

English-Speaking Countries

Australia

Australia's Unique History

The east coast of Australia was discovered by Captain Cook in 1770. He landed south of present day Sydney in New South Wales. He claimed this part of the land for the King of England. The early settlers were very cruel to the aborigines, the people who have lived in Australia from the earliest times. They were killed or driven away from their lands.



History of Australia

The discovery of gold in 1851 brought very many people to Australia. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Australian colonies formed a federation. The new constitution was introduced on January 1, 1901. It was the birth of the new nation. Australia became a nation within the British Empire under Queen Victoria's rule. It was called the Commonwealth of Australia. In 1931 Australia gained independence from Great Britain.



The Aborigines

The aborigines who had their own rich history did not welcome the white people who took their land. In 1788 there were about 300.000 aborigines in Australia. There now only 40.000 full aborigines and 39.000 part aborigines who live mainly in the tropical and desert areas. The aborigines love music. They sing and play their instruments and dance. When they dance they put colours on their faces, arms and legs.



Australia Today

Australia is a continent, a country and an island at the same time. It is the sixth largest country and the smallest continent in the world. Australia is situated south of Asia, between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Oceans. It is an island of 7,7 million square kilometres. Australia is located in the southern hemisphere. That's why it has summer when we have winter and it has winter when we have summer. January is the hottest month in Australia.



The Flag of Australia

The flag of Australia is the only one to fly over a whole continent. The small Union Jack represents the historical link with Britain, the large seven-pointed star represents the six States and the Territories, and the small stars form the Southern Cross- a prominent feature of the southern hemisphere night sky. In 1984 Australia officially adopted green and gold as its national colours.



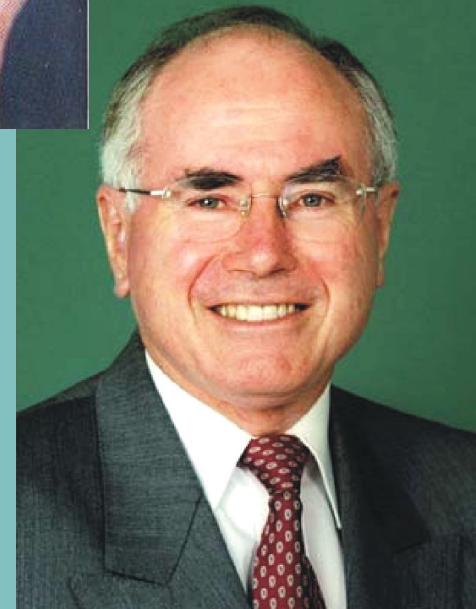
Australia's coat of arms

Australia's coat of arms- the official emblem of the Australian Government- was granted by King George V in 1912. The arms consist of a shield containing the badges of the six states. The supporters are native Australian fauna- a kangaroo and an emu. A yellow-flowered native plant, wattle, also appears in the design. Australian's national day, Australia Day, on 26th January marks the date in 1788, when British Captain Arthur Phillip sailed into port Jackson(Sydney Cove).



The Commonwealth of Australia

The Commonwealth of Australia is a self-governing federal state and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Formally the head of the state is the Queen of the UK Elizabeth II, represented by the Governor-General. Australia consists of six states and two territories: the Federal Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The Capital Territory is the land around the federal Capital, Canberra. The federal government of the country is headed by the Prime Minister. Australia's official language is English.



The people of Australia

Australia has a population of about 18 million people. 70% of the population live in its 10 largest cities.

Australia is a multicultural society with about a quarter of the population foreign born. Settlers from about 200 countries have made Australia their home. Aborigines now comprise only 1,5 % of the population of Australia.

Canberra

Canberra is the capital of Australia. It is situated in the Australian Capital Territory, not on the seacoast. It is not the biggest city. The population is 300.000 people.

The centrepiece of the city is the new Parliament House, which was opened in 1988. Canberra is also the “natural capital” and is within easy reach of some of Australia’s most spectacular countryside. The air here is fresh and crisp. No wonder the people of Canberra love to spend their time outdoors!



Canberra

There are many fine museums in Canberra. Canberra was designed by an American architect. Australia's national landmarks are located in Canberra. The National Gallery, the National Science and Technology Centre, the High Court and the Old Parliament House are all here. Canberra is a “cyclist paradise”.



Sydney

Sydney is the largest and oldest city in Australia. Sydney is home to nearly 4 million people. Sydney's population is mainly English in background. Tourists from all over the world are attracted by Sydney's natural beauty, Mediterranean climate and its impressive galleries, museums, architecture and parks.



