CHAPTER 3 Development to 1911

Key points

- The settlement pattern of Australia's towns to 1911 was shaped by their function and their history. Town location resulted from the spread of industry in response to exploration, topography and climate, the impact of the gold rushes and the subsequent development of transport systems.
- The nineteenth century left Australia with a plethora of small towns suited to life with relatively limited personal transport options (horse and cart, walking), a fewer number of mining-based 'boom' towns and a small number of more permanent centres.
- Railways, ports, rivers and mineral finds were often the key to locational success.
- The southern and eastern states had a large number of towns with the potential for further growth.

Establishment of Australian townships prior to 1911

To trace the fate of Australia's towns over the past century we need to establish and understand the processes, drivers and trends that led to the starting point. What were Australia and its towns like in 1911? This question will be answered by the economic and demographic data drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – then the Commonwealth Bureau of Census Statistics (CBCS) – 1911 Census presented in the next chapter.

The state of Australia's towns and cities in 1911 was the result of more than a century of growth. It is therefore useful to examine some of Australia's settlement history that led to the spread of townships described by the 1911 Census.

What follows is a brief description of some aspects of that history, with an emphasis on some of the key factors shaping Australia's human geography at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Early settlement

Australia has been inhabited for between 50 000 to 150 000 years, with estimates of the population ranging from 300 000 to one million just prior to European settlement (ATSIC 1999, p.8). Indigenous people created a pattern of localities covering the continent, based on a system of land tenure 'intimately bound up with spiritual attachment and notions of

custodianship' (ATSIC 1999, p.8). This changed, however, with the colonisation of the continent by the British beginning at Sydney Cove in 1788.

The first colony in Sydney grew relatively quickly but was constrained to the west until the route over the mountains was established. That crossing, in 1813, allowed settlement over the ranges to complement earlier coastal settlements in the Hunter and the Illawarra south to Batemans Bay (Roberts 1924). The establishment of further colonies at what are now Hobart (in 1804), Brisbane (1824), Perth (1829), Adelaide (1836) and Melbourne (1837) expanded the development focus from the original colony (Australian Government 2010). The histories of settlement of each of these colonies were varied and colourful (for example, see Roberts 1924 or Scott 1916) as each new colony established a central city and explored the hinterland.

Occupation spread from each new base at varying speeds with the underlying motive being ownership and development of new grazing and farming lands punctuated by frenzied 'rushes' for gold and other minerals. Settlement was a competitive business with the occupation of grazing land by 'squatters' closely following the initial explorers, and often preceding the establishment of effective government administration.

The towns that followed the spread of European population from the colonial bases reflected the needs of the basic industries that spawned further growth and development. Key shapers of the location of those industries were geography, climate and natural resources, land tenure arrangements that allowed agriculture to replace grazing, mining discoveries and better transport (especially rivers and railways).

Grazing and farming

Professor Ernest Scott in Roberts (1924) reports that the need (or desire) for grazing land was the driving force behind many of the expeditions from the earliest days of the Sydney colony, before and including the Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson initial crossing of the Blue Mountains.

The quest for grazing and farming land dramatically and rapidly expanded the footprint of the colonies. Expansion outpaced government administration and during the early 1820s, the desire for more grazing land pushed pastoral settlement beyond the 'nineteen counties' official limit of settlement in New South Wales (NSW). Squatters took up land from the Murrumbidgee River in the south to the Macleay in the north. During the 1830s farming also spread beyond the official limits of settlement, while the pastoralists pushed further southwest.

The pastoralists were driven by world demand for merino wool, enabling the profitable expansion of this industry. Wool provided the basic industry on which other industry and settlement could build. The sheep and cattle stations themselves became the centres of local economic activity and often went on to become villages or townships, augmenting others established at key geographic points (river crossings etc), or to meet transport, social (shanties and churches) or government administrative needs. The towns provided much needed goods and services to workers, travellers and the stations themselves. The establishment of pastoral activities did have a flaw however, as the system left large holdings of land in the hands of a relatively small number of people. The ability of others to prosper was limited by a lack of access to arable land.

An increasing demand for land was fuelled by the increased population brought about by the gold rushes and the improved transport possibilities for agricultural products (such as wheat) as the rail system developed. These demographic and technological advances left the outdated land tenure arrangements as a barrier to further development.

