

LAUNCESTON'S FIRSTS

Date	Information	Details	Fn	Check
1814	Hotel	The Launceston Hotel was founded on its present premises 1814 and is the oldest continuously licensed hotel in Australia. (It should be noted that an hotel in New South Wales and an hotel in New Norfolk make the same claim, although it is not known if they have been continuously licensed.)		
1825	Media	First country newspaper "The Tasmanian" January 1825		
1827	Sport	Launceston was the birthplace of Australian Golf in 1827.		
1834	Theatre	Australia's first Actor-Manager, George Seth Coppin, founded Launceston's first playhouse.	1	
1834	Melbourne	Launcestonians founded Melbourne. Trips to Port Phillip Bay by the Henty Brothers (1834) and Batman (1835) resulted in the founding of Melbourne from Launceston. John Batman [Bateman] was born at Parramatta.		
1835	Literature	The first person to publish a drama in Australia - Evan Henry Thomas - 1835 - "The Bandit of the Rhine" lived, died and was buried in Launceston. Immigrant from Ireland.		
1835	Town Planning	In 1835 Henry W H Smythe drew the first town plan of Launceston. First of its kind in the world - first urban land use plan. Forty years before the next known survey of its kind		
1835	Commerce	The Launceston Bank for Savings was established in 1835. The bank has since become the Tasmania Bank and now part of Trust Bank. Trust Bank is therefore the longest functioning savings bank in Australia. Also oldest bank in the Commonwealth outside Britain.		
1836	Commerce	The Bank of Australasia was established in Launceston in 1836 and absorbed Launceston's first bank, The Cornwall [est. 1828]. The Bank of Australasia became the ANZ Banking Group. The Union Bank was also established in Launceston (1838) and became part of ESANDA that is also now part of the ANZ Banking Group		
1836	Horticulture	The Launceston Horticultural Society is the oldest horticultural society in Australia was established in 1836. Its first major show was in 1838.		

1840s	Medicine	First registered chemist in the (then) British Empire, Mr Landon Fairthorne, who was Mayor of Launceston in 1885. Mr Fairthorne resided in Longford before moving to Launceston.		
1842	Media	"The Examiner" is Tasmania's oldest daily newspaper and was established in Launceston in 1842.		
1844	Parliament	First Tasmanian born member of Parliament was Sir Richard Dry. Appointed to the Legislative Council in 1844. Son of a convict. Knighted in 1858 - first colonial in Australia to receive this distinction.		
1844	Retail	Samuel A. Tegg opened a bookshop on the site of 'Birchalls' on 23 November 1844. The site has been continually used as a bookshop since that time and therefore 'Birchalls' is the oldest continuously operating bookshop in Australia. Birchalls was also the first self-service book and stationery store in Australia.	2	
1845	Music	St Joseph's Band formed in 1845 - oldest continuing association of its kind in the Commonwealth outside Great Britain. It became the Launceston Boys' Band in 1941.	3	
1846	Education	Oldest continuously functioning private school in Australia - Launceston Church Grammar School. Opened in 1846		
1847	Medical	7 June 1847 – Dr William Russ Pugh - first use of anaesthetics for a surgical operation in the Southern hemisphere		
1847	Circus	The first circus performance in Australia was presented on 27 December 1847 by Robert Radford at the rear of his pub, the Horse and Jockey Inn in York Street, Launceston.	4	X
1849	Commerce	21 August 1849 - Launceston Chamber of Commerce formed - First Australian City to start an institution of this kind		
1851	Nationhood	First organisation to unite the Australian States (then colonies) on any issue was the Australasian Anti-Transportation League. The League that was established in Launceston successfully lobbied the British Government to recognise Australia as a viable community in its own right. This led to the Federation Conference, that led to the creation of the Australian Nation (1 January 1901)		

