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Australian History and Society: An Introduction 1788–2000

Section 2:
1851–1900

Fakultät für
**Kultur- und
Sozialwissen-
schaften**

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Preface

Up until 1850 the colonial economy was based on sheep and wool. The discovery of gold served as a catalyst for a new wave of mass immigration from Britain, America and China. Between 1850 and 1862 the population trebled to 1,200,000 as a result of immigration inspired by gold. Unlike early immigration, emigrants in the 1850s paid their own fares and thus a new group of self-reliant, enterprising migrants swamped the old classes. Many were professional men, skilled tradesmen and clerks whose skills were valuable in the colonies. As a result of gold Victoria became the most populous colony with Melbourne its largest and richest city. This section first examines the impulses and impact of mass immigration and the social position of those who came and how they transformed the landscape, the economy and society, race relations and the requirements of industry as well as the political solutions they inspired. The topic then examines the development of the nationalist movement, its motivations and the movement towards federation, as well as its social, political and economic implications.