Decade Summary	1888
The decade of the 1880s saw a generation of children of gold rush migrants grow up, get married and start having families of their own. This time in Australia's colonial history brought about the dream for many non-Indigenous Australians of owning their own home on land that they could either farm or grow their own food on. But, realising this dream of home ownership had unexpected consequences for many settlers. The land boom led to a great 'speculative mania', as thousands of workers and investors took their money and placed it in high-return building societies, investment companies and new banking institutions. Investment returns, profits and wages became higher and higher. Migrants came to the colonies in the hope of making a fortune, whether from gold discoveries or in new businesses. People flocked to the cities in search of work thus creating an available labour force, and new manufacturing industries blossomed. The society that emerged in this era was a relatively open and fluid one, in which new possibilities emerged, such as women's suffrage, the trade union movement and an electoral party for the workers. Indigenous people were being dispossessed of their land and removed from their country to reserves or missions as the land was opened up for the settlers. In 1886, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines was given powers to make decisions governing Indigenous children's lives, removing them from their families, apprenticing 13-year-old Indigenous children and granting or denying permission to visit their families. Most of these children never saw their families again after being taken away, hence becoming known as the 'Stolen Generations'.	**January** • Non-Indigenous Australians celebrate 100 years of colonial settlement. **May** • A demonstration against Chinese immigration takes place outside Sydney Town Hall and a month later an Intercolonial Conference on the Chinese question is held. • In Queensland, Thomas Glassey becomes the first trade union candidate in any colonial parliament. **December** • The Centennial International Exhibition opens in Melbourne in the newly built Royal Exhibition Building. • Henry Lawson's first story, *His Father's Mate,* is published. • The women's magazine*, The Dawn*, begins publication with editorials by Louisa Lawson, mother of Henry Lawson, and advocates voting rights for women and divorce law reform. It also included household hints, a short story and poetry as well as fashion news. Established by Louisa it was prepared and printed by women.

History and Politics	
Unionism	The early 1880s saw a series of successful strikes by skilled tradesmen and workers for improved wages and conditions of work. In 1882, the Amalgamated Miners' Union was formed. In 1886, the Shearers' Union, formed by WG Spence, grew to 9000 members in its first year and had members in many regional centres across Australia. By early 1888, the Sheep Farmers' Association formed to resist demands of shearers for higher shearing rates. Simultaneously, women began to enter the workforce. Many young girls sought factory employment, finding it far preferable to the constraints and 24 hour-a-day supervision of life as a house-servant. On 15 February 1882, more than half the 4000 tailoresses working in Melbourne factories went on strike, led by Helen Lothan Robertson, against employers cutting their rates of pay. The previous December they had formed the first organised women's trade union. The strike sparked mass demonstrations and received popular support. Two months later, the employers bowed to public pressure and agreed to the log of claims put forward by the women including the maintenance of their rate of pay.
Spectacular expansion	By 1883, Australian colonies borrowed heavily from British banks for business investment, pastoral properties (sheep and cattle), mining enterprises, railway construction and property speculation. It meant that for a period there was an increase in the number of small and large businesses, and large-scale building activity. In January 1888, transactions on the Melbourne Stock Exchange passed the £2 million mark. By July in the same year, Melbourne property prices were higher than those in London.
Defence	In 1882, the Russian fleet moored off South Australia. A year later Germany claimed part of New Guinea. Both these events increased the long standing fear of invasion or annexation from European Imperial powers, and fortifications were built on the coastline not far from the cities of Sydney and Melbourne. In 1884, two British officers completed an official inquiry into the defence of the colonies and recommended stronger seaport fortification, with more emphasis on armed vessels, batteries and torpedoes. A field force was established in which most were volunteers, but with a core of permanent paid men. Colonial forces expanded from 9,423 soldiers and volunteers in 1884 to 29,010 in 1901. It was not until 1917 that, due to shortage of volunteers and the major loss of life on the Western Front, the army officially allowed Indigenous people to enlist – but since they were not acknowledged as Australian citizens they were unable to receive the pension on their return. The distinctive 'slouch hat' with side turned up, which would become so iconic of the Australian soldier during the First World War, dates from this period. In February 1885, news reached Australia that General Charles Gordon had been killed in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum after a long siege. Three weeks later a contingent of 700 New South Wales troops, the colony's first overseas expeditionary force, left to join the British Expeditionary Force in the Sudan. They fought in one engagement, and two men were wounded. The contingent embarked for home in late May.
The 'Chinese' Question	On 3 May 1888, a large meeting was held at the Sydney Town Hall to protest against Chinese immigration. The next day a shipload of Chinese immigrants was prevented from coming ashore at Sydney. A crowd marched to Parliament House demanding that the premier, Sir Henry Parkes, 'stop the invasion'. Soon after, the NSW Supreme Court ordered that the Chinese immigrants be allowed to disembark, but Parkes refused. Anti-Chinese laws were passed in all colonies in 1888. However, Chinese migrants proved remarkably successful in establishing and maintaining a successful presence in the economic and cultural life of 19th century Australia.

