



Stuttard Van Lines Country Guide for

Australia



Country Guides: Courtesy of Overseas Moving Network International (OMNI)

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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Indian/Pacific Oceans.

Time: Australia spans three time zones: 1. GMT + 10 (GMT + 11 October to March, except Queensland). 2. GMT + 9.5 (GMT + 10.5 October to March, except Northern Territory). 3. GMT + 8. Some States operate daylight saving time during the Australian summer. Clocks in these States are put forward by one hour in October and put back again in March.

Note: Addresses of Tourist Representatives for individual States can be found at the head of each State entry.

Australian High Commission in the UK

Australia House, The Strand, London WC2B 4LA, UK Tel: (020) 7379 4334 or (09065) 508 900 (24-hour immigration and citizenship enquiries; calls cost £1 per minute). Website: www.australia.org.uk Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700 (general); 0900-1100 (visa and immigration); 0930-1530 (passport and consular).

Tourism Australia in the UK

Australia Centre, Australia House, 6th Floor, Melbourne Place, The Strand, London WC2B 4LG, UK **Tel:** (020) 7438 4601 (trade enquiries only). Website: www.australia.com Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1730.

Embassy of the Commonwealth of Australia in the USA

1601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA Tel: (202) 797 3000 or (888) 990 8888 (visa information line; toll-free in the USA). Website: www.austemb.org All visa enquiries should be directed to the Embassy in Washington, DC or Consulate General in Los Angeles.

Tourism Australia in the USA

6100 Center Drive, Suite 1150, Los Angeles, CA 90045, USA Tel: (310) 695 3200. Website: www.australia.com



2 OVERVIEW

'Outback and beyond'

Australia has come a long way since the days when Captain Cook stumbled ashore to find an aboriginal way of life that went back for tens of thousands of years. Even the outdated images of Crocodile Dundee types swilling beer around the Opera House have long been replaced by a forward-looking attitude that embraces Australia's Pacific Rim location and a growing reputation for first-class cuisine and high fashion notable in its cosmopolitan, twenty-first-century metropolis, Sydney. The high quality of life in the country's effervescent largest city is enhanced by one of the world's great harbours, but there is far more to Australia city-wise than just Sydney. Its big rival, Melbourne, is blessed with a more European ambience, with trams and pavement cafes as much a part of the experience as the buzzing sports and cultural scene, while coastal Darwin, Perth and Brisbane offer other worlds to explore. Away from the cities, Australia's stunningly diverse landscape boasts everything from vast, barren deserts, where kangaroo and emu bound through the arid surroundings, to tropical rainforests, rugged mountains and pristine beaches, such as world-class Bondi, Cable Beach and Whitehaven. Then, of course, there's the epic monolith of Uluru (Ayers Rock) and the Great Barrier Reef, where another undiscovered world opens up beneath the surf. With tourist numbers up and interest in Australia never higher, this is the perfect time to bury those anachronistic Crocodile Dundee cliches and discover the real Australia.

Robin McKelvie

3 GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 7,692,030 sq km (2,969,909 sq miles).

Population: 20.1 million (estimate 2005).

Population Density: 2.54 per sq km.

Capital: Canberra. Population: 309,900 (official estimate 1999).

GEOGRAPHY: Australia is bounded by the Arafura Sea and Timor Seas to the north, the Coral and Tasman Seas of the South Pacific to the east, the Southern Ocean to the south, and the Indian Ocean to the west. Its coastline covers 36,738km (22,814 miles). Most of the population has settled along the eastern and south-eastern coastal strip. Australia is the smallest continent (and the largest island) in the world. About 40 per cent of the continent is within the tropics and Australia is almost the same size as the mainland of the United States of America. The terrain is extremely varied, ranging from tortured red desert to lush green rainforest. Australia's beaches and surfing are world-renowned, while the country is also rich in reminders of its mysterious past. These range from prehistoric Aboriginal art to Victorian colonial architecture. The landscape consists mainly of a low plateau mottled with lakes and rivers and skirted with coastal mountain ranges, highest in the east with the Great Dividing Range. There are rainforests in the far northeast (Cape York Peninsula). The southeast is a huge fertile plain. Further to the north lies the enormous Great Barrier Reef, a 2000km (1200 mile) strip of coral that covers a total area of 345,000 sq km. Although Australia is the driest land on Earth, it nevertheless has enormous



snowfields the size of Switzerland. There are vast mineral deposits. More detailed geographical descriptions of each State can be found in the individual State entries.

Government: Constitutional Monarchy. Gained independence from the UK in 1901. Head of State: HM Queen Elizabeth II, represented locally by Governor-General Michael Jefferey since 2003. Head of Government: Prime Minister John Winston Howard since 1996. All individual States and Territories have their own autonomous legislative, executive and judicial systems (though certain powers remain under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government). Recent history: In March 1996, tiring of Labour, the Australian public turned to the Liberal Party led by John Howard. Howard's centre-right coalition was returned to office for a third term at the 2004 general election. Aboriginal issues continue to affect Australian Governments. Since Howard's re-appointment, race riots have already occurred. The country's foreign policy is now geared to the strengthening of economic and political links with the countries of the Asian Pacific Rim and the affirmation of the existing links with the USA (exemplified by Australia's participation in the 2003 invasion of Iraq). Under the Howard Governments, migration has also come to dominate the Australian political agenda. The hard line which Howard set down has been rigorously pursued. The Government's hard line was reinforced by the October 2002 bomb in Bali, which killed 200 mostly Australian tourists. This brought Australia to the centre of the US-inspired global 'war against terrorism'. The bicameral Federal Parliament holds legislative power. Both chambers are elected by universal adult suffrage. The 76-member Senate serves a six-year term, while the House of Representatives is voted in every three years. The Prime Minister is the leader of the largest party in the Lower House and wields executive power at the head of a Cabinet of Ministers. The Queen of England is formally head of state, represented locally by a Governor General. Each of Australia's six states also has its own directly elected legislature, enjoying considerable autonomy in areas such as health, education and transport policy.

Language: The official language is English. Many other languages are retained by minorities, including Italian, German, Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese dialects and Aboriginal languages.

Religion: 26 per cent Roman Catholic, 24 per cent Protestant and smaller minorities of all other major religions.

Electricity: 220/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Three-pin plugs are in use, however sockets are different from those found in most countries and an adaptor socket may be needed. Outlets for 110 volts for small appliances are found in most hotels.

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS: A largely informal atmosphere prevails; shaking hands is the customary greeting. Casual wear is worn everywhere except in the most exclusive restaurants, social gatherings and important business meetings. Most restaurants forbid smoking.

