Country occupying all of the Earth's smallest continent, situated south of Indonesia, between the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Government Australia is an independent sovereign nation within the Commonwealth. It has a federal, multiparty political system, with a prime minister at the head of the political executive. It has retained the British monarch as head of state, represented by a governor general. The constitution came into effect on 1 January 1901. As in the British system, the executive, comprising the prime minister and cabinet, is drawn from the federal parliament and is answerable to it. The parliament consists of two chambers: an upper house, the Senate, with 76 elected members (12 for each of the six states, two for the Australian Capital Territory, and two for the Northern Territory); and a lower house, the House of Representatives, with 150 members elected in single-member constituencies by universal adult suffrage. Senators serve for six years (with half the Senate being elected every three years), and members of the House for three years.

Voting is compulsory; the Senate is elected by proportional representation, but the House of Representatives is elected as single-member constituencies with preferential voting (the alternative vote), in which voters number the candidates in order of their preference. Each state has its own constitution, governor (the monarch's representative), executive (drawn from the parliament), and legislative and judicial system. Each territory has its own legislative assembly. The last relics of UK legislative control over Australia were removed in 1986, with the passing of the Australia Act, which ended judicial appeals to the UK Privy Council.

History For the history of Australia prior to the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, see Australia: history to 1901.

Federal versus state powers On the foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia, the division of powers between the state and federal governments was made, broadly, on the principle that those powers that were concerned solely with internal affairs should be vested in the states (as the colonies now became). The restrictions imposed on federal action have at times prevented the government from pursuing policies it has considered necessary for social and economic development of the country.

Frequent attempts have been made to amend the constitution, but with little success. To be successful a constitutional amendment must have the support of parliament and be approved in a referendum by a majority of votes nationally and in a majority of Australia's states. Nearly all proposed amendments have been designed to increase federal powers, but with the exception of 1946, when the Commonwealth was given control of social services, these proposals have been rejected by the electorate. The Commonwealth has desired full powers over trade, commerce, industrial matters, trusts, and monopolies, but though these have been denied it, judicial review and its financial supremacy have enabled it to exert an increasing influence over state policy.
Government before World War I

In the decade leading up to World War I, legislation was passed establishing an Australian navy and military force, imposing a protective tariff, and implementing the ‘White Australia’ policy (aimed at barring Asian immigration), and the first steps towards a welfare state were taken with the granting of old-age pensions. In 1910, a left-of-centre Labor government came into power seeking to make further reforms, but the outbreak of World War I in 1914 overshadowed domestic affairs.

Australia in World War I

At the outbreak of war, all parties pledged themselves to support the Allied cause. A division of troops was immediately placed at the disposal of the imperial government in Britain, and a small force was promptly sent to German New Guinea. At no time did Australia adopt conscription, though two attempts were made to introduce it. Both times a majority of the people voted against it, and the issue split the Labor Party. Despite this opposition to compulsory overseas service, out of the population of 5 million, 400,000 men enlisted. Total casualties were approximately 220,000, including 55,585 dead. The Victoria Cross was awarded to 63 Australians.

Australian troops formed part of Anzac (the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps), and took part in many of the crucial battles of the war, most notably in the Gallipoli campaign. They also fought in defence of the Suez Canal and on the Salonika front in the early years of the war, and later in Palestine, Flanders, and France. Other forces took German New Guinea, Nauru, and the Bismarck Archipelago. These former German possessions were subsequently subject to Australian administration under a League of Nations mandate. The Australian navy also served in the war, its most famous feat being the sinking of the German cruiser *Emden* off the Cocos Islands in 1914.

Governments and parties in the 1920s

At the end of hostilities in 1918, Australia was represented at the Paris Peace Conference and became a member of the League of Nations, but external affairs quickly faded into the background.

Domestically, material questions dominated in the 1920s. Splits in the Labor Party over conscription led to its losing control at the federal level and in all states except Queensland after the war. By 1924 it had recaptured most of the state governments, but not until 1929 did it regain federal control. William Hughes led a right-of-centre Nationalist government until 1923, and Stanley Bruce a Nationalist–Country Party coalition until 1929.

