

AUSTRALIA: a profile



The blue colour of the **Australian Flag** represents Australia as an island continent and as the blue sky; the **Union Flag** reflects Australia's history as a **former British colony**. The five white stars represent the **Southern Cross**, referring to the four moral virtues: justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude.



The **Coat of Arms** depicts the emblems of Australia: the **Commonwealth Star**, the **Red Kangaroo** and the **Emu**, and the floral emblem - the **Golden Wattle**

Anthem

**Advance Australia
Fair**

Capital

Canberra

Largest city

Sydney

Official language

English

Status

**Parliamentary
democracy and
constitutional
monarchy**

Government

**The British
Monarch**

Governor-General

Prime Minister

Area

7,741,220 km²

Population

21,180,000

Density

2.6/km²

Currency

**Australian dollar
(AUD)**

Time zone

(UTC+8 TO +10.5)

Internet TLD

.au

Calling code

+61

The **koala** and the **eucalyptus** form an iconic Australian pair.



Most Australians live in urban areas. **Sydney** is the most populous city in the country.



Perth is now the most expensive city in Australia to live.



Lieutenant **James Cook** charted the east coast of Australia on **Bark Endeavour**, claiming the land for Great Britain in 1770.



Port Arthur, Tasmania was Australia's largest goal for transported convicts.



The Super Pit in **Kalgoorlie** is Australia's largest **open cut** gold mine.



AUSTRALIA: A FACTFILE



1. The Official Name of the Country

The Commonwealth of Australia (Австралийский Союз) is a country in the southern hemisphere comprising the mainland of the world's smallest continent, the major island of Tasmania, and a number of other islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. **The capital** of the country is **Canberra**. It is an important political and cultural centre of the country.

2. The National Symbols

The Australian National Flag is Australia's foremost national symbol. It was first flown in 1901 and has become one of the expressions of the Australian identity and pride. It has three elements on a blue background: the Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross. The Union Jack in the upper left corner is connected with the history of the British settlement. Below the Union Jack is the white Commonwealth or Federation Star. It has seven points representing the unity of the six states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia.



The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia that signifies the Commonwealth authority and ownership.

‘Advance Australia Fair’ is the national anthem of Australia. Usually ‘God Save the Queen’ is played at the start of Royal functions and ‘Advance Australia Fair’ at the end.



ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FAIR

*Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.
Beneath our radiant Southern Cross
We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.*

3. The Status and Government

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional democracy. The British Monarch is the head of the state, which is represented by the Governor-General at the federal level and by the Governors at the state level. Australia is also a parliamentary democracy as it has a parliament.

There are three branches of government:

- The legislative: the Commonwealth Parliament, comprising the Queen, the Senate (the upper house), and the House of Representatives (the lower house). The seat of the Parliament is the Parliament House, which was opened in Canberra in 1988.
- The executive: the Federal Executive Council, consisting of the Prime Minister and Ministers of the State.
- The judiciary: the High Court of Australia and other federal courts.

There are three political parties: the Australian Labour Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party.

4. The States and Territories



Australia consists of six states, two major mainland territories, and other minor territories. The states are New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia. The two major mainland territories are the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

Each state and territory has its own legislature. The British Monarch is represented in each state by a governor.

5. The Geography and Location

The word “Australia” means “a southern land”. Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. The **total area** of Australia is 7,741,220 km². This country is situated on the Indo-Australian Plate and surrounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans.

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef and it extends for over 2,000 kilometres. The largest part of Australia is a desert.

There are several **rivers** in the country; the largest of them are the Murray and the Darling. In general, Australia has a warm and dry climate that differs from one part of the country to another. The climate is significantly influenced by the ocean currents.

6. The Environment



Wombat

Kangaroo

Kookaburra

Many Australia's animals and birds are unique. Most Australian woody plant species are evergreen and many are adapted to fire and drought, including many eucalypts and acacias. Among well-known Australian fauna are the platypus (утконос) and the echidna; **the kangaroo, the koala**, and the wombat (вombat); the saltwater and freshwater crocodiles; and birds such as **the emu** and the kookaburra (кyкaбappa). Besides, Australia has many dangerous animals, including some snakes and dingoes (wild dogs).

