**GEO 401 FINAL EXAM PREP**

**COMPLETE TEXT**

**PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY**

The Pacific Ocean has long served as a highway on which plants and animals found their way from island to island by floating on the water, swimming, or flying, and humans have used the ocean as a way to make contact with other peoples for visiting, trading, and raiding. But the wide expanses of water are also a profound barrier to the natural diffusion of plant and animal species and keep Pacific Islanders spatially isolated from one another. The vast ocean has imposed solitude and fostered unique evolutionary trends for plants and animals. The solitude has also fostered self-sufficiency and subsistence economies among its human occupants well into the modern era. Unfortunately, as we shall see, the ocean also serves as a conveyer of pollution, especially discarded plastics (see [page 633](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#page_633)).

**CONTINENT FORMATION**

The largest landmass in Oceania is the ancient continent of Australia at the southwestern edge of the region (see the [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001) map). The Australian continent is partially composed of some of the oldest rock on Earth and has been relatively stable for more than 200 million years, with very little volcanic activity and only an occasional mild earthquake. Australia was once a part of the great landmass called [**Gondwana**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident01) that formed the southern part of the ancient supercontinent Pangaea (see [Figure 1.8](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch1_2.xhtml#chap01figr0008)). What became present-day Australia broke free from Gondwana and drifted until it eventually collided with the part of the Eurasian Plate on which Southeast Asia sits. That impact created the mountainous island of New Guinea to the north of Australia.

***Gondwana***

the great landmass that formed the southern part of the ancient supercontinent Pangaea

Australia is shaped roughly like a dinner plate with an irregularly broken rim with two bites taken out of it: one in the north (the Gulf of Carpentaria) and one in the south (the Great Australian Bight). The center of the plate is the great lowland Australian desert, with only two hilly zones and rocky outcroppings (see [Figure 11.1A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). The eastern rim of Australia is composed of uplands; the highest and most complex of these are the long, curving Eastern Highlands (labeled “Great Dividing Range” in the [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001) map; see also [Figure 11.1C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). Over millennia, the forces of erosion—both wind and water—have worn most of Australia’s landforms into low, rounded formations. Some of these, like Uluru (Ayers Rock), are quite spectacular ([**FIGURE 11.4**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0004)).

Off the northeastern coast of the continent lies the [**Great Barrier Reef**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident02), the largest coral reef in the world and a World Heritage Site since 1981 (see [Figure 11.1B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). It stretches along the coast of Queensland in an irregular arc for more than 1250 miles (2000 kilometers), covering 135,000 square miles (350,000 square kilometers). The Great Barrier Reef is so large that it influences Australia’s climate by interrupting the westward-flowing ocean currents in the mid-South Pacific circulation pattern. Warm water is shunted to the south, where it warms the southeastern coast of Australia. Threats to the health of the Great Barrier Reef are discussed on [page 627](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#page_627).

***Great Barrier Reef***

the longest coral reef in the world, located off the northeastern coast of Australia

**ISLAND FORMATION**

The islands of the Pacific were (and are still being) created by a variety of processes related to the movement of tectonic plates. The islands found in the western reaches of Oceania— including New Guinea, New Caledonia, and the main islands of Fiji—are remnants of the Gondwana landmass; they are large, mountainous, and geologically complex. Other islands in the region are volcanic in origin and form part of the Ring of Fire (see [Figure 1.9](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch1_2.xhtml#chap01figr0009)). Many in this latter group are situated in boundary zones where tectonic plates are either colliding or pulling apart.

FIGURE 11.4 Uluru (Ayers Rock). This land formation, near the center of Australia, is a smooth remnant of ancient mountains. The site is held sacred by central Aboriginal Australians. It is also one of Australia’s most popular tourist destinations.

For example, the Mariana Islands east of the Philippines are volcanoes that were formed when the Pacific Plate plunged beneath the Philippine Plate. The two islands of New Zealand were created when the eastern edge of the Indian-Australian Plate was thrust upward by its convergence with the Pacific Plate.

The Hawaiian Islands were produced through another form of volcanic activity associated with [**hot spots**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident03), places where particularly hot magma moving upward from Earth’s core breaches the crust in tall plumes. Over the past 80 million years, the Pacific Plate has moved across these hot spots, creating a string of volcanic formations 3600 miles (5800 kilometers) long. The youngest volcanoes, only a few of which are active, are on or near the islands known as Hawaii.

***hot spots***

individual sites of upwelling material (magma) that originate deep in Earth’s mantle and surface in a tall plume; hot spots tend to remain fixed relative to migrating tectonic plates

Volcanic islands exist in three forms: volcanic high islands, low coral atolls, and [**makatea**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident04) (sometimes called seamounts), which are coral platforms raised or uplifted by volcanism. High islands are usually volcanoes that rise above the sea into mountainous rocky formations which, because of their varying height and rugged landscapes, contain a rich variety of environments. New Zealand, the Hawaiian Islands, Mo’orea, and Easter Island are examples of high islands (see [Figure 11.1D](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001), [F](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). An [**atoll**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident05) is a low-lying island or chain of islets, formed of coral reefs that have built up on the rim of a submerged volcanic crater (see [Figure 11.1E](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). These reefs are arranged around a central lagoon that was once the volcano’s crater. Because of their low elevation, atoll islands tend to have only a small range of environments and very limited supplies of fresh water.

***makatea***

coral platforms uplifted by volcanism, sometimes called seamounts

***atoll***

a low-lying island or chain of islets, formed of coral reefs that have built up on the rim of a submerged volcano

**CLIMATE**

Although the Pacific Ocean stretches almost from pole to pole, most of the land of Oceania is situated within the Pacific’s tropical and subtropical latitudes. The tepid water temperatures of the central Pacific bring mild climates year-round to nearly all the inhabited parts of the region ([**FIGURE 11.5**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0005)). The southernmost reaches of Australia and New Zealand have the widest seasonal variations in temperature.

**Moisture and Rainfall**

With the exception of the vast arid interior of Australia, much of Oceania is warm and humid nearly all the time. New Zealand and the high islands of the Pacific receive copious rainfall; before human settlement, they supported dense forest vegetation. Now, after 1000 years of human impact, much of that forest is gone (see [Figure 11.5B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0005); see also [Figure 11.9D](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0009)).

Travelers approaching New Zealand, either by air or by sea, often notice a distinctive long white cloud that stretches above the north island. Seven hundred years ago, early [**Maori**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident06) settlers (members of the Polynesian group) also noticed this phenomenon and they named that place *Aotearoa*, “land of the long white cloud,” a name that is now applied to all of New Zealand. The cloud is the result of particularly high winds, complex landforms, and moist conditions.

***Maori***

Polynesian people indigenous to New Zealand

The legendary [**Roaring Forties**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident07) (named for the 40th parallel south) are powerful air and ocean currents that speed around the Southern Hemisphere (usually between the latitudes of 40 and 50 degrees) virtually unimpeded by landmasses. These *westerly winds* (winds that blow west to east), which are responsible for Aotearoa’s distinctive moist cloud, deposit a drenching 130 inches (330 centimeters) of rain per year in the New Zealand highlands and more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) per year on the coastal lowlands (see [Figure 11.5B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0005)). At the southern tip of New Zealand’s North Island, the wind averages more than 40 miles per hour (64 kilometers per hour) nearly 120 days per year. Farmers in the area stake their cabbages to the ground so the plants will not blow away.