There was a series of industrial disputes, which government-sponsored arbitration failed to avert. In part, this was because of a division of arbitration powers between the federal and state governments. The introduction of increased penalties for breach of arbitration rulings embittered industrial relations and contributed to the electoral defeat of Bruce’s government in 1929.

The great depression

During the 1920s Australia’s federal government adopted a new approach of encouraging immigration and capital imports in an effort to increase the pace of economic growth; previously Australia’s population growth had depended largely on natural increase. In cooperation with the British government (which provided the capital) and the states (which helped settle the immigrants), the federal government sponsored ambitious immigration schemes, under which £34 million was to be made available for land settlement and associated public works. But the target was not realized – only £9 million of the loan money was spent and only 200,000 immigrants had arrived when depression brought the schemes to an end in 1929.

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Australia quickly felt the effects of the great depression that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929. Bad seasons and a disastrous fall in the price of wheat had already brought to an end the period of optimistic expansion by the time of the 1929 election. The new Labor government showed some hesitation in dealing with the situation. Tariffs were raised still higher, but there was opposition within Labor ranks to cutting back government expenditure to deflate the economy, as it would involve greater hardships for workers than for other sections of the community. A compromise policy calling for conversion of loans and a limited amount of inflation was finally evolved. However, the Labor Party had been seriously weakened. It was defeated in the 1931 elections and remained in opposition for ten years.

Though economic recovery was comparatively rapid, economic problems continued to preoccupy the government throughout the 1930s. The government was acquiescent when Britain pursued a policy of appeasement in Europe, and though 1934 saw the beginning of rearmament, it was not until war became imminent that real efforts were made to provide any adequate defence measures.

**Australia in World War II** On the outbreak of World War II the Australian prime minister Robert Menzies followed Britain's lead, and on 3 September 1939 Australia declared war on Germany. The country was in many ways unprepared, and it took some time to organize an effective war effort. From the beginning Australia cooperated in the Empire Air Training scheme, compulsory military training was introduced, and before the end of 1939 the Australian Imperial Force had sailed for the Middle East. In the first two years of the war Australian troops fought in Greece, Syria, and North Africa.

The domestic political situation in the early years of the war was unstable. The 1940 elections had resulted in the House of Representatives being evenly divided between Labor and non-Labor, with two independents holding the balance. Menzies remained prime minister and the Labor Party rejected his repeated proposals for an all-party government, though consenting to be members of an all-party advisory war council. In August 1941 Menzies resigned and after a brief period Labor assumed control. Labor had not questioned the participation in the war but merely the disposition of troops, and with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 the cause of the dispute disappeared.

In the same month the new Labor prime minister John Curtin made his famous appeal to the USA for help – an appeal that was interpreted by some as the severing of the link with Britain. Britain was too occupied in the European theatre of war to provide effective assistance in the defence of Australia, which, as the Japanese pushed south, had only one armoured division and seven skeleton divisions of semi-equipped untrained militia to defend it. February 1942 saw the surrender of 15,000 Australian troops to the Japanese at the fall of Singapore, the bombing of Darwin on the Australian mainland, and the recall by Curtin of two of the three Australian divisions in the Middle East. The British prime minister Winston Churchill had wanted these diverted to defend Burma, but Curtin insisted that they return to Australia.

The rest of the war saw close cooperation between US and Australian forces. Australia became the base for the Allied campaign in the Pacific, and under the supreme command of Gen Douglas MacArthur the Allied forces halted the Japanese drive in 1942–43, and in mid-1943 began the recapture of the islands and the slow reconquest of the New Guinea coastline. In 1943 the 9th Division, which had remained in the Middle East and had assisted in checking the German advance into Egypt, had been recalled to join the fighting in New Guinea and the nearby islands. The last campaign in which Australian troops fought was the invasion of Borneo in July 1945.

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At home, the impact of the war on the life of the community had been considerable even before the Japanese attack prompted much more extensive government controls. At first the government showed some reluctance to interfere with traditional economic freedoms, but by 1942 it had rationed a wide range of articles, pegged wages, controlled prices, and undertaken the direction of labour. Manpower had become a serious problem as the Australian manufacturing industry expanded under the pressure of the increased demands made upon it, once Australia became the base for US and Australian forces and a source of supplies. The result was a significant change in the structure of the economy, with the establishment of new industries and the expansion of existing ones.