Passport/Visa

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	Yes	No
Australian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canadian	Yes	Yes	No
USA	Yes	Yes	No
OtherEU	Yes	Yes	No
Japanese	Yes	Yes	No



Note: Australian visa regulations (including visa application charges) change from time to time. The information provided below is valid at the time of publication, but visitors should check that this information is still current by visiting the Department of Immigration online (website: www.immi.gov.au) or by calling the Australian Immigration and Citizenship 24-hour Information Service (tel: (09065) 508 900; calls cost £1 per minute).

PASSPORTS: Valid passport required by all.

VISAS: Required by all except the following: (a) nationals of New Zealand; (b) nationals of the following countries do not need to obtain a transit visa before travel if they are continuing their journey to a third country (and they hold confirmation of booking and documentation to enter country) within eight hours of arriving in Australia: Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Hong Kong (SAR or BNO passport holders), Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Korea (Rep), Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Nauru, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Samoa (Western), San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan (if issued by the authorities in Taiwan), Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, UK (and its colonies), USA, Vanuatu, Vatican City and Zimbabwe. All other nationals must obtain a transit visa before travel if intending to remain in Australia no longer than 72 hours and a 'stopover' is intended. Transit visas are free of charge. Note: Not all airports remain open all night; travellers should check with the airline.

Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) visas: The ETA is an electronically stored authority for travel to Australia that allows people from certain countries (see below) to visit Australia for up to three months for tourism, short-term business or elective study purposes. An ETA is invisible and therefore will not show up in your passport. ETAs (Visitor and Business Short Validity ETAs only) may, for some nationals, be obtained online from the main Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA; website: www.eta.immi.gov.au) or from over 10,000 travel agents and airline offices throughout the UK. Please note, the Australian High Commission in London does not offer an automatic ETA service. Only nationals of the following countries are eligible for an ETA: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, British Overseas Territories, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea (Rep), Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan (China), UK, USA and Vatican City.

Types of ETA and cost: Tourist Visit/Business Visit (short-term): Free of charge. Note: A service fee of A\$20 is charged when applying for an ETA online through the DIMIA ETA website. Some travel agents and airlines issuing ETAs also charge a processing fee.

Validity of ETAs: Tourist Visit ETAs are valid for 12 months from date of issue (or until the passport expires, whichever comes first) and permit multiple entries into Australia for a stay of up to three months on each visit. Short-term Business Visit ETAs are valid for 12 months from date of issue (or until the passport expires, whichever comes first) for a single entry of up to three months. Long-term Business Visit ETAs are valid for 10 years (or the life of the passport) and permit multiple entries for a stay of up to three months for each visit.



Other types of visa and cost: Visitors not eligible for an ETA, or seeking a longer stay than an ETA offers, may apply for Tourist Visit (Non ETA) and Temporary Business Short-stay and Temporary Business Long-stay (Non ETA) visas. Tourist Visit and Business Short-stay visas cost £35; Business Long-stay visas cost £70. There are also student visas available, plus sponsored family visitor visas; please enquire at the Australian High Commission. Visa fees are generally adjusted on 1 January and 1 July each year.

Validity of non-ETA visas: For non-ETA visas, the validity varies according to the type of visa, the purpose of the trip and the validity of the passport. The validity will be stated on the visa label in your passport.

Application to: ETA: Authorised travel agents or airlines, by telephone or, in some cases, online through Australian Visas Ltd (see above). Non-ETA: Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates; see Passport/Visa Information. There is a Tourist Short-Stay visa available online for passport holders of Bahrain, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the United Arab Emirates.

Application requirements: ETA: (a) Valid passport. (b) Fee (if applicable). (c) Completed application form giving details of passport number and expiry date, airline, names of travellers etc (if applying by post). Tourist Visitor (Non ETA): (a) Completed application form. Application forms for tourist and business visitor visas can be downloaded from the Department of Immigration (website: www.immi.gov.au). (b) An A4 stamped, self-addressed, registered envelope for return of passport. (c) Valid passport with two unused visa pages. (d) Fee (payable by credit or debit card, American Express and Diners Card are not accepted). (e) One or more recent passport photos as required. (f) Evidence of sufficient funds. (g) Tourists over the age of 70 require a medical certificate. Business Visitor (Non ETA): (a)-(f) and, (g) Applicant must provide proof of sponsorship and business interest. Business visa forms are also available from Australian Outlook, 3 Buckhurst Road, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex TN40 1QF, UK. Transit: (a) Photo (signed on back), itinerary, onward booking, correct documentation to onward country and completed incoming passenger card. Note: (a) Prior to lodging an application, visitors should confirm the current visa fees at www.immi.gov.au. (b) All travellers to Australia, except Australian citizens and permanent residents, must satisfy health and character requirements. (c) All travellers, including minors travelling on a parent's passport, require their own visa or ETA. (d) Students must, before commencing study, pass a chest X-ray examination, carried out by a qualified radiologist.

Working days required: ETA: When issued through DIMIA's ETA website (website: www.eta.immi.gov.au), or through travel agents or airline offices, ETAs are usually processed and valid immediately or within three working days. Non-ETA: 10-15 working days.

Temporary residence: Applicants for temporary residence, working holidays and long-stay business visits to Australia should contact DIMIA online (website: www.immi.gov.au) or the High Commission online (website: www.australia.org.uk).

Passport/Visa Information: Australian High Commission in the UK Australia House, The Strand, London WC2B 4LA, UK Tel: (020) 7379 4334 or (09065) 508 900 (24-hour immigration and citizenship enquiries; calls cost £1 per minute). Website: www.australia.org.uk Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700 (general); 0900-1100 (visa and immigration); 0930-1530 (passport and consular). Embassy of the Commonwealth of Australia in the USA 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA Tel: (202) 797 3000 or (888) 990 8888 (visa information line; toll-free in the USA). Website: www.austemb.org All visa enquiries should be



directed to the Embassy in Washington, DC or Consulate General in Los Angeles. Department of Immigration Website: www.immi.gov.au

4 MONEY

Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD; symbol A\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of A\$100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of A\$2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 cents.

Currency exchange: Exchange facilities are available for all incoming and outgoing flights at all international airports in Australia. International-class hotels will exchange major currencies for guests. It is recommended that visitors change money at the airport or at city banks.

Credit & debit cards: Major credit cards are accepted. Use may be restricted in small towns and outback areas. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Traveller's cheques: Widely accepted in major currencies at banks or large hotels. However, some banks may charge a fee for cashing traveller's cheques. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in a major currency.

Currency restrictions: Export and import of coins/notes in Australian or foreign currency above A\$10,000 must be declared to customs at the port of entry or departure. Export of local currency above A\$2000 must have reserve bank approval.