1851	Nationhood	The Australasian Anti-Transportation League Flag is the oldest known flag to feature a representation of the Southern Cross with the stars arranged as they are seen in the sky. The flag was designed in 1849 by Reverend John West of Launceston, and from 1851 was used by the Australian Anti-Transportation League in the Australian colonies and in New Zealand. The flag is blue, with the Union Flag in the Canton, and the Southern Cross on the fly. Each of the stars of the Southern Cross was symbolic of a member colony. There is a white border around three sides of the flag, which was used to display the name of the League, the year it was established and the name of the colony where it was flown.		
1851	Sport	11-12 February 1851. First 1st Class Cricket match held in Australia. Played in Launceston (Victoria vs Tasmania). First recorded intercolonial cricket match. Tasmania won by three wickets.		
1853	Local Government	The first local government elections held in Van Diemen's Land were held in Launceston. 1 January 1853. (No elections had been held in Hobart)		
1854	Welfare	Launceston City Mission is one of the the oldest City Missions in Australia. It was formed in 1855.	5	X
1858	Commerce	Established in 1858 as the Northern Tasmanian Permanent Building and Investment Society, the Tasmanian Permanent Building Society, is the oldest continuously operating Building Society in Australia. The Society is now part of the Trust Bank.	6	
1860	Sport	Tasmanian Turf Club is the oldest club in Australasia to have functioned continuously under the same name. Races were held at Mowbray since 1860. Launceston offices 1917		
1860	Sewage system	First underground sewage system in Australia. Third city in the world to be served by underground sewers		
1871	Communication	First unofficial use of telephone in Australia between Campbell Town and Launceston. 1876. Alfred Barrett Biggs.		
1876	Railways	First railway in Tasmania was opened on 10 February 1871 between Launceston and Deloraine.		
1877	Sport	First North vs South Schools' cricket match was played at Launceston. Launceston Grammar defeated Hobart High School		
1879	Sport	The Launceston Football Club is the oldest football club in Tasmania.		

1883	Medicine	Frank Styant Browne set up a homeopathic pharmacy in Launceston in association with Dr H Benjafield in Elizabeth Street		
1889	City status	Launceston was the first Tasmanian City created by Parliament. Hobart is a Cathedral City - it became a City with the establishment of the Church of England Diocese		
1890	Sound recording	Frank Styant Browne photographed the first Australian demonstrations of sound recording on wax cylinders in 1890.		
1891	Arts	The oldest art society in Australia, the Launceston Art Society, was established in 1891.		
1892	Music	The Brindley Water Pipe Organ at the Albert Hall is the only working model in the Southern Hemisphere. It was built around 1825, and came from Scotland in the early 1890s.		
1895	Electricity	10 December 1895. Duck Reach Power Station began supplying Hydro electric power. Launceston was the first City in the southern hemisphere to be lit by hydro electric power. First Australian river to be used to generate electric power was the South Esk River.		
1895	Transport	The founder of Australia's national airline, Qantas, Sir Wilmot Hudson Fysh, KBE, DFC, was born in Launceston, 7 January 1895. Qantas is one of the oldest airlines in the world.		
1896	X-Ray	Frank Styant Browne acquired Tasmania's first X-Ray outfit in June 1896, taking the first X-Ray photographs in Tasmania		
1896	Medicine	The Department of Radiology at the Launceston General Hospital is the longest continuously operating Department of Radiology in the Southern Hemisphere		
1897	Elections	First elections in Australia under the Hare-Clark System were held in Hobart and Launceston.		
1905	Hydro Electricity	Launceston was the first City in the (then) British Empire to have a three phase four wire electricity distribution system - 1905		
1905	Transport	The Tasmanian Motor Cycle Club was formed in 1905 and is the second oldest motor cycle club in the world.		
1914-8	War	Lieutenant Colonel H W Murray VC CMG DSO and Bar DCM MID and Croux de Guerre was born on the outskirts of Launceston, trained in Launceston and became the most decorate AIF soldier in World War I.		

