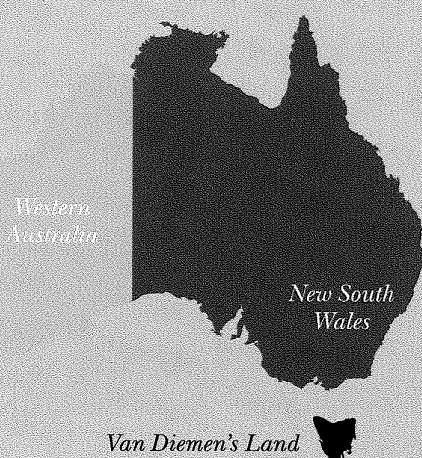


Western Australia

▲ COLONIAL SETTLEMENT 1832



The first recorded instance of European contact with the west coast of Australia was by Dutch explorer, Dirk Hartog. In 1616, he landed at an island in Shark Bay that was later named Dirk Hartog Island in his honour. Hartog spent three days exploring the area, then sailed north and charted the western coastline of Australia before finally returning to Batavia.

In 1791, Commander George Vancouver staked British claim on the area known today as Albany. Whalers and sealers operating in the Southern Ocean became frequent visitors to the area, known as King George Sound, in the early 1800s. French explorers also made several excursions around this time. The presence of the French prompted the British Government to create the first British settlement in Western Australia at Albany in 1826. In 1829, the Swan River Colony was founded. The

port city of Fremantle and the city of Perth, which would go on to become the capital city of the state, both developed from this colony.

Western Australia was founded as a “free colony”, although convicts from New South Wales were used to help with early settlement. But labour was in short supply. From 1842, the colony received around 200 juvenile prisoners from Britain, but this was not enough to meet the demands of the growing colony. By 1849, Western Australia became a penal colony, with most convicts spending little time in prison and used as unpaid labour.

Transportation of convicts to Western Australia ceased in 1868. By 1885, the first gold discovery in the area was at Halls Creek, with major findings at Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893. The increased wealth of the state helped convince the British Government in 1890 that Western Australia (WA) was ready for self-governance.

▲ Black swan

Dutch exploration of the western coast of Australia continued after Hartog’s 1616 landing, and in 1694 the ship *Ridderschap van Holland* apparently vanished in this area. Willem de Vlamingh launched a rescue mission for survivors two years later. He didn’t find any survivors but he did find black swans. In 1697, he ventured up a Western Australian river, that he named the Swan River (*Zwaanenvier* in Dutch) after the large colony of black swans that populated the water and banks of the river.