Consequently, the land tenure system came under review because of mounting pressure to provide more opportunities for 'free settlers'. This pressure prompted governments to undertake various attempts to reform tenure arrangements from the 1850s onward, but by and large these were unsuccessful. Various schemes were tried across the colonies, but were often undermined by outright dishonesty and political pressure (Roberts 1924). By 1890, the land tenure system in all the colonies was in need of reform. Graziers still held large areas which precluded the development of smaller lots suitable for farming. The total area being cropped was too small and Australian farmers could not compete internationally, and in some cases even struggled on local markets. Cheap wheat was imported from the United States and elsewhere while intending settlers could not find suitable land. As a result, regional population growth stalled. As Roberts (1924) puts it, 'there was a demand for land and a need to put the people on the land, but the land itself was alienated and lying idle'. Areas of high quality land held in this way included the Hunter Valley, the Riverina, the western plains of Victoria, the downs of Queensland and the lands east of Perth.

The response from all colonial governments was the voluntary or compulsory acquisition of land for subdivision and resale. All states implemented variants of this policy along with taxation measures designed to encourage private sub-division. These measures had a chequered history, being associated with high prices, land booms, administrative difficulties and poor decision-making. Despite this, as Table 3.1 shows, the outcome of the various schemes was the creation of thousands of new farms (mostly) in the better farming lands.

These closer settlement schemes which first began in the 1860s were the forerunners of the better known soldier settlement and irrigation schemes of the twentieth century. However, in some respects, they were more significant in that they were the first challenge to the land development policies that had been in existence since early settlement. They broke up many of the large grazing holdings and allowed the emergence of new (farming) industries. This legacy remains today, even though the very small holdings created (see Table 3.1) have long ago disappeared as the result of subsequent amalgamations. These schemes were not universally beneficial. In fact, they often were associated with failure and hardship for the settlers involved.

The economic impact on the towns nearby was an increase in population, bolstering the demand for personal and industry-related goods and services, as farming was a more land, labour and capital-intensive industry than the replaced grazing enterprises.

Closer settlement	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	Australia
Total area acquired (thousands of acres)	I 298	576	785	784	447	96	3 986
Farms allotted	2 985	3 619	2915	2 789	739	300	13 347
Acres per settler	435	158	269	281	604	321	299
Cost per settler	£1 844	£ 887	£670	£907	£570	£1 128	£ 326

Table 3.1 Overview of closer settlement schemes 1890 to 1921

Source: Derived from Roberts (1924, p.342).

The closer settlement schemes were concentrated in the arable areas where agriculture was possible. Map 3.1 shows that in New South Wales, many of the schemes were located in what was to become the wheat belt in the twentieth century for New South Wales and Victoria. Areas further to the west remained grazing areas in what is still known as the Western Division. Interestingly, the predominant land tenure in the Western Division is leasehold (Western Land Leases), reflecting its grazing heritage.



Map 3.1 Closer Settlement in New South Wales

Source: Reproduced from Aplin (2011a).

Western Division settlements were relatively few, small and sparse. Only three Western Division towns (Bourke, Cobar and Broken Hill) had more than 1000 people in 1911. In contrast, the farming land to the east supported more numerous and prosperous towns well into the twentieth century. Hence, the type of agricultural industry is a key determinant of settlement patterns, along with mining development and transport opportunities.

Gold and minerals

Gold was occasionally found in small quantities from the early 1820s across the colonies (for example in Bathurst, Berrima, Fish River and Ballarat), but the government discouraged further prospecting, fearing the social turmoil widespread prospecting might bring (Scott 1916). This fear was largely realised after Edward Hargreaves conducted the first systematic search for gold at Bathurst in 1851. Its relatively moderate success sparked rushes that spread across a number of colonies, most notably in the Ballarat and Bendigo districts in Victoria. The influx of people from all parts of the world was massive and by 1855, there were as many people in Victoria alone as had been in all of Australia before the 'rush'. Gold was found in all the colonies over the next fifty years, most notably at Gympie (in 1867) and Mount Morgan (1882) in Queensland and Coolgardie (1892) and Kalgoorlie (1893) in Western Australia (1882 to 1900).