Society and Culture	
The Bulletin	On 31 January 1880, the first issue of *The Bulletin* was published by Jules Francois Archibald and John Haynes. It was an eight-page illustrated weekly magazine, with an initial print run of 3,000 copies. Published in Sydney, it was pitched at a widespread 'bush readership' of labourers and itinerant bush workers, many of whom had acquired literacy from the compulsory schooling of the previous decade. In December 1888, *The Bulletin* published the 21-year-old Henry Lawson's first story *His Father's Mate*. The following year *The Bulletin* published Banjo Patterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow' in December, and 'The Man from Snowy River' in 1890.
The Heidelberg School	The Heidelberg School of painting became famous at this time. It was a group of artists whose distinctive landscapes were painted in the *en plein air* style (a French term that means 'in the open air'). The painters included Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Charles Conder and Frederick McCubbin. Their subject matter emphasised themes of the 'nobility' of labour and ordinary work, especially of the bush pioneers. In August 1889, they held an exhibition at Buxton's Gallery in Melbourne. They had painted on the backs of cigar boxes, using the modern Impressionist techniques of capturing fleeting moments of daylight. Their work caused controversy and attracted criticism from established critics and dealers of the time.
Education	In April 1880, the NSW premier Sir Henry Parkes was successful in bringing about a new education act called the *Public Instruction Act 1880*, in which the NSW government took responsibility for the primary years of education. State assistance to denominational schools was ended and government schools were placed under a Public Schools Board with the purpose of providing technical schools for boys, and evening schools and high schools for boys and girls. The Department of Public Instruction inherited 1265 schools: 150 denominational, 705 public, 313 provisional and 97 half time. State education became secular and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and14 years, and the teaching of religion in these schools was not allowed.
Indigenous Australians	During the 1880s, new Native Protection Acts caused widespread displacement and suffering to Aboriginal peoples. Many Indigenous people's lives were extremely affected by dispossession, Western diseases and systematic attacks. In the 1880s, laws were enacted giving Aboriginal Protectors the power to make decisions governing all aspects of Aboriginal peoples' lives, including imposing curfews and forcing Indigenous Australians to live and work on specially designated government reserves and missions.

Science and Technology	
Innovations	In 1882, HH Kingsbury returned from New York with several generators and illuminated the Sydney GPO and Circular Quay using Edison incandescent light bulbs. In 1882, a government-run telephone exchange opened at Sydney General Post Office, a forerunner of Telecom and Telstra. By 1883, all Australian capital cities except Perth would have telephone exchanges. In 1887, the introduction of refrigeration on ships meant Australia could sell its primary industry produce to the world. The first cargo of cool-storage apples, about 1,300 cases, was shipped from Tasmania to England.
Expanding cities	Problems with the lack of adequate sewerage systems and sanitation abounded in colonial cities. In 1886, a typhoid outbreak in Balmain, Sydney, was traced to seepage from the local cemetery into a dairy's well nearby. The Victorian parliament passed the *Public Health Act*, establishing a department of public health with a medical inspector to supervise sanitation. In newly built houses the backyard 'dunny' became an established feature. The structure usually backed onto a laneway where the euphemistically named 'night soil' would be removed daily by the 'dunny man'. In August 1880, the first wooden blocks were laid down as street paving. These blocks were adopted from Europe, and were a forerunner of bitumen. Hardwood blocks the size of ordinary house bricks were used. King Street in Sydney was the first paved street in Sydney.
The railway revolution	By the 1880s, railways were ready to go 'trans-colonial'. In 1883, the first regular train service between Sydney and Melbourne was established. However, since each colony built its own railway lines to its own standards, Sydney–Melbourne passengers had to change trains at Albury because of different train gauges. Uniform gauge would not be introduced until 1962.
Rural Australia	The introduction of rabbits to the Australian environment in the 1860s had a devastating impact upon the land. Rabbits had no natural predators in Australia and their numbers exploded as they rapidly spread across the continent. Attempts to curtail the pest did little to solve the problem. In April 1883, the NSW Parliament passed the *Rabbit Nuisance Act 1883*, which gave 'rabbit inspectors' the right to enter land and order property owners to destroy rabbits. In 1887, construction began on large-scale rabbit-proof fences. In July 1883, a droving party led by Michael Durack took 7,250 breeding cattle from the Barcoo River in Queensland to the newly discovered Ord River in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. It was more than two years before Durack arrived in September 1885, with only half the cattle surviving.