1980s

The 1980s are remembered by many as a time of excess, entrepreneurs and environmental issues.

Issues of all kinds came to the fore -- a referendum was held over whether to dam the Franklin River, peace rallies were well attended during the early part of the decade, land rights became part of the political agenda and the first national council on AIDS was held in 1984. A Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody was set up and Australia signed the Ozone Layer Treaty.

The Bicentenary caused controversy as people remembered 200 years of European settlement or 200 years of white oppression

The Australian economy was placed in a world context when the Australian dollar was floated and the banking system deregulated. Unrealistic amounts of money were borrowed, house prices rose considerably and share prices on the Australian stockmarket crashed. By the end of the decade a large number of corporations had collapsed.

Australia's high profile in sport continued with success in the America's Cup, the Wallabies rugby tours, the world surf-riding championship and victory in the Ashes tour of England for the first time in 55 years.

Questions for research and discussion:

**• In the 1980s there were many firsts for women. Go through the timeline and make a list of these, giving the date and the achievement.**

**• Choose two events from the 1980s that you think were influential on how Australians regard themselves. Give reasons for your answer.**

• Why do you think the Australian National Film and Sound archives were set up in 1984?

• Why did the Australian government recommend that Australia not participate in the Moscow Olympics in 1980?

• What are the `Ashes'?

**1980**

• The Japanese company Mitsubishi takes over Chrysler Australia Ltd.

• Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visit Australia for the opening of the High Court building in Canberra.

• Convicted bank robber Darcy Dugan is released from Maitland Jail, New South Wales, after spending more than 30 of his 59 years in prison. He is re-arrested in 1981 and charged with the armed hold-up of a service station.

• Baby Azaria Chamberlain disappears from a campsite at Ayers Rock, reportedly taken by a dingo.

• Robert (Bob) Hawke resigns as president of the ACTU and is elected to the House of Representatives.

• An election for the House of Representatives and half Senate is held and the Fraser Government is re-elected with a reduced majority. The Democrats win three more Senate seats.

• A world-wide competition for a design for the new Parliament House in Canberra is won by the United States-based Romaldo Giurgola.

• The Pitjantjatjara Council advises the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs of the possible radioactive contamination of Aboriginal people in South Australia caused by the atomic tests of 1953.

• Australia's Landsat data-acquisition station at Alice Springs begins receiving direct information from United States remote-sensing satellites.

• NSW is crippled by a petrol drivers strike.

• Justice David Opus, a Family Court judge, is shot dead at his Sydney home.

• The Turkish Consul-General is shot on 17 December, This is the first political assassination in Australia.

• Australia's first 'test tube' baby is born.

• Automatic teller machines are introduced.

• Women are allowed to become full members of surf lifesaving clubs.

• Deborah Wardley becomes the first woman in Australia to be appointed as a pilot for a major commercial airline.

• The Australian Olympic Federation votes to send a team to the Olympic Games in Moscow even though the Federal Government has called for a boycott because of Russia's intervention in Afghanistan. Some individual athletes subsequently withdraw from the team.

• Michelle Ford wins the 800 metres freestyle swimming event at the Moscow Olympic Games, and the men's team wins the 4 x 100 metres medley relay.

• Tennis player Evonne Cawley wins the women's singles at Wimbledon.

• Grant Kenny wins the National Open Iron Man and Junior Iron Man titles in consecutive events at the Australian surf championships.

• Des Renford swims the English Channel for a record 19th time.

• Alan Jones wins the world Formula One driver's championship.

• The 'Wilfrid Thomas Show' ends after 39 years on ABC radio.

• Bruce Beresford makes the movie, 'Breaker Morant'.

• The estimated resident population of Australia is 14,807,370.

**1981**

• Sir Garfield Barwick retires as Chief Justice of the High Court and is succeeded by Sir Harry Gibbs.

• Australia withdraws diplomatic recognition of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

• Alice Springs coroner Denis Barritt finds that a dingo killed Azaria Chamberlain.

• Grants of assisted passage are restricted to refugees.

• The Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act (South Australia) is passed and a large area of the state is returned to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara people.

