

Australia



Australia is the smallest continent, but combines a wide variety of landscapes. These include deserts in its interior, hills and mountains, tropical rainforests, and heavily-populated coastal strips with long beaches and coral reefs off the shoreline. When the British founded the first settlement and named it Sydney in 1788, there were a few hundred thousand Aborigines living in the country.

AUSTRALIA FACTS

Population: 19.8 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003)

Capital: Canberra

Major language: English

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 76 years (men), 82 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Australian dollar = 100 cents

Main exports: Ores and metals; wool, food and live animals; fuels, transport machinery and equipment

Average annual income: US \$19,900 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .au

International dialing code: +61

The sport-mad Australians are known for their uncomplicated friendliness. This was particularly in evidence at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, which were dubbed the 'friendly Games'.



Flag Description: blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and a large seven-pointed star in the lower hoist-side quadrant known as the Commonwealth Star, representing the federation of the colonies of Australia in 1901; the star depicts one point for each of the six original states and one representing all of Australia's internal and external territories; the remaining half is a representation of the Southern Cross constellation in white with one small five-pointed star and four larger, seven-pointed stars. For more information go to : http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1250188.stm