7. The Population

The population includes approximately 200 nationalities. Australia is one of the least populated countries in the world. Its population is over 20 million people. Most

Australians live in cities along the eastern and south-eastern coasts. The population of the country is mainly of British origin. For many years Australia was a place where criminals and political offenders were sent from Britain. However, after World War II many other Europeans, especially from Greece and Italy, came and changed the character of the population. The immigration policy has always been based on the “White Australia” concept.



The brown-skinned Aborigines (native Australians) are an ancient people with a rich cultural inheritance. They established the life style, very different from the European culture. The natives did not practise agriculture or keep domestic animals other than the dog. They supported themselves by hunting, gathering and fishing. The land has always been very important for the Aborigines as they believe that the land was granted to them by the Ancestral Beings. They also believe that man shares a common life principle with animals, birds and plants.

The mythological period of creation is called Dreamtime. In the Dreamtime, spirit beings are believed to have travelled through the land, shaping the country, providing water, creating people and other living beings and things. These spirits also created the rituals, legends and songs of each Aboriginal tribe. Every Aborigine is spiritually linked with a special figure of the Dreamtime, his totem (the emblem of his family or

clan, his ancestry), which is usually a local animal (a kangaroo, a koala, etc.) So the Aborigines evolved a way of life, where they aimed to live in harmony with their environment. Of course, when the Europeans arrived, the Aborigines were doomed, for the European settlers never treated them as human beings. Now the Aborigines are a dying race: they are in danger of being destroyed, and they are in danger of destroying themselves. Alcohol and leprosy are their biggest killers at present.

The contemporary Aborigines still remain “economically disadvantaged”. Like the American Indians, they are strangers in their own land. No Aborigines are doctors, only a few of them have become lawyers! The Aborigines have been struggling to survive and resist the official policy, demanding local autonomy, language, land and rights. This struggle is of great political significance in Australia, and one of the modern political issues is a push for an official government apology for the injustices suffered by the generations of Aborigines. Unfortunately, many Aborigines continue to live in deplorable conditions even nowadays.

8. The Languages: English, Aboriginal tongues.

English is the official state language. Some other European languages are spoken all over Australia, and there are books, radio and TV programmes produced in these languages.

Before the British colonization, almost all the Aboriginal tribes spoke their own Aboriginal languages. But the problem is that the native tribes never developed writing, for their languages were handed down from one generation to another by speaking. Fifty or sixty Aboriginal languages are still spoken by groups of native people now. But these groups range between fifty and three thousand people only. So, if no effort is made to keep these languages alive, they may be in danger of dying out.

In 1980 an Aboriginal language was taught for the first time as a second language to Aboriginal children, living in cities. The reasons for introducing this education programme were firstly to save the language and secondly to make both black and white children interested in the Aboriginal culture.

9. The Religions

Australia has no state religion. Most of the Australians are Christians: Roman Catholics, Anglicans and other Christians.

10. The History

The ancient history of Australia is called prehistory rather than history because there are no paper written records of human events in Australia.

Prehistory

68,000 BC – 40,000 BC: Aboriginal tribes are thought to have arrived in Australia.

13,000 BC: Land bridges between mainland Australia and Tasmania are flooded. Tasmanian Aboriginal people become isolated for the next 12, 000 – 13, 000 years.

Written history

The 16th century: Australia is discovered by the Portuguese. The land is unattractive.

The early 17th century: The northern and western coasts of Australia are explored by the Dutch who call the region New Holland.

1770: The English navigator Captain James Cook arrives in Australia, explores its eastern coast and calls the region New South Wales, claiming it for Great Britain.

1779: Since the loss of the American colonies, the British prisons are overcrowded. Britain seeks a suitable place to transport its criminals to. Captain Cook's fellow explorer, Sir Joseph Banks, suggests New South Wales as such a place.

