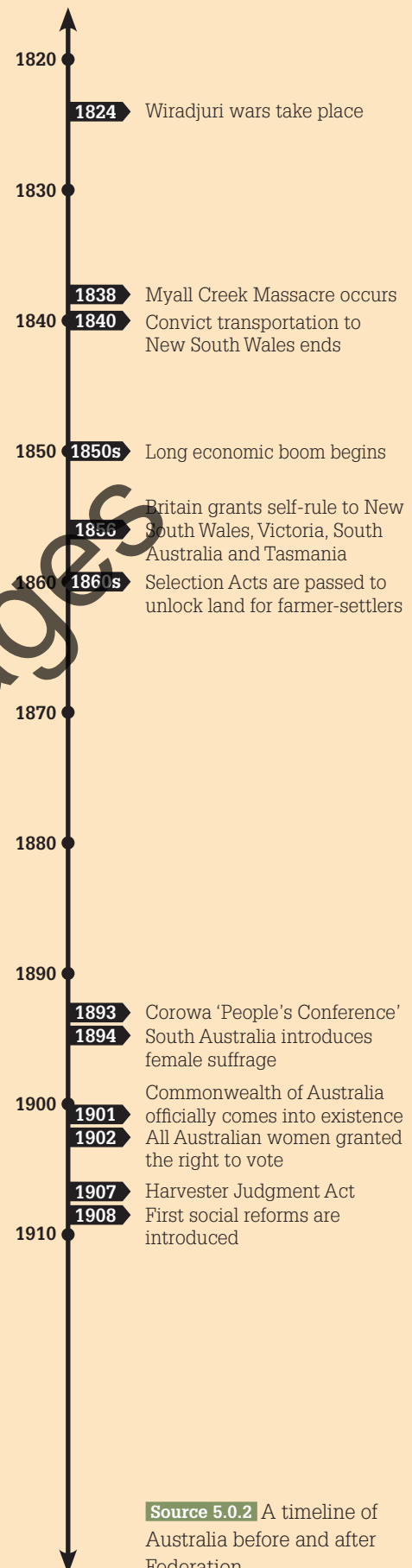


# Making a nation

## Introduction

Less than a century after the arrival of the British in Australia, six separate British colonies had been established across the continent. As a growing sense of Australian identity developed, the colonies became one nation on 1 January 1901. This marked the beginning of independent nationhood for the Commonwealth of Australia.



**Source 5.0.1** A 1938 poster advertising the 150-year celebrations of British settlement in New South Wales, National Library of Australia

**Source 5.0.2** A timeline of Australia before and after Federation



## UNIT 5.1

# European settlement by 1900

### Expanding the empire

Throughout the eighteenth century, British colonisers acquired new territory for their empire in three ways:

- by winning wars of conquest and taking land as part of the peace settlement, for example New Zealand
- by purchasing new lands with the signing of a treaty with other people, for example some parts of India
- by declaring newly 'discovered' territories to be ownerless, or *terra nullius*, and therefore free to claim, as occurred in Australia.

The first two ways acknowledged the original owners of the land, while the third, *terra nullius*, did not.

### *Terra Nullius* and dispossession

The concept of *terra nullius* ignored the fact that there were people already on the Australian continent. When James Cook explored the east coast of Australia in 1768–1771, he believed that a treaty with the local inhabitants was unnecessary. This was because they were so few in number and showed no sign of European land 'ownership', such as agricultural crops, fenced livestock or permanent houses. Since he could find no obvious political authority to deal with, Cook felt justified in claiming the entire 400 million hectares of Australia on behalf of the British Empire. This was despite the fact that he had explored just a small and very narrow section of the east coast.

On 26 January 1788, after the arrival of the First Fleet, Governor Arthur Phillip formalised the British colonisation of Australia with a flag-raising ceremony at Sydney Cove (see Source 5.1.1). Such symbols were important to the British as they 'proved' ownership of the land. Land grants given to new settlers by Governor Phillip failed to consider that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had occupied that land for generations. Soon fences were erected, animals put to pasture and houses built. This taking of the owners' traditional land without any prior agreement or compensation is referred to as dispossession.