• Jack 'Puttynose' Nicholls is found shot dead in a car at Wangaratta, Victoria. He was due to give evidence to the Costigan Royal Commission.

• A Royal Commission into drug trafficking under Justice Donald Stewart is established.

• The Church of England in Australia becomes the Anglican Church in Australia.

• Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Everingham orders the police to reopen investigation into the disappearance of Azaria Chamberlain.

• Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visit Australia to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Melbourne.

• The National Bank of Australasia and Commercial Banking Company of Sydney merge to form the National Australia Bank.

• The Bank of New South Wales and the Commercial Bank of Australasia merge. It begins trading under the name of Westpac on 1 October 1982.

• The Rural Bank of New South Wales becomes the State Bank.

• A referendum is held in Tasmania to decide the site of the dam on the Franklin River (44.89% vote 'No Dams' or informal).

• Death duties are abolished in New South Wales.

• Antivenene for funnelweb spider bites is developed by Struan Sutherland of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. This has taken over 22 years to develop.

• The four-millionth Holden vehicle comes off the assembly line.

• Metal trades workers gain a 38-hour week.

• Pat O'Shane is appointed permanent head of the New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

• The Cairns section of the Great Barrier Reef is proclaimed as a Marine Park.

• Dame Enid Lyons, the first woman in Federal Parliament dies at 84.

• The Australian Institute of Sport opens at the National Sports Centre in Canberra.

• Cricketer Dennis Lillee takes his 310th Test wicket, setting a new world record.

• Cricketer Trevor Chappell bowls the last ball underarm in a World Series Cricket match against New Zealand in Melbourne to prevent New Zealand scoring the six runs it needed to draw. There is a public uproar.

• Brothers Glen, Mark, and Garry Ella play in Australia's Rugby Union Test team.

• England beats Australia in Manchester to retain the 'Ashes'.

• Jan Stephenson wins the women's world golf championship in Japan.

• Film:

Peter Weir, 'Gallipoli'.

George Miller, 'Mad Max 2'.

• Books published:

Peter Carey, 'Bliss' (Miles Franklin Award winner).

Blanche d'Alpuget, 'Turtle Beach'.

A.B. Facey, 'A Fortunate Life'.

The Macquarie Dictionary

Eric Rolls, 'A Million Wild Acres'.

Gavin Souter, 'Company of Heralds'.

Patrick White, 'Flaws in the Glass' .

**1982**

• Lindy Chamberlain is committed for trial for the murder of her baby daughter, Azaria. She is found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Morling Commission in 1987 results in a pardon.

•The ALP reverses its policy on uranium mining to allow for the continuation of existing mining projects.

•Aboriginal Northern Land Council agrees to the mining of uranium at Jabiluka, Northern Territory.

•Sir Ninian Stephen follows Sir Zelman Cowen as Governor-General.

•The Australian dollar falls below parity with the American dollar for the first time.

•The Dalai Lama arrives in Australia for the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Buddhism in Australia.

•Uranium mining ceases at Mary Kathleen, Queensland.

•Queen Elizabeth II visits Australia to open the Australian National Gallery. Prince Phillip arrived earlier for the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane.

•The National Country Party, at the Federal level, changes its name to the National Party of Australia.

•John Cain leads the ALP to victory in Victoria, ending 27 years of Liberal rule.

•Instant lotteries are introduced in New South Wales.

•The first case of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) in Australia is diagnosed in Sydney.

•Aborigines agree to Uranium mining at Jabiluka.

•Random breath testing is introduced in New South Wales.

•A Royal Commission into the Maralinga atomic tests begins.

•The Federal Government approves $160 million to develop and launch 'Aussat' to provide outback communications.

•Much of Australia is in the fourth year of drought.

•Large protest rallies are held against the damming of the Gordon River.

•The 'Australian Women's Weekly' is first published as a monthly.

•Thomas Keneally wins the Booker prize with his book, 'Schindler's Ark'.

•The records of the group 'Men at Work' top the Australian, British and American charts.

•Mark Richards wins the world professional surf-riding championship for the fourth year in succession.

•Films:

George Miller, 'The Man from Snowy River'.