In addition to gold, other minerals led to the influx of people and the establishment of towns. Copper was found at Burra in South Australia in 1845, silver, lead and zinc at Broken Hill (1883) and tin, copper, silver and lead on the west coast of Tasmania and Queensland. Coal was mined in the HunterValley near Maitland from 1843, and by the early 1900s the region was Australia's pre-eminent coal producer (NSW Minerals Council 2012).

The lack of today's easy, car-based personal transport meant that major mines almost inevitably spawned a support town close by. The amount of wealth and economic activity generated invariably led to the establishment of some of Australia's substantial regional centres and administrative hubs. Beneficiaries of mining activities and wealth in 1911 included Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Launceston, Newcastle, Maitland and Broken Hill. It is not hard to imagine that the initial population and commercial impetus imparted by mining gave these towns an advantage over their neighbours as they struggled for dominance as service centres in subsequent years.

In most mining towns, the initial boom faded with the passage of time and towns that survived did so as service centres for agriculture, transport, administration or communications.

Transport and other services

Modern transport in Australia bears no comparison to the difficulty of moving people and freight in the early nineteenth century (for example see Family History Group of Bathurst Inc 2012 which describes a harrowing two-day trip from Sydney to Bathurst). Transport was also expensive: it was claimed that it cost more to move a bale of wool by bullock train from Bathurst to Sydney than by clipper ship from Sydney to London (Aplin 2011a).

It is not surprising then that transport routes guided colonial development both in terms of the location and frequency of towns and villages. Early development was often on the basis of where ships could find harbor—even where distances were small.

Sea access allowed the development of the North Coast rivers as ports serviced by coastal traders (often trading in valuable cedar hewn from local forests) well before the regions were reached by land. Newcastle for instance was established as a convict colony serviced by sea in the very early 1800s and was only accessed by a rudimentary path until the completion of the Great Northern Road in 1836 (NSW Minerals Council 2012). Similarly, the new colonies at Hobart, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth were all on, or very close to, the coast. Later

the inland rivers became transport routes that, despite the difficulties of seasonal flow, could compete with the rudimentary land transport options provided by the horse, bullock and foot.

These transport routes gave rise to towns that serviced the transport systems and larger centres that acted as hubs for regional produce. Bourke became a hub for wool exports where wool from as far north as Queensland found its way onto the Darling River steamers heading for South Australia and Victoria (Paddison 1955). Smaller towns often supported other transport systems such as the Cobb & Co. changing stations situated every 10 to 30 miles along the company's routes (Australian Government 2009). For many people, however, day to day travel was by foot, which encouraged closely-arranged small towns to support them.

Expanding rail systems

The coming of the railways from the mid-1800s dramatically changed the transport patterns in Australia. Paddison (1955) shows the pattern of rail development in New South Wales from 1855 from small, almost tentative beginnings to a network that covered much of the state (see Map 3.2). Of particular interest are the two separate starting points at Sydney and Newcastle which not only emphasises the difficult terrain between the two, but the relative ease of maritime transport between them. This remained a feature as railway development focused inland and, at best, delayed development along the coast, where coastal shipping reduced the urgency for rail links.

A second feature is the speed with which lines were established from Sydney to the northwest (specifically to Bourke) and the south west to Hay to access the Darling and Murrumbidgee river trade and eventually on to Jerilderie and Tocumwal on the Murray River. Paddison (1955) notes that these were deliberate attempts by the New South Wales Government to divert traffic and trade that otherwise would flow to Victoria and South Australia. While colonial rivalry had other motives as well as economics, it does illustrate that the development of transport links and hence towns has always had a competitive economic basis.

The shape of the Victorian and South Australian rail systems similarly had a strategic purpose: drawing produce from the inland to their respective capitals, in particular by accessing the river boat trade. The first rural lines from Melbourne were to Ballarat and through central Victoria to the Murray River port of Echuca (Waugh 2000). Similarly the first South Australian line was a horse-drawn tramway from the Murray port of Goolwa to Port Elliot in 1854 and subsequently extended to the better sea port of Victor Harbor in 1864 (National Railway Museum n.d.p.). Subsequently this trade was secured through a publicly-owned rail line from Adelaide to Morgan.