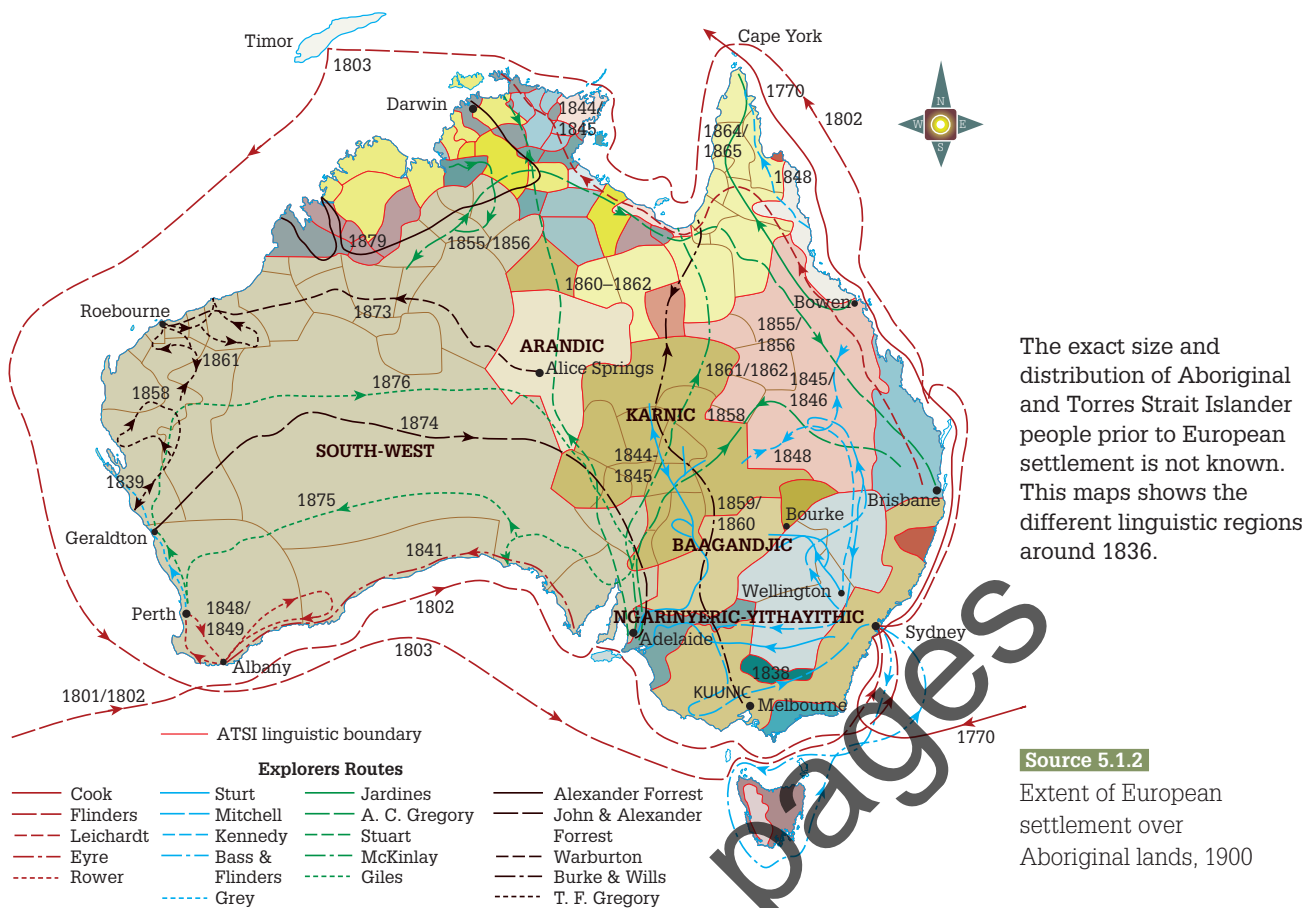
Source 5.1.1 *The Founding of Australia by Captain Arthur Phillip*. Painted by Algernon Talmadge, 1937, State Library of NSW

### The spread of European settlement

As the first European population around Sydney Cove increased, so did the need for farming land to feed the growing colony. The discovery of the Hawkesbury River in June 1789 provided an important inland route to better pastoral lands. Early settlement spread northward along the coast towards the Hawkesbury River, then westward along the river itself. In 1790, Governor Phillip issued the first land grant at Rose Hill (renamed Parramatta in 1791) to former convict James Ruse, with the instruction to establish a farm. However, vast open pastures needed for large-scale farming and grazing were not available along the coastal fringe. The long-term viability of New South Wales depended on the opening of new lands further westward, beyond the Blue Mountains.

