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Plate tectonic models associate this geological history with the fragmentation of a super-continent, Gondwana (e.g. Laughton et al., 1972). It has been proposed that southern Australia lay adjacent to part of Wilke's land in Antarctica, and that eastern Australia lay adjacent to the Lord Howe Rise (e.g. Griffiths, 1973). The block faulting and graben formation have been linked with the beginning of movements that led to the rupture and fragmentation of this continental mass, while the inception of rifting is correlated with the phase of regional downwarp and creation of new oceanic crust in the ocean basins adjacent to the Australian continental margin.

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