Exchange rate indicators

Date At time of publishing £1.00=A\$2.81 \$1.00=A\$1.33

Banking hours: Mon-Thurs 0930-1600, Fri 0930-1700. These hours may vary slightly throughout the country.

5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into Australia by persons over 18 years of age without **incurring customs duty**: 250 cigarettes or 250g of tobacco or cigars; 2.25l of any alcoholic liquor; articles for personal hygiene and clothing, not including perfume or fur apparel; other goods to a value of A\$900 (A\$450 if under 18).

Prohibited items: There are very strict regulations against the import of non-prescribed drugs, weapons, firearms, wildlife, domestic animals and foodstuffs (including meat, poultry and dairy; plants or parts of plants [including fruit, nuts and seeds]; animal products [including wool, skins and eggs] and any equipment used with domestic animals) and other potential sources of disease and pestilence (such as vaccines or viruses). There are severe penalties for drug trafficking. For further details on customs regulations, contact the information centre of the Australian Customs Service (tel: (2) 6275 6666 (from outside Australia) or (1 300) 363 263 (from anywhere in Australia); website: www.customs.gov.au). Customs information booklets can be obtained from the Australian High Commission or Embassy.



6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Jan 26 Australia Day. Apr 14-17 Easter. Apr 25 ANZAC Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Jan 1 2007 New Year's Day. Jan 26 Australia Day. Apr 6-9 Easter. Apr 25 ANZAC Day.

Note: Nationwide holidays only. If these dates fall on a Saturday or Sunday, a day may be given in lieu. There are numerous individual State holidays see individual state sections for details.

7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
Yellow Fever	No	1
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	No	N/A
Malaria	No	N/A

1: A yellow fever certificate is required from travellers over one year of age arriving within six days of leaving or transiting countries with infected areas.

Food & drink: Standards of hygiene in food preparation are very high. Milk is pasteurised and meat and vegetables are considered safe to eat. Care should be taken, however, when sampling 'bush tucker' in outback areas as some insects and fauna are highly poisonous unless properly cooked.

Other risks: Occasional outbreaks of dengue fever and Ross River fever have occurred in rural areas in northern Australia in recent years. There have been reports of Murray Valley encephalitis in the Northern Territory. Inland, there are suggestions that this risk extends from Western Australia to Queensland. Corals, jellyfish and fresh water crocodiles may prove a hazard to the bather, and heat is a hazard in the northern and central parts of Australia. Insectivorous and fruit-eating bats have been found to harbour a virus related to the rabies virus and should be avoided. Venomous snakes and spiders exist throughout Australia and can be extremely dangerous. Medical assistance should be sought immediately if bitten.

Note: There are strict customs and health controls on entering and leaving the country, and Australian law can inflict severe penalties on health infringements. Australia reserves the right to isolate any person who arrives without the required certificates. Carriers are responsible for expenses of isolation of all travellers arriving by air who are not in possession of the required vaccination certificates. All arriving aircraft are sprayed before disembarkation to prevent the spread of disease-carrying insects.

Health care: Doctors and dentists are highly trained and hospitals are well equipped. There is a reciprocal health agreement with the UK, in emergencies only, which allows residents from the UK free hospital treatment. Passport or proof of UK residence, such as an NHS medical card or a UK driving licence, must be shown. Prescribed medicines, ambulances and treatment at some doctors' surgeries must be paid for. Personal insurance for illness and accidents is highly



recommended for all visitors. Those wishing to benefit from the agreement should enrol at a Medicare office; this can be done after treatment.

Travel - International

AIR: The national airline is Qantas (QF) (website: www.qantas.com.au). About 25 international airlines fly to Australia.

Approximate flight times: From London to Adelaide is 24 hours 25 minutes, to Brisbane is 23 hours 25 minutes, to Cairns is 25 hours 45 minutes, to Darwin is 21 hours 25 minutes, to Melbourne is 23 hours, to Perth is 21 hours 50 minutes and to Sydney is 23 hours 30 minutes. From Los Angeles to Sydney is 13 hours 30 minutes. From New York to Perth is 30 hours and to Sydney is 20 hours. From Singapore to Sydney is eight hours and to Perth is five hours.

Main airports: Sydney Airport (SYD) (Kingsford Smith) (website: www.sydneyairport.com) is 8km (5 miles) south of the city (travel time 30 minutes). To/from the airport: Airport Link connects the airport to Sydney Central Station (travel time 13 minutes). Coaches meet all incoming international and domestic flights, departing every 20 to 30 minutes. There are many courtesy guest shuttles; enquire at hotel when booking is made. The international terminal is separate from the domestic terminal. Passengers may be set down at city airline terminals and some city hotels, motels and guest houses on request. There are also buses and taxis. Adelaide Airport (ADL) (website: www.aal.com.au) is 6km (4 miles) west of the city (travel time 30 minutes). A new terminal is currently under construction. To/from the airport: Coaches meet all international and domestic flights. Buses and taxis are available to the city and hotels. Melbourne Airport (MEL) (Tullamarine) (website: www.melbourne-airport.com.au) is 22km (14 miles) northwest of the city (travel time 30 minutes). To/from the airport: Skybus Coach (24 hours) or taxis are available to the city centre. There are also regional bus links from the airport. Perth Airport (PER) (website: www.perthairport.com) is 12km (7 miles) northeast of the city (travel time 25 minutes). There are separate international and domestic terminals. To/from the airport: Airport buses meet international and domestic flights. Taxis are available. Brisbane Airport (BNE) (website: www.bne.com.au) is 13km (8 miles) northeast of the city (travel time 35 minutes). To/from the airport: Coach services are available to the city, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and major hotels. Coaches meet all international flights. A rail link between the airport and the city was introduced in 2001. Taxis are also available. Darwin Airport (DRW) (website: www.darwinairport.com.au) is 13km (8 miles) northeast of the city (travel time 20 minutes). To/from the airport: Coaches and taxis meet all incoming international daytime flights. Hobart Airport (HBA) (website: www.hobartairpt.com.au) is 16km (10 miles) east of the city (travel time 25 minutes). To/from the airport: Coaches meet all incoming flights. Buses and taxis are available to the city. Cairns Airport (CNS) is 8km (5 miles) north of the city (travel time 10 minutes). To/from the airport: Coaches meet all incoming flights. There is also a shuttle taxi service, limousines, car hire and taxis. Canberra Airport (CBR) (website: www.canberraairport.com.au) is 8km (5 miles) east of Canberra (travel time 15 minutes). To/from the airport: Taxis and shuttle buses are available to the city centre. Facilities: All airports have a duty free shop, bank/bureau de change, restaurant/bar, tourist information kiosk, car hire and taxi stand; these will almost always be available on arrival and departure of international flights.

