

History

60,000 years ago

The original inhabitants of Australia are Aborigines, who arrived by boat from Asia. They spread across the whole continent and 35,000 years ago reached Tasmania.



ABORIGINES

For thousands of years Aborigines were hunters and gatherers with a nomadic way of life. They produced simple tools - flints, boomerangs, spears... They lived in small groups in a large territory, therefore their society was divided into many tribes with different languages and customs. At the start of British colonisation between 300,000 to 1.5 million people lived here in more than 600 tribes, speaking more than 200 languages. Dreamtime is the English expression for the system of Aborigines' laws and religious faith. The tradition of dreamtime was the joining force of Aborigines and throughout the country we can find rock paintings depicting this period. Today almost all Australians realise their cultural heritage left to them here by the Aborigines - painting, literature, music...

Abel Tasman mapped the extensive territory of Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. The Dutchmen's discoveries did not have any economic effect and 150 years later they abandoned Australia.

1606

The Dutchman Willem Jansz became the first European on the "southern continent" (Cape York Peninsula). He called it New Holland.

1642 - 1644

The first Englishman - the pirate W. Dampier landed on the north-west coast.

1770

Captain J. Cook after landing at Botany Bay declared the territory a British colony - New South Wales.

Under the doctrine "Terra Nullius" - Australia before the British had not belonged to anyone.

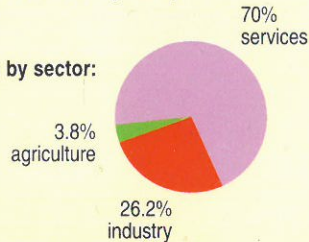
ECONOMY

Australia has an enviable western-style capitalist economy. Over the past decades it has built itself a new significant position in the east. The relatively healthy economy is based largely on natural wealth.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

- 31,600 USD per capita (2005)

GDP - composition by sector:



The workforce is 10.5 million (2005).

INDUSTRY

- focused on the production and export of mineral wealth.

- important sectors: mining, industrial and transportation equipment, food processing, chemicals, steel

Mineral wealth

- provides 50% of the national income.

- significant fields: iron ore, copper, bauxite, black coal, uranium, natural gas, gold, diamonds, opals (Coober Peedy 70% of world production)

Economy

FOREIGN TRADE

Export - 103 billion USD (2005)

Exported commodities

- coal, gold, opals, aluminium, iron ore, meat, wool, wheat, machinery and transport equipment

Major export partners

- Japan, China, South Korea, USA, New Zealand, India



Import - 119.6 billion USD (2005)

Imported commodities

- machinery and transport equipment, computers and office machines, telecommunication equipment and parts, crude oil and petroleum products

Major import partners

- USA, China, Japan, Singapore, Germany



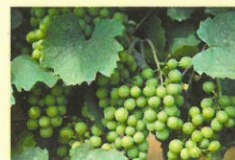
AGRICULTURE

- today sheep wool, which brought Australia exceptional profits, has lost its prime position.

- products: wheat, barley, sugarcane, fruits, wine, sheep, cattle

Australian wines

New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory are known as the birthplace of Australian wines. The Hunter Valley vineyard region was founded in the 1830s by the Scot James Busby and by 1859 vineyards had already spread throughout other states. Today Australian wines are bought by people worldwide.