**Post-war policy** The maintenance of full employment was for many years a basic consideration in post-war policy. Even before hostilities ended the government drew up plans for projects that would be undertaken if unemployment threatened. In fact this did not happen, and the immediate post-war years were a period of rapid expansion, rising wages, and over-full employment.

The two objectives that have so often shaped Australian policies, the improvement of social conditions and the economic development of the continent, again dominated policy in the post-war period. The welfare state had actually been extended during the war, with family allowances being paid from 1941, and in 1945 a comprehensive scheme of unemployment and sickness benefits was introduced.

**Post-war immigration** The war had emphasized Australia's relative emptiness and potential vulnerability, with attacks on Australian soil for the first time. Labour shortages continued after the war and it was considered that Australia must 'populate or perish'. This encouraged the development of a government-sponsored immigration scheme, starting in 1948. It was initially decided that an intake of 70,000 a year, together with natural increase, would result in a 2% population increase annually, this being considered the maximum increase possible without economic strain (although later this maximum was revised).

Old immigration policies were abandoned: no longer were immigrants settled on the land, and no longer was immigration only encouraged from Britain, as it was realized that the large number of displaced persons in Europe offered a ready source of immigrant labour. Numerically, the programme was very successful. Between 1948 and 1975, over 2 million new immigrants settled in Australia, including about one-third from Britain, which included children who were shipped from UK orphanages from the end of World War II until the late 1960s. Many of the other immigrants were, for the first time, from southern and central Europe.

**The Menzies era** It had been expected that large-scale immigration would relieve the labour shortage, but by creating new demands, notably in housing, schools, and hospitals, in the short term it aggravated the situation and was one of the contributing factors to post-war inflation, which reached a crisis point in 1951. High wool prices, heavy private investment, home building, and huge public-works programmes were contributory causes. But the economy began to boom in the 1950s and 1960s as Australia, which had previously relied on agricultural and mineral production, now developed manufacturing industries.

In 1952 the Menzies government (elected in 1949 as a centre-right coalition of the newly founded Liberal party and the Country Party, and re-elected in 1954, 1955, 1958, 1961, and 1963) decided that it had become necessary to reimpose certain controls, notably import restrictions, in order to halt inflation. These measures temporarily slowed the pace of expansion and intake of immigrants, but
were reasonably successful in restoring economic stability. A prolonged period of economic prosperity followed, and active federal encouragement of immigration was revived. Australia's post-war economic expansion survived inflationary pressures and periodic waves of acute industrial unrest, in which control of the largest unions by the extreme left played a leading part.

Politically, the period was notable as one of great crisis for the Labor Party, continuously out of office from 1949 to 1972, and from 1954 deeply divided against itself. Australian political life as a whole suffered from its consequences.

**Foreign affairs** Australia became much more conscious of its relationship with non-Commonwealth countries after World War II. The danger of Japanese invasion during the war had emphasized the need to make adequate defence arrangements, and the search for powerful allies resulted in attempts to achieve closer association with the USA. In the Cold War period Australia joined two regional defence alliances, becoming a member of Anzus (with New Zealand and the USA) in 1951, and of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954.

The need to establish friendly relations with Asian countries became increasingly important, particularly following the emergence of an expansionist Indonesia, which claimed some of Australia's trusteeship territories. To this end Australian diplomatic representation in many Asian countries was increased, and Australia made aid contributions under the Colombo Plan. In 1964, during the Indonesian threat to Malaysia, the Australian government introduced selective conscription.

In the early 1960s there was uncertainty in Australia regarding its future political and economic relations with Britain should the latter gain entry to the European Economic Community (EEC). A new trade agreement between the two countries in 1957 had safeguarded the preferences laid down by the Ottawa agreements of 1932, and many Australians considered that British membership of the EEC would imperil Australia's economy and entail the dissolution of the British Commonwealth. By this time Australia was, however, far less dependent upon British imports than it had been before 1939. Nevertheless when Britain did join the European Community (EC) in 1973, it was felt by many Australians that Britain had turned its back, and a new strain of nationalism began to emerge.

