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Expeditions 2.0**

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AUSTRALIA

ENCYCLOPÆDIA

Britannica



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Australia



Australia is the only country that takes up a whole continent. It is known for its vast Outback, the Great Barrier Reef, and its unique wildlife. The capital of Australia is Canberra.

Geography

Australia is one of the largest countries in the world, but it is also the smallest continent. Located south of Asia, Australia lies between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Off the southeastern coast is the island of Tasmania. It has more than 4,000 lakes. Along Australia's northeastern coast is the world's largest coral reef, the Great Barrier Reef.

The western half of the continent is a plateau with several deserts, including the Great Victoria Desert. East of the plateau is a lowland area that rises to the Great Dividing Range, a range of mountains on the east coast. In the southeast are the Australian Alps. There, Mount Kosciusko, Australia's tallest mountain, stands 7,310 feet (2,228 meters) high. The Darling and Murray rivers also run through the southeast.

Australia is very dry. Most areas have hot summers and mild winters. Because Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, summer starts in December, and winter starts in June.





Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is located in Australia's Northern Territory. The area is sacred to Australian Aborigines.

Plants and Animals

Australia's plants vary from region to region. The rain forests of the northeast include flowering plants, palms, and laurels. Woodlands and forests cover eastern Australia. Eucalyptus trees are common in the highlands of the south and at the edges of the deserts. Desert shrubs and grasses grow in dry areas.

The country is home to many unique animals, including emus (large flightless birds), dingoes (wild dogs), and platypuses (egg-laying mammals). Many of the world's marsupials live in Australia—for example, kangaroos, koalas, and wallabies. Crocodiles, lizards, snakes, turtles, and parrots also live there.

People

More than 90 percent of Australians have European roots. Australia welcomed many immigrants, or people from other countries, over the years. However, entry tests were set up to make it very hard for nonwhites to settle there.

This changed in 1973. Since then, many Asians have immigrated to the continent. Aborigines, the native people of Australia, make up a small percentage of the population.

Almost 70 percent of Australians are Christians. There are also small groups of Buddhists and Muslims. Many people do not follow any religion.

Few people live in the central region, called the Outback or "bush." About 85 percent of all Australians live in cities, mostly along the coasts. The official language is English.

Economy

Australia is a prosperous country. Most people work in trade, businesses that serve the public, and manufacturing. Manufacturers make food, print, and metal products; chemicals; and machinery.

Australia's rich natural resources include oil, coal, and natural gas. Mines provide



A bridge crosses the Yarra River in Melbourne. The city is Australia's second largest, after Sydney.



TIMELINE

Dutch explorers name the continent New Holland.

1644

Britain sets up the first colony in Australia.

1770

James Cook claims Australia for Great Britain.

1788

Australia separates from Britain.

1851

A gold rush brings many settlers to Australia.

1901

Sydney hosts the Summer Olympic Games.

1992

Aborigines win the right to claim their traditional lands.

2000

iron, bauxite, copper, opals, and sapphires.

Agriculture and fishing are small parts of Australia's economy. Still, Australia is one of the world's largest producers of wool. The wool comes from more than 100 million Australian sheep. Farmers grow wheat, vegetables, fruits, nuts, cotton, and other crops.

History

Aborigines lived in Australia for at least 40,000 years before Europeans arrived. They came from Asia by boat or by land that is now underwater.

European Explorers

Portuguese and Spanish explorers may have landed in Australia in the 1500s. In the 1600s several Dutch explorers reached the continent. They included Dirck Hartog and Abel Tasman. Hartog discovered the west coast, and Tasman sailed along the southern tip of what is

now called Tasmania. Because of all these voyages the Dutch named the continent New Holland in 1644. But they did not settle there.

William Dampier, an English pirate turned explorer, landed on the west coast twice in the late 1600s. In 1770 Captain James Cook landed in southeastern Australia and claimed it for Great Britain. He named the region New South Wales.

First Fleet and Settlement

Captain Cook thought that New South Wales was a good place for settlement. At the time, England's prisons were overcrowded. So the English government decided to send prisoners to Australia to start a penal colony—a place where criminals are sent to live.

Captain Arthur Phillip was in charge of the First Fleet. He led 11 ships carrying about 200 marines, a few free settlers,

more than 700 convicts, food stores, and farm animals. The trip took eight months and conditions were very hard. They reached Australia in January 1788 and settled in a bay that they named Sydney Cove. Phillip became the first governor of the colony.

Convicts and settlers worked to clear land and to establish farms. They were not used to the climate, so the colonists struggled to survive. But soon more convicts and settlers arrived.

In the 1800s other parts of the country were settled. In 1851 the discovery of gold drew thousands of new immigrants to Australia. The settlements grew and became colonies separate from New South Wales. They became Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia.

The flood of settlers nearly wiped out the aboriginal population. Many Aborigines died while fighting for their land or from diseases brought by the Europeans.

Independence and War

By the late 1800s the six separate colonies each had an elected parliament, or group of lawmakers. In 1901 they became states when they joined together to form a federation. The new Commonwealth of Australia had a national parliament and six state parliaments. It kept ties with Britain, however, as part of the British Commonwealth (a group of former British colonies).

In World War I, Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) troops fought alongside the British Army. Many Australians died during the battle of Gallipoli in 1915. Australia also supported Britain when World War II began in 1939. In the 1940s the Japanese attacked several Australian cities. After the war the population grew.

Recent Events

In the 1970s Australia started to focus more on its Asian neighbors. Many Asian immigrants arrived, and trade increased between Australia and Asian countries. In the 1990s Aborigines won some rights to land. They also won more respect from white Australians.