Departure tax: None.

SEA: Main ports: Cruise liners dock at Sydney (website: www.sydneyports.com.au), Melbourne (website: www.portofmelbourne.com), Hobart (website: www.hpc.com.au), Perth (Port of Fremantle) (website: www.fremantleports.com.au), Adelaide and Brisbane (website: www.portbris.com.au).



Travel - Internal

Note: Australia is a vast country and journeys should be planned, especially if travelling to remote areas. Health precautions should be taken when travelling in the Northern Territory and Queensland.

AIR: Australians rely on aviation to get from place to place as inhabitants of smaller countries rely on trains and buses. The network of scheduled services extends to more than 150,000km (95,000 miles) and covers the whole continent. Both first-class and second-class service is available, with meals and hostess service on many routes. Recent deregulation of Australia's domestic airlines means that flight services are more competitively priced. Aircraft can be chartered by pilots who pass a written examination on Australian air regulations and have their licences validated for private operations within Australia. The major domestic airlines are: Jetstar Airways (website: www.jetstar.com.au), Qantas (website: www.qantas.com.au) and Virgin Blue (website: www.virginblue.com.au), which serve the major resorts and cities throughout Australia. In addition, Rex Regional Express (website: www.rex.com.au) operate throughout New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria; Air North (website: www.airnorth.com.au) operate throughout the Northern Territory; Macair Airlines (website: www.macair.com.au) operate throughout Queensland; Skywest (website: www.skywest.com.au) operate throughout Western Australia and several small airlines operate to the islands off Tasmania (see Tasmania section). Nearly all the domestic airlines operate special deals or air passes at greatly reduced prices.

Domestic airports: There are a great number of airports and landing strips throughout the country, including airports in all capital cities and regional centres such as Alice Springs, Launceston and Uluru (Ayers Rock).

SEA/RIVER: There are 36,738km (22,600 miles) of coastline and many lakes, inland waterways and inlets, all of which can be used for touring by boat. From paddle steamers along the Murray River to deep-sea fishing cruisers along the vast Barrier Reef, all are available for charter or passenger booking. Most tour operators also handle shipping cruises. The Spirit of Tasmania is an overnight car-ferry service linking Melbourne with Tasmania daily (website: www.spiritoftasmania.com.au).

RAIL: Over 40,000km (24,850 miles) of track cover the country. Due to the vastness of the country, internal flights are a preferred option for travelling long distances, particularly as rail travel can be slow and relatively expensive. For further information on rail transport within the different States, see the individual State entries or contact Rail Australia (website: www.railaustralia.com.au). Two services span the continent from coast to coast. The twice-weekly Indian Pacific travels 4350km (2704 miles) from Sydney on the east coast to Perth on the west coast, via Adelaide. The journey takes three days and three nights, crossing the Nullarbar Plain on the famous 478km (297 mile) stretch of straight track, the longest in the world. The Ghan travels 2979km (1891 miles) between Adelaide and Darwin, via Alice Springs. The service runs weekly in each direction and takes two nights. Both trains are fully air conditioned and soundproofed, with first- and second-class sleeping cars, a lounge car, bars and good restaurant facilities. Other express service links (not always daily) from the state capitals are as follows: The Canberra Monaro Express links Canberra with Sydney in four or five hours. The XPT Express runs from Melbourne to Brisbane via Canberra and Sydney. The Sunlander and the Queenslander link Brisbane with Cairns (31 hours). The Prospector links Perth with Kalgoorlie and this is one of Australia's fastest trains (six to seven hours). The Spirit of the Outback runs Brisbane to Longreach via Rockhampton. There are also a number of scenic rail journeys available, including



the Kuranda Scenic Railway that links Cairns with Kuranda via a 34km- (14 mile-) climb through tropical rainforest; the Great South Pacific Express service along the East Coast from Sydney to Cairns via Brisbane has been temporarily suspended. Several routes have motor-rail facilities. Long-distance trains are air conditioned and have excellent catering facilities and showers. Reservations for seats and sleeping berths are essential on all long-distance trains and are accepted up to six months in advance. Luggage allowance: All interstate rail passengers are allowed 50kg (111lb). Medium-sized suitcases and hand luggage can be placed in the passengers' compartments. Large suitcases must be carried in the guard's van and checked in 30 minutes prior to departure. Sleeping berths: Single and twin apartments are available for a surcharge on most inter-capital overnight services. All 'Twinettes' have two sleeping berths and wash basin. Twinettes are available either first-class or holiday-class; the first also offer individual showers. 'Roomette' (single compartment) cars have showers at the end of each car. These are first-class only. Cheap fares: Unlimited travel, valid for 14, 21 and 30 days, with seven-day extensions available, is available with an Austrailpass, which must be purchased outside Australia, and can only be used by non-Australian passport holders. Only economy-class passes are available. Each State operator offers its own Austrailpass scheme. The Austrail Flexi-Pass is valid for eight, 15, 22 and 29 days within a six-month period, although it cannot be used on the Ghan or the Indian Pacific. The pass only offers economy-class accommodation. Both the Austrailpass and the Austrail Flexi-Pass must be purchased outside of Australia. The East Coast Discovery Pass offers six months' travel on the eastern coast. An Austrailpass does not include meal or sleeping berth charges. The passes must be used within 12 months of issue. There is also a Backpacker Rail Pass and a Great Southern Railway Pass available.

Representative in the UK: Rail Australia, c/o International Rail Limited, Chase House, Gilbert Street, Ropley, Hampshire SO24 0BY (tel: (0870) 751 5000; website: www.international-rail.com). Most major tourist attractions can be reached by train; tickets for multiple destinations can be purchased from travel agents outside Australia.

ROAD: Traffic drives on the left. Road signs are international. The speed limit is 60kph (35mph) in cities and towns in most states but 50kph (31mph) in Victoria and Western Australia, 50kph/31mph in all suburban areas and 80-110kph (50-68mph) on country roads and highways unless signs indicate otherwise. Seat belts must be worn at all times and driving licences must be in the driver's possession when driving. Driving off major highways in the outback becomes more difficult between November and February because of summer rain, as many roads are little more than dirt tracks. Road travel is best between April and October. Distances between towns can be considerable, and apart from ensuring that all vehicles are in peak condition, it is advisable to carry spare water, petrol and equipment. Travellers are advised to check with local Automobile Associations before departure in order to obtain up-to-date information on road and weather conditions. Bicycle helmets must be worn by all cyclists.