Peter Weir, 'The Year of Living Dangerously' .

**1983**

•Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser obtains a double dissolution of parliament. Bob Hawke replaces Bill Hayden as leader of the Labor Party to go to the election.

•A severe dust storm sweeps through Melbourne and deposits 11,000 tonnes of topsoil on the city.

•The 'Ash Wednesday' bushfires in Victoria and South Australia result in the loss of 72 lives and the destruction of more than 2,000 houses.

•A huge worldwide television audience watches the Sutherland and Pavarotti concert from the Sydney Opera House.

•The election for Federal Parliament results in Labor winning office. Malcolm Fraser resigns from the Liberal leadership.

•The Australian dollar is devalued by 10%.

•The Hawke Ministry is sworn in. Andrew Peacock is elected Liberal Party Leader of the Opposition.

•Australian Catholic priest Brian Gore is jailed in the Philippines on charges of murder and inciting rebellion. He is released in 1984.

•A National Economic Summit is held in Canberra.

•Archbishop Edward Clancy succeeds Cardinal Sir James Freeman as Catholic Archbishop of Sydney.

•New South Wales Premier Neville Wran steps aside while a Royal Commission investigates allegations made on the ABC TV program 'Four Corners' that he attempted to influence the magistracy.

•New South Wales Premier Neville Wran is exonerated and resumes his post as New South Wales Premier. Chief magistrate Murray Farquhar is charged with perverting the course of justice.

•The Australian Broadcasting Commission is reconstituted as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

•The first death from AIDS in Australia occurs.

•Dick Smith completes the first solo flight around the world in a helicopter.

•Paul Sharp becomes the first white person to cross the Simpson Desert alone and on foot.

•A High Court decision blocks the construction of the Gordon-below-Franklin dam in Tasmania.

•The foundations of Sydney's first Government House are uncovered by Heritage Council archaeologists.

•The second building for the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney is begun. It is completed in 1988.

•The first electronic funds transfer at point of sale (EFTPOS) is launched by Westpac Bank.

•The Inaugural National Conference of Aboriginal Writers is held in Perth.

•The Melbourne Cricket Club votes to allow women members.

•Cliff Young, aged 61, wins the inaugural Sydney-Melbourne foot race.

•Kiwi wins the Melbourne cup.

•Golfer Jan Stephenson wins the US Women's Open golf championship.

•Runner Robert de Castella wins the marathon at Rotterdam and at the world athletic championships in Helsinki.

•Australia II wins the America's Cup. It is the first time in 132 years that a non-American yacht has won.

•Unemployed number 730,000 (10.4% of the workforce).

**1984**

•'Advance Australia Fair' is proclaimed as Australia's official national anthem and green and gold as Australia's national colours.

•The $100 banknote is introduced.

•The $1 coin is introduced.

•Friday night and Saturday afternoon shopping are introduced in New South Wales.

•76,000 square kilometres of land are returned to the Aboriginal people at Maralinga.

•First National Council on AIDS is held.

•Banks are deregulated.

•Heavy snowfalls block roads and railways in eastern Australia. Sydney has its coldest July day since 1896.

•Migrants from Asia increase by 17%, while those from Europe fall by 37%.

•More than a hundred of the thousand companies listed on the stock exchange are taken over during the year.

•The video-cassette boom cuts attendances at cinemas and forces the closure of some drive-in cinemas.

•A mouse plague sweeps New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia country districts.

•Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer become the first Australians to climb Mount Everest and the first to ascend the north face without oxygen.

•The National Film and Sound Archives open in Canberra.

•At the Los Angeles Olympics, Glynis Nunn wins the women's heptathlon, John Sieben wins the 200 metres butterfly swimming, the Australian men's cycling team wins the 4,000 metres team pursuit, and Dean Lukin wins the super heavyweight weight-lifting.

•The Australian Jockey Club (AJC) 'warns off' Bill and Robbie Waterhouse following the substitution of the racehorse Bold Personality for Fine Cotton at Brisbane Racecourse.

•The State Sports Centre opens in Homebush, Sydney.

•Black Knight wins the Melbourne Cup.

