

Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930

Site List Timeline

Only sites for which there is good evidence are included. The estimates of the number of people massacred are conservative and include only those we can be reasonably sure were killed during the massacre or immediately afterwards. In some cases the actual deaths may have been many more. To understand how we have estimated the number killed in each massacre, please read the [Introduction](#).

Australia includes at least 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups, many of which are represented on the [AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia](#). The borders of the Australian colonies and administrative jurisdictions changed several times between 1788 and 1930. The changes had in impact on the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were treated and on their experiences of frontier massacre.

When the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove in 1788, the British were pursuing the claim they made in 1770 to the entire eastern part of the Australian continent, then known as New Holland. The western boundary was marked by 135 degrees east of Greenwich which divided the entire continent in half. The northern and southern boundaries ranged from Cape York in the north to South Cape in the southern part of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) which was then believed to be part of the mainland. The entire region was named 'New South Wales' by the British.

In 1800 Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) was found to be a separate island and the British quickly established settlements in the northern and southern parts to forestall a possible French claim. In 1825, Van Diemen's Land became a separate colony and in 1856 changed its name to Tasmania.

In 1826, the British established a settlement at King George Sound, now Albany and in 1828 took possession of the western part of the Australian continent to prevent a possible French claim. A year later, fearing Albany could too easily be fired on by French boats, they established the Swan River Colony at present day Perth and in 1848 it became known as the Colony of Western Australia. Unlike the other Australian colonies, which achieved responsible government in the 1850s, Western Australia remained a Crown Colony until 1890 and joined the other Australian colonies in federation in 1901.

In 1825, the western boundary of New South Wales was extended to 129 degrees east and in 1835, the new Colony of South Australia was formed by excising territory from the south-western boundary of New South Wales and the south-eastern boundary of Western Australia. It achieved responsible government in 1856 and in 1860 gained jurisdiction over the Northern Territory which was then part of New South Wales, only to relinquish it to the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911. Thus, the Northern Territory was under the jurisdiction of New South Wales 1825-1860; South Australia 1861-1911 and the Australian Commonwealth from 1912.

In 1836, the area of New South Wales south of the Murray River was proclaimed the Port Phillip District. It operated as a semi-autonomous jurisdiction until 1850 when it was formally separated from New South Wales and became the Colony of Victoria.

In 1859, the area north of the McIntyre and Dumaresq rivers and including the Torres Strait Islands and the region east of present-day Northern Territory were excised from New South Wales to form the Colony of Queensland.

In 1911, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was excised from New South Wales.

NSW: New South Wales

VDL: Van Diemen's Land

PPD: Port Phillip District

VIC: Victoria

QLD: Queensland

SA: South Australia

WA: Western Australia

NT: Northern Territory

Warning: Links to 'Sources' go to other websites and may contain images of people.

[A full chronological list of all sites with all details is in the document *Chronological List Of Known Colonial Frontier Massacre Sites In Australia From 1788 To 1930*]