### Moving westward

The crossing of the Blue Mountains by William Lawson, Gregory Blaxland and William Wentworth in 1813 opened up new pastoral lands to feed a growing population. To ease its own population pressures, the government of Britain introduced an assisted passage scheme to encourage people to emigrate to the Australian colonies. New settlers took up



this challenge, as they hoped to make their fortune as property owners—something that was virtually impossible in Britain.

With further inland and coastal exploration of the continent, new British colonies were established:

- 1803 Van Diemen's Land (later the colony of Tasmania)
- 1824 Moreton Bay (later the colony of Queensland)
- 1829 Swan River (later the colony of Western Australia)
- 1834 Port Phillip District (later the colony of Victoria)
- 1834 South Australia (the only colony settled by free settlers rather than convicts).

The British concept of *terra nullius* meant that there was no recognition of the original owners of the land (see Source 5.1.2). Driven off their land, many Aboriginal people were eventually moved into areas for which European settlers had no use. Often restricted and unable to return to their traditional lands, Aboriginal people experienced a strong sense of loss. As they came into contact with European settlers for the first time, many died from smallpox and influenza.

## ACTIVITIES

### Remembering and understanding

- 1 What does *terra nullius* mean?
- 2 Why did James Cook believe a treaty with Aboriginal people was unnecessary?
- 3 Construct a timeline that shows when the colonies of Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia were established.
- 4 What was the effect of Europeans moving into traditional Aboriginal land?

### Applying and analysing

- 5 Examine Source 5.1.2. Construct a Venn diagram to illustrate the movement of European settlers onto Aboriginal lands.
- 6 Assume the point of view of either a European settler or an Aboriginal inhabitant. Write a diary entry illustrating what is taking place on the land. Predict what is likely to result.



## UNIT 5.2

# European settlement and the environment

### Europeans and the environment

From the time of European settlement of Australia in 1788, the new inhabitants altered the landscape. As the new settlement grew, settlers began to explore further afield in search of grazing and pastoral land. They cleared the land of native flora to grow crops, which resulted in deforestation and the destruction of native animal habitats. The new arrivals also introduced foreign species of both plants and animals, often to the detriment of the local flora and fauna.

### Acclimatisation Societies

Many new settlers wanted to make their new home, Australia, more like their old home, Europe. One way they could achieve this was by importing plants and animals from the old country. The Acclimatisation Societies were groups of people who joined together to bring in plants and animals from elsewhere, in order to 'improve' the Australian environment.

### Impact on the environment

Since the arrival of European settlers, hundreds of species have become extinct in Australia, including birds, mammals, frogs and more than sixty plant species. Many other species are thought to be threatened or vulnerable.

By 1900, hundreds of new plant species had also been introduced by European settlers. A number of these introduced plants have become invasive and, in some cases, are now a major concern. Some species such as wheat and other grains have become important crops.

Introduced animals have also caused problems. Rabbits and foxes, for example, pose a direct threat to native wildlife. Other introduced species such as sheep and cattle have had an impact on the environment, but have also provided a source of income for the nation.

### The rabbit as a pest in Australia

... the rabbit menace in Australia today is so great that it would be almost impossible to exaggerate its possibilities. (1935)

**Source 5.2.2** Once it was introduced, the rabbit did not take long to become a pest in Australia.

Rabbits arrived in Australia with the First Fleet in 1788. The domesticated rabbit provided early settlers with a source of meat and the wild rabbit

Introduced species	Impacts
Birds	Species such as the common myna and starlings compete with native birds for food and nest sites.
Fish	Species such as the European carp and the brown trout compete with native species.
Dogs	Dogs were introduced through Aboriginal settlement and increased with European settlement. Wild or feral dogs can cause destruction of animal stock.
Cats	Domestic cats were introduced with early European settlers. Domestic or feral cats can destroy native birds and mammals.
Foxes	The European red fox was released near Melbourne in 1845 for sport hunting. Taking only 50 years to cross Australia, it has become a major pest preying on many native species.
Rodents	The house mouse and the rat could have entered Australia on or even before 1788 via visiting European ships. The house mouse can sometimes reach plague proportions in wheat belt regions.