1787: The first fleet sets sail for New South Wales under the command of Captain Arthur Philip, who is to become the colony's first governor. The fleet consists of 11 ships with about a thousand male and female convicts.

1788, January 26: Captain Philip arrives in Australia. The first settlement is established at Port Jackson, the site of the present city of Sydney. Now January 26 is Australia Day. For the new arrivals, New South Wales is just a penal colony, a harsh and horrible place. The colonists are faced with a constant threat of starvation.

1820 – 1850: Free settlers begin to arrive. Gradually, the interior land is explored, and new settlements are built. The Aborigines are ruthlessly pushed off their lands by the new settlers.

1850 – 1851: The gold rush encourages many settlers to come. Six colonies are founded.

The 1890s: These years witness the rise of the labour movement, the development of Australian nationalism and federation. The Industrial Revolution in England requires plenty of raw materials, and Australia's agricultural and mineral resources meet this demand.

1901, January 1: Australia becomes a nation when the federation of the separate colonies is founded. The separate Australian colonies are united and proclaim themselves the Commonwealth of Australia, still a Dominion of the British Empire. It consists of six federal states and two internal territories.

1931: The Statute of Westminster formally ends most of the constitutional links between Australia and the UK. However, the British capital still remains ruling in the economy of the country.

1942: The ties between Australia and Britain loosen significantly when it becomes clear that the British forces are unable to defend Australia against the Japanese invasion. Americans immediately offer their help; and, since that time on, the Australian ruling circles have always looked towards the United States instead of Great Britain as the main protector of their interests.

The post World War II period: The new relationship between Australia and the USA is officially proclaimed in the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) Treaty of Mutual Security, a military alliance of these powers in the South Pacific. Yet not only is Australia a US military base but also many US firms have a multibillion dollar economic interest in the country. Throughout Australia, the signs of Americanization are evident: many skyscrapers, a lot of McDonald's fast-food restaurants, numerous American programmes on TV.

1980 – 1990: The formal dependence of Australia on Great Britain is ended. Australia becomes the most developed state in the South Pacific, dominating the other countries of the area.

11. The Currency and Economy



The **Australian dollar** is the currency of the Commonwealth of Australia. Within Australia, its signs are (\$), **A\$** or **AU\$**. The Australian dollar is subdivided into 100 cents. It is the sixth most-traded currency in the world.

The **economy** of Australia is a developed, market economy with a GDP (gross domestic product) of approximately \$1 trillion USD. Rich in natural resources, Australia is a major exporter of agricultural products, minerals (such as iron-ore) and energy in the forms of natural gas and coal. The service sector of the economy includes tourism, education and financial services.

Socially and economically, Australia is still trying to come to terms with its dependence on foreign powers and its place in Asia. As an Australian journalist once observed, Australia is a synthesis of Britain and America. Before the World War II, the Australian authorities sought London's approval of almost every political step. After the war, on major world issues, Canberra tends to wait for Washington to make its position known and only then to take this or that step.

However, nowadays, Australia is one of the ten foremost capitalist states in terms of its level of economic development. It is the most developed country in the South Pacific, and it dominates the area.

12. The Largest Cities of Australia

Now Australian cities do not have kangaroos hopping down their quiet streets. But Australians do have their own folk life: in the suburbs, everyone has a garden and a yard which might include a barbecue, a cubby house for children and various kennels for dogs, cats and chickens. And this scene is just typical of the Australian habits and ways.

Though Australia is one of the least populated countries in the world, two of its cities, Sydney and Melbourne, rank among the 40 largest cities on our planet.



Canberra: the capital, the fascinating 20th-century creation by the American architect Walter Burley Griffin; “the fat cat” of the Australian cities, being a city of politicians and bureaucrats; the seat of the Australian Parliament; often called the Garden City of Australia because of its broad avenues and residential streets lined with trees.



