SYDNEY, THE HARBOUR CITY

Sydney might not be the capital of Australia, but it is probably its best known city. It is the largest city in the country, the capital of the state of New South Wales and an important financial and cultural centre. Thanks to its unique location alongside a spectacular natural harbour on the hills surrounding Port Jackson, Sydney is often called the Harbour City.

The area of Sydney had long been inhabited by Aboriginal people before the British established their colony there in 1788. Sydney was used as a penal (prison) settlement from 1788 until 1850. Life in the prison was brutal. The prisoners, known as convicts, had to work hard and experienced cruel physical punishment for disobeying (not following) orders. After 1810 the city grew gradually freer. In the 1850s a new wave of people arrived in the city. Many of them were searching for gold in a region 150 kilometres from Sydney. They included the first Chinese immigrants, who opened small businesses in the city.

The city's population continued to grow in the 20th century, attracting people from all over the world. After the Second World War many immigrants from Europe found their new home in Sydney. In the 1970s this trend changed, with more people coming from Asia. This international population gives Sydney a very cosmopolitan atmosphere.

In the seventies, many famous Australian bands such as Midnight Oil, INXS and AC/DC started their careers in the city. In more recent years, Sydney has become a popular place to make films. Some Hollywood blockbusters (successful films) that were shot

there include *The Matrix, Mission Impossible II* and the *Star Wars* prequels.

For sports lovers, Sydney co-hosts "the Ashes" cricket tournament with Melbourne – a long-running competition between Australia and England. The Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race is another important international event. Locally, Rugby League is extremely popular and Sydney has several rugby teams. For many people, the most famous sporting event was the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Today, Sydney is a popular tourist destination. People come to see the landmarks and to enjoy the mild climate, relaxed atmosphere and truly cosmopolitan culture.
Ryan Scott (Australia)

1 Sydney is known for its beautiful harbour. The **Harbour Bridge**, which was completed in 1932, connects the south and north coast of Port Jackson. Another famous landmark on the waterfront is the **Sydney Opera House**. It is admired for its dramatic roof, which was designed by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon to resemble (look like) the sails of a ship. In 2007, the Sydney Opera House was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a masterpiece of 20th century architecture.

2 The famous **Bondi Beach**, the closest ocean beach to the centre of Sydney, is synonymous with Sydney's beach lifestyle. From mid-October to the beginning of November, the beach hosts an open-air free sculpture exhibition called "Sculpture by the Sea".

3 **The Rocks** are not a collection of rocks; this is one of the country's oldest suburbs. Once a poor district, it's now a tourist centre with many bars, markets and trendy shops.

4 The **Royal Botanical Gardens** are an ideal location for a picnic or a walk. In a special section you will find Wollemi Pines, one of the rarest plant species in the world. Moreover, you can see many tourist attractions from here, such as the Sydney Opera House and Government House, the seat of the Governor of New South Wales, which looks a little like a castle.