***Roaring Forties***

powerful air and ocean currents at about 40° S latitude that speed around the far Southern Hemisphere virtually unimpeded by landmasses

By contrast, two-thirds of Australia is overwhelmingly dry (see [Figure 11.5A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0005)). The dominant winds affecting Australia are the north and south *easterlies* (winds that blow east to west) that converge east of the continent. The Great Dividing Range blocks the movement of moist, westward-moving air so that rain does not reach the interior (an orographic pattern; see [Figure 1.12](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch1_3.xhtml#chap01figr0012a)). As a result, a large portion of Australia receives less than 20 inches (50 centimeters) of rain per year, and humans have found rather limited uses for this interior territory. But the eastern (windward) slopes of the highlands receive more abundant moisture. This relatively moist eastern rim of Australia was favored as a habitat by both indigenous people and the Europeans who displaced them after 1800. During the southern summer, the fringes of the monsoon that passes over Southeast Asia and Eurasia bring moisture across Australia’s northern coast. There, annual rainfall varies from 20 to 80 inches (50 to 200 centimeters).

**FIGURE 11.5 PHOTO ESSAY: Climates of Oceania**

John White Photos/Moment/Getty Images

ML Harris/The Image Bank/Getty Images

Guiziou Franck/hemis.fr/Getty Images

Overall, Australia is so arid that it has only one major river system, which is in the temperate southeast where most Australians live. There, the Darling and Murray rivers drain one-seventh of the continent, flowing west and south into the Indian Ocean near Adelaide. One measure of Australia’s overall dryness is that the entire average *annual* flow of the Murray-Darling river system is equal to just one day’s average flow of the Amazon in Brazil.

In the island Pacific, mountainous high islands also exhibit *orographic rainfall* patterns, with a wet windward side and a dry leeward side (see [Figure 11.5C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0005)). Rainfall amounts on the low-lying islands vary considerably across the region. Some of the islands lie directly in the path of trade winds, which usually deliver between 60 and 120 inches (152 to 305 centimeters) of rain per year. These islands support a remarkable variety of plants and animals. Other low-lying islands, particularly those near the equator, receive considerably less rainfall and are dominated by grasslands that support little animal life.

#### El Niño

Recall from [Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch3.xhtml) the *El Nino* phenomenon, a pattern of shifts in the circulation of air and water in the Pacific that occurs irregularly every 2 to 7 years. Although these cyclical shifts, or oscillations, are not yet well understood, scientists have worked out a model of how the oscillations may occur ([**FIGURE 11.6**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0006)).

The El Niño event of 1997-1998 illustrates the effects of this phenomenon. By December 1997, the island of New Guinea (north of Australia; see the [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001) map) had received very little rainfall for almost a year. Crops failed, springs and streams dried up, and fires broke out in tinder-dry forests. The cloudless sky allowed heat to radiate up and away from elevations above 7200 feet (2200 meters), so temperatures at high elevations dipped below freezing at night for stretches of a week or more. Tropical plants died, and people unaccustomed to chilly weather became ill. Meanwhile, at the other end of the system, along the Pacific coasts of North, Central, and South America, the warmer-than-usual weather brought unusually strong storms, high ocean surges, and damaging wind and rainfall (see [Figure 11.6C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0006)).

In the 1980s, an opposite pattern in which normal weather conditions become intensified, was identified and named *La Nina.* It is now understood that La Nina patterns can bring unusually severe precipitation events (including tornadoes and blizzards) to places from the Indian Ocean to North America. La Nina is thought to have played a role in the major floods of 2010-2011 in Queensland, Australia, which were especially damaging because they followed a lengthy El Nino-connected drought.

FIGURE 11.6 A model of the El Niño phenomenon.. (A) Normal equatorial conditions. Water in the equatorial western Pacific (the New Guinea/Australia side) is warmer than water in the eastern Pacific (the Peru side). Due to prevailing wind patterns, the warm water piles up in the west. Warm air rises above the warm-water bulge in the western Pacific and forms rain clouds. The rising air cools, drops its moisture as rain, and, once in the higher atmosphere, moves in an easterly direction. In the east, the now dry, cool air descends, bringing little rainfall to Peru.

(B) Developing El Niño conditions. As an El Niño event develops, the ocean surface’s warm-water bulge begins to move east. The air rising above it splits into two formations, one circling east to west in the upper atmosphere and one west to east.

(C) Fully developed El Nino. Slowly, as the bulge of warm water at the surface of the ocean moves east, it forces the whole system into the fully developed El Nino, with air at the surface and in the upper atmosphere flowing in reverse of normal (A). Instead of warm, wet air rising over the mountains of New Guinea and condensing as rainfall, cool, dry, cloudless air descends to sit at Earth’s surface in the west. Meanwhile, in the east, the normally dry, clear coast of Peru has clouds and rainfall. [*Sources consulted:* Environmental Dynamics Research, Inc., 1998; Ivan Cheung, George Washington University, Geography 137, Lecture 16, October 29, 2001.]

### FAUNA AND FLORA

The fact that Oceania is made up of an isolated continent and numerous islands has affected its animal life *(fauna)* and plant life *(flora).* Many of its species are [**endemic**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident08), meaning that they exist in a particular place and nowhere else on Earth. This is especially true in Australia (of the 750 species of birds known in Australia, more than 325 species are endemic), but many Pacific islands also have endemic species.

**endemic**

belonging or restricted to a particular place

#### Animal and Plant Life in Australia

The uniqueness of Australia’s animal and plant life is the result of the continent’s long physical isolation, large size, relatively homogeneous landforms, and arid climate. Since Australia broke away from Gondwana more than 65 million years ago, its animal and plant species have evolved in isolation. One spectacular result of this isolation is the presence of more than 144 living species of endemic marsupial animals. [**Marsupials**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident09) are mammals whose babies at birth are still at a very immature stage; the marsupial then nurtures them in a pouch equipped with nipples. The best-known marsupials are kangaroos; other marsupials include wombats, koalas, and bandicoots. The [**monotremes**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident10), egg-laying mammals that include the duck-billed platypus and the spiny anteater, are endemic to Australia and New Guinea.

**marsupials**

mammals whose babies at birth are still at a very immature stage; the marsupial then nurtures them in a pouch equipped with nipples

**monotremes**

egg-laying mammals, such as the duck-billed platypus and the spiny anteater

Most of Australia’s endemic plant species are adapted to dry conditions. Many of the plants have deep taproots to draw moisture from groundwater, and small, hard, pale green, or shiny leaves to reflect heat and to hold moisture. Much of the continent is grassland and scrubland with bits of open woodland; there are only a few true forests, found in pockets along the Eastern Highlands and the southwestern tip and in Tasmania ([**FIGURE 11.7**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_1.xhtml#chap11figr0007)). Two plant genera account for nearly all the forest and woodland plants: *Eucalyptus* (450 species, often called gum trees) and *Acacia* (900 species, often called wattles).

