

# Australia

Australia is an island continent located in the Southern Hemisphere. It is washed by three oceans and four seas. It is bounded on the north by the Torres Strait and the Timor Sea, on the east by the Coral and Tasman seas, and on the south and west by the Indian Ocean. The continent and the island of Tasmania and a number of smaller islands make up the Commonwealth of Australia.

It is independent federative state and the member of the Commonwealth headed by the British Queen. The population of the country is 18,000,000. The capital of the country is Canberra. Australia occupies 7,687,000 square kilometres and is almost as large as the continental US. It is twice the size of Western Europe. It is about 25 times larger than Britain and Ireland. It is the sixth largest country in the world.

Australia is the world's flattest and driest continent. It is the biggest island and the smallest continent in the world.

Australia's main regions are an ancient western plateau, which covers more than half of the continent; the central plains; the Great Dividing Range in the east, which rises to 2,230 m high (Mount Kosciusko); the Eastern coastal plain, where most of the large towns are; and the tropical northeast coast. The centre of the continent is taken by the deserts: Great Sandy Desert, Great Victoria Desert, Simpson Desert. There are few rivers and lakes in Australia. The best-known river is the Murray (2,600 km). The longest is the Darling (2,740 km).

Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, so the seasons are the other way round. Summer is from December to February, autumn is from March to May, winter is from June to August, and spring is from September to November. Most of the country weather is characterized by clear skies and low rainfall. The climate of Australia ranges from the tropical regions of the Northern Territory to the cool temperature conditions in the southeast (Victoria, Tasmania), where it frequently snows in winter. The tropical northern region has only two seasons: a hot, wet season with rains in February and March, and a warm, dry season.

Two territories in Australia Two

There are six states and two territories in Australia. Two territories and their capitals are Northern Territory (Darwin) and Australian Capital Territory (Canberra). The states and their capitals are New South Wales (Sydney), Western Australia (Perth), Tasmania (Hobart), the State of Victoria (Melbourne), South Australia (Adelaide) and Queensland (Brisbane). New South Wales is the first state in Australia. It has the biggest population, it is most industrialized and is a leader in agriculture. Its population is about 6 million people. Sixty per cent of it lives in its capital, Sydney.

The largest state is Western Australia, but it is very sparsely populated: its population is about 1.7 million people. Queensland is the second largest state. Its population is 3.2 million people. The state of Victoria is the smallest.

*Government.* Head of state is Queen of Britain. The Queen is represented by Governor General and six State Governors. Head of government is Prime Minister. Federal Parliament is a legislative body. It consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 76 senators, elected for 6-year term. The House of

Representatives consists of 148 members elected every three years. Each state and territory have their own local government. Each state is headed by a governor, has its executive, legislative and judicial systems, modelled on those of the federal government. Each territory has its own legislative assembly.

*Languages.* English and aboriginal languages are state languages. There is no aboriginal language which is spoken by all aborigines. There are many different tribal languages. But many aboriginal languages are dying nowadays, that's why an aboriginal language is taught as a second language to aboriginal children living in the cities.

*Economy.* Australia is one of the ten foremost countries in terms of its level of economic development. Agriculture and mining industry are highly developed. Australia exports beef, lamb, wool and wheat. The country is self-sufficient in food. It is rich in minerals such as lead, copper, iron ore, gold, silver, tin, uranium and others.

*Big cities* are Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Darwin.

## Vocabulary

<b>a number</b> — ряд	<b>legislative body</b> — законодатель- ный орган
<b>Commonwealth of Australia</b> — Австралийский Союз	<b>judicial</b> — юридический
<b>twice the size</b> — в два раза больше	<b>to be headed</b> — возглавляемый
<b>flat</b> — плоский	<b>a great variety</b> — большое разнообразие
<b>dry</b> — сухой	<b>aborigine</b> — абориген
<b>plateau</b> — плато	<b>tribal language</b> — язык племени
<b>plain</b> — равнина	<b>level</b> — уровень
<b>the Great Dividing Range</b> — Боль- шой Водораздельный хребет	<b>beef</b> — говядина
<b>coastal</b> — береговой	<b>lamb</b> — баранина
<b>desert</b> — пустыня	<b>wool</b> — шерсть
<b>hemisphere</b> — полушарие	<b>wheat</b> — пшеница
<b>skies</b> — небо	<b>self-sufficient</b> — самодостаточный
<b>rainfall</b> — количество осадков	<b>lead</b> — свинец
<b>wet</b> — влажный	<b>copper</b> — медь
<b>sparsely populated</b> — редконасе- ленный	<b>iron ore</b> — железная руда
<b>executive</b> — исполнительный	<b>tin</b> — олово
	<b>uranium</b> — уран