Melbourne

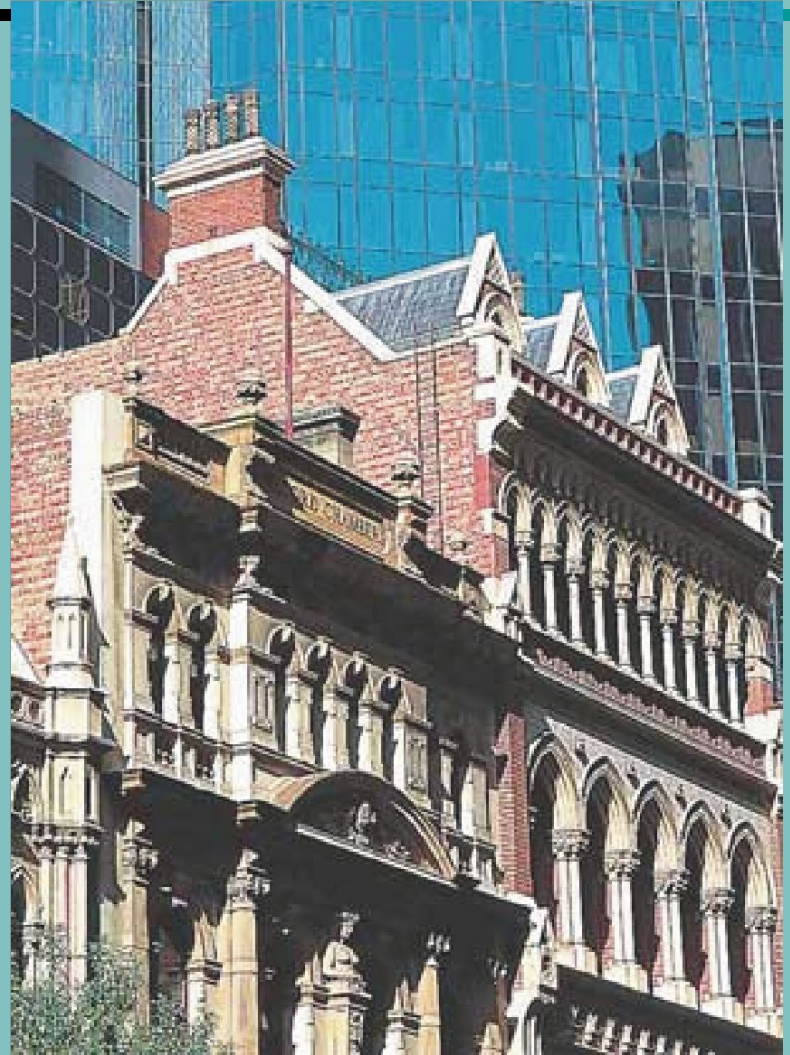
Melbourne is the capital of Victoria. It is the second largest city in Australia. Its population is 3,200,000 people. Melbourne is a very multi-cultural city. It is home to many cultural groups, speaking 170 languages. Melbourne is the acknowledged culture capital of Australia, with world-class music, dance, opera, comedy and theatre.



Melbourne

The architecture in Melbourne has been carefully planned. The National Gallery of Victoria, established in 1861, is the state art gallery.

The Centre houses the Melbourne Concert Hall, Performing Arts Museum and three major theatres. World-known is the Melbourne Zoo. Established in 1857, it is one of the oldest zoos in the world. It is home to over 3,000 animals.



Darwin

Darwin is the capital and the largest city of the Northern Territory. Its population is 70.000 people. It has tropical climate.



Australia's Wildlife

Australia's Wildlife

Australia has nearly half a million species of plants and animals. Australians love their wildlife. Australia's best known animals are the kangaroo, the koala and a dingo(a wild dog). There are 50 species of kangaroo. Some stand as tall as a man and some are as small as a cat. They can often be seen in many of the forests and parks.



Birds and Animals

The koala is the best loved of all Australian animals. The koala lives on leaves alone.

About 400 species of birds in Australia are found nowhere else in the world.

There are 55 species of parrots in the country. They are very colourful.

The emu is the most interesting bird in Australia. It is big and can not fly.

The kookaburra is another interesting Australian bird. It can not sing, but laughs like a human.



The Dingo

The dingo is one of Australia's wild animals. It is a wild dog which kills other animals at night. It fills the silent night air with its terrible cries. In colour it is reddish brown or yellow.

Scientists think that it was once a pet of the aborigines, but then it went wild. When they are young, they are playful and amusing like any young dog. But the grown dingo is dangerous.

The keeping of pet dingoes is not allowed in most parts of Australia.

