

# Australia

**Total area:** 7,686,850 sq km  
**Population:** 20 million  
**Capital:** Canberra

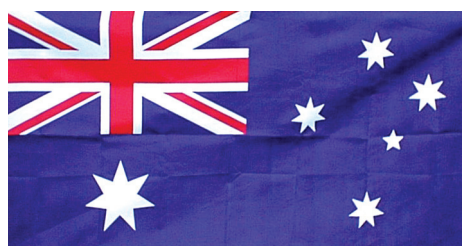
## Geography

Australia is a continent between the Indian and the Southern Pacific Ocean. It is the smallest continent in the world, but the world's sixth largest country. Much of the centre of Australia is flat, but there are some mountains of which Uluru (Ayers Rock) is the best known.

Australia's climate is quite different from the rest of the world. It is **the driest** inhabited continent on earth, and the center of the country has one of **the lowest rainfall rates** in the world. About **three-quarters** of the country can be described as arid or semi-arid.

## History

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were the original Australians. Different languages and cultures varied between the groups, **depending on** which part of the country they lived in. Beginning in 1606, European **explorers** discovered the huge island, but it wasn't until 1770, that British Captain James Cook made a scientific voyage to the South Pacific and mapped Australia's eastern coast. He was the first to **claim** the country for Britain. The British decided to use its new country as a **penal colony**, meaning they would keep prisoners there. In 1788, 11 ships carrying 1500 people, mostly **convicts**, arrived in what is now known as Sydney Harbor. Thousands of men and women were brought to Australia as prisoners until 1868, when the transports stopped. Unfortunately, **the new settlers disrupted**



The Australian flag is dark blue, with the flag of the United Kingdom in the upper left hand corner. The lower left hand corner **contains a seven pointed** star known as the Commonwealth Star. Each of the star's points represents one of the six **sovereign** states, and the seventh point represents all of the territories. The rest of the flag is a picture of the **Southern Cross constellation**, which can only be seen in the **southern hemisphere**. It has one small star and four larger ones.



**The Sydney Opera House is one of the most distinctive and famous 20th century buildings in the world. The building and its surroundings form a typical Australian image.**



**Aboriginal peoples lived in Australia before the arrival of Europeans.**

**the lifestyle of the indigenous people** and many became sick from new illnesses and died.

In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was founded and the six colonies (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) **federated** as sovereign states.

## Political system

A federation in 1901 united the six states under a single constitution. It now has a federal government that operates as a democratic, federal state system that **recognizes** the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II.

## People

About 70 per cent of the population lives in the country's large cities such as Melbourne and Sydney. English is the

common language, however more than 200 languages are spoken throughout the country.

## Holidays

Australia celebrates Australia Day on January 26, to remember the day the first British ships came to the country in 1788. At the end of April, the country celebrates Anzac Day, to remember Australian and New Zealand soldiers killed in battles.

The Queen's Birthday is celebrated on the second Monday of June in all of Australia except Western Australia, which celebrates it in late September.

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## vocabulary

**the driest** - nejsušší  
**the lowest rainfall rates** ['reɪnfɔ:l] - nejnižší srážky  
**three-quarters** ['kwɔ:təz] - tři čtvrtiny  
**depending on** [dɪ'pendɪŋ] - podle toho  
**explorer** [ɪk'splɔ:rə] - průzkumník, objevitel  
**to claim** [kleɪm] - nárokovat si  
**penal colony** ['pi:n(ə)l 'kɒləni] - trestanecká kolonie  
**convict** [kən'vɪkt] - odsouzenec  
**the new settlers disrupted the lifestyle of the indigenous people** ['setləz dɪs'rʌptɪd m'ɪdʒɪnəs] - noví osadníci narušili životní styl původních obyvatel  
**to federate** ['fɛdəreɪt] - spojit se, vytvořit federaci  
**to recognize** ['rekəɡnaɪz] - uznávat  
**to contain** [kən'teɪn] - obsahovat  
**seven pointed** - sedmicípá  
**sovereign** ['sɒvrɪn] - nezávislý, suverénní (stát)  
**the Southern Cross constellation** ['sʌð(ə)n kɒnstə'leɪʃ(ə)n] - souhvězdí Jižní kříž  
**southern hemisphere** ['sʌð(ə)n 'hemɪsfɪə] - jižní polokoule