**Source 5.2.1** Impact of selected introduced animal species. Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development



**Source 5.2.3** Construction of the Number 1 Rabbit Proof Fence began in 1901. This photograph was taken in 1926. National Library of Australia

was introduced later for hunting. Thomas Austin is credited with releasing twenty-four wild rabbits on his property near Geelong in Victoria in 1859. The rabbits spread across the country at about 130 kilometres per year and by 1900, the rabbits had reached the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Rabbits cause significant damage to the environment through grazing and feeding on newly planted vegetation and trees. Rabbits also cause damage to grain crops and sustain predators such as cats and foxes. This increases pressure on native animals. Between 1901 and 1907 a fence, known as the Number 1 Rabbit Proof Fence initially and later the State Barrier Fence, was constructed to keep rabbits (along with other vermin) from the eastern states out of Western Australia.

The fence, although inadequate, was one solution to the overwhelming environmental problems that rabbits had caused. Unfortunately, by 1902 rabbits had already been found west of the initial fence, which prompted the construction of the second fence, built in 1905.

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*The Rabbit-proof Fence.—Mr. A. Crawford, the chief rabbit inspector, returned on Thursday from a visit of inspection to the rabbit-proof fence at Barrambie. He found that the rabbits had established themselves in large numbers outside the fence along the stone ridges, and that, owing to the carelessness of residents of Barrambie in leaving the gates open, many*

*of the rodents had got through to the country between the outer and inner fences. He has decided to recommend to the Minister that deviation should be made with the fence for some distance, in order to keep the township and Barrambie mine well away from it.*

**Source 5.2.4** The rabbit-proof fence proved a limited barrier to determined rabbits. *The West Australian*, 7 December 1901, p. 11

## ACTIVITIES

### Remembering and understanding

- 1 Draw a mind map to illustrate the effect that European settlement had on the environment in Australia.
- 2 Who was responsible for releasing wild rabbits into Australia? When did this occur?
- 3 What damage do rabbits cause to the environment?

### Applying and analysing

- 4 Examine Sources 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4. Write a government report explaining the environmental concerns rabbits are causing, what has been done to prevent their spread and how effective this has been so far.
- 5 The landscape in Australia has also affected settlement. Construct a PMI chart showing how the unique environment of Australia affected the early settlers.



## UNIT 5.3

# Contact between Indigenous peoples and settlers

## An empty land

The concept of *terra nullius* ignored the fact that there were people living on the Australian continent. When James Cook claimed the entire 400 million hectares of Australia on behalf of the British Empire, he did so after exploring a very narrow section of the east coast. James Cook used European ideas of land 'ownership' to make the British claim.

After the arrival of the First Fleet and the first flag-raising ceremony on 26 January 1788, other symbols of ownership of land were set down. These included the construction of permanent buildings, the fencing of land, putting animals to pasture and the planting of crops. Aboriginal people were dispossessed from their lands by land grants given to new settlers.

## Aboriginal resistance

As the colonies expanded, settlers came into conflict with Aboriginal people. The original inhabitants responded to the loss of their traditional land by killing livestock for food, which in turn led to reprisals.

## Impact of European settlement

European settlement was a very bad experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Initially they avoided the new settlers; however as contact increased, violence and disease followed. The new arrivals brought with them diseases such as smallpox and measles to which the original inhabitants had no resistance. Smallpox killed half of the Indigenous people in the Sydney area within the first year of European settlement. European and Indigenous views of land ownership were also very different.



