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File No. 16

Date: 30/04/2023

Australia, New Zealand

Australia

Australia is a continent between the Indian and the Southern Pacific Ocean located in the Southern Hemisphere. It is the smallest continent in the world, but the world's sixth largest country and the biggest island in the world. It's only a little smaller than the USA. Area: 7, 5 mil. Km. Australia is very thinly (densely) populated.). It's due to the hostile condition as central deserts and the tropical northern part are practically uninhabited. The population of Australia is some 24 mil. Most population lives in urban areas mainly along the south-east coast where the country's large cities such as Melbourne and Sydney...are situated (can be found. Inhabitants are mainly of British origin; the rest is made by other European immigrants and by aborigines. Australian English (Aussie) and aboriginal languages are spoken here. Capital is Canberra, which name came from an Aboriginal word meaning "Meeting Place ". Flag: consists of the British flag (union jack) and larger blue field in which 5 stars are arranged in the form of the Southern Cross constellation.

The Australian climate

Australia's climate is quite different from the rest of the world. It varies from warm to subtropical. The Continent lies in the southern hemisphere which means that Australia has summer when we have winter and so is sometimes called Down Under. It is the driest, flattest, hottest inhabited continent on earth. Although the tropical north and the bushes in south eastern part are quite wet the centre of the country is very flat, dry, arid and hot during the day. But there are also some mountains along eastern coast - Great Diving Range with highest point Mt. Kosciusko. Australia is home of interesting plants and animals. It is famous for its unique wildlife. Thanks to a different historical development Australia is home of many unique endemic species, like the kangaroo, koala, bear, dingo, platypus, Tasmanian devil, and wombat which cannot be found elsewhere. Also,

many dangerous and poisonous creatures (snakes, spiders, crocodiles, sharks, box jellyfish etc.). Rivers: Murray, Darling (the longest permanently flowing rivers) -fertile land - agriculture.

History

The first people to live there were Aborigines who came about 50 000 years ago. They are known for their art and spiritual beliefs and music - play on wooden instrument didgeridoo. Different languages and cultures varied between the groups. Beginning in 17 C European explorers discovered the huge island, but it wasn't until 1770, that British Captain James Cook landed on the eastern coast. He was the first to claim the country for Britain. Within decades Britain got the entire continent and decided to keep prisoners there (established convict colony 1788). During 19 C many new settlers came there because gold rush and started exploring the outback. In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was founded and the six colonies.

National economy

Is a highly developed country with high standard of living. Australia belongs to the top exporters of beef, lamb, wool, milk products and wheat and is rich in mineral deposits of iron, bauxite (first in the world), uranium, gold, silver etc. Main industries are textiles, electrical equipment, chemicals, car, aircraft, ship and machinery.

Government type and administration

Country is divided into (It is made up of, consists of) 6 states and 2 territories. Each state has its own parliament, constitution, governor and executive, legislative and judicial system. The official title is The Commonwealth of Australia. It is a member of British Commonwealth and the head of the states is Queen Elizabeth II represented by a governor general. However, the real head of the country is the prime minister. Federal Parliament consists of two chambers - Senate and House of Representatives. New South Wales (capital Sydney), Victoria (Melbourne), South Australia (Adelaide), Western Australia (Perth), Queensland (Brisbane) has amazing beaches, Great barrier reef - snorkelling or diving, Tasmania (Hobart) an Island south of mainland, is known for its unspoilt nature. Northern Territory (Darwin) and A. Capital Territory (Canberra).

Travel destination - is home to quite great array of attractions and sites worth to making a trip for.

Uluru (Ayers Rock) is the best known one. Famous red rocks stand up out of the flat desert, is the largest piece of stone in the world. It is a sacred place for Aborigines. Line of mountains runs from the north to the south of the east coast is called the Great Diving Range, because it divides the green, wet coast of eastern Australia from the hot, dry lands in the Centre. The Great Dividing Range has the highest Australian mountain Mt. Kosciusko. Great Barrier Reef - biggest system of islands and reefs in the world, great variety of corals, species of fish. Mackenzie falls, Kakadu, Blue Mountains, Byron bay, Fence (against dingo/ rabbits - seen from space) and great ocean road - worth visiting, natural wonders. Beaches, beaches, beaches

Cities + people

Capital Canberra lies between Australia's 2 largest cities Sydney and Melbourne. Sydney might not be the capital of Australia, but it is probably its best-known city. Famous for the Opera house (venue for concerts and local theatre) and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It is the largest city in the country, the capital of the state of New South Wales and an important financial and cultural centre. Sydney has very cosmopolitan atmosphere. Famous Australian bands such as AC/DC started their careers in the city. Melbourne for art and entertainment - a popular tourist destination. People come to see the landmarks and to enjoy the mild climate, relaxed atmosphere and truly cosmopolitan culture. (Perth, Adelaide...) People of Australia are very laid back, easy going, outgoing and adventurous. They are known for their love for sports and outdoor (adrenaline) activities such as paragliding, surfing, and bungee jumping. Some celebrities are connected with A. - Kidman, C. Blanchett, Mel Gibson...

New Zealand

New Zealand consists of two large islands (North and South Island) in south-west Pacific Ocean. Nearest are Australia on west, Fiji, Tonga on north. Its area is 270 thousand sq. km. Each of the two main islands is mainly hilly and mountainous. The east coast consists of fertile plains (Canterbury Plains). A volcanic plateau is in the centre of North Island.

People:

The population is more than 3 million people. Density is much higher than in Australia. The most of people live in urban areas. People are

of European (above all British) origin, the rest are Polynesian. Officially English is spoken here but some people still speak Maori.

History:

The Maoris, a Polynesian group reached New Zealand before and during the 14th century. The first Europeans were Abel Tasman and James Cook. Now it is an independent member of the Commonwealth. National economy: Food processing, textiles, machinery and forest industry are the main industries here. Only 2 per cent of land is arable and the main crops is grain. Natural riches are: oil, gas, iron ore and coal. The main trading partners of New Zealand are the USA, Australia, Japan, Great Britain.

Government type and administration

NZ has a parliamentary system where the head of state is King Charles III. represented by the Governor General. The head of government is the Prime Minister. The country is divided into counties. The capital is Wellington, other big cities are Manukau, Christchurch and Auckland.

Places of interests

Auckland (largest city), Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington Places, where the film The Lord of The Ring was filmed - about 150 filming locations in both the North and the South Islands (for example dreamy Hobbiton in the Shire)