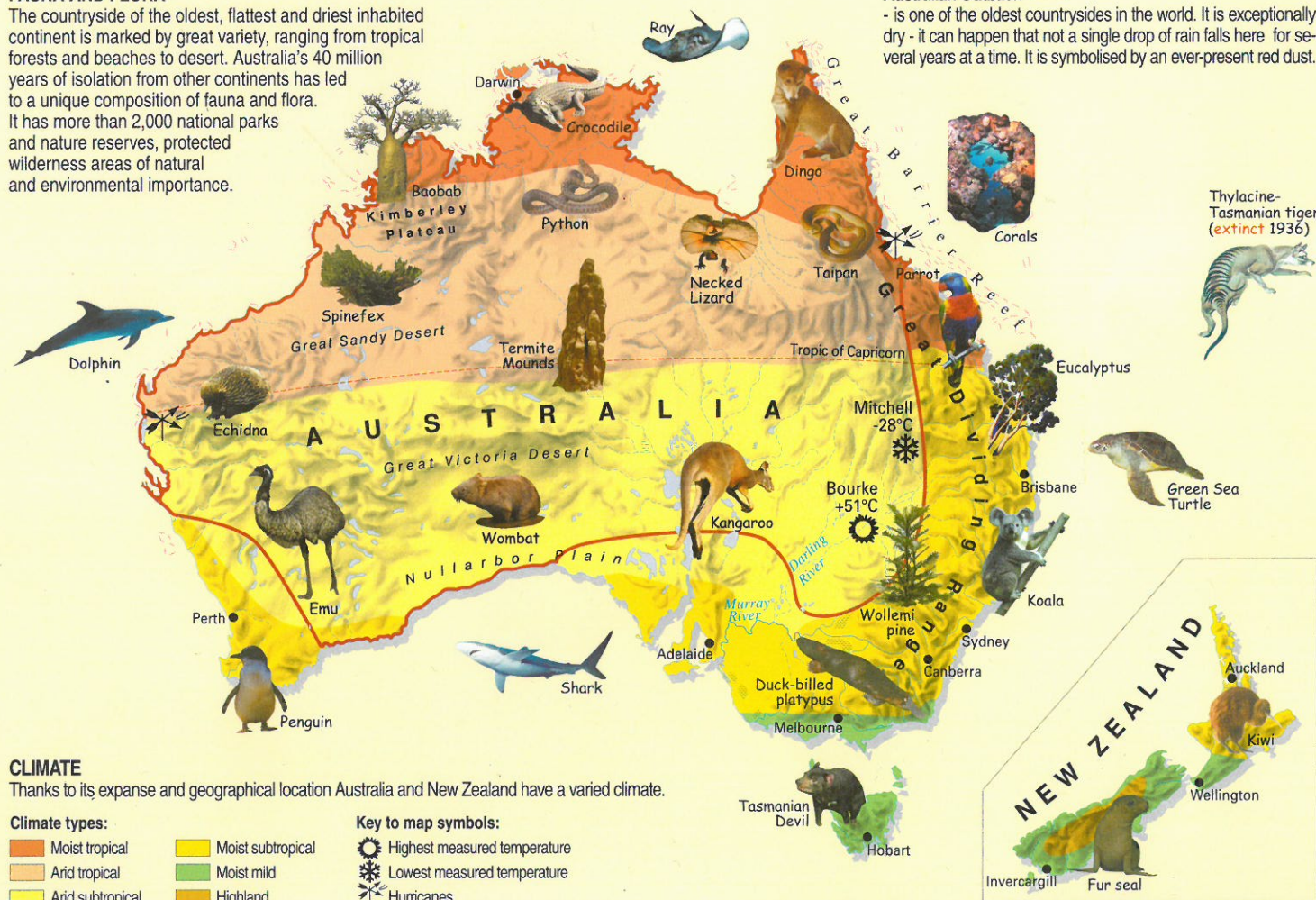
SERVICES

- the most dynamically developing sector in services is tourism.

Fauna, flora and climate

FAUNA AND FLORA

The countryside of the oldest, flattest and driest inhabited continent is marked by great variety, ranging from tropical forests and beaches to desert. Australia's 40 million years of isolation from other continents has led to a unique composition of fauna and flora. It has more than 2,000 national parks and nature reserves, protected wilderness areas of natural and environmental importance.



CLIMATE

Thanks to its expanse and geographical location Australia and New Zealand have a varied climate.

Climate types:

- Moist tropical
- Moist subtropical
- Arid tropical
- Moist mild
- Arid subtropical
- Highland

Key to map symbols:

- Highest measured temperature
- Lowest measured temperature
- Hurricanes

Transportation

MAJOR MODES OF TRANSPORTATION:

The need to overcome great distances has contributed to the development of transport.

Highways - the Australian system is divided into three different categories for rural Australia:

- Federal highways
- State highways
- Local roads.

The road network comprising a total of 913,000 km, is divided into: Surfaced 353,331 km
Unmade 559,669 km.



Railways - comprising a total of 47,738 km

- National rail services: The Indian Pacific (Sydney - Adelaide - Perth) The Ghan (Adelaide - Alice Springs - Darwin) The Overland (Melbourne - Adelaide)
- State and city services
- Mining railways (Western Australia)
- Cane railways (Queensland)



Air travel - there are almost 455 airports in Australia

- the first airline was Qantas (1922), today there are a number of smaller regional companies, transporting 18 million passengers a year.

Waterways - mainly used for recreation (Murray - Darling river systems)

Sea transport - the General Seaports: Adelaide, Cairns, Brisbane, Darwin, Fremantle, Melbourne, Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong, Hobart, the Iron Ore Seaports: Dampier, Port Hedland, Oakajee

Pipelines - there are several pipeline systems:

- Natural gas (5,600 km)
- Crude oil (2,500 km)
- Petroleum products (500 km)
- Water.

Education

1789 - the nun Isabella Rosson founded the first school in Sydney
1850 - oldest university - University of Sydney
1872 - first system of compulsory education in Victoria

Today the system of **compulsory education** lies within the competence of individual state governments and therefore there are differences between them. Education is compulsory for children aged 5 to 15 years.

Basic breakdown of the education system:

Primary School	Kindergarten, 4 - 5 year-olds Preparatory/Reception, 5 - 6 year-olds Year 1 - 6, 6 - 12 year-olds
Secondary School	Year 7 - 12, 13 - 18 year-olds
Tertiary qualifications	- vocational education and training - higher education (universities)

Children living in the Australian Outback far from any school listen to tuition on the radio, broadcast by the **School of the Air** and do their homework by correspondence.