Coach: Major cities are linked by an excellent national coach system, run by Greyhound Pioneer (website: www.greyhound.com.au). Tasmania also has its own coach service, Tasmanian Redline Coaches (website: www.redlinecoaches.com.au). There are numerous other companies operating State and Interstate services. The main coach express routes are: Sydney to Adelaide, Melbourne (inland), Brisbane and Canberra; Canberra to Melbourne; Melbourne to Adelaide; Adelaide to Alice Springs, Perth and Brisbane; Darwin to Alice Springs, Cairns, Perth and Kakadu; Alice Springs to Ayers Rock; Cairns to Brisbane; Brisbane to Sydney (inland and coastal) and Melbourne. Coach passes are available for travel on a variety of routes for between seven days and one year, such as the All Australian, the Sunseeker, the Aussie Reef & Rock, the Coast to Coast etc. The Aussie Kilometre Pass allows you to purchase your travel in kilometres and then travel in any direction on the national network to the distance purchased. It is advisable to purchase these passes before departure from country of origin. Coaches are one of the cheapest



ways to travel around Australia, as well as one of the most comfortable, with air conditioning, big adjustable seats and on-board bathrooms; some also have television and the latest videos.

Car Hire: Available at all major airports and major hotels to those over 21 years old. Documentation: An International Driving Permit is required by nationals of countries whose official language is not English. International, foreign or national driving permits are generally valid for three months. An International Driving Permit is only valid in conjunction with a valid national licence. Permits must be carried at all times while driving.

URBAN: Comprehensive public transport systems are provided in all the main towns. The State capitals have suburban rail networks, those in Sydney and Melbourne being particularly extensive, and trams run in Melbourne and Adelaide. Meter-operated taxis can be found in all major cities and towns. There is a minimum 'flagfall charge' and then a charge for the distance travelled. Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped. A small additional payment may be required for luggage and telephone bookings. Some taxis accept payment by credit card. For further details, see individual State entries.

TRAVEL TIMES: The following chart gives approximate travel times (in hours and minutes) from Sydney to other major cities in Australia. Air Rail Coach
Adelaide 1.40 25.00 22.00 Brisbane 1.20 15.00 15.00 Darwin 5.00-
92.50 Melbourne 1.10 10.00 14.00 Perth 4.00 65.00 56.00

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS/MOTELS: Every State has a selection of hotels run by well-known and established international chains. More authentic accommodation can be found outside the cities. The highways out of the State cities are lined with good quality motels offering self-contained family units, and often an in-house restaurant service. Most hotels and motels provide rooms with telephones, private shower and/or bath, toilet, small fridge and tea- and coffee-making facilities. The principal difference between a hotel and a motel in Australia is that a hotel must, by law, provide a public bar among its facilities. For this reason, there are many motels which are hotels in all but name, offering an excellent standard of comfort and service but preferring to reserve their bar exclusively for the use of their guests, rather than for the public at large. Hotels and motels in Australia are graded in a star rating system by the Australian Automobile Clubs. In most cases, different rooms will be offered at different rates depending on their size, aspect or facilities; this is particularly true of seafront hotels. In general, hotels in cities cost more than their rural counterparts. Grading definitions range from 5-star (highest) to 1-star (lowest). Some hotels are graded with an additional open or hollow star. This indicates a slightly higher grade of facilities than the normal facilities for its classification.

GUEST HOUSES/HOMESTAY/SELF-CATERING AND FARMSTAY HOLIDAYS: Service apartments and self-contained flats are available at main tourist resorts, especially along the east coast. Many of the less accessible areas have accommodation on farmsteads, from guest houses on the huge sheep stations to basic staff quarters on smaller arable farms, giving an insight into an alternative aspect of Australian life. Bed & breakfast in private home accommodation is available throughout Australia, often at very low prices. Some companies offering budget bed & breakfast also offer tourist and general information services. Some hotels have self-catering apartments. Guest houses are not allowed to serve alcohol. Holiday units and apartments are classified according to a 5-star system, with criteria comparable to those for hotels and motels above.



COUNTRY PUB ACCOMMODATION: These offer drinks, meals and simple but comfortable accommodation for travellers. Pubs tend to be easy to find and advance reservations are not always necessary. However, standards may vary according to the type of pub and its location.

CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION: University colleges and halls of residence offer inexpensive accommodation for both students and non-students during the vacation periods (May, August and late November to late February).

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Camping tours cover most of the country, especially the wilder areas. Participants generally join a group under an experienced guide team and everyone helps with cooking, washing, etc. All equipment and transport is supplied; some also provide portable showers. More rugged tours with Land Rovers are available offering limited facilities, although company equipment is again provided with a driver/guide and cook. Campsite information is available from all major tourist centres. Camping is available in caravan parks, campsites, national parks and other areas. It is illegal to camp in undesignated areas. With the constant threat of bushfire, a policy of 'no open fires' will sometimes be in force, especially during Fire Danger Season (Dec 1-Apr 30); check with local authorities for more information. A number of companies can arrange motor camper rentals, with a range of fully-equipped vehicles. Full details can be obtained from Tourism Australia (see Top Things To Do). Caravan parks are classified according to a 5-star system with criteria similar to those for hotels and motels above. Accommodation is also available at many of Australia's sheep stations.

YOUTH HOSTELS: Found throughout the country, but there are greater concentrations near cities and densely populated areas. Only YHA hostels meet Hostelling International standards.

Accommodation information: Australian Hotels Association National Press Club Building, Level 2, 16 National Circuit, Barton, ACT 2600, Australia Tel: (2) 6273 4007. Website: www.aha.org.au Australian Hotels Association Level 5, 8 Quay Street (Prince Centre), Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia Tel: (2) 9281 6922. Website: www.aha-nsw.asn.au Australian Bed & Breakfast Council Website: www.australianbedandbreakfast.com.au Australian Youth Hostel Association National Office, PO Box 314, Camperdown, NSW 1450, Australia Tel: (2) 9565 1699. Website: www.yha.com.au VIP Backpacker Resorts of Australia Website: www.backpackers.com Nomads Website: www.nomadsworld.com

Introduction

Australia's main tourist attractions are Sydney, the Great Barrier Reef, the Gold Coast of Queensland and Uluru (Ayers Rock), in the rugged outback of the Northern Territory. Other attractions in the continent range from the wild flowers of Western Australia to the vineyards of the Barossa Valley, and from Western Australia's ghost towns to the remarkable wildlife on the island of Tasmania. It is possible to visit the relatively undisturbed Aboriginal communities on Bathurst and Melville Islands, about 80km (50 miles) north of Darwin, providing valuable insights into the continent's ancient indigenous culture. The Australian coastline has thousands of miles of beautiful beaches. Information on resorts, excursions, places of interest, sports and activities within Australia is given under each individual State section.

