

**1883**

Intercolonial conference. The colonies meet to discuss federation. The convention agrees to form a federal council to act on common problems.

**1885**

The Federal Council of Australia is formed. New South Wales refuses to join it.

**1889**

Major-General Edwards, a military expert from Britain, visits to review the Australian armies. He says that the colonies' armies are unable to protect Australia and should be united into one.

**1889**

Henry Parkes makes his speech at Tenterfield in which he calls for the colonies to form a federal government.

**1890**

The Australasian Federation Conference, Melbourne. Delegates agree to return to their colonies and recommend support for federation.

**1891**

National Australasian Convention, Sydney. The parliaments of each colony choose and send delegates to represent their interests. The convention draws up a draft outline (a constitution) for a federal government. There is strong opposition to federation from New South Wales, the biggest and richest colony. The other colonies see no point in forming a federation without New South Wales.

**1891**

Colonies hit by depression. Businesses are failing, banks closing and there is high unemployment and poverty.

**1893**

Corowa Conference, NSW. Develops a plan for the people in the colonies to elect representatives to attend a new convention and to vote on the constitution they draw up.

**1896**

The People's Convention, Bathurst, NSW. Raises interest in the colonies in the upcoming constitutional convention.

**1897–98**

National Australasian Convention. The biggest of all the conventions; delegates elected by the people in each of their colonies meet three times over a year and a half, first in Adelaide, then Sydney and finally in Melbourne. Western Australian delegates are chosen by parliament. Queensland does not participate at all. Each session runs for more than a month. The convention has to draft a new constitution which will be acceptable to all the colonies. At the close of each session the delegates return to their colonies with the draft constitution to be discussed by their own parliaments. When they meet again, each colony has things they wish to change or to add.