**A succession of Liberal prime ministers** In 1966 Sir Robert Menzies retired and was succeeded by Harold Holt, who, a year later, drowned in a swimming accident. John Gorton became prime minister in 1968. He increased the number of Australian troops committed to the Vietnam War, which divided the country. Gorton was succeeded by a Liberal–Country Party coalition under William McMahon (a Liberal) in 1971. In December 1972 McMahon was defeated in the general election by the Labor Party under Gough Whitlam – the first Labor victory since 1949.

**Whitlam's Labor government** In April 1974 Whitlam dissolved both houses of parliament because of persistent deadlock, but a month later he was reelected, despite having a reduced majority in the House of Representatives. During 1974 the Australian economy became progressively more unstable (partly owing to the international economic situation), with an unfavourable balance of trade, growing unemployment, and trade-union unrest.

On 1 January 1975, Australia introduced new laws on immigration. These restricted the number of unskilled and semiskilled workers allowed into the country, in order to ease the unemployment situation. They also ended the ‘White Australia’ of preferential treatment of immigrants from Britain, except in cases of family reunion, paving the way subsequently for substantial immigration from Asia.
In mid-1975 the Whitlam government narrowly survived accusations of unorthodox international loan-raising activities. The affair led to the dismissal or resignation of several senior government ministers and damaged Labor’s standing. Opposition to the government’s monetary policy became stronger in October when the opposition-dominated Senate exercised its constitutional right in blocking budget bills concerning money supply.

Whitlam replaced by Fraser An impasse developed and the government rejected the Senate’s proposal for a general election in mid-1976. On 11 November 1975 the governor general, Sir John Kerr, took the unprecedented step of dismissing the government and installing a caretaker ministry under Malcolm Fraser, the Liberal leader, to govern until elections could be held. The wisdom of this action was questioned by many, and there were widespread demonstrations supporting Whitlam. Kerr himself resigned in 1977.

The Liberals won a majority in the December 1975 elections with Fraser forming a coalition (Liberal–National Country Party). Whitlam was succeeded as leader of the Labor Party by Bill Hayden. In the 1977 general election Fraser’s coalition government was returned with a reduced majority, which was further reduced in the 1980 elections.

The Hawke era In the 1983 general election the coalition was eventually defeated and the Australian Labor Party under Bob Hawke again took office. Hawke, who was a former president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, called together employers and unions to a National Economic Summit to agree to a wage and price policy and to deal with unemployment. In 1984 he called a general election 15 months early and was returned with a reduced majority. Hawke placed even greater emphasis than his predecessors on links with Southeast Asia, and imposed trading sanctions against South Africa as a means of influencing the dismantling of apartheid.

In the 1987 general election Labor marginally increased its majority in the House but did not have an overall majority in the Senate, where the balance was held by the Australian Democrats. The 1990 election was won by Labor, led by Hawke, with a reduced majority in the House of Representatives, for a record fourth term in office. The Australian Democrats maintained the balance of power in the Senate. In August 1991 Hawke announced that agreement had been reached on greater cohesion of the states’ economies.

Keating as prime minister In December 1991 Hawke's leadership of the Labor Party was successfully challenged by Paul Keating, his Treasurer (finance minister), who became the new party leader and prime minister. Hawke retired from politics in January 1992. Despite Keating’s ‘kickstart’ plan – announced in February 1992 – to boost a stagnant economy, Australia’s unemployment rate reached a record 11.1% in July. Keating’s inability to tackle the effects of the recession was seen as the main reason for his waning popularity. An expansionary budget outlined in August 1992 was criticized by the opposition as an attempt to gain support for the Labor Party in preparation for the 1993 elections. In December 1992 the Citizenship Act was amended so as to remove the oath of allegiance to the British crown.

But in March 1993 Keating led the Labor Party to a surprising fifth successive general election victory. John Hewson resigned as Liberal Party leader in May 1994 and was succeeded by Alexander Downer, who in turn was replaced by John Howard in January 1995.

Howard’s Liberal–National government in power Although the economy was beginning to
improve, after the early 1990s recession, Keating's Labor Party was defeated in the 1996 general election by John Howard's Liberal–National coalition, which ran on the slogan of time for a change after 13 years of Labor government. The Howard government made cuts in some government training and education programmes and introduced a new policy of requiring of able-bodied social security recipients to more actively seek work. In the 1998 general election, there was a swing towards Labor but the Liberal–National coalition remained in power, with a majority of six seats. The extremist One Nation party, led by Pauline Hanson and which called for less immigration, secured 8% of the vote, but won no seats. Australia's population reached 19 million in 1999. Natural increase accounted for 53% of the rise from 18 million, and net overseas migration contributed 47%.