1916	RSL	The Launceston R&SLA Club was the first in Australia to receive its Charter.		
1919	Aviation	Lt. Arthur Long left Freeland's Aerodrome in Launceston and flew to Melbourne (landing at Stanley en route). This was the first crossing of Bass Strait by air and was in a two-seater bi-plane		
1920s	Sport	Mr Alfred Alexander invented in Launceston the first laminated tennis racket in the world. The factory was established in 1926.		
1921	Town Planning	In 1921/22, H J King completed an aerial photographic survey of Launceston for the Launceston City Council. This was the first use of the technique for municipal management		
1932	Transport	Australia's first major airline, Australian National Airways, (now Ansett Australia) was founded in Launceston by the Holyman Brothers (Victor and Ivan), who established their early services to Hobart and Flinders Island.		
1937	Medicine	The first deep therapy unit installed at the Launceston General Hospital was the first in the Southern hemisphere	7	
1947	Medicine	The first use of radioactive phosphorus for treatment in Australia was at the Launceston General Hospital.	8	
1948	Politics	Mrs Margaret Edgeworth McIntyre OBE was elected in May 1948 as the Member for Cornwall in Tasmania's Legislative Council. She was the first woman elected to the Legislative Council. Killed in a plane crash in September 1948		
1949	Public Transport	On 4 August 1949, the Mayor of Launceston, Alderman Henty, launched the first use in Australia of two-way-radio-controlled taxis. The Plaza Taxi Company fitted nine taxis and a control car with two-way radios.	9	
1949	Local Government	In December 1949, Mrs Dorothy Edna Annie Edwards elected as an Alderman of the City of Launceston. First woman elected as an Alderman in Tasmania.	10	Yes
1955	Local Government	In December 1955, Alderman Dorothy Edna Annie Edwards elected as Mayor of Launceston. The first woman Mayor of a Tasmanian city and one of the first woman Mayors of an Australia city.	11	Yes
1957	Service Clubs	The first chartered Lions Club in Tasmania was the City of Launceston Lions Club.		

1961	Security Technology	Close circuit television was used for the first time in Australia as a security measure by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery when it exhibited 58 original Dutch paintings	12	Yes
1962	Fluoridation	Fluoride was added to the then City of Launceston's water supply. First Australian City to add fluoride to its water.		
1962	Politics	Dr R J D (Spot) Turnbull was the first Independent Senator elected to Federal Parliament, in 1962. He started and finished his Federal Parliamentary career as an Independent Senator for Tasmania 1962-1974. Dr Turnbull was Mayor of Launceston in 1964-65.		
1970	Rock Concert	The annual Launceston Gorge Rock Concert (the Basin Concert) is the longest running outdoor rock concert in Australia.	13	
1972	Colonial Furniture	Dr Clifford Craig wrote the first authoritative book on colonial furniture	14	
1973	Chairlift	Cataract Gorge Chairlift - longest single span chairlift in the world		
1975	Mall	Launceston pioneered a mall - The Brisbane Mall was opened on 4 October 1975 by the Mayor of Launceston, Alderman David V. Gunn		
1975	International Relations	In February 1975 the U.S.A. Consul-General in Australia, Mr R.A. Brand, presented Mr Geoffrey Finney with an American Flag that had flown over the U.S.A. Congress (1.10.1974). The flag was presented by the Congress for Mr Finney's role in "strengthening Australia-America relations". It was the first time that such a flag had been presented to a non-United States citizen. It was also the first time it was presented to someone outside U.S.A. territory.		
1983	Cross-Chess	Mr Leigh Miller of Launceston invented the board game, Cross-Chess. The game is played with traditional chess pieces and movements on a differently configured board. He drew up the board concept on an afternoon in 1983.		
1983	Tartan	First time that authentic Scottish tartan was produced in Australia. (Waverley Woollen Mills)		
1987	Citizenship	A former Mayor, Alderman A. (Jimmy) Tsinoglou naturalised his wife, Sophia at an Australian Citizenship Ceremony on 22 July 1987. This conferring of Australian Citizenship on a Mayoress by her husband the Mayor is believed to be unique in Tasmanian Local Government history.		

