**Australia**

**Basic info**

The full name is The Commonwealth of Australia. The total area of this island continent is about **8 million km2**. Australia is located in Southeast Asia with Indian Ocean in the west, South Pacific in the east. The nearest Australian neighbours are also islands such as Indonesia, New Zealand, Fiji or Papua New Guinea. In the population of **22,7 million inhabitants** are 95 % of British and Irish origin. 1,5% is original Australians called Aborigines. It has a democratic federal system and head of state is **Queen Elizabeth II.** The capital is **Canberra** with 360 000 inhabitants. Australia is divided into **6 states** (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania) and 2 territories (The Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory. Official language is English.

**History**

History of Australia is dated since 17th century, but major importance had had sailing of **James Cook in 1770**. Since that time this continent was used as a penal colony for the convicts in British territories. In 1850s began gold rush, which caused civil disobedience due to mining licence fees. Australia as autonomous state was formed in 1901 and since 1907 is the member of Commonwealth.

**Geography, Climate and Nature**

Australia is the smallest continent but also **the 6th largest country** in the world. The landscape very various with highest point – **Mt. Kosciuszko** (2228m), which lies in Australian Alps and **the lowest point Lake Eyre** (-16m) in central Australian Lowlands. In Australia there are 4 great deserts (The Great Sandy Desert, Gibson Desert, Great Victoria Desert and Simpson Desert). There is also special desert with red sand – Ayers Rock, which is the largest piece of stone in the world. The climate in Australia varies from warm to subtropical and 80% of the land suffers from drought. Heavy rainfalls are only in the northeast, where are tropical jungles. Great Barrier Reef is world´s largest coral reef system and also the biggest single structure made by living organisms, visible from outer space. In Australia live many animals, which are not living anywhere else like **kangaroo, koala bear, bird emu or wombat**.

**Cities and population**

Around 85% of population live in urban areas along southeast coast. The biggest city is **Sydney with 4,6 million inhabitants**. Other big cities are **Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra or Darwin**. Density in Australia is **2,8 inhabitant per km2** – which means 233rd place in the world. Australian population is a great mixure of various nationalities such as Chinese, Italian, German, Greek or Indian. Indigenous inhabitants in Australia are Aborigines. During settlement over 250 000 killed.

**Economy**

GDP per capita is 5th in the world i.e. around 66 000 AUD. (GDP is gross domestic product per head). Currency is **Australian dollar (AUD)** and Australia is the 13th largest economy in the world. Despite only 9% of arable land is Australia exporter of products as **beef, lamb, wheat or wool**. There are large resources of **raw materials** in which is dominant **bauxite** ( 1/3 of world production), **iron ore or coal**.