#### Plant and Animal Life in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands

Naturalists and evolutionary biologists have had a great interest in the species that inhabited the Pacific islands before humans arrived. Charles Darwin formulated many of his ideas about evolution after visiting the Galápagos Islands of the eastern Pacific (see the [Figure 3.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch3.xhtml#chap03figr0001) map) and the islands of Oceania.

Islands gain plant and animal populations from the sea and air around them as organisms are carried from larger islands and continents by birds, storms, or ocean currents. Once these organisms “colonize” their new home, they may evolve over time into new species that are unique to one island. High, wet islands generally contain more varied species because their more complex environments provide niches for a wider range of wayfarers and thus more opportunities for evolutionary change.

Once they arrive, human inhabitants modify the flora and fauna of islands. In prehistoric times, Asian explorers in oceangoing canoes brought plants such as bananas and breadfruit and animals such as pigs, chickens, and dogs to Oceania.

FIGURE 11.7 Map of Australia’s natural vegetation. Much of Australia is grassland and scrubland. A few forests can be found in the Eastern Highlands, the far southwest, and Tasmania. [Source *consulted:* Tom L. McKnight, *Oceania* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 28.]

European settlers later brought grains, vegetables, fruits, invasive grasses, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, housecats, and rats. Today, human activities from tourism to military exercises to urbanization continue to change the flora and fauna of Oceania.

Generally, the diversity of land animals and plants is richest in the western Pacific, near the larger landmasses. It thins out to the east, where the islands are smaller and farther apart. The natural rain forest flora is rich and abundant in New Zealand and New Guinea, and also on the high islands of the Pacific. However, the natural fauna is much more limited on these islands. While New Guinea has fauna comparable to Australia, to which it was once connected via Sundaland (see [Figure 10.5](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch10_1.xhtml#chap10figr0005)), New Zealand and the Pacific islands have no indigenous land mammals, almost no indigenous reptiles, and only a few indigenous species of frogs, as they were never connected to Australia and New Guinea by a land bridge that land animals could cross. Two indigenous birds in New Zealand, the kiwi and the huge moa (a bird that grew up to 12 feet [3.7 meters] tall), were a major source of food for the Maori people. The moa was hunted to extinction before the Europeans arrived. Today, New Zealand may well be the country with the most nonnative species of mammals, fish, and fowl, nearly all brought there by European settlers (see further discussion of this on [page 629](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#page_629)).

#### THINGS TO REMEMBER

* This largest region of the world is primarily water and has a very small population of just 40 million people.
* The largest land area in Oceania is the continent of Australia.
* The thousands of islands of the Pacific were created either as a result of plate tectonics or volcanic activity.
* The climate of most of the region is warm and humid almost all the time.
* Due to their isolation from the life forms found on other major landmasses, the fauna and flora of the region are unique in many distinctive ways that have informed our knowledge about evolution. Many species, such as marsupials and monotremes, are endemic to the region.

## ENVIRONMENT

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 1**

**Environment:** Oceania faces a host of environmental problems and public awareness of environmental issues is keen. Global climate change, primarily warming, has brought about rising sea levels and increasingly variable rainfall. Other major threats to the region’s unique ecology have come from the introduction of nonnative species and the expansion of herding, agriculture, fishing, fossil fuel extraction, waste disposal, and human settlements.

### GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Oceania, with the exception of Australia, is a minor contributor of greenhouse gases. Australia has some of the world’s highest greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis (see [Figure 1.14](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch1_3.xhtml#chap01figr0014)). Much of Australia’s emissions, like those of the United States, result from the use of automobile-based transportation systems to connect a widely dispersed network of cities and towns. Additionally, Australia’s heavy dependence on coal to generate electricity has led to high emissions, much as coal dependence has in the United States. Because Australia has a relatively small population (23.9 million people in 2015), it accounts for only slightly more than 1 percent of global emissions. However, despite the negligible contributions of greenhouse gases made by the islands of the Pacific, they, as well as Australia, are quite vulnerable to the effects of global climate change ([**FIGURE 11.8**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0008)).

#### Sea Level Rise and Storm Surges

The best scientific research indicates that global warming is raising sea levels mainly through thermal expansion as rising temperatures cause the water in the ocean to expand in size, but also by melting glaciers and polar ice caps. Obviously, this issue is of great concern to residents of islands that already barely rise above the waves (see [Figure 11.8A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0008)). If sea levels rise 4 inches (10 centimeters) per decade, as predicted by the International Panel on Climate Change, many of the lowest-lying Pacific atolls, such as Tuvalu, will disappear under water within 50 years. Other islands, some with already very crowded coastal zones, will see these zones shrink and become more vulnerable to storm surges and cyclones. In late February 2016, the worst cyclone to hit the southern Pacific struck the Fiji island chain, killing 42 and leaving at least 60,000 without shelter, water, and electricity. Wind speeds exceeded 200 miles (325 kilometers) per hour and waves were 40 feet (13 meters) high.

#### Wildfires and Other Water-Related Vulnerabilities

Much of Oceania is particularly vulnerable to the droughts and floods that could result from global climate change. Parts of Australia and some low, dry Pacific islands are already undergoing prolonged droughts and freshwater shortages requiring changes in daily life and livelihoods. The fear is that the severe droughts are not the usual periodic dry spells but may represent permanent alterations in rainfall patterns that could also worsen wildfires. Such fires emerged as a major issue in Australia in February 2009, when 173 people died in a rural firestorm near Melbourne (see [Figure 11.8B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0008)). In 2015 and 2016, repeated wildfires struck Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria—the last three lie in the most humid, and hence most fire-resistant, part of the country.

As fresh water becomes scarcer across the region, *virtual water* (see [Chapter 1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch1.xhtml)) becomes an issue. All export-related activities that permanently consume or degrade fresh water in their extraction or production processes (such as mineral mining;

oil and gas extraction; meat, wool, and wheat production; and tourism-related construction and maintenance) are essentially extracting virtual water from places that are already under water stress. If the true costs of this freshwater depletion were counted and added to the price of the products, these exports might no longer be competitive on the world market—at least not until all global producers understood virtual water accountability to be in their best interests and raised their prices accordingly.

Another concern is that the warming of the oceans could not only result in stronger tropical storms, but also threaten coral reefs and the fisheries that depend on them by causing *coral bleaching* (see [Figure 11.8C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0008)). When ocean waters warm just a few degrees, the living coral organisms expel the algae that live inside and give the coral its color. Coral bleaching is a phenomenon that has affected all reefs in this region in recent years, with scientists announcing, in 2016, Australia’s “biggest ever environmental disaster”: The Great Barrier Reef had lost 50 percent of its coral cover and was vulnerable to losing another 25 percent. Because so many fish depend on reefs, coral bleaching also threatens many fishing communities and ultimately the global food supply. This is especially true on some of the Pacific islands that have few other local food resources. Photos of Great Barrier coral bleaching can be seen at <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/05/14/477963623/new-photos-show-the-rapid-pace-of-great-barrier-reef-bleaching>.