**Howard's second term** The early years of Howard's second term were dominated by a referendum held in November 1999 on whether to move to a republic, with a president (chosen by a two-thirds vote of Australia's parliament) replacing the British monarch. This had been the option suggested by a convention set up by Howard in 1997 to examine reforms to Australia's 19th-century written constitution. In the referendum, 55% voted 'no' to this proposed change. They also rejected a separate proposal to insert a preamble to the constitution, recognizing Aborigines as the first Australians. After the referendum results, Howard said that constitutional reform was no longer on the political agenda.

In 2000, the Olympic Games were held in Sydney, bringing over A$3 billion in new business to the Australian economy. And in July 2000 a new 10% goods-and-services tax (GST) was introduced.

**Asylum crisis** In 2000–01, Australia faced a perceived asylum crisis to which the Howard government responded with vigorous border protection measures.

Between July and December 2000, over 1,000 illegal immigrants had arrived from Indonesia by boat, and in December 2000, at least 160 drowned when storms sank the boats carrying them.

In August 2001, a Norwegian freighter carrying 433 asylum seekers rescued from a sinking Indonesian ferry was refused permission to land them in Australia. In an unprecedented move, Australian troops prevented the mainly Afghan refugees from landing and 40 soldiers boarded the freighter, the MV *Tampa*, threatening to sail it out of territorial waters. After an eight-day stand-off, the unwanted asylum-seekers transferred to the HMAS *Manoora*, which took them to Papua New Guinea from where they were flown to New Zealand and Nauru, where applications for refugee status would be processed. However, the Australian government received a humiliating setback on 11 September 2001 when the Federal Court ruled that it had acted illegally in refusing the refugees permission to apply for asylum in the country and that they must be allowed to land.

**Howard's third term** In February 2001, at a time of economic slowdown, the Liberal Party lost state elections in Queensland and Western Australia. But Howard's harsh asylum policies proved popular and in the November 2001 general election his coalition was returned with an increased majority for a third term. It achieved the largest swing to a incumbent government since 1966. Taking responsibility for defeat, Kim Beazley resigned as Labor Party leader and was replaced by Simon Crean.

In 2002, the Australian government faced mounting international pressure over its asylum policy, as hundreds of asylum-seekers in the Woomera detention camp ended a 16-day hunger strike on 29 January 2002 after the government said it would speed up consideration of their applications. The United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, asked to send an envoy to inspect the
Woomera camp to ensure that Australia was meeting its international obligations. Public protest at the conditions at Woomera continued, and in March 2002 protesters helped over 50 asylum seekers to escape by knocking down fences and giving bolt-cutters to the detainees.

In March 2003, Australia sent troops and naval units to support the USA’s invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein. The Howard government’s decision was controversial in Australia, with large public protests in many cities. There was also criticism from senior Liberal politicians, including former prime minister Malcolm Fraser.

Howard’s fourth term In December 2003, Mark Latham replaced Simon Crean as Labor Party leader and by spring 2004 Labor was ahead in the opinion polls. Latham promised that, if elected, a Labor government would bring Australia’s troops back from Iraq by Christmas. But Howard’s Liberal–National coalition was re-elected in November 2004, with 53% of the vote and an increased majority. The coalition also won a majority in the Senate, giving the government control over both houses for the first time since the Fraser government. This enabled the Howard government to push through controversial legislation, including reforms to industrial relations and a liberalization of media ownership rules. The Howard government also refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions, on the grounds that it would be ineffective as it did not set binding emission reduction targets for developing countries such as China and India.

Labor return to power In January 2005 Mark Latham resigned as Labor Party leader to be replaced by Kim Beazley. But Beazley failed to make an impression in opinion polls against John Howard and in December 2006 lost the party leadership to Kevin Rudd, the shadow foreign affairs minister. Rudd modernized the party around a centrist programme and led it to victory in the November 2007 general election. There was a 5% swing to Labor, which won 53% of the vote, and the Liberal–National coalition lost 23 seats, including Howard’s own seat.

