

A Brief History of Australia



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出版者:

出版时间:2010-6

装帧:

isbn:9780816082513

Australia is a country of contradictions. The oldest land on Earth, it was one of the last to be found by European sailors during the era of exploration. Aboriginals, the oldest continuously surviving culture in the world, became citizens of the country only 42 years ago. The sixth-largest country in the world by landmass, it has just more than half the population of the state of California. Despite its very low population density, Australia is often considered overpopulated, compared to the amount of water and fertile soil that is available for human use.

Taking a largely chronological approach, A Brief History of Australia looks at social, cultural, economic, and political trends in the country's long history, shedding light on its unique and complex identity. Beginning with the peopling of the continent about 60,000 years ago, the volume examines the early history and culture of the Aboriginals. It continues with the first documented sighting of the landmass by a European in the 17th century, followed by a discussion of the colonial period in the 18th and 19th centuries. From the Federation of 1901 to the Liberal government of John Howard (1998 to 2007) and the Labor government of Kevin Rudd (2007–present), this new book explores Australia's relationship to the British Crown, national security and education policy, the role of sport and environmental issues, Aboriginal rights, women's history,

and gay rights.

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