#### Responses to Potential Climate Change Crises

Oceania is pursuing a number of alternative energy strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Although Australia remains dependent on fossil fuel sales (primarily the sale of coal, and also crude oil and natural gas) to Asia, it is pursuing renewable energy strategies for domestic use. These include increasing power production from geothermal, solar, and biomass sources and, because of water shortages, decreasing the emphasis on hydropower. New Zealand has set a goal of obtaining 95 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2025. Much of this energy will come from wind power, which has a great deal of potential in this region, especially in areas near the Roaring Forties. On low Pacific islands, solar energy is now the most widely used alternative to costly and polluting imported fuel.

**FIGURE 11.8 PHOTO ESSAY: Vulnerability to Climate Change in Oceania**

Oceania is vulnerable to a wide variety of hazards related to climate change, including sea level rise, stronger tropical storm intensity, and the availability of water becoming less certain. Fortunately, several countries in this region are already implementing practices that are increasing resilience to climate hazards.

**A** A low-lying atoll in Tuvalu. With its highest point only 14.7 feet (4.5 meters) above sea level, Tuvalu is quite vulnerable to sea level rise. Combined with increased flooding during tropical storms, higher sea levels could make many low islands in this region uninhabitable. Tuvalu's government is already negotiating the future resettlement of parts of its population to nearby nations such as New Zealand.

Torsten Blackwood/Getty Images

**B** A wildfire outside of Brisbane, Australia. Higher temperatures are bringing stronger and more extensive wildfires to this region.

Images by Ni-ree/Moment/Getty Images

**C** A marine biologist monitors the reefs off the coast of Fiji for signs of coral bleaching. Caused by warmer temperatures, coral bleaching threatens many fish species that live on coral reefs. In turn, human communities on Pacific islands are threatened by the loss of fisheries.

Mark Conlin/Getty Images

**D** A vineyard fitted with a drip irrigation system, visible at the base of the vines, in Marlborough, New Zealand. These systems provide resilience in the face of drought and use substantially less water than other irrigation methods.

David Wall Photo/Lonely Planet Images/Getty Images

##### Thinking Geographically

After you have read about the vulnerability to climate change in Oceania, you will be able to answer the following questions.

1. **A** If sea levels rise 4 inches (10 centimeters) per decade, as predicted by the International Panel on Climate Change, name some places other than low-lying islands that will be affected.
2. **B** Check the location of Brisbane and then suggest a reason for why wildfires there are especially alarming.
3. **C** What kinds of actions could humans take to increase the resilience of coral reefs to climate change?
4. **D** Why would irrigation be needed in New Zealand, which has a wet climate?

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE: Water Conservation**

Oceania is a world leader in implementing alternative water technologies. Some of these are simple but effective age-old methods, such as harvesting rainwater from roofs and the ground for household use. Most buildings in rural Australia, New Zealand, and many Pacific islands get at least part of their water this way, relieving surface and groundwater resources. Australia and New Zealand are now stretching water resources further by using very efficient drip irrigation technologies extensively in agriculture (see [Figure 11.8D](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0008)) and new low-cost water-filtration techniques.?

### INVASIVE SPECIES AND FOOD PRODUCTION

European systems for producing food and fiber introduced in Oceania have had a profound effect on its environments. Many of the unique endemic plants and animals of Oceania were displaced by [**invasive species**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident12), organisms that spread aggressively into regions outside their native range, adversely affecting economies or environments. Many *exotic*, or *alien*, plants and animals were brought to Oceania by Europeans to support their food production systems. Ironically, many of these same species are now major threats to food production ([**FIGURE 11.9**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0009)).

**invasive species**

organisms that spread into regions outside their native range, adversely affecting economies or environments

#### Australia

When Europeans first settled the continent, they brought many new animals and plants with them, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. European rabbits are among the most destructive of these introduced species. Early British settlers who enjoyed eating rabbits brought them to Australia. Many were released for hunting, but with no natural predators, the rabbits multiplied quickly, consuming so much of the native vegetation that many indigenous animal species starved. Moreover, rabbits became a major source of agricultural crop loss and reduced the capacity of grasslands to support herds of introduced sheep and cattle. Attempts to control the rabbit population by introducing European foxes and cats backfired as these animals became major invasive species themselves ([**FIGURE 11.10C**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr10)). Foxes and cats have driven several native Australian predator species to extinction without having much effect on the rabbit population. Intentionally introduced diseases have proven more effective at controlling the rabbit population, though rabbits have repeatedly developed resistance to them.

Herding has also had a huge impact on Australian ecosystems. Because the climate is arid and soils in many areas are relatively infertile, the dominant land use in Australia is the grazing of introduced domesticated animals—primarily sheep, but also cattle. More than 15 percent of the land has been allocated for grazing and Australia leads the world in exports of sheep and cattle products.

Dingoes, the indigenous wild dogs of Australia (see [Figure 11.10B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr10)), prey on sheep and young cattle. To separate the wild dogs from the herds, the Dingo Fence—the world’s longest fence—was built. It extends 3488 miles (5614 kilometers) and is unfortunately a major ecological barrier to other wild species. Meanwhile, kangaroos (the natural prey of dingoes) have learned to live on the sheep side of the fence, where their population has boomed beyond sustainable levels.

#### New Zealand

New Zealand’s environment has been transformed by introduced species and food production systems even more extensively than Australia’s environment. No humans lived in New Zealand until about 700 years ago, when the Polynesian Maori people settled there. When they arrived, dense midlatitude rain forest covered 85 percent of the land. The Maori were cultivators who brought in yams and taro as well as other nonnative plants, rats, and birds. By the time of significant European settlement (after 1825), forest clearing and overhunting by the Maori had already degraded many environments and driven several bird species to extinction.

European settlement in New Zealand dramatically intensified environmental degradation. Attempts to re-create European farming and herding systems in New Zealand resulted in environments that today are actually hostile to many native species, a growing number of which are becoming extinct. Only 23 percent of the country remains forested, with ranches, farms, roads, and urban areas claiming more than 90 percent of the lowland area ([**FIGURE 11.11**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr11)).

The ordinary house cat *(Felis catus*), brought from Europe to control rabbits, mice, and rats, is an example of an interloper whose impact has been astonishing. In New Zealand, it is estimated that feral cats kill up to 100 million birds each year. Many of the victims are endemic birds such as *tuis* and *kukupa*, with little inborn wariness for predators. For some, the answer has been to eliminate all feral cats and sterilize all housecats—a project that gained steam in New Zealand in 2013. But this solution has not been popular with New Zealand’s pet lovers or advocates; eliminating or reducing the number of cats may also give rise to a burgeoning rodent population. Despite the attempts to reduce the cat population, cats remain popular: in 2016, 45 percent of New Zealanders still owned one.

Most of New Zealand’s cleared land is used for export-oriented farming and ranching. Grazing has become so widespread that today in New Zealand, there are 15 times as many sheep as people, and 3 times as many cattle. Both farming and ranching have severely degraded the environment. Soils exposed by the clearing of forests proved infertile, forcing farmers and ranchers to augment them with agricultural chemicals. The chemicals, along with feces from sheep and cattle, have seriously polluted many waterways, causing the extinction of some aquatic species.

**FIGURE 11.9 PHOTO ESSAY: Human Impacts on the Biosphere in Oceania**

Despite its vast size and relatively small population, Oceania has been severely affected by human activity. Much of the damage has been done by people from distant countries, as well as countries in Oceania that export resources outside the region.