South Australia also built a line to the border to link Broken Hill's mines with the port and (later) smelting facilities in Port Pirie. However the New South Wales government refused to allow the line to cross the border and so the connection was made by the privately owned Silverton Tramway Company. The opening of the link to Broken Hill in 1888 allowed the development of Broken Hill's rich silver, lead and zinc deposits, and virtually created the town of Port Pirie, where the smelters for the new mines were located (Lee 2003).





Source: Reproduced from Paddison (1955).

Regional impact of rail

The coming of the railway was a transport revolution in the nineteenth century and created a transport network far superior to earlier Australian inland transport systems. Previously, transport was largely limited to horse or bullock-drawn wagons for heavy freight and horse-drawn buggies, Cobb & Co. coaches, or walking for people transport. Riverboats plied the larger inland rivers—the Murray, Darling and Murrumbidgee—and provided an alternative for a few areas, but were subject to delays as drought often made rivers impassable. Rail was immeasurably superior since it could generally be placed where the need was, while being relatively fast and reliable.

Railways had a profound effect on the economies of regional towns and regions. The coming of rail provided opportunities for the export of ores and rural produce, commerce and travel, which allowed industry to bloom in new areas and create new wealth. In particular, the railway allowed the development of new industries. Heavier (or at least lower value per ton) produce could now be economically transported. This enabled wheat, for example, to be grown where previously only wool was profitable. Scott (1941) notes that 'a ton of wheat in 1918 was worth \pounds 9, whilst a ton of wool was worth \pounds 144'. Before the railways, the widespread cropping at distance from ports was not feasible. In addition, the railways themselves were significant pieces of infrastructure requiring considerable investment that provided employment opportunities. For instance, once in place, steam engines required coal and water at regular intervals, maintenance of tracks and running machinery, which provided a continuing source of jobs for towns along the rail route. Consequently, railways were a significant source of employment for many small towns as well as being the major industry in rail service towns such as Goulburn, Junee and Werris Creek in New South Wales, Peterborough in South Australia and Shepparton, Seymour and Korong Vale in Victoria.

The association of some towns with the rail network is clear from Maps 3.3 and 3.4. These maps show the distribution of towns that have had populations of at least 500 persons at one or more of the 1911, 1961 and 2006 Censuses, in the south eastern and south western parts of Australia. While the association between railway lines and towns is obvious, it is difficult to show that the railway was necessarily central to the initiation of these towns since the rail line was most likely routed to service existing centres. Attributing cause and effect is therefore difficult, but it is clear that there is a strong association between a successful town and access to the transport system. Certainly, the relatively small number of substantive towns not on the railway or the coast (and so able to access sea transport) suggests that it was unlikely that towns would grow without a good transport link.

Overall a significant consequence of establishing the transport systems is that it set in place a strong element of path dependence in terms of the funnelling of economic activity to the competitive advantage of capital cities. It also would have a significant impact on the development of the transport networks into the future and in turn advantage those towns with effective connections. For example, many major highways were forming adjacent to these rail lines to become the emerging networks of road infrastructure.



Map 3.3 Towns and rail lines in South Eastern Australia

Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911 and 2006 Censuses.



Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911, 1961 and 2006 Censuses.

Personal transport

While Maps 3.3 and 3.4 show the impact of resources and transport on the location and growth of larger centres, personal transport also played an important role in the proliferation and local distribution of smaller towns and villages. Towns and villages evolved to cater for a population that, unless lucky enough to be on a railway line, was dependent on travel by foot or by horse-drawn vehicles.

In the absence of good mobility, potential retail customers faced considerable cost in time and money if they travelled long distances to shop. Significant savings (particularly in time) could be made if goods and services could be accessed locally. Competition to local business was therefore constrained by the inability of consumers to cheaply travel to alternative centres. Consequently, a degree of monopoly power and associated price premiums were available to local businesses supplying essential goods within relatively small distances. Thus the model of a network of numerous small towns was best suited to satisfy the bulk of consumer needs.