•Wallabies Rugby Union team achieve the grand slam, beating England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, and also the Barbarians.

•Tom Carroll wins the world surfing (board-riding) championship.

•Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, are restored and converted to a museum of social history.

•Australia's first Mormon temple is built in Carlingford, Sydney.

•The world's first frozen-embryo baby is born in Melbourne.

**1985**

•Australia begins a two-year term on the United Nations Security Council.

•More than 140 bushfires rage through Victoria and South Australia. Five people are killed.

•AM stereo radio broadcasting begins.

•Women begin training in the Australian Army.

•In the 'Come to Canberra Campaign' joint Land Councils from the Northern Territory and the States go to Parliament House, Canberra, to protest against the amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act of the Northern Territory.

•The United States withdraws from a planned ANZUS naval exercise after New Zealand refuses to allow nuclear-capable United States warships to call at its ports.

•Australia cancels its involvement in American MX missile tests.

•More than 300,000 people across Australia march in Palm Sunday anti-nuclear rallies.

•Bond Corporation takes over Castlemaine Tooheys in the biggest takeover operation yet in Australia.

•John Howard replaces Andrew Peacock as leader of the Federal Opposition.

•The Mutijulu Aborigines gain control of Ayers Rock and the Uluru National Park.

•Canon Arthur Malcolm becomes first Aboriginal bishop.

•The State of Victoria celebrates its 150th anniversary.

•Simon Crean succeeds Cliff Dolan as president of the ACTU.

•Australians have $2.28 billion in debt on Bankcard.

•The annual per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages: beer, 115 litres; wine, 22 litres; spirits, 1.1 litre per person.

•'Neighbours', the popular Australian soap opera, begins.

•Sir Macfarlane Burnet , Nobel Prize winner for medicine, dies in Melbourne.

•Poet Douglas Stewart dies, aged 71.

•Books published:

Peter Carey, 'Illywacker'.

C J Koch, 'The Doubleman' (Miles Franklin Award winner).

**1986**

•Australia's first women deacons are ordained in the Anglican church.

•Pat O'Shane becomes the first Aboriginal magistrate.

•Halley's Comet is visible in the night sky.

•'Southern Aurora' and 'Spirit of Progress' trains combine to become the Melbourne/Sydney Express.

•The Trans-Australia Airlines (TAA) becomes Australian Airlines.

•Sydney has its wettest 24 hours on record, with more than 327 mm of rain falling. Six people are killed, 1,500 evacuated and transport is in chaos.

•Joan Child becomes first female speaker of the House of Representatives.

•Australian Democrats leader Don Chipp retires from Federal Parliament and is succeeded as party leader by Senator Janine Haines, the first woman and the first South Australian to become a parliamentary party leader.

•NSW Premier, Neville Wran, retires from politics.

•Liberals are re-elected in Tasmania and the ALP is returned in Western Australia.

•Federal Government introduces a $250 administration charge for all tertiary students, to take effect in the 1987 academic year.

•Mary Gaudron becomes the first woman appointed to the High Court.

•There is a severe downturn in the rural sector which threatens the economic survival of many farmers.

•Pope John Paul II visits Australia.

•The Turkish Consulate in Melbourne is bombed.

•The Roman Catholic Church becomes Australia's largest religious denomination (26.25%).

•Artist Davida Allen's portrait of Dr John Arthur McKelvie Shera wins the Archibald Prize.

•Richard Meale's opera 'Voss', with libretto by David Malouf, has its world premi�re at the Adelaide Festival.

•The movie 'Crocodile Dundee', starring Paul Hogan has worldwide success.

•Elizabeth Jolley's 'The Well' wins the Miles Franklin Award.

**1987**

•Alan Bond buys Channel 9 television network from Kerry Packer for $1 billion.

•The all-weather road from Darwin to Adelaide is completed.

•The Hawke Government is returned for a historic third term.

•A crocodile kills an American woman at the Prince Regent River, in north-west Western Australia. She is the eighth person in two years to be killed by crocodiles.

•News Ltd. takes over the Herald and Weekly Times Group.