**A** In 1946, on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands (then a U.S. territory), the United States conducted one of the first underwater tests of a nuclear weapon and its effects on naval vessels. Since then, the United States and France have conducted over 30 nuclear tests in Oceania, some without sufficient attention to nuclear contamination.

Scott Camazine/Getty Images

**B** Once hunted to near extinction to protect sheep herds introduced to the area, the Tasmanian devil is now threatened by low genetic diversity, which leaves it vulnerable to disease.

Danita Delimont/Gallo Images/Getty Images

**C** An endangered great white shark tangled in a fish net off the coast of New Zealand. Fleets from around the world come to Oceania to take advantage of its fisheries, many of which are now overexploited. Many Pacific islands still sell fishing rights to foreign fleets because they need the income.

Kim Westerskov/Getty Images

**D** A herd of sheep in New Zealand, where ranches, farms, roads, and urban areas cover 90 percent of the lowlands. Forests once covered 85 percent of New Zealand, but after two centuries of export-oriented agriculture and forestry, only 23 percent of the country remains forested. In recent decades, there have been increased efforts to conserve the remaining forests.

Raimund Linke/Getty Images

**Thinking Geographically**

*After you read about human impacts on the biosphere in Oceania, you will be able to answer the following questions.*

**A** Why did the nations that conducted nuclear tests in Oceania choose that part of the world?

**B** Why were so many plants and animals brought to Oceania from Europe and what are some negative results?

**C** Why might islands object to foreign fishing fleets in Oceania?

**D** What is the chief present impetus for deforestation in New Zealand?

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE: Environmental Awareness in New Zealand**

New Zealand is a global leader in environmental awareness. It formed the world’s first environmentally focused national political party in 1973—the Green Party of Aotearoa—now the third largest, and spearheaded the world’s first nuclear-free zone in 1984. New Zealand’s government promotes a “clean and green” image internationally, but most New Zealanders acknowledge the severity of existing environmental problems and the need for further action.?

### GLOBALIZATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

As the Pacific islands have become more connected to the global economy over the years, many unique species of plants and animals were driven to extinction as the islands were deforested and mined or converted to commercial agriculture. This has been the case in Hawaii, which is home to more threatened or endangered species than any other U.S. state, despite having less than 1 percent of the U.S. landmass. The extensive conversion of tropical Hawaiian forests to export crops, such as sugar cane and pineapples, has caused the extinction of numerous plant, bird, and land species.

Over the last century, across the span of the Pacific, flows of resources and pollutants have increased dramatically. Mining, nuclear pollution, commercial agriculture and fishing, and tourism are all examples of how globalization has transformed environments in the Pacific islands.

#### Mining in Papua New Guinea and Nauru

Mining has rendered the islanders of Oceania losers in three ways: foreign-owned mining companies that took advantage of poorly enforced or nonexistent environmental laws are responsible for major environmental damage. In the Ok Tedi Mine on Papua New Guinea, 80 million tons of mine waste devastated river systems ([**FIGURE 11.12**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr12)). The environmental degradation forced tens of thousands of indigenous subsistence cultivators into new mining market towns, where their horticulture skills were of little use and where they needed cash to buy food and pay rent. Also, most of the profits of mining go to foreign-owned mining companies, while the best-paying mining jobs go to outsiders.

FIGURE 11.10 LOCAL LIVES: People and Pets in Oceania. A A rainbow lorikeet, a small parrot that is native in much of Oceania. Rainbow lorikeets are popular pets because of their plumage and curious disposition. However, in parts of Australia and New Zealand, they are considered pests because they consume fruit in orchards, are noisy, and leave behind large droppings.

B An Australian dingo, a type of wild dog that lives mainly in the Australian outback. Dingoes were likely brought to Australia by Aboriginal Australians, who used them as guard dogs and possibly as a food source. Shepherds consider dingoes to be pests, and in the 1880s, they built a 3488-mile (5614-kilometer) fence to keep dingoes out of southeastern Australia.

C A cat in New Zealand. Introduced throughout Oceania by Europeans who brought them as pets and to control rodent populations, cats quickly became feral. This had disastrous impacts on native species of marsupials and birds. Cats have been completely removed from several of New Zealand’s smaller islands, including those designated as native bird sanctuaries.

FIGURE 11.11 Land uses and natural resources of New Zealand.. As a result of European settlement and the clearing of land for farming, only 23 percent of New Zealand remains forested. [Source *consulted:* Richard Nile and Christian Clerk, *Cultural Atlas of Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), p. 194.]

In 2007, thirty thousand Papua New Guinea people sued the Australian parent mining company, which was then BHP Billiton, for U.S.$4 billion. Two villagers, Rex Dagi and Alex Maun, traveled to Europe and the United States to explain their cause and meet with international environmental groups. They and their supporters convinced U.S. and German partners in the Ok Tedi Mine to divest their shares.

However, the story of mining disasters in Oceania is extensive. The most extreme case of environmental damage caused by mining took place on the once densely forested Melanesian island of Nauru, which is one-third the size of Manhattan and located northeast of the Solomon Islands (see the [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001) map). Nauru’s wealth was once legendary, based on proceeds from the strip-mining of high-grade phosphates derived from eons of bird droppings (guano) that are used to manufacture fertilizer. The phosphate mining companies were owned first by Germany, then Japan, and finally Australia. For a time in the early 1970s, Nauru had the highest per capita income in the world (although not distributed equitably). Today, the phosphate reserves are nearly depleted, the proceeds have been ill spent, and the environment destroyed. Junked mining equipment sits on miles of bleached white sand where forest once stood. Instead, Nauru now serves as a detention camp for more than 500 asylum-seekers from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Cambodia, and Myanmar (Rohinga). Nauru has become part of Australia’s controversial offshoring policy for those seeking asylum, called the *Pacific Solution*, discussed on [page 644](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#page_644).

FIGURE 11.12 The Ok Tedi Mine. (A) The Ok Tedi open-pit copper and gold mine. A large hole now exists where Mount Fubilan once stood.

(B) The Ok Tedi River as it flows downstream of the mine. Each year since its opening in 1984, the mine has discharged millions of tons of contaminated mine tailings and eroded sediments, resulting in a once-deep river becoming clogged with poisonous runoff that kills many trees along its banks. Sediment from the mine river has killed innumerable fish in the river, contaminated 500 square miles (1300 square kilometers) of farmland, and adversely affected 50,000 people in 120 villages. Litigation against the mine owners is ongoing.

##### Thinking Geographically

The products of the Ok Tedi Mine (gold and copper) are not used by the indigenous subsistence cultivators of Papua New Guinea, yet they were forced off their land and into new mining market towns as a result of sediment and chemical pollution. What are some possible ways to alert consumers of the gold and copper to the negative impacts of mining on indigenous peoples?