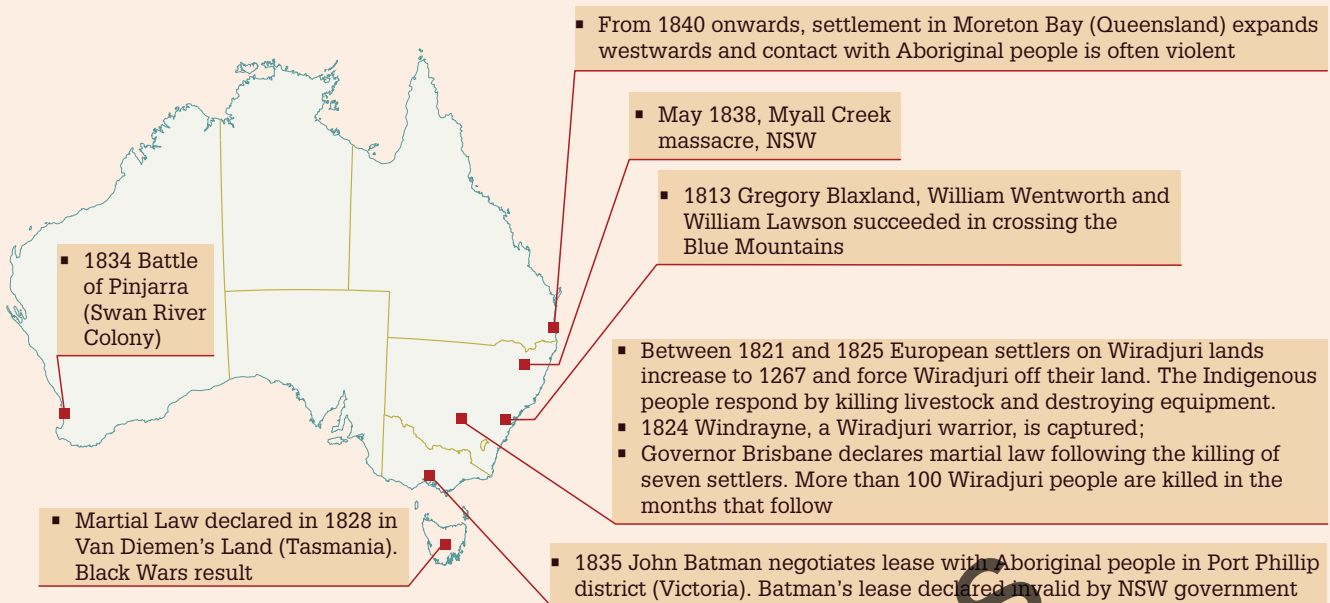
**Source 5.3.1** Tasmanian poster showing both Aboriginal people and Europeans the consequences of breaking the law, 1866, National Library of Australia

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*Black men. We wish to make you happy. But you cannot be happy unless you imitate the white man. Build huts, wear clothes and be useful ... you cannot be happy unless you love God ... love white men ... learn to speak English.*

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**Source 5.3.2** Speech made to a group of Aboriginal people by Governor Gawler of South Australia in 1838



An extraordinary calamity was now observed among the natives. Repeated accounts brought by our boats of finding bodies of the (Aborigines) in all the coves and inlets of the harbour, caused the gentlemen of our hospital to procure some of them for the purpose of examination and anatomy. On inspection it appeared that all the parties had died a natural death: pustules, similar to those occasioned by the small pox, were thickly spread on the bodies; but how a disease ... could at once have introduced itself ... seemed inexplicable.

**Source 5.3.4** An early account of the effect of European diseases on Aboriginal people, 1789

The wild black fellows do not understand your laws, every living animal ... and every edible root ... are common property. A black man claims nothing as his own but his cloak and his weapons and his name. He does not understand that animals or plants can belong to one person more than another.

**Source 5.3.5** In 1843, Yagan, a Victorian Aboriginal man, explained the difference between European and Aboriginal notions of ownership.

**Source 5.3.3** Selected key resistance between Aboriginal people and Europeans

## ACTIVITIES

### Remembering and understanding

- 1 What is the message to both groups in Source 5.3.1?
- 2 What is Governor Gawler really saying in Source 5.3.2?
- 3 Create a timeline of Aboriginal resistance from the dates given in Source 5.3.3.

### Applying and analysing

- 4 Examine Sources 5.3.4 and 5.3.5.
  - a What do the sources have in common?
  - b How do the sources describe contact between European settlers and Aboriginal people?
  - c In your opinion, was conflict always likely to occur? Explain.
- 5 Complete a flow chart illustrating the contact between Aboriginal people and European settlers from initial contact to later conflict.