NORFOLK ISLAND: Situated 1700km (1056 miles) off the east coast of Australia, Norfolk Island is not part of any State but is instead administered by the Australian government. The island is best reached by air from Sydney. Its history as one of the world's harshest penal colonies has left the island with some of Australia's finest Georgian colonial architecture. Many of the island's small population are directly related to the mutineers of HMS Bounty who settled in the area. A variety



of accommodation is available. There is excellent bushwalking and the island boasts 40 different plants and animals that are unique to the island.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

The range of activity, adventure and special interest holidays is almost limitless. Detailed information is given under each individual State section. Below is a brief outline with practical information on some of the most popular sports and activities available in Australia. Further trade information can also be obtained via Tourism Australia (see Contact Addresses section).

Bushwalking: This is an Australian term coined in the 1920s to distinguish serious walkers from casual hikers. Australia's wilderness areas, national parks and vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside make bushwalking one of the country's most popular pastimes. Maps are widely available, either from the many guide books on offer or from State government offices. Fires are a threat during summer, and walkers must respect fire ban warnings. Outdoor clothing and equipment tends to be expensive. Each State and Territory has its own independent parks authority.

Self-drive tours: Three-quarters of Australia's land mass lies in the outback. 4-wheel-drive vehicles are a favourite means of transport and there are a number of scenic highways and roads leading to the often remote outback destinations. On such journeys, it is not unusual to drive for hours without seeing another person. It is advisable to take extra water and petrol in case of emergencies.

Diving: With 36,735km (22,826 miles) of coastline, Australia provides outstanding opportunities for watersports, particularly diving and snorkelling. The tropical waters along the 2500km (1500 miles) of the Great Barrier Reef and its multitude of tiny islands form one of the world's best-known diving locations. Requirements for dive courses (which are widely available) vary from state to state, but generally, beginners must be at least 12 years of age and have a medical certificate of fitness in accordance with Australian standards. To obtain the basic scuba diving qualification, visitors can participate in either a one-week full-time course or a two-week part-time course; tailor-made courses are also available. Certified divers must be able to produce their international certification card and log book for solo dives, unless they participate in fully supervised dives with a professional. For further information, contact Dive Directory, PO Box 5264, Cairns, Queensland 4870 (tel: (7) 4046 7304; fax: (7) 4031 1210; e-mail: info@div-australia.com).

Fishing: The seas off the east coast are reputed to be one of the world's best game-fishing areas, and the waters off north Western Australia are also particularly abundant. The area north of Queensland is well-known for marlin fishing while the streams in the high country in New South Wales and Victoria are very good for trout. Newspapers and radio have comprehensive tide and fishing reports. Fishing licence requirements vary from state to state. For further information, contact the Australian Recreational and Sport Fishing Industry Confederation, PO Box 854, Dickson ACT 2602 (tel: (2) 6257 1997; fax: (2) 6247 9314; e-mail: recfish@sportnet.com.au; website: www.recfishoz.com).

Surfing: There are surfing schools all over the country, offering instruction for beginners or advanced surfers. For details, contact Surfing Australia, PO Box 1613, Kingscliff, NSW 2487 (tel: (2) 6674 9888; e-mail: crystalj@surfingaustralia.com; website: www.surfingaustralia.com).



Golf: Facilities are excellent and the settings often spectacular. For further details and a copy of the Australian Golfers Handbook, contact the Australian Golf Union, 153-155 Cecil Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205 (tel: (3) 9699 7944; fax: (3) 9690 8510; website: www.agu.org.au).

Skiing: Possible from May to mid-October in the mountainous areas of the southeast. The best skiing slopes are located on the eastern mountain ranges on the state borders of New South Wales and Victoria. For further information, contact Ski & Snowboard Australia, Level 1, 1 Cobden Street, South Melbourne 3205 (tel: (3) 9696 2344; fax: (3) 9696 2399; e-mail: info@skiandsnowboardaustralia.org.au; website: www.skiingaustralia.org.au).

Special interest holidays: A huge range of these are available farming, flying and gliding, ballooning, cycling, rafting, pony trekking, gemstone fossicking, bungee jumping, camel treks, whale watching, etc. For further details, see the individual State and Territory sections.

Entertainment

Food & Drink: There are numerous speciality dishes and foods Australia also offers an enormous variety of cuisines, including Italian, French, Greek, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Thai, Japanese, Indian, African, Lebanese and Korean. Things to know: Service is European-style and varies from waitress and waiter service to self-service. Bistros, cafes, family-style restaurants and 'pub' lunches at the counter offer good food at reasonable prices. Most restaurants and hotels are licensed to serve alcohol; private hotels and guest houses cannot be licensed by law. Some restaurants will allow guests to bring their own alcohol and are called 'BYO' restaurants. Licensing hours in public bars are 1000-2200 Mon-Sat, however most pubs are open until 2400; Sunday hours vary. Restaurants, clubs and hotel lounges have more flexible hours. National specialities: Sydney rock oysters. Barramundi (freshwater fish). Tiger prawns. Macadamia nuts. Yabbies (small freshwater lobsters). Beef is the most popular meat and lamb is also of a high quality. There is a wide variety of excellent fruits and vegetables. National drinks: Australian wine. Australian beer. The major vineyards (wineries) are outside Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra and Adelaide. The largest single wine-growing region is in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, two hours' drive from Adelaide, where high-quality red and white wines are produced. For further information, visit www.australianwineandbeer.com). Legal drinking age: Drinking age is 18 years or over. Tipping: Not as common as it is in Europe and America, nor is a service charge added to the bill in restaurants. 10 per cent for food and drink waiters is usual in top-quality restaurants, but is optional elsewhere. With taxis it is usual not to tip but round up the cost to the next dollar.

Shopping: Special purchases include excellent local wines; wool, clothing, leather and sheepskin products; opal and other precious or semi-precious stones; and modern art sculpture and paintings. Exhibitions of bark paintings, boomerangs and other tribal objects are on view and for sale in Darwin, Alice Springs and the State capitals; many depict stories from the Dreamtime. Many cities and towns have small shops devoted to the sale of 'Australiana', where Australian souvenirs, ranging from T-shirts to boomerangs, can be bought. Shopping hours: Opening hours for most stores in the cities are Mon-Fri 0900-1730, Sat 0900-1700. Late-night shopping is available Friday to 2100 in Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart and Darwin. Late-night shopping is available Thursday at the same times in Sydney, Canberra and Perth. Major stores in some states are open 1000-1600 Sunday. Corner stores, restaurants and snack bars are open in most cities until well into the night. For further information on shopping and trading, contact the ACT Office of Fair Trading (tel: (2) 6207 0400; website: www.fairtrading.act.gov.au).