The lack of personal mobility and mass communication also meant that both industrial management and staff were obliged to live close to their work. Often this involved living on rural properties or in townships next to mines, ports and railway stations. Mining operations were the antithesis of today's fly-in/fly-out arrangements and typically each substantial mining strike spawned a town to support the mine and house its workforce. This pattern was particularly evident in the coal mines of the Hunter region around Cessnock and the gold mines around Kalgoorlie where many small towns were created.

Growth patterns leading up to 1911

The history of Australian settlement is one of sporadic regional growth in response to land and mineral booms. This growth was as spectacular as it was patchy. It is therefore useful to consider the patterns of settlement and trends in population growth leading into 1911. A state analysis is shown in Table 3.2. What is clear is the high proportion of the total population in New South Wales and Victoria. These two states together had two thirds of the total Australian population (compared to 57.7 per cent in 2006), but this percentage had been falling rapidly from 71.6 per cent in 1881. Victoria in particular had declined in importance having been the most populous state in 1881 and 1891. Of the other states, only Queensland had more than 10 per cent of the population in 1911 to be the third most populated state, replacing South Australia with a share of 9.2 per cent.

State	1881	1891	1901	1911	9 (per cent)
New South Wales	749 825	23 954	354 846	I 646 734	37.0
Victoria	861 566	39 840	20 070	3 5 55	29.5
Queensland	213 525	393 718	498 129	605 813	13.6
South Australia	276 414	315 533	358 346	408 558	9.2
Western Australia	29 708	49 782	184 124	282 4	6.3
Tasmania	115 705	146 667	172 475	191 211	4.3
Northern Territory	3 45 I	4 898	4811	3 310	0.1
Federal Territory				7 4	0.0
Australia	2 250 194	3 174 392	3 773 801	4 455 005	100.0

Table 3.2Population by state 1881 to 1911

Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911 Census.

A feature of Table 3.2 is the very small size of the Northern Territory's population. This results partially from a statistical anomaly. Prior to 1967, Census data did not count many Indigenous Australians and most were effectively excluded from official population figures (ABS 1998). In the 1911 Census, demographic estimates for 'half-caste' Indigenous persons total just over 10 000, with nearly half enumerated in New South Wales. This number substantially underestimates the true population counts of Indigenous persons at the time. Augmented estimates suggest that from 1911 to 1966, the number of Indigenous persons that were intentionally excluded varied between 80 000 and 100 000 (Smith 1980 cited in ABS 1998). After the 1967 Referendum, the way in which Indigenous persons were counted was altered through changes to Section 51 of the Constitution which removed the exclusion of the 'aboriginal race' (ABS 1998). As a result, 'Censuses immediately following the referendum saw the start of a period of substantial increases in the number of enumerated Indigenous Australians' (ABS 1998).

Table 3.3 presents the absolute and percentage increases in population from 1881 to 1911 for Australia's states and the Northern Territory. Growth in the states in the years before 1911 was variable, with spectacular percentage growth occurring in Western Australia and to a lesser extent in Queensland. The Western Australian growth was in response to the discovery of gold in that state in the 1890s and reflects similar population spikes in other states earlier in Australia's development. However, the increase in the actual number of people in Western Australia during the 1890s gold rush was not as high as New South Wales without a gold rush and comprised only 11.4 per cent of the total population increase from 1881. This is markedly different to the Victorian gold rush of the 1860s and suggests that the Australian economy had become more diverse and mature and the impact of mining discoveries had less overall impact. This is consistent with the relatively high levels of growth experienced across the nation despite the impact of widespread drought. With the exception of the Northern Territory, even the 'slow' growth states shown in Table 3.3 are comparable with the growth rates of today (Australia had a 1.4 per cent growth rate in 2012). However, leading into 1911, it was New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia that were the growth stand-outs.

	1881–91		1891-1901		1901-1911		1881–1911	
State	Actual persons gained	Average growth pa (%)						
New South Wales	374 29	4.1	230 892	1.9	291 888	2.0	896 909	2.7
Victoria	278 274	2.8	61 230	0.5	4 48	0.9	453 985	1.4
Queensland	180 193	6.3	104 41 1	2.4	107 684	2.0	392 288	3.5
South Australia	39 1 1 9	1.3	42 813	1.3	50 212	1.3	32 44	1.3
Western Australia	20 074	5.3	134 342	14.0	97 990	4.4	252 406	7.8
Tasmania	30 962	2.4	25 808	1.6	18 736	0.1	75 506	1.7
Northern Territory	447	3.6	-87	-0.2	-1 501	-3.7	- 4	-0. I
Commonwealth	924 98	3.5	599 409	1.7	681 204	1.7	2 204 811	2.3

Table 3.3Population increase by state 1881 to 1911

Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911 Census.