1992	Orienteering	First International Orienteering Federation Council Meeting to be held in Southern Hemisphere - held in Launceston 12-14 January 1992		
1992	Orienteering	First time a woman held the position of Technical Director of a World Orienteering Championship - Veterans World Cup Orienteering Championships held in Launceston - January 1992		
1992	Fauna	The first wombat born in captivity outside Australia was born at Satsukiyama Park, Ikeda, Japan. The wombat (named Satsuki) is the offspring of two wombats from Tasmania. Three wombats were given by the Launceston City Council to Launceston's Sister City Ikeda, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Sister City Relationship in 1990.		
1994	Religion	Launceston's Mrs Jill Tabart is the first woman President of the Uniting Church in Australia, only the second lay person to hold the position. (As Dr Jill Holm, she is the Launceston City Council's Medical Officer of Health [1987 -])		
1994	Religion	Launceston's Mrs Jill Tabart is the first woman President of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, only the second lay person to hold the position. (As Dr Jill Holm, she is the Launceston City Council's Medical Officer of Health [1987 -])		
1995	Governor	The first Tasmanian Governor to be born and educated in Tasmania, His Excellency the Hon. Sir Guy Green, A.C., K.B.E., assumed office on 2nd October 1995. His Excellency was born and educated in Launceston.		
General	Medicine	One of the first pancreatic transplant operations in the world was carried out at the Launceston General Hospital	15	
General	Medicine	The Launceston General Hospital was one of the first places in Australia to use the Pap Smear test	16	
General	Medicine	One of the first times that internal heart massage was performed in the world was at the Launceston General Hospital	17	
General	Museums	Mrs Isabella I. Mead was the first woman appointed as Director of an Australian Museum. She was appointed Director of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (a department of the Launceston City Council)		
General	Retail	The last genuine period shop in Tasmania - The Old Umbrella Shop is located at 60 George Street, Launceston. It is operated by the National Trust.		
General	Wool	Continual world record superfine wool prices - Launceston Wool Sales		
General	Arts	The Launceston Players is the oldest continually-run dramatic society	18	

There have been claims made about certain firsts that have not been able to be proven. These claims are listed below as way of record.

1827	Sport	<p>Launceston was the birth place of Australian Golf in January 1827. CLAIM NOT CORRECT.</p> <p>Bothwell, Tasmania is the legitimate home of Australian Golf. A course was first marked out in the early 1820s</p>	19	
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- 1 Possibly sited at upper floor, corner Wellington and Balfour Streets, later known as the Cornwall Hospital
- 2 From the Examiner - 21/9/1994 p. 13 & 13/10/1994 p. C. Secondary source documents in folder Doc. No. 2.
- 3 Check about Launceston Boys' Band 1941
- 5 The Hobart City Mission was formed on 23/11/1852. Information provided by the Hobart City Mission. Launceston City Mission had been thought to be the oldest in Australia. This is not the case.
- 6 Secondary source - the Examiner 1/7/1982. Information provided by the Chief Justice of Tasmania, the Hon Sir Guy Green AC KBE in a letter to the Mayor of Launceston 16/1/1995
- 7 From information provided by Paul Richards, Launceston General Hospital. 1994
- 8 From information provided by Paul Richards, Launceston General Hospital. 1994
- 9 from *The Examiner* 3 December 1997. Source Community History Museum, Launceston. Doc. No. 4.
- 10 from Women in Australian Parliaments and Local Governments Past and Present, A Survey by A. Viola Smith, Australian Local Government Women's Association - New South Wales-ACT Branch 1975.
- 11 Women Mayors of Australia Cities prior to and including Dorothy Edwards -
 Cr Nellie Crave Ibbott MBE JP - Mayor of Heidelberg City 1943-44
 Cr Marie Dalley OBE JP - Mayor of Kew City 1950-55
 Cr Gladys Ellen Machin OBE - Mayor of Caulfield City 1955-56; 1960-62
 Cr Gertrude Josephine McKenzie JP - Mayor of Mordialloc City 1955-1958
 Ald Dorothy Edna Annie Edwards CBE - Mayor of Launceston City 1955-1957
 from Women in Australian Parliaments and Local Governments Past and Present, A Survey by A. Viola Smith, Australian Local Government Women's Association - New South Wales-ACT Branch 1975. Secondary source document in folder - Doc. No. 3.
- 12 Secondary source – The Examiner 29/11/1961 from the files of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVM2: Dutch Paintings Exhibition).
- 13 Secondary source - the Examiner 8/2/1994, p. 5. Information provided by the Chief Justice of Tasmania, the Hon Sir Guy Green AC KBE in a letter to the Mayor of Launceston 16/1/1995
- 14 The Examiner 19/11/1994

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- 15 From information provided by Paul Richards, Launceston General Hospital. 1994
- 16 From information provided by Paul Richards, Launceston General Hospital. 1994
- 17 From information provided by Paul Richards, Launceston General Hospital. 1994
- 18 From the Examiner - 4/9/1994 p. 2. Secondary source document in folder - Doc. No. 1. Original name needs to be checked.
- 19 From the Examiner – 28/11/1996 p. 3 and information from the Community History Museum. Documentation in folder – Doc. No. 5