Rudd’s new government immediately ratified the Kyoto Protocol on climate change and started a phased withdrawal of Australian combat troops from Iraq, which was completed in July 2009. However, in April 2009 Australia sent additional troops to Afghanistan to support the US-led war on terror. The Rudd government provided increased funding and support for homeless persons and education, reformed the healthcare system, and dismantled much of the preceding government’s WorkChoices industrial relations legislation. In February 2008, Prime Minister Rudd formally apologized in parliament to Australia’s indigenous peoples for past injustices perpetrated against them by the state.

Australia’s economy had expanded at an average annual rate of over 3% since the early 1990s, so that, in 2007, the unemployment stood at a 30-year low of 5%. The global financial crisis of 2008–10 presented a serious challenge to which the Rudd government responded, in October 2008, with a $A10 billion economic stimulus package, followed, in February 2009, by a $A42 billion package. Interest rates were reduced substantially, but tax revenues fell, leading to a sharp increase in the government’s budget deficit. Nevertheless, strong export growth enabled Australia to be one of the few OECD countries to avoid recession.

Gillard replaces Rudd as Labor leader and prime minister During 2007–09 Rudd and his government enjoyed high levels of public support, but this changed in early 2010. The government’s proposed 40% Resource Super Profit Tax on extractive industries brought opposition from powerful mining interests, while delays in its introduction of a ‘carbon reduction’ emissions trading scheme dismayed environmentalists and the left.

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In June 2010, Julia Gillard, the deputy prime minister, successfully challenged Rudd for the party’s leadership and took over as the country’s first female prime minister. Further to the left, the Welsh-born Gillard had headed a super-ministry of education, employment, and workplace relations in the Rudd administration. She called an early general election in August 2010, which produced a ‘hung parliament’ in which both Labor and the opposition coalition held 72 of the 150 seats.

Gillard continued as prime minister, heading a minority government supported by the Greens and independents and which included Rudd as foreign secretary. She made health and education the priorities of her administration and in July 2012 introduced the controversial carbon emissions tax aimed at penalizing large polluters.

**Swing to the right brings Abbott to power** The Labour governments of Rudd and Gillard successfully maintained economic growth through and beyond the global financial crisis, with unemployment kept below 6%. However, party infighting led to a fall in popularity for the party. In February 2012, Rudd resigned as foreign secretary to (unsuccessfully) challenge Gillard for the party’s leadership. In January 2013, she responded by announcing there would be an early general election in September 2013. But, in June 2013, the party voted for Rudd to replace her as leader and prime minister.

Rudd's greater voter popularity was not enough to save Labor from defeat, and the right-of-centre Liberal-National coalition led by Tony Abbott, a British-born Roman Catholic, won a landslide victory in September 2013. Labor won 33% of the vote, its worst share for 100 years, and 55 of the 150 lower house seats. The Liberal-National coalition won 46% of the vote and 90 seats. However, no single party or alliance won control over the Senate.

One of Prime Minister Abbott’s first actions was to launch Operation Sovereign Borders under which Australia’s navy intercepted boats of migrants and asylum seekers coming from southeast Asia and towed them back to Indonesia. In July 2014, Australia’s parliament scrapped Labour’s carbon emissions tax, replacing it with subsidies to encourage companies and farmers to reduce emissions. This was despite an academic study reporting that the carbon tax had contributed to a 0.8% drop in emissions in 2013.

However, Abbott’s opinion poll ratings fell sharply after he broke election promises to introduce paid parental leave and not to cut education and health spending. His government’s increases in charges for visits to local doctors and cuts to university funding were unpopular, while his opposition to same-sex marriage was out of line with public opinion.

**Turnbull ousts Abbott as party leader and prime minister** In February 2015 Abbott survived an attempt to replace him as Liberal leader, but in September 2015 the communications minister, Malcolm Turnbull, launched a successful challenge. Abbott pledged not to undermine the new government.

**Climate changes** According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, 2013 was the hottest year in Australia since records began in 1910. Overall, 2013 was 1.2° C above the long-term average of 21.8° C set between 1961 and 1990. The increase was attributed partly to the onset of La Niña conditions (which caused ocean temperatures to rise around the country) and partly to global warming. It continued a trend of steadily rising temperatures, with the mean temperature of the continent rising by 1° C since 1950.

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