Sydney: the largest city and port of Australia; “the Queen City of the South”, named after Lord Sydney (then the British home secretary); originally a penal colony, now the chief commercial and industrial centre of Australia; a principal centre of government and culture: the seat of the state government, several federal agencies, consulates of many countries; the Public Library of New South Wales, the Galleries of Australia, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the State Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney (Australia’s oldest university), the New South Wales University of Technology, Hyde Park, the Botanic Gardens; several popular resort suburbs with beautiful sandy beaches; the successful 2000 Olympic Games.



Melbourne: the second largest city of Australia, named after Lord Melbourne (then the Prime Minister of Great Britain); a city of contradictions and hidden charms being cosmopolitan, suburban, cultivated, football crazy, conservative and a haven for the avant-garde; a cultural focus and a leading centre for scientific research, a base for Antarctic exploration: the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, the Royal College of Surgeons, the University of Melbourne, galleries, museums; visitors come to Melbourne for shopping, restaurants, nightlife and sporting events; the successful 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.



Brisbane: Australia's third largest city; a port and marketing centre; a leading Australian tourist centre: a lively, cosmopolitan city with several interesting districts, a good street café scene, a great riverside park, a busy cultural calendar and decent nightlife.

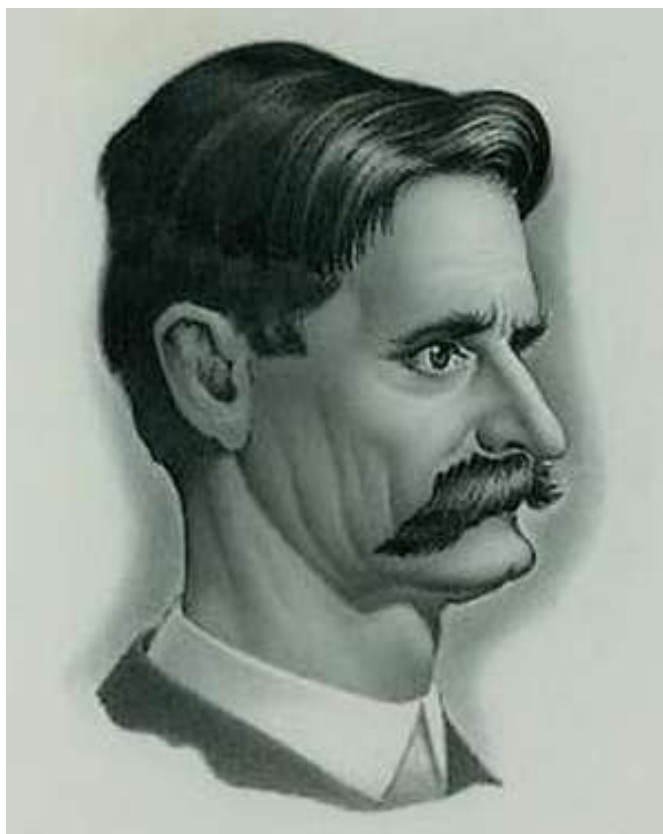


Darwin: a city of Australia with a tropical climate (the year-round temperature near 28°C); named after the famous English naturalist Charles Darwin; played a major role during World War II as an allied military base.

13. Culture, Science and Sport in Australia

The Australian culture bears the stamp of its British ancestry. However, today artists in all the fields, particularly in painting and literature, are successful in bringing to the broad stream of the European culture a contribution that is peculiarly Australian. Australia has a rich artistic heritage (both Aboriginal and Australian) and vivid contemporary arts. Australia's arts festivals attract people from all over Australia and abroad. Australians have their own folk life. It is true and proper to admit that Australia's outstanding masters are world famous.

Literature



Henry Lawson (a classic of Australia, a short-story writer and a poet):
the collections of short stories “While the Billy Boils” (Пока греется котелок), “When the Hat Went Round” (Шляпа по кругу).

With all Good Wishes
& hopes for
Peace & Progress -



Katherine Susan Prichard (a classic of Australia, a woman writer):
the trilogy “The Roaring Nineties” (“Девяностые годы” or “Роковые
девяностые”).