Towns in 1911

The distribution of towns in 1911 is presented in Maps 3.5 to 3.10, state by state. The maps include towns of 200 people or more, and separately identify those with a population of over 500. The railway lines illustrate the important role of transport—particularly the rail system— in the development of settlement leading up to 1911. Each state capital city is presented based on the 2006 Statistical Division for reference.

These maps provide a snapshot of the distribution of towns. A closer examination of these towns and their development to 2006 is considered in the following chapter.

Queensland

Key features of the distribution of towns in 1911 Queensland (see map 3.5) are:

- the clustering of towns on the coast—particularly in the south-eastern corner around Brisbane
- The cluster of small mining towns directly west of Cairns
- The very strong association of settlement and the east-west railway lines from Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Brisbane.



Map 3.5 Queensland towns in 1911

- Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.
- Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911 Census and Geoscience Australia Gazetteer.

New South Wales

The pattern of development shown by Map 3.6 for New South Wales features:

- Intense settlement on the coast, particularly around Sydney, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley and the far North Coast (associated with cedar-getting and subtropical agriculture)
- The strong correlation of successful towns west of the Great Dividing Range with rail transport and with rivers
- A large number of agricultural towns in the wheat-belts areas of the state, while the Western Districts has only a few dispersed pastoral or mining towns.



Map 3.6 New South Wales towns in 1911

Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.

Victoria

Features of the 1911 Victorian settlement patterns shown in Map 3.7 are:

- Relatively intense settlement around Melbourne, the gold towns of Ballarat and Bendigo and the port of Warrnambool
- The association between a successful town and rail, with many of the towns with a population of over 500 connected to the network
- The relatively close settlements of the central north of the state and on the Murray River being closely associated with agriculture.



Map 3.7 Victorian towns in 1911

- Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.
- Source: BITRE analysis of ABS/CBCS 1911 Census and Geoscience Australia Gazetteer.

Tasmania

Key features of the distribution of towns in 1911 Tasmania (see map 3.8) are:

- Clusters of towns around the major cities of Hobart, Launceston and Burnie-Devonport
- A string of towns connecting the North and South regions of the state
- The growth of several mining towns in the western region of the state
- As in other states, the importance of rail transport.





Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.

South Australia

Features of the 1911 South Australian settlement patterns shown in Map 3.9 are:

- The close settlement around Adelaide and the York Peninsula
- The lack of development in the west and far north of the state, which in part reflects the very poor counting of the Aboriginal population in the 1911 Census
- A cluster of towns close to the state border based on logging.



Map 3.9 South Australian towns in 1911

Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.

Western Australia

The pattern of development shown by Map 3.10 for Western Australia features:

- A strong collection of towns south of Perth
- The close association of towns and railways in the agricultural regions
- A cluster of towns around the goldfield city of Kalgoorlie.

Map 3.10 Western Australian towns in 1911



Note: Rail lines are from MapInfo StreetPro (2007), and include both modern and disused lines. Capital city shaded based on the 2006 Statistical Division.

A century of change

This chapter shows that the situation in 1911 was a product of a settlement process based on colonies that became states and was shaped by the administrative, technological and social changes of the preceding century. The great social changes, some still underway in 1911, were land tenure reform and its impacts on agriculture, the gold rushes (and other minerals) which had seen an explosion in the Australian population and the coming of the railways which had revolutionised transport in the cities and across the regions. Settlement patterns were closely tied to industry location which itself was a response to natural factors of climate, soils, topography and mineral deposits. Transport networks had also begun to develop in response to the advancement of more sophisticated technologies, so that transport initially centred on the river systems and coastal ports became focused on the extension of the rail lines. These created nodes of activity and industry around station and river ports.

The twentieth century would see these factors remain important in shaping settlement patterns, but would also see new factors emerge alongside them.