Business



GDP: US\$611.7 billion. Main exports: Ores and metals, wool, food and live animals, minerals, fuels, transport machinery and equipment. Main imports: Machinery and transport equipment, computers and office machines, telecommunication equipment and parts, crude oil and petroleum products. Main trade partners: USA, Japan, China, Germany and UK.

Economy: Australia has a very diverse economy and a high standard of living. The service sector accounts for almost three-quarters of GDP, although other sectors of the economy contribute significantly to Australian export earnings. Approximately one-third of export earnings is derived from agricultural products, although the main agricultural industry, sheep farming, now appears to be in long-term decline. The other major export industry is mining; Australia has vast reserves of coal (of which it is now the world's leading exporter), oil, natural gas, nickel, zircon, iron ore, bauxite and diamonds, as well as uranium (Australian ore fuels many of the Western nations' nuclear power plants). Most Australian manufacturing is concentrated in processing of mineral products and in the iron, steel and engineering industries. The country's service industries, which now account for the major part of the economy, have continued to grow, despite some damage in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which severely affected many of Australia's major trading partners. The most important development in the economy in recent years has been a shift in trading patterns away from Britain and Europe towards the Pacific Rim 60 per cent of Australian exports are now sold in that region. Australia's single-largest trading partner is Japan, which takes approximately one-third of total exports, followed by the USA, South Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, China and then the EU nations (principally the UK and Germany). Japanese investment in Australia, particularly in property and tourist ventures, has reached the point where most of the eastern seaboard 'Gold Coast' is now Japanese owned. The Australian economy has continued to perform steadily during the last few years; annual growth in early 2004 was just over 3 per cent. Inflation and unemployment are stable at 3 and 7 per cent respectively.

Business Etiquette: Suits are usually worn in Sydney and Melbourne. Brisbane businesspeople may wear shirts, ties and shorts; visiting businesspeople should wear lightweight suits for the initial meeting. Prior appointments necessary. Punctuality is important. A great deal of business is conducted over drinks. Best months for business travel are March to November. Office hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

Commercial Information: Australia Business in the UK Dudley House, 34-35 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HE, UKTel: (0870) 890 0720. Website: www.anzcc.org.uk Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) Commerce House, Level 3, 24 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, ACT 2600, Australia Tel: (2) 6273 2311. Website: www.acci.asn.au International Chamber of Commerce Level 3, 525 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000, Australia Tel: (3) 8608 2072 or 2547. Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) Level 2, 80 William Street, Sydney, NSW 2011, Australia Website: www.aacb.org.au

10 CLIMATE

Australia is in the southern hemisphere and the seasons are opposite to those in Europe and **North America. There are two climatic zones:** the tropical zone (in the north above the Tropic of Capricorn) and the temperate zone. The tropical zone (consisting of 40 per cent of Australia) has two seasons, summer ('wet') and winter ('dry'), while the temperate zone has all four seasons.



November to March: (spring to summer): Warm or hot everywhere, tropical in the north, and warm to hot with mild nights in the south.

April to September: (autumn to winter): Northern and central Australia have clear warm days, cool nights; the south has cool days with occasional rain but still plenty of sun. Snow is totally confined to mountainous regions of the southeast.

Note: For further details, including climate statistics, see under individual State entries.

Required clothing: Lightweights during summer months with warmer clothes needed during the cooler winter period throughout most of the southern States. Lightweight cottons and linens all year in the central/northern States with warm clothes only for cooler winter evenings and early mornings. Sunglasses, sunhats and sunblock lotion are recommended year round in the north and during the summer months in the south.

11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Terra Australis, as the continent was first known to Europeans, is thought to have been inhabited by man for at least 40,000 years. The aboriginal population, whose modern remnants describe themselves as Kooris, are thought to have migrated from southern India or Sri Lanka. The first European settlements were initiated by the Dutch East India Company in 1606. The company chartered and claimed for their mother country the 320km (200 miles) of northwest coast, which they named New Holland. The explorations of Captain James Cook, 150 years later, opened up the east coast. The British Empire, having just lost her American colonies, was in need of a new prison colony. By 1868, when transportation ended, Britain had sent more than 160,000 convicts to Australia. They were settled around the coast several of modern Australia's biggest cities grew from the penal settlements and those set up by freed convicts and other European immigrants and eventually enabled the British crown to claim the entire continent. The colonisers treated the Kooris with appalling brutality but as long as European settlement was confined to the coast, the majority of tribes were able to live as before. This ended in 1851, when, following an exodus to the gold fields of California, the administrators sought to stem the tide by offering rewards for the discovery of gold in Australia. The subsequent gold rush prompted the first wave of voluntary migration to the continent in modern times; the population doubled within months of the discovery of gold in Victoria. Around the same time, the interior was charted for the first time, while towns sprang up both there and on the littoral. The Kooris, meanwhile, were massacred, driven into barren areas or into lives of virtual slavery. Most of Australia was granted the right to self-government in the 1850s. The Commonwealth of Australia, a Federation of States, was set up in 1901, establishing Australia as an independent democracy. Nonetheless, close links with the UK were maintained; Australian troops fought alongside the British during both World Wars. The politics of the country remained under firm British supervision until years after World War II. In the aftermath, Australia assumed some of the trappings of a regional power, taking control of some of Germany's former territories in the area and developing links with Japan, India and South East Asia. It also joined in a secretive strategic alliance with Britain, the USA, Canada and New Zealand, which remains the country's principal defence commitment. Until its abandonment in the mid 1960s, a 'White Australia' policy was officially adopted with regard to immigration. Between 1949 and 1972, Australian governments were composed of the Liberal Party in a centre-right coalition with the smaller National Country Party. Sir Robert Menzies was the dominant political figure, serving 16 years as Prime Minister. In 1972, the coalition was finally defeated at the polls as the Labour Party under Gough Whitlam took office with a comparatively radical agenda. There followed one of the most controversial