•Sir Anthony Mason succeeds Sir Harry Gibbs as Chief Justice of the High Court.

•Share prices on Australian stock exchanges suffer a record fall, in line with the worldwide stockmarket crash.

•The Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal commission is set up.

•Carbon dating of ancient artefacts found near Penrith, New South Wales, indicates that humans occupied Australia 47,000 years ago.

•Aboriginals are officially acknowledged as the first owners of Australia.

•The Royal Commision on Black Deaths in Custody is announced.

•Northern Territory elections are held and voting becomes compulsory for Aboriginal people.

•Sir Warwick Fairfax, former chairman of media group John Fairfax Ltd, dies in Sydney at 85.

•Australian entrpreneur Dick Smith becomes the first person to fly solo in a helicopter to the North Pole.

•The American yacht 'Stars and Stripes' beats Australia's Kookaburra III in a series of races off Fremantle to win back the America's Cup.

•Tennis player Pat Cash wins the Wimbledon men's singles tennis championship.

•Cyclist Martin Vinnicombe of Sydney wins the amateur 1,000-metre time trial at the world cycling championships in Vienna.

•Wayne Gardner wins the world 500-cc motorcycle championship.

•Kensei wins the Melbourne Cup, in which a female jockey (Maree Lyndon) rides for the first time.

•Allan Border overtakes Greg Chappell to become Australia's greatest run-scorer in Test cricket.

•ABC TV program 'Countdown' ends in its thirteenth year.

•Artist William Robinson's 'Equestrian Self-Portrait' wins the Archibald Prize.

•David Williamson's play, 'Emerald City' is first produced.

•Filmmaker John Duigan releases the popular film 'The Year My Voice Broke'.

•Books published:

Murray Bail, 'Holden's Performance'.

C. M. H. Clark, 'A History of Australia', the final volume (volume 6).

Robert Hughes, 'The Fatal Shore'.

Thomas Keneally, 'The Playmaker'.

**1988**

•Many Australians celebrated 200 years of European occupation.

•The Aboriginal television station 'Imarja' begins transmission in Alice Springs.

•The First Fleet re-enactment vessels arrive at Botany Bay.

•The NSW Labor government is defeated in the elections. Nick Greiner, Lberal Party leader, becomes Premier of NSW.

•Parliament House on Capital Hill, Canberra, is officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

•Former Prime Minister Sir William McMahon dies in Sydney, aged 80.

•Sydney's controversial monorail begins operations.

•The two-dollar coin goes into circulation to replace the banknote.

•The number of motor vehicles on Australia's roads increases to more than 9.3 million.

•Australia signs the Ozone Layer Treaty.

•Luna Park (Sydney) closes down.

•Construction work begins on the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

•Sir Charles Moses, former head of the ABC, dies in Sydney, aged 88.

•At the Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea; Duncan Armstrong wins the 200 metres freestyle swimming; Sue Williams wins the women's judo; Debbie Flintoff-King wins the 400 metres hurdles; and the women's team wins at hockey.

•Kay Cottee in her yacht 'First Lady' arrives back at Port Jackson to become the first woman to sail single-handed non-stop around the world.

•Empire Rose wins the Melbourne Cup.

•Peter Carey's 'Oscar and Lucinda' wins both the Booker Prize and 1989 Miles Franklin Award.

•Books published:

The Australian Encyclopedia, 5th edition (9 volumes).

The Australian National Dictionary.

**1989**

•Bill Hayden succeeds Sir Ninian Stephen as Governor-General.

•A large earthquake strikes Newcastle, New South Wales, killing 13 people, injuring more than 120, and damaging many city buildings.

•The 'Greens' hold the balance of power in Tasmania for first time in Australian history.

•The Communist Party of Australia decides to disband.

•Poet and civil rights campaigner Oodgeroo Noonuccal receives a Doctorate at Griffith University. She is the first Aboriginal woman to receive a PhD.

•Australia offers temporary resident status to 20,000 Chinese students in the aftermath of the massacre in Tiananmen Square.

•Several large corporations, including Equiticorp, Hooker Corporation, Spedley Securities and Qintex, collapse during the year.