#### Nuclear Pollution

The geopolitical aspects of globalization have hit Oceania especially hard. Nuclear weapons testing by France and the United States from the 1940s to the 1960s (during the Cold War), as well as the dumping of nuclear waste by various nuclear powers, have long been major environmental issues for the Pacific islands (see [Figure 11.9A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_2.xhtml#chap11figr0009)). In New Zealand in July 1985, the French secret service blew up the ship *Rainbow Warrior* owned by the antinuclear environmental group Greenpeace. In response, the 1986 Treaty of Rarotonga established the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, which was an expansion of a similar zone set up in New Zealand in 1984. Most independent countries in Oceania signed this treaty, which bans nuclear weapons testing and nuclear waste dumping on their lands. Because of political pressure from France and the United States, however, French Polynesia and U.S. territories such as the Marshall Islands have not signed the treaty.

**Tourism**

Even tourism, which until recently was considered a “clean” industry, can create environmental problems. Foreign-owned tourism enterprises not only take the profits from tourism home and leave the stress and many other social costs of tourism to be absorbed by local communities, they often accelerate the loss of wetlands and worsen beach erosion by clearing coastal vegetation for hotel construction, golf courses, and waterfront-related entertainment.

Tourism has also strained island water resources because of showering, laundering, and other services that consume fresh water. Furthermore, inadequate methods of disposing of sewage and trash from resorts have polluted many once-pristine areas. Ecotourism (see [Chapter 3](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch3.xhtml)) aimed at reducing these impacts is now a common element of development throughout the Pacific, but environmental impacts from ecotourism are still generally high.

**The Great Pacific Garbage Island**

When oceanographer Charles Moore found himself surrounded by a massive floating island of degrading plastic garbage in the north Pacific in 1997, he thought it was an anomaly. But his investigations revealed that the disposable, throwaway aspect of modern living was responsible. The “island” included plastic beverage bottles and caps along with Lego blocks, trash bags, toothbrushes, footballs, and kayaks—indeed, virtually every consumer product made. By 2008, several such garbage masses were floating in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Modern plastics exposed to sunlight degrade into tiny bits that are then ingested by sea birds and animals or into microscopic fragments ingested by filter feeding organisms. The plastics also release carcinogenic chemicals as they break down. Millions of seabirds, sea mammals, and fish die each year after exposure to the residue of this trash. Humans are affected because, as marine scientists say, whatever goes into the ocean is likely to go into the food chain and eventually end up on someone’s dinner plate.

The science of marine debris is young and the research needed must be done by a wide range of experts. In 2014, scientists in Europe and North America discovered a significant accounting error: from the vast amount of plastic manufactured, the five huge circulating masses of trash in the world ocean should have contained 10 to 100 times more plastic than they did. Where is the missing plastic, and what is the impact of all this plastic on marine animals and those who eat them? Efforts to clean up the floating islands of garbage are currently under study but have not yet been implemented.

**The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea**

Based on the idea that all the problems of the world’s oceans are interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) established rules governing all uses of the world’s oceans and seas; it has been ratified by 157 countries (although not the United States). The treaty allows islands to claim rights to ocean resources 200 miles (320 kilometers) out from their shores. Island countries can now make money by licensing privately owned fleets from Japan, South Korea, Russia, the United States, and elsewhere to fish within these offshore limits. As of yet, however, there is no overarching enforcement agency, and protecting the fisheries from overfishing by these rich and powerful licensees has turned out to be an enforcement nightmare for tiny island governments with few resources. Similarly, it has proven difficult to monitor and control the exploitation of seafloor mineral deposits by foreign mining companies.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 1**

* **Environment:** Oceania faces a host of environmental problems and public awareness of environmental issues is keen. Global climate change, primarily warming, has brought about rising sea levels and increasingly variable rainfall. Other major threats to the region’s unique ecology have come from the introduction of nonnative species and the expansion of herding, agriculture, fishing, fossil fuel extraction, waste disposal, and human settlements.
* In an effort to combat global warming, renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuels are being pursued across the region. New Zealand has set a goal of obtaining 95 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2025.
* Throughout Oceania, the introduction of food production systems from elsewhere has resulted in the spread of ecologically and economically damaging invasive plant and animal species.
* Globalization and the patterns of consumption (from mining to vacationing) by people who live far from the Pacific are seriously affecting human and animal life in this region.

# HUMAN PATTERNS OVER TIME

Oceania’s past has been shaped by its ancient settlement from the Asian mainland and by the more recent arrival in Australia and New Zealand of Europeans. Oceania’s present is increasingly being influenced by economic and geographic considerations, particularly its physical proximity to Asia.

### THE PEOPLING OF OCEANIA

The longest-surviving inhabitants of Oceania are [Aboriginal Australians](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident13), whose ancestors (the Australoids) migrated from Southeast Asia 50,000 to 70,000 years ago ([**FIGURE 11.13**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr13); see also [Figure 11.14A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14)), at a time when sea level was somewhat lower. It is possible that some memory of this ancient journey may be preserved in Aboriginal oral traditions, which recall mountains and other geographic features that are now submerged under water. At about the same time that the Aboriginal Australians were settling Australia and Tasmania, related groups were settling nearby areas. The distribution of these groups, the sequence of settlement, and the navigation skills necessary to explore and occupy this huge oceanic environment are complex. [Figure 11.13](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr13) and the vignette about Mau Piailug, the modern-day Micronesian navigator, are attempts to clarify this story.

**Aboriginal Australians**

the longest-surviving inhabitants of Oceania, whose ancestors, the Australoids, migrated from Southeast Asia 50,000 to 70,000 years ago over the Sundaland landmass that was exposed during the ice ages

FIGURE 11.13 Primary indigenous culture groups of Oceania. By 50,000 to 70,000 years ago, humans had come to New Guinea and Australia. About 25,000 years ago, people began moving across the ocean to nearby Pacific islands. Movement into the more distant islands commenced with the arrival of Austronesians, who went on to inhabit the farthest reaches of Oceania. The largest culture group is Polynesia, which stretches from Hawaii to Easter Island (Rapa Nui, which is so far east that it is not on this map), to New Zealand. [Source *consulted:* Richard Nile and Christian Clerk, *Cultural Atlas of Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), pp. 58–59.]

[**Melanesians**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident14), so named for their relatively dark skin tones, a result of high levels of the protective pigment *melanin*, migrated throughout New Guinea and other nearby islands, giving this area its name, [Melanesia](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident15). Archaeological evidence indicates that they first arrived more than 50,000 to 60,000 years ago from Sundaland (see [Figure 10.5](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch10_1.xhtml#chap10figr0005)), a now-submerged shelf exposed during the Pleistocene epoch. They lived in isolated pockets, which resulted in the evolution of hundreds of distinct yet related languages. Like the Aboriginal Australians, the early Melanesians survived mostly by hunting, gathering, and fishing, although some groups—especially those inhabiting the New Guinea highlands—eventually practiced agriculture.

**Melanesians**

a group of Australoids named for their relatively dark skin tones, a result of high levels of the protective pigment melanin; they settled throughout New Guinea and other nearby islands

**Melanesia**

New Guinea and the islands south of the equator and west of Tonga (the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Fiji, and Vanuatu)

**VIGNETTE** *With courage, you can travel anywhere in the world and never be lost. Because I have faith in the words of my ancestors, I’m a navigator.*

MAU PIAILUG (1932–2010)

In 1976, Mau Piailug made history by sailing a reconstruction of a traditional double-hulled Pacific island voyaging canoe, the *Hōkūle’a*, across the 2400 miles (3860 kilometers) of deep ocean between Hawaii and Tahiti. He did so without a compass, charts, or other modern instruments, using only methods passed down through his family. To find his way, he relied mainly on observations of the stars, the Sun, and the Moon. When clouds covered the sky, he used the patterns of ocean waves and swells as well as the presence of seabirds to tell him of distant islands over the horizon.