## UNIT 5.4

# The experiences of non-Europeans in Australia

### A new life in Australia

From 1850 to 1900, approximately seven million people left China in search of opportunities in South-East Asia, the United States, Canada and Australia. This mass exodus was the beginning of what is today known as the Chinese **diaspora**. It is estimated that up to 90 000 Chinese migrants came to Australia.

Other non-Europeans who came to Australia were:

- approximately 62 000 South Pacific Islander People, who worked on the sugar-cane fields in Far North Queensland
- approximately 3000 Japanese, who came to Broome in Western Australia as pearl divers
- approximately 2000 Afghans, who came to South Australia as camel drivers.

### The Chinese experience

The first Chinese in Australia were probably fishermen from Indonesia looking for sea cucumbers. The majority of Chinese arrived during the Victorian gold rushes and were instantly disliked. At the goldfields the Chinese organised themselves into large groups with each person having an allocated role. These groups meant they had limited contact with the other diggers thus avoiding trouble with the European miners.

Competition between European and Chinese miners often led to conflicts over pieces of ground thought to contain gold. Many European miners resented the Chinese simply for being different. Rumours spread about Chinese opium addiction, disease, gambling and general immorality. Anti-Chinese Leagues were established throughout Victoria and later New South Wales to pressure governments into restricting Chinese immigration.

**1750s** Chinese traders visit Australia in search of sealskins and sandalwood

**Pre-1840** First Chinese migrants (sailors whose contracts expired in Sydney or had jumped ship) settle in New South Wales

**By 1850** In New South Wales nearly 3000 Chinese, mostly indentured labour known as Coolies (unskilled workers bound to their employer for a set period of time, usually a few years, who could not resign even if they grew dissatisfied with their pay and working conditions, which were much worse than those of free workers)

**1850s** Chinese (as well as Europeans and Americans) attracted to the Victorian gold rush

**1852-1853** About 500 Chinese migrants leave Hong Kong for Melbourne

**By 1854** More than 2000 Chinese in the colony of Victoria (most are single young men who expect to stay in Australia for a year or two, make their fortune and return home to China to get married—the new arrivals are met by angry crowds and face regular abuse and violence on the goldfields)

**June 1855** Victorian government enacts a law that limits the number of Chinese arrivals to one person per 10 tonnes of cargo carried by a ship; new Chinese arrivals are forced to pay an arrival tax of £10 (most get around the law by disembarking in Adelaide and travelling to the Victorian goldfields on foot)

**1857** South Australian government applies similar immigration laws

**1857** Chinaman's Flat: European miners set fire to the Chinese camp, forcing the inhabitants to flee in terror and abandon their diggings; in Ararat, Chinese miners robbed of gold because they had not paid their £1 residence ticket (many European miners also had not paid)

**1861, 1877, 1886** Anti-Chinese sentiment leads to the introduction of restrictions on Chinese immigration in New South Wales in 1861, Queensland in 1877 and Western Australia in 1886

**June 1861** Chinese camp at Lambing Flat destroyed in the first of six riots over ten months during which 250 Chinese are injured

**Source 5.4.1** Key events in the Chinese experience in Australia



## Pacific Islanders in Queensland

Blackbirding involved deceiving Pacific Islander People into coming to Australia, sometimes by offering small items of little worth or making false promises of high wages. Blackbirding was usually conducted by agents for plantation owners, who relied on cheap 'Kanakan' labour to carry out the long and difficult work of harvesting sugar cane.

Between 1863 and 1904, approximately 62 000 South Pacific Islander People arrived in Queensland and worked on sugar plantations in the far north (see Source 5.4.3). In most cases these people were promised good wages and food as well as a year-long contract and then a passage home. In reality conditions were much harsher and contracts were mostly for three years.

Blackbirding was made illegal in 1872 although the practice continued for another thirty years.

Fourteen men,  
And each hung down  
Straight as a log  
From his toes to his crown  
Fourteen men,  
Chinamen they were  
Hanging on the trees  
In their pig-tailed hair  
Honest poor men,  
But the diggers said 'Nay!'  
So they strung them all up  
On a fine summer's day.  
There they were hanging  
As we drove by,  
Grown-ups on the front seat,  
On the back seat I.  
That was Lambing Flat,  
And still I can see  
The straight up and down  
Of each on his tree.