periods of recent Australian history, culminating in the Whitlam government being dismissed by the Governor General, Sir John Kerr, in circumstances still hotly disputed. The immediate beneficiary was the Liberal Party leader, Malcolm Fraser, who won the next elections, which followed in December 1975, within weeks of Whitlam's dismissal. Fraser remained in office until 1983, when Labour was returned to power under the leadership of the ex-trade-union leader, Bob Hawke. Under Hawke and his acerbic Treasury Minister and eventual successor, Paul Keating, the Labour party won five elections in a row. Finally, in March 1996, tiring of Labour, the Australian public turned to the Liberal Party led by John Howard. Howard's centre-right coalition was returned to office for a third term at the 2004 general election. Aboriginal issues continue to affect successive Australian governments who have found considerable difficulty in reconciling Koori peoples' traditional claims and conceptions of land ownership with, to take but one example, the requirements of mining companies. Since Howard's re-appointment, race riots have already occurred - one of which, in a district of Sydney, was catalysed by the death of an Aboriginal teenager in police custody. The other dominant political issue of the last few years was Australia's constitutional future. There were two options: to maintain the existing link with Britain; or to establish Australia as a fully fledged republic. A split in the republican camp produced a surprise victory for the traditionalists in the national referendum on the subject, held in October 1999. Despite that, most Australians now look to links with America and Asia as more important and relevant to their future than those with the 'Old Country'. The country's foreign policy (irrespective of the party in power) is now geared to the strengthening of economic and political links with the countries of the Asian Pacific Rim and the affirmation of the existing links with the USA (exemplified by Australia's participation in the 2003 invasion of Iraq). Under the Howard governments, migration has come to dominate the Australian political agenda. The hard line which Howard set down has been rigorously pursued 'boat people' from the troubled states of Asia have been prevented from landing in Australia and instead directed to small Pacific islands; those who do reach Australia are detained in remote outback encampments. The government's hard line was reinforced by the October 2002 bomb in Bali, which killed 200 mostly Australian tourists. This brought Australia to the centre of the US-inspired global 'war against terrorism'.

Government: The bicameral Federal Parliament holds legislative power. Both chambers are elected by universal adult suffrage. The 76-member Senate serves a six-year term, while the House of Representatives is voted in every three years. The Prime Minister is the leader of the largest party in the Lower House and wields executive power at the head of a Cabinet of Ministers. The Queen of England is formally head of state, represented locally by a Governor General. Each of Australia's six states also has its own directly elected legislature, enjoying considerable autonomy in areas such as health, education and transport policy.

Travel Advice

Australia is a vast country. Journeys need to be planned, particularly if travelling to remote areas. Most visits to Australia are trouble-free but you should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate international terrorist attacks, which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. The Australian authorities have carried out a number of arrests as a result of investigations into terrorist networks. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the following organisations for the **latest travel advice:** British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: www.fco.gov.uk US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

Top Things To See & Do



For the Top Things To See and the Top Things To Do in Australia, please refer to each individual State section.

Tourist Information: Tourism Australia in the UK Australia Centre, Australia House, 6th Floor, Melbourne Place, The Strand, London WC2B 4LG, UK Tel: (020) 7438 4601 (trade enquiries only). Website: www.australia.com Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1730. Tourism Australia in the USA 6100 Center Drive, Suite 1150, Los Angeles, CA 90045, USA Tel: (310) 695 3200. Website: www.australia.com

OverviewII

Australia has come a long way since the days when Captain Cook stumbled ashore to find an Aboriginal way of life that went back some 40,000 years. Indeed, Australia must really be divided into 'modern Australia' and 'indigenous Australia', since there is a wealth of disparate elements that constitute this compelling country. The continent was first known to Europeans as Terra Australis. The first European settlements were initiated by the Dutch East India Company in 1606. By 1868, Britain had sent more than 160,000 convicts to Australia and several of modern Australia's biggest cities around the coast grew from the penal settlements. Eventually, the British crown claimed the entire continent. The colonisers unfortunately treated the Kooris, the indigenous population, with appalling brutality, which only worsened following the gold rush and the first wave of voluntary migration that spilled into the interior, where many Kooris had fled to. The inaugural National Sorry Day was held in 1998 and has become an annual fixture on the Australian calendar. The day is a symbolic event that heralds modern Australia's willingness to face its inception. The didgeridoo and the boomerang have become modern Australian icons. Tourists flock to the breathtaking, epic monolith of Uluru (Ayers Rock) to watch the sun soak it in reds and oranges. This assimilation of Aboriginal culture has both negatives and positives, and the aim must be to harmonise rather than homogenise. Many struggle to reconcile Aboriginal Dreamtime with the stereotype of carefree people in cork hats, swigging beer around a barbeque. But it is not difficult to 'take it easy' amidst miles of sun, sea and sand. You could even do the Aussie thing and ride some waves, with surfing schools on offer all over the country (**website:** www.surfingaustralia.com). Nevertheless, Australia may be an island, but it is also the world's largest one, and its size encompasses a range of stunning landscapes, from vast, barren deserts, where kangaroo and emu bound through the arid surroundings, to tropical rainforests and rugged mountains. Isolated from other continents, Australia has an abundance of unique plant and animal life. Just as the surroundings surprise, so too may the people. Crocodile Dundee types have long been replaced by fashionistas browsing for bargains in Australia's world-renowned cities. Australia embraces its Pacific Rim location, with multicultural influence throughout, from Sydney's great harbour that welcomes worldwide visitors, to Melbourne's European ambience and lively Chinatown. Australia is a real hotchpotch of elements, catering for every kind of holidaymaker. This is the perfect time to discover the 'real' Australia, whatever you may find that to be.

Communications

Telephone: There are full facilities for national and international telecommunications. Full IDD is available. Country code: 61. Payphones are red, green, gold or blue. Only local calls can be made from red phones. Green, gold and blue phones also have International Direct Dialling (IDD) and Subscriber Trunk Dial (STD). Telstra Smart Phonecards are available at newsagents, supermarkets and chemists and can be used for local, STD or international calls. Creditphones, which take most major credit cards, can be found at airports, city-centre locations and many hotels. Multimedia payphones are available in parts of Melbourne and Sydney. A touch screen allows visitors to gain access to information services, including tourist information which can be



printed off for future reference. Phonecards for these telephones can be purchased from nearby shops.

Mobile telephone: Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good, including in Tasmania; access in some of the more isolated, outback and rural areas is limited. US handsets are not compatible.

Internet: Available throughout Australia. Internet cafes are prevalent in all capital cities, including Tasmania, and individual hotels may also provide facilities.

Post: There are post offices in all the main towns of every State. Post office hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700; some post office are also open Sat 0900-1200. Stamps are often available at hotel and motel reception areas and selected newsagents.

MEDIA: Australia's media scene is diverse and thriving. There is a long history of public broadcasting, but also many private TV and radio stations. Ownership of both print and broadcast media is highly concentrated. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) operates national and local public radio and TV stations. The other main broadcaster is the Multicultural Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). Press: The main daily newspapers are The Australian and Australian Financial Review. Newspapers generally have a high circulation throughout the continent. TV: ABC and SBS TV are national public braodcasters. Seven Network, Nine Network and Ten Network are commercial broadcasters. Pay TV operator Foxtel is owned by News Corporation. Radio: ABC is a public radio broadcaster that operates speech-cultural network Radio National, rolling news station ABC NewsRadio, youth-oriented Triple J, classical and contemporary music network, ABC Classic FM and local-regional services. Radio Australia is ABC's external service.