Piailug reached Tahiti 33 days after leaving Hawaii and made the return trip in 22 days. His voyage resolved a major scholarly debate over how people settled the many remote islands of the Pacific without navigational instruments thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. Some thought that navigation without instruments was impossible and argued that would-be settlers simply drifted about on their canoes at the mercy of the winds, most of them starving to death on the seas, with a few happening upon new islands by chance. It was hard to refute this argument because local navigational methods had died out almost everywhere. However, in isolated Micronesia, where Piailug lived, indigenous navigational traditions still survive.

After the successful 1976 voyage, Piailug trained several students in traditional navigational techniques. His efforts have become a symbol of cultural rebirth and a source of pride throughout the Pacific. In 2007, the protégés of Mau Piailug sailed from Hawaii through the Marshall Islands to Yokohama, Japan, to celebrate peace and the human need to stay connected with nature. In 2016, the *Hokule’a* arrived in the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., as part of a global traverse using Polynesian *wayfinding* navigation techniques. *[Source: Facts on File, 2007; NPR, 2016.]*

Long after Melanesia was settled, [**Micronesia**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident16) and [**Polynesia**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident17) were settled between 5000 to 6000 years ago and other islands as recently as 1000 years ago, by linguistically related *Austronesians.* The Austronesians were a group of skilled farmers and seafarers originally from southern China who migrated through Southeast Asia and into the Pacific, sometimes mixing with the Melanesian peoples they encountered (see [Chapter 10](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch10.xhtml)). Micronesia consists of the small islands that lie east of the Philippines and north of the equator (see the [Figure 11.13](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr13) map). Polynesia is made up of numerous islands situated inside the large, irregular triangle formed by New Zealand, Hawaii, and Easter Island. (Easter Island, also called Rapa Nui, is a tiny speck of land in the far eastern Pacific, at 109° W 27° S, not shown in the figures in this chapter.) The voyages of Mau Piailug (see the vignette above) and recent experiments run by Polynesians have provided evidence that ancient sailors could navigate over vast distances using seasonal winds, astronomic calculations, bird and aquatic life, and wave patterns to reach the most far-flung islands of the Pacific. The Polynesians were fishers, hunter-gatherers, and cultivators who developed complex cultures and maintained trading relationships among their widely spaced islands.

**Micronesia**

the small islands that lie east of the Philippines and north of the equator

**Polynesia**

the numerous islands situated inside an irregular triangle formed by New Zealand, Hawaii, and Easter Island

In the millennia that have passed since first settlement, humans have continued to circulate throughout Oceania. Some apparently set out because their own space was overcrowded and full of conflict or because food reserves were declining. It is also likely that Pacific peoples were enticed to new locales by the same lures that later attracted some of the more romantic explorers from Europe and elsewhere: sparkling beaches, magnificent blue skies, aromatic breezes, and lovely landscapes.

### THE SAGA OF RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)

One of the most fascinating mysteries about the exploration and settlement of the Pacific by indigenous people is that regarding Easter Island (Rapa Nui), a 63-square-mile (163-square-kilometer) volcanic formation 2283 miles (3512 kilometers) off the west coast of Chile. Archeological evidence suggests that the island was settled by 100 or fewer Polynesian people about 1200 C.E. They arrived in double-hulled canoes. Over 900 monolithic human figures carved from local rock attest to a vibrant society that could support massive artworks, yet by the time Europeans arrived in 1722, decline was well under way, sparking a debate. Was environmental collapse the explanation for the decline, or political revolution, or diseases of some sort? Collaborative research by universities in California, Virginia, Spain, New Zealand, and Denmark have contributed to the developing understanding that Rapa Nui people experienced decline because of a range of environmental problems that prohibited continual production of sufficient food; this decline preceded the arrival of Europeans.

### POSSIBILITIES OF EARLY CONTACT BETWEEN PACIFIC PEOPLES AND THE AMERICAS

Somehow, around 1300 C.E. (19 to 23 generations ago), the Rapa Nui were able to overcome their difficulties to a degree sufficient enough to continue exploration further to the east. Genomic data show that the Rapa Nui traveled to coastal South America long before Europeans appeared in the Americas or the Pacific, and there, they mixed with Native Americans. This evidence coincides with other studies that recently have found genomic proof of ancient Polynesian ancestry among indigenous Brazilians. And now, the long puzzling fact that sweet potatoes, genetically derived from sweet potatoes domesticated in South America, were being cultivated in the Pacific long before European contact, may have been explained. They were the result of very early contact between Polynesian people and Native Americans.

### ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS IN THE PACIFIC

The earliest recorded contact between Pacific peoples and Europeans took place in 1521, when the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan (exploring for Spain) landed on the island of Guam in Micronesia. The encounter ended badly. The islanders, intrigued by European vessels, tried to take a small skiff. For this crime, Magellan had his men kill the offenders and burn their village to the ground. A few months later, Magellan was himself killed by islanders in what later became the Philippines, which he had claimed for Spain. Nevertheless, by the 1560s, the Spanish had set up a lucrative Pacific trade route between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco on the west coast of Mexico. Explorers from other European states followed, first taking an interest mainly in the region’s valuable spices. The British and French explored Oceania extensively in the eighteenth century ([**FIGURE 11.14C**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14)).

FIGURE 11.14 VIS UAL HIS TO RY OF OCEANIA.

**Thinking Geographically**

*After you have read about the human history of Oceania, you will be able to answer the following questions.*

**A** From where did the ancestors of Aboriginal Australians migrate to Oceania?

**B** Why did Europeans find it hard to believe that Polynesians could navigate boats like the one in this painting over the wide span of the Pacific and successfully find their way back and forth?

**C** What were the chief interests of early Europeans when they came to Oceania in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries?

**D** Summarize the sequence of immigrants to Australia from early years of European settlement to the present.

**E** Until World War II (approximately) on what did the economy in most parts of Oceania depend?

**F** What is the present role of Asians in the makeup of Australia’s population?

The Pacific was not formally divided among the colonial powers until the nineteenth century. By that time, the United States, Germany, and Japan had joined France and Britain in taking control of various island groups. As in other regions, the European colonizers of Oceania emphasized extractive agriculture and mining. Because native people were often displaced from their lands or exposed to exotic diseases to which they had no immunity, their populations declined sharply.

**THE COLONIZATION OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

Although all of Oceania has been under European or U.S. rule at some point, the most Westernized parts of the region are Australia and New Zealand. The colonization of these two countries by the British has resulted in Australia and New Zealand having many parallels with North America. In fact, the American Revolution was a major impetus for “settling” Australia because once the North American colonies became independent, the British needed another location where they could send their convicts and other outcasts. In early-nineteenth-century Britain, a relatively minor theft—for example, of a piglet—might be punished with 7 years of hard labor in Australia (see [Figure 11.14D](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14)).