**Source 5.4.2** 'Fourteen men' by Mary Gilmore refers to the anti-Chinese riots in New South Wales, 1860–1861

**Source 5.4.3** Kanaka labourers on a Queensland pineapple plantation, c. 1890s, National Library of Australia



## Afghans in South Australia

Not long after the settlement of South Australia in 1836, exploration of the interior of the continent began. In early attempts to explore the 'Red Centre', horses and bullocks were used to transport equipment and materials across the desert, but these animals proved incapable of enduring long periods without water. They also had difficulty in walking across sand for long distances.

In 1839, the first camels were imported to Australia to improve transport across the Simpson Desert (see Source 5.4.4). Camels had earned a reputation as 'ships of the desert' due to their ability to survive harsh desert conditions carrying great loads.

### Cameleers and 'ships of the desert'

Most Europeans had very little experience handling camels, and so specially trained camel drivers known as cameleers were brought to Australia. Although they came from several different places throughout central Asia and India, most cameleers were Afghans. Australians referred to them simply as 'Ghans' (short for Afghans). All were single Muslim men who had signed three-year contracts to live and work in central Australia.

In 1886, 100 camels and thirty-one Afghan cameleers arrived in South Australia. By 1900, it was estimated that there were about 15 000 camels and 2000 Afghans in Australia. These men played an important role in the inland exploration of the continent, carrying vital supplies and mail from South Australia to the north. The Overland Telegraph, which connected Adelaide and Darwin in 1872, could not have been built without the assistance of the Afghan cameleers. They also helped to establish the rail connection between Adelaide and Port Augusta, and carried mail and equipment between isolated outback settlements.

## Japanese in Western Australia

From the middle of the nineteenth century, buttons and belt buckles made out of pearls and mother-of-pearl shells were popular in Britain and the United States. Such demand led to the establishment of Western Australia's pearling industry around Shark Bay in the 1850s. Pearlers initially used Aboriginal women to dive for oysters, since they had excellent lung capacity. These divers could descend to depths of up to 13 metres, at times as far as 2 kilometres from shore. This was before diving suits, oxygen tanks, snorkels and masks had been developed



Source 5.4.4 Camels being unloaded at Port Augusta, 1890s, State Library of South Australia



**Source 5.4.5** Japanese pearl divers, Broome, 1910, State Library of Western Australia

and their simple method was known as skin diving. It was a very risky activity and up to half the divers died as a result of drowning, shark attack, the bends or cyclones.

The discovery of the precious South Sea pearl in the 1870s attracted many Japanese, Malay and Chinese pearl divers to Western Australia. In 1881, Broome was established as a pearling town and by the following decade it had earned a reputation as the pearling capital of the world. The invention of diving suits and simple breathing apparatus allowed divers to go deeper and stay underwater longer. Japanese divers were considered the best at their trade, as they seemed to cope better with high water pressure. This meant that Japanese divers soon replaced Aboriginal divers. They worked as indentured labourers, initially receiving no wages but instead paying off the debt they owed to their employers for their travel costs to Australia (see Source 5.4.5).

By 1910, the town of Broome had a population of 4000 people, which included 3000 Japanese, Malays and Chinese, all of whom had some connection to the pearling industry. Many divers died during the heyday of Broome's pearling industry and the Japanese cemetery in Broome has over 700 graves of Japanese divers.

## ACTIVITIES

### Remembering and understanding

- 1 Which were the main groups of non-Europeans who came to Australia?
- 2 Define the words 'Coolie' and 'blackbirding'.
- 3 Why did Chinese people come to Australia during the 1850s?
- 4 Using the information in this unit, label a map of Australia showing where non-Europeans worked.
- 5 Construct a Venn diagram to explain the similarities and differences between two groups of non-Europeans who came to Australia.

### Applying and analysing

- 6 Examine Source 5.4.2 by using ADAMANT.
  - a How useful would you consider this source for examining the events at Lambing Flats?
  - b How would the use of primary and secondary sources differ in regard to examining an event such as this?
- 7 Choose one of the groups mentioned in this unit. Write a short letter back home to explain your reasons for coming to Australia and the conditions you have encountered.
- 8 Imagine you are a museum curator. You have been assigned the role of producing an exhibition on the contribution of non-European migrants to Australia. Write the final signage board that summarises the contribution of migrants up until 1900.