy from Melbourne; Leslie John Hawkins, a teenager apprenticed to a Sydney optician; Egbert John Nuttall, a Melbourne architect; Annie Dorrington, an artist from Perth; and William Stevens, a ship’s officer from Auckland, New Zealand. The Commonwealth Government and the Review of Reviews for Australasia provided £75 each and the Havelock Tobacco Company added £50 to this making a total of £200 prize money, a considerable amount at the time. The five winners received £40 each.
1902 Women can vote in federal elections

On the 12th of June 1902, the federal government gave a new law giving the women to vote in federal elections. Aboriginal women, as well as women from Asia, Africa and the pacific island (except for New Zealand) where excluded, unless they were already allowed to vote at state level. Women in SA and WA had already gained state voting rights. Under the new law, British female subjects who were 21 years and older were also given the right stand for election to parliament.
1908 Canberra selected as new capital

The city of Canberra was built for the purpose of it becoming the national capital of Australia. The area was once a farming region, and land for the Australian Capital Territory (originally Federal Territory of Australia) was purchased from New South Wales for the purpose of building Australia's new Federal capital.

Australia's two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, had been rivals since before the gold rush days. After Federation in 1901, it was therefore decided that the nation's capital should be situated between the two cities. A location was chosen which was 248km from Sydney and 483km from Melbourne. The first survey peg marking the beginning of the development of the city of Canberra was driven in on 20 February 1913. The foundation stone was laid on 12 March 1913. Lady Denman, wife of the Governor-General, then announced the name of the city as Canberra, believed to be a derivation of an Aboriginal word for 'meeting place'.

The First World War began when Britain and Germany went to war in August 1914, and Prime Minister Andrew Fisher's government gave full support for Britain. The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia, as in many other places, with great enthusiasm. On 25 April 1915 members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) landed at Gallipoli together with troops from New Zealand, Britain, and France. This began a campaign that ended with the evacuation of troops on 19 and 20 December 1915. Following Gallipoli, Australian forces fought campaigns on the Western Front and in the Middle East. For Australia, as for many nations, the First World War remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which over 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.
World War II was actually two wars. The war with Germany commenced in 1939, and the war with Japan started in 1941. Both ended in 1945.

In Europe the war was caused by the plans of German Chancellor (Prime Minister) Adolf Hitler to conquer the world. Hitler was leader of the nation Socialists, better known as Nazis. Germany had been treated very harshly by the victorious countries after the great War of 1914 – 1918, and this had lead to great resentment among the Germans. When Hitler offered away to wipe out this resentment many people supported him. Hitler offered his army to invade Poland in the latter part of the northern summer of 1939. The British government issue an ultimatum demanding withdrawal of all German forces. He refused, so on the 3rd of September 1939 Britain declared war on Germany. Within 1 hour of the declaration a telegram from the British Government advising the state of War had arrived at Canberra. In the great War Australia had enthusiastically supported Britain with troops. More than 65,000 of our young men had died, and in 1939 most Australians were not so eager about going to fight for Britain. In contrast the government, led by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, was keen to send Australian troops to Europe. 45 minutes after receipt of the telegram, Menzies announced on national radio that Australia had also declared War.
1948 – Don Bradman

Donald Bradman toured England in 1948 with an Australian cricket team that went undefeated in their 34 tour matches, including the five Ashes Tests. Bradman was the captain, one of three selectors, and overall a dominant figure of what was regarded as one of the finest teams of all time, earning the sobriquet The Invincibles.

Generally regarded as the greatest batsman in the history of cricket, the right-handed Bradman played in all five Tests as captain at No. 3. Bradman was more influential than other Australian captains because he was also one of the three selectors who had a hand in choosing the squad. He was also a member of the Australian Board of Control while still playing, a privilege that no other person has held. At the age of 40, Bradman was by far the oldest player on the team; three quarters of his team were at least eight years younger, and some viewed him as a father figure. Coupled with his status as a national hero, cricketing ability and influence as an administrator, this associated the team more closely to him than other teams to their respective captains. Bradman's iconic stature as a cricketer also led to record-breaking public interest and attendances at the matches on tour.

Bradman ended the first-class matches atop the batting aggregates and averages, with 2428 runs at 89.92, and eleven centuries, the most by any player. Despite his success, his troubles against Alec Bedser's leg trap—he fell three consecutive times in the Tests and twice in other matches to bowlers using this ploy—were the subject of much discussion.
1954 Queen Elizabeth II visited Australia

The Queen in Australia is a landmark to Australian history. It not only records the first visit by a reigning monarch to Australia, it was also the first colour, feature-length documentary made in Australia. This historic program provides nationwide coverage of the 1954 Royal Tour by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh - a two-month journey that took in every facet of Australian life: garden parties at Government House, dancers at the Tivoli, racing at Randwick, tennis at Kooyong with Rosewall and Hoad, cricket with the Don, even a meeting with Papua New Guinean tribal chiefs. The young royals visited every state in the nation, and this film captures it all. The result is a remarkable and revealing insight into our nation in the 1950s.
1967 Aboriginals were allowed to vote

The acquisition of voting rights by Indigenous Australians began in the mid-19th century but was not completed in every jurisdiction until the mid-20th century.

Under Australia's Federal system, restrictions on Aborigines voting in State and Federal elections varied until the 1960s, during which decade all remaining restrictions were eradicated.


Indigenous Australians had first begun to acquire voting rights along with other adults living in Britain's Australian colonies from the mid-19th Century. Other than in Queensland and Western Australia, Aboriginal men were not excluded from voting alongside their non-Indigenous counterparts in the Australian colonies and in South Australia Aboriginal women also acquired the vote from 1895 onward. Following Federation in 1901 however, new legislation restricted Aboriginal voting rights in Federal elections. For a time Aborigines could vote in some states and not in others, though from 1949, Aborigines could vote if they were ex-servicemen and by 1967 Aborigines had equal rights in all states and territories. In 1971, Neville Bonner became the first Aboriginal to sit in the Federal Parliament. In 1984, compulsory enrolment and voting in Commonwealth elections for Indigenous Australians came into effect.
The official anthem was ‘God Save the Queen’ (or ‘King’) from 1788 to 1974, although numerous commercial and official competitions were held over the years to find a substitute. The first was held in 1840.

John Dunmore Lang, who published an ‘Australian Anthem’ and an ‘Australian Hymn’ in 1826, was an early advocate of a distinctively Australian anthem. ‘The Song of Australia’ was written in 1859 by Caroline Carleton, and it was suggested to the Prime Minister in 1929 as a possible national anthem.

The issue of a truly national anthem was raised persistently before the 1956 Olympic Games, which were held in Melbourne. ‘Advance Australia Fair’ and ‘Waltzing Matilda’ were the two songs most strongly favoured then as the new anthem. ‘Waltzing Matilda’ was composed in 1895, with lyrics by one of Australia’s best known poets, AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson.

On Australia Day, 26 January, in 1972, the number of entries (more than 400) received in an Australia-wide national anthem quest gave an indication of the interest in a new anthem.

Exactly a year later a government-sponsored competition was announced, which drew 2500 entries for the words and 1300 for the music. The judges selected six entries for the words, but rejected all the musical entries.
Parliament House, known formerly as the Provisional Parliament House, was the house of the Parliament of Australia from 1927 to 1988. The building began operation on 9 May 1927 as a temporary base for the Commonwealth Parliament after its relocation from Melbourne to the new capital, Canberra, until a more permanent building could be constructed. In 1988, the Commonwealth Parliament transferred to the new Parliament House on Capital Hill. It also serves as a venue for temporary exhibitions, lectures and concerts.

On 1 May 2008 it was made an Executive Agency of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. On 9 May 2009, the Executive Agency was renamed the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, reporting to the Special Minister of State.
That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.
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