A steady flow of English and Irish convicts arrived in Australia until 1868. Most of the convicts chose to stay in the colony after their sentences were served and are given credit for Australia’s rustic self-image and egalitarian spirit. They were joined by a much larger group of voluntary immigrants from the British Isles who were attracted by the availability of inexpensive farmland. Waves of these immigrants continued to arrive until World War II. New Zealand was settled in the mid-1800s, somewhat later than Australia. Although its population also derives primarily from British immigrants, New Zealand was never a penal colony.

Another similarity among Australia, New Zealand, and North America was the treatment of indigenous peoples by European settlers. In both Australia and New Zealand, native peoples were killed outright, annihilated by infectious diseases, or shifted to the margins of society. The few who lived on territory the Europeans deemed undesirable were able to maintain their traditional ways of life. However, the vast majority of the survivors lived and worked in grinding poverty, either in urban slums or on cattle and sheep ranches. Today, native peoples still suffer from discrimination and maladies such as alcoholism and malnutrition. Even so, some progress is being made toward improving their lives (see pages 651-652). In 2008, the then newly elected prime minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, officially apologized to Aboriginal people for the treatment they have received since the land was first colonized.

Closely related to attitudes toward indigenous people were attitudes toward immigrants of any color other than white. By 1901, a whites-only policy (called the “White Australia policy”) governed Australian immigration, with favored migrants coming from the British Isles and (after World War II) from southern Europe. This discrimination persisted until the mid-1970s, when the White Australia policy on immigration was ended. In New Zealand, where similar racist attitudes prevailed, there was never an official whites-only policy, and by the 1970s, students and immigrants were arriving from Asia and the Pacific islands. But controversy over immigration in Australia and New Zealand continues. Recently, debate has centered on the arrival of refugees by boat from various parts of Asia, including Iraq, Iran, Syria, Myanmar, and Cambodia (see [Figure 11.17A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#chap11figr0017) and the discussion on [page 644](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#page_644)).

**OCEANIA’S SHIFTING GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS**

During the twentieth century, Oceania’s relationship with the rest of the world went through three phases: from a predominantly European focus, to identification with the United States and Canada, and finally to the currently emerging linkage with Asia.

Until roughly World War II, the colonial system gave the region a European orientation. In most places, the economy depended largely on the export of raw materials to Europe (see [Figure 11.14E](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14)). Thus, even when a colony gained independence from Britain, as did Australia in 1901 and New Zealand in 1907, people remained strongly tied to their mother countries. Even today, the queen of England remains the titular head of state in both countries. During World War II, however, the European powers provided only token resistance to Japan’s invasion of much of the Pacific and its bombing of northern Australia. This impotence on the part of Europe spurred a change in the region’s political and economic orientation.

After World War II, the United States, which already had a strong foothold in the Philippines, became the dominant power in the Pacific and U.S. investment grew more important to the economies of Oceania. Australia and New Zealand joined the United States in a Cold War military alliance, and both fought alongside the United States in Korea and Vietnam, suffering considerable casualties and experiencing significant antiwar activity at home. U.S. cultural influences became strong, too, as North American products, technologies, movies, and pop music penetrated much of Oceania.

By the 1970s, another shift took place as many of the island groups were granted self-rule by their European colonizers, with Oceania steadily drawn into the growing economies of Asia. Since the 1960s, Australia’s thriving mineral export sector has become increasingly geared toward supplying raw materials to Asian manufacturing industries (primarily Japan in the 1960s and China since the 1990s). Similarly, New Zealand’s wool and dairy exports have gone mostly to Asian markets since the 1970s. Despite occasional backlashes against “Asianization,” Australia, New Zealand, and the rest of Oceania are being transformed by Asian influences. Many Pacific islands have significant Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Indian minorities, and the small Asian minorities of Australia and New Zealand are growing in population (see [Figure 11.14F](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14)). On some Pacific islands, such as Hawaii, Asians now constitute the largest portion (42 percent in Hawaii, for example) of the population.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

* Oceania can be divided into four distinct indigenous cultural regions: Australia and Tasmania, originally settled by Aboriginal Australians; Melanesia, settled by Melanesians; and Micronesia and Polynesia (includes New Zealand and Hawaii), settled by a variety of Austronesian peoples.
* Through colonization, Europeans were active in Oceania from the early sixteenth century (in New Zealand, after 1642) until the end of World War II. During the 50 years after the war, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand were the principal powers in the Pacific.
* Since the 1970s, the influence of Asian countries has grown throughout Oceania.

# GLOBALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 2**

**Globalization and Development:** Globalization, coupled with Oceania’s stronger focus on neighboring Asia (rather than long-time connections with Europe and North America), has transformed patterns of trade and economic development across Oceania. These changes are driven largely by Asia’s growing affluence, its enormous demand for resources, and its similarly massive production of manufactured goods.

### GLOBALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND OCEANIA’S NEW ASIAN ORIENTATION

One could say that globalization in Oceania began when the first European explorers arrived in the region, beginning the trend of influence by outsiders (primarily Europeans) on settlement, culture, and economics. More recently, the United States has exerted a powerful influence on trade and politics in the region. For the past several decades, however, globalization has reoriented this region toward Asia, which buys more than 70 percent of Australia’s exports (mainly coal, iron ore, and other minerals). In 2011, China and India each purchased not only the output of mines, but also major shares of Australia’s particularly high-quality coal deposits. Both countries use coal to generate energy and are trying to secure future access to more high-quality coal that produces relatively lower harmful emissions. Asia also buys nearly 40 percent of New Zealand’s exports (primarily meat, wood, wool, wine, and dairy products), as well as many other products and services from islands across Oceania ([**FIGURE 11.15**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_4.xhtml#chap11figr15)).

FIGURE 11.15 Exports from Oceania. The colors of each pie chart indicate a country’s export trading partners. The “other” sections can include trade with Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, non-EU Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and other locales, some of them new trading partners. (Figures for Hawaii do not include exports to other parts of the United States.) *[Sources consulted: The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>; “East Asian and Pacific Affairs: Countries and Other Areas,” U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/ci/index.htm>.]

In addition, Asia is a major source of the region’s imports. Because there is relatively little manufacturing in Oceania, most manufactured goods are imported from China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Thailand—Oceania’s leading trading partners. Both Australia and New Zealand have free trade agreements either completed or in continuous negotiation with Asia’s two largest economies, China and Japan.

The Pacific islands are further along in their reorientation toward Asia than are Australia and New Zealand. Not only are coconut, forest, and fish products from the Pacific islands sold to Asian markets, but Asian companies own more and more of these industries on the various islands. Fleets from Asia regularly fish the offshore waters of Pacific island nations. Asians also dominate the Pacific island tourist trade, both as tourists and as investors in the tourism infrastructure. And growing numbers of Asians are taking up residence in the Pacific islands, exerting widespread economic and social influence.

### THE STRESSES OF ASIA’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT “MIRACLE” ON AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

For Australia and New Zealand, Asia’s global economic rise has generated both more trade and more competition with Asian economies in foreign markets. Throughout Oceania, local industries formerly enjoyed protