



AUSTRALIA

Geography

Australia is the biggest island in the world and is located in south-east Asia, between the Indian Ocean in west and the Pacific (Coral and Tasman Seas) in east. Tasmania lies 240 km south. Nearest is Indonesia, Papua New Guinea on north, Solomons, Fiji and New Zealand on east. Its area is about 8,000,000 sq km. Australia is an island continent.



The surface is mostly flat, only 5% is higher than 600 m. 2/3 of Australia, mostly in the centre and the west are deserts: **Great Victorian Desert, Gibson Desert, Great Sandy Desert.**

The Great Dividing Range along the eastern coast - **The Australian Alps** has the highest Australian mountain **Mt. Kosciusko**. **Cape York Peninsula** has jungles.

The longest river is **The Murray River**. The second largest river is **Darling**.

There are 3 big lakes: **Lake Eyre, Lake Torrens, Lake Gairdner.**

Climate

The Australian **climate** varies from warm to subtropical. The continent is in southern hemisphere, it means that Australia has summer when we have winter and vice versa.

Fauna/flora

The south-east is covered with forests of **eucalyptus** and other **evergreen trees**. The animals of Australia are special and numerous, such as **kangaroo, koala bear, dingo, platypus, Tasmanian devil, wombat**.



People

The population of Australia is about 19,000,000. Most people live in urban areas mainly along the south-east coast. Deserts and tropical northern part are practically uninhabited. 95% of inhabitants are of British origin, 3% are made by other European ethnic groups and 1,5% are **original inhabitants – aborigines**.

History

The first people in Australia were **the Aborigines** who came more than 40 000 years ago.

Captain James Cook explored the eastern coast in 1770 when the continent was inhabited by a variety of different tribes.

Within decads Britain got the entire continent which became **a convict colony** from 1788 till 1850s when immigration increased because gold was found here.

The Commonwealth was proclaimed in 1901.

National economy

Main industries are iron, steel, textiles, electrical equipment, chemicals, car, aircraft, ship machinery. **Agriculture:** cattle and sheep breeding (beef, lamb, wool), wheat, barley, oats, sugar, wine, fruit and vegetables growing.

Natural resources: bauxite, coal, copper, iron, lead, nickel, silver, tin, uranium, zinc ores and gold.

Currency – Australian Dollar.

Government type and administration

The official title is **The Commonwealth of Australia** and it is a British dominion.

It has a democratic **federal system** and **the head of state is Queen Elizabeth II** represented by the **Governor-General**. **The head of government is The Prime Minister.**

The Commonwealth of Australia consists of **6 states** and **2 territories**:

1. **New South Wales** (capital – **Sydney**)
2. **Victoria** (–,,- **Melbourne**)
3. **Queensland** (–,,- **Brisbane**)
4. **South Australia** (–,,- **Adelaide**)
5. **Western Australia** (–,,- **Perth**)
6. **Tasmania** (–,,- **Hobart**)

1. **Northern Territory**
2. **Australia Capital Territory – Canberra**

The Federal Parliament (the supreme law-making body) has its seat in Canberra and is divided into **the Senate** and **the House of Representatives**.

The Australian national flag consists of the British flag symbol and a larger blue field in which 5 stars are arranged in the form of the Southern Cross Constellation. The large white star under the Union Jack symbolizes 6 Australian states and a territory



"**Advance Australia Fair**" is the official national anthem of Australia.

Places of interests



Sydney – the oldest, biggest city; Sydney Opera House with the roof like sails; The Sydney Harbour Bridge – one of the oldest bridges in the world

Melbourne – was the capital; important sport centre



Brisbane – stilt houses (wooden houses on tall posts)

Perth – a boat



1/3 of the families own



Darwin – has no tall buildings because of strong storms and winds in summer.

Canberra – the newest city, became the capital in 1927



Alice Springs – the geographical centre of Australia; an important tourist centre

ULURU- Ayers Rock – an enormous rock

3 km long, 348 m high with another 2100 m under the ground, 600 million years old, its colour changes from yellow to gold, red and purple at the end of the day.



Great Barrier Reef – the world's longest coral reef



Cooper Pedy – 90% of the world's opals come from here; daily temperature is about 40-50°C, most people live under the ground in houses dug out of the rock.