•Gaby Kennard, the first Australian woman to fly single-handed around the world, arrives back at Bankstown Airport.

•Australia's current account deficit rises to $21 billion.

•Andrew Peacock displaces John Howard as Liberal Party leader and Charles Blunt replaces Ian Sinclair as Federal National Party leader.

•The Home loan interest rates increase to 18 per cent.

•Singer Kylie Minogue's debut LP 'Kylie' and its associated singles sell more than 12 million copies and top the charts in 20 countries.

•The Australian cricket team captained by Allan Border wins the 'Ashes' in England for the first time in 55 years.

•The ALP wins government in Queensland after 32 years.

By 1994, the Australian Labor Party has governed Australia for over 10 years, Paul Keating is the Prime Minister and the move for Australia to become a republic is gaining momentum. The 1992 Mabo High Court decision recognising that Australia was occupied prior to 1788 by the Aboriginal people is causing controversy and debate in the community.

Sydney was chosen to host the Year 2000 Olympics, the Sydney Harbour Bridge celebrated its 60th birthday and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel opened to help ease Sydney's traffic problems.

The decade began with a recession and a large amount of people were unemployed. The excesses of the eighties had taken their toll, but the economy was on the mend by the mid-90s.

What will the future bring?

On 31 January 1993, the Sun-Herald published a `Poll on the Future' journalist Simon Kent. began the article, `The Prime Minister turned towards her videophone on the wall of her office... she left the lodge and climbed into her electric-powered Ford Citymate...'

What do you think will happen in the remaining years of the 2000s? Write your own timeline of events up to the year 2010.

Questions for research and discussion:

•If Australia is to become a Republic how might the system work? That is, who would replace the Queen as Head of State? Who would choose the new head? Would the states still exist?

•After thinking about and discussing these issues, write two letters to the editor of a major newspaper on the issue of Australia becoming a republic -- one supporting the idea of a republic and one supporting retaining the monarchy.

• The issue of a new flag and the idea of a republic are seen by many as two separate issues. Can Australia have a new flag and still retain the monarchy?

•There are interest groups that support all these issues. How important are interest groups in forming public opinion?

•Carmen Lawrence replaces Peter Dowding as Premier of Western Australia, becoming Australia's first female Premier.

•It is reported that the Queen has asked that Australian citizens no longer be nominated for British Imperial honours.

•A report is released revealing that the State Bank of Victoria had incurred a loss of $1.345 billion, the largest in Australia's corporate history.

•In an election for the House of Representatives and a half Senate, Bob Hawke and the Labor Party government are re-elected with a reduced majority. New members include Ted Mack, the first independent elected to the House for 35 years.

•John Hewson is elected leader of the Liberal Party.

•Three navy warships leave Sydney for the Persian Gulf as part of a multinational force to enforce the United Nations embargo of Iraq following its annexation of Kuwait.

•Bob Hawke attends the 75th anniversary of ANZAC Day ceremony at Gallipoli.

•Kerry Packer regains control of the Channel 9 television network.

•Direct broadcasting of Senate question time begins on television.

•Floor trading ends at the Australian Stock Exchange.

•One-cent and two-cent coins cease being issued.

•Cigarette advertising is banned in print media.

•Women in Australia's defence forces are allowed to do combat-related duties.

•Author Patrick White dies.

•Joan Sutherland gives the final performance of her career at the Sydney Opera House.

•Morning and afternoon newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne merge into 24 hour publications.

•Queensland finally adopts Daylight Saving.

•Victorian Labor Premier John Cain resigns and Joan Kirner takes over.

•Melbourne loses a bid for the 1996 Olympic Games.

•Kingston Town wins the Melbourne Cup.

•Australia wins 52 gold medals at the Auckland Commonwealth Games.

•Kerry Saxby breaks her 26th world record, winning the 10 km track walk at Fana, Norway.

•Susie Maroney, 15, swims the English Channel and wins the Manhattan Island marathon.

•Surfboard-rider Pam Burridge wins the Association of Surf Professionals world title at Hawaii.

•Morris West publishes 'Lazarus'.

•The population of Australia reaches 17 million.