Although the prime minister is the head of the government, the British monarch is still the official head of state in Australia. Some Australians want the country to become a republic with a president as head of state. In 1999, however, Australians voted against a complete separation from Britain. In 2010 the country gained its first woman prime minister, Julia Gillard. She served until 2013.

Australia suffered two major natural disasters in the early 2000s. A series of bushfires in 2009 killed 173 people in Victoria, and rains in Queensland caused massive flooding in 2010–11.

Facts About AUSTRALIA



Population
(2013 estimate)
23,028,000

Area
2,973,952 sq mi
(7,702,501 sq km)

Capital
Canberra

Form of government
Federal parliamentary state

Metropolitan areas
Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide

New South Wales



New South Wales is one of Australia's six states. It is rich in natural beauty, historical places, and modern businesses. Australia's largest city, Sydney, is the capital of New South Wales. The state also contains the Australian Capital Territory, where the country's capital, Canberra, is located.

Geography

New South Wales lies in southeastern Australia. The Pacific Ocean borders the state on the east. Three states border New South Wales: Victoria on the south, South Australia on the west, and Queensland on the north.

Mount Kosciusko, Australia's highest point, is about 100 miles (160 kilometers) southwest of Canberra. It rises 7,310 feet (2,228 meters). The Darling, Australia's longest river, cuts across the northwest. Other major rivers of New South Wales include the Murray and the Murrumbidgee.

The coast of New South Wales has a moist climate, with mild winters and warm summers. The inland area is dry, with mild winters and hot summers.

People

Most people in New South Wales have British or other European ancestors. Other groups include Turks, Lebanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thais, and Indonesians. Australia's native people, called Aborigines, make up about 2 percent of the population.

More than 6 million people live in New South Wales. About 4 million live in Sydney, on the coast. Sydney is a major center of business and the arts. The magnificent Sydney Opera House, with its shell-like roofs, has become a symbol of Australia. Other important cities in New South Wales include Newcastle, Wollongong, Broken Hill, Wagga Wagga, and Lismore.

Economy

New South Wales produces more goods and services than any other state in Australia. Services, such as banking and



A rock formation called the Three Sisters rises above a cliff in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales.

tourism, are the main parts of the economy. Farmers in the state mainly raise animals, especially sheep for wool. New South Wales also produces much of Australia's grain, including wheat, corn, and sorghum. In addition, most of the country's silver, lead, and zinc comes from mines in New South Wales.

History

The British explorer James Cook discovered New South Wales in 1770. He claimed the territory for King George III of Great Britain. The area reminded Cook of southern Wales in Great Britain, so he named it New South Wales.

The British government set up a colony at Sydney Harbour in 1788. Many of the people who lived there were prisoners sent from Great Britain. The colony grew slowly until gold was discovered in 1851. The gold rush that followed brought many people to the area.

When Australia became an independent country in 1901, New South Wales became a state of Australia. The current state borders were set up in 1915.

VIRTUAL REALITY SCENE



VIRTUAL REALITY SCENE



Swordfish

The swordfish is a fish that was named for its long, thin snout. The swordlike snout is flat rather than rounded. For this reason, the fish is sometimes called the broadbill. The swordfish's scientific name is *Xiphias gladius*.

Swordfish are found in oceans around the world. They are mainly pelagic. This means that they live out in the open sea.

Swordfish grow to about 15 feet (4.6 meters) long. They can weigh as much as 1,000 pounds (450 kilograms). Swordfish are purplish blue in color. The sword is almost black. Unlike most fishes, the adult swordfish does not have scales. It also does not have teeth.

The swordfish has a powerful body that is shaped like a torpedo. Its sword is actually a bony extension of the top jaw. The swordfish eats smaller fishes and squid. It uses its sword to slash through schools of fishes.

Swordfish reproduce by laying eggs. The young swordfish hatch after about two



A swordfish swims in the Pacific Ocean near Costa Rica.

and a half days. They have teeth and scales but not a sword-shaped snout. By the time a swordfish is about 2 to 4 feet (0.6 to 1.2 meters) long, it has lost its teeth and scales. It also has grown a sword.

Swordfish are important to the fishing industry. They are also popular with people who fish for sport. When caught, a swordfish will use its sword to defend itself.

Sydney



Population
(2006 census),
urban area,
4,119,191

Sydney is a major city in Australia, a country in Oceania. The greater Sydney area is Australia's largest metropolitan area. Sydney has a huge and magnificent harbor. It is one of the most important ports on the South Pacific Ocean. The city is also one of Australia's main centers of business and culture.

Places of Interest

The Sydney metropolitan area stretches across a large section of land. The city center lies along the harbor. The Sydney Harbour Bridge is one of the longest in the world of its kind. The city's most famous landmark, the Opera House, is



The Sydney Opera House is a distinctive feature along the city's waterfront.

also on the waterfront. It has several white roofs shaped like shells. Sydney is also home to a large aquarium.

Many beaches and parks surround Sydney. The city is famous as a place for sailing, swimming, surfing, and other sports and recreation.

Economy

Sydney is Australia's main center of banking and business, especially computer and communications services. Tourism, education, entertainment, and trade are also important. Many large companies have headquarters in Sydney. Manufacturing is a smaller part of the city's economy.

History

The people called Aborigines have lived in Australia for many thousands of years. The British began settling in Australia in 1770. Great Britain's rulers decided to use the island as a prison colony, where they could send convicts to serve their sentences. Sydney was founded as a prison colony in 1788.

Sydney soon became a major trading center. It continued to be a home for British convicts until 1840. The city grew rapidly in the late 1800s. By 1930 more than 1 million people lived in the metropolitan area. Sydney and its economy continued to grow throughout the 1900s. Sydney hosted the Summer Olympic Games in 2000.