Dimfna Cusack (a classic of Australia, a woman writer): “Say No
the Death” (Скажи смерти “нет”).

The Mid-20th Century Men of Letters: A. Marshall, Peter Carey, Thomas Keneally,
the aborigine poetess K. Worker, the aborigine writer K. Johnson.



Patrick White, a contemporary writer of Australia, the only Australian awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (1973), he is recognized as one of the great English-language writers of the 20th century.

Painting: Sydney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Brett Whiteley, Fred Williams, Albert Namatjira and his three sons (the aborigine painters).



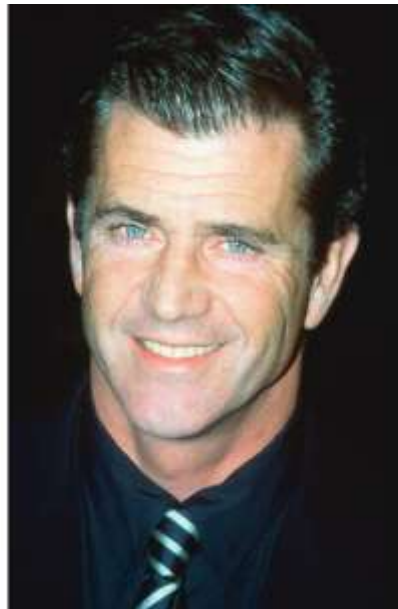
Albert Namatjira (the aborigine painter)

Opera



Joan Sutherland (an opera diva)

Acting

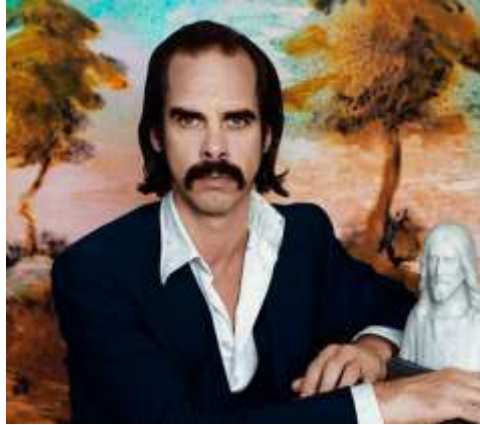


Mel Gibson



Nicole Kidman.

Popular Music



Nick Cave



“Midnight Oil”



“Silverchair”

Over the past decades, the Australian culture has been strongly influenced by the American popular culture (particularly television and cinema), the large-scale immigration from non-English-speaking countries, and also by Australia's Asian neighbours. However, Australians prefer to keep to what has already been tried and tasted, avoiding anything original and unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, their culture possesses distinctive Australian features, which have arisen from the country's unique environment and beautiful landscape.

Science

- *F.M. Barnet*, a virusologist; the Nobel Prize in 1960
- *John Eccles*, a physiologist; the Nobel Prize in 1961

Mass Media

Australia has two public broadcasters (the ABC and the multicultural SBS), three commercial television networks, several paid TV services and numerous public, non-profit television and radio stations. Each major city has daily newspapers, and there are two national daily newspapers "**The Australian**" and "**The Australian Financial Review**".

Sport

Sport plays an important part in the Australian culture, due to the climate that favours outdoor activities. It is considered the Australian "religion" and the Aussies (i.e. inhabitants of Australia) are world beaters in cricket, rugby, swimming, cycling. Other popular sports are baseball, yachting, soccer and Aussie Rules (a unique Australian sport, similar to football). The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games were declared by the International Olympic Committee Head Juan Antonio Samaranch the best games ever.

Note: It's interesting to suppose what the IOC Head will say in 2014 after the Sochi Olympic Games, isn't it?

Russia and Australia

Our states have always been friendly countries. Yet the cannons, that are pointed seaward, line the coast of some Australian cities. They have been there to “repulse a Russian invasion”. It goes without saying that no cannon is ever fired, for our countries have never been at war. During the Second World War, Australian seamen accompanied the allied convoys between the British ports and Murmansk. Many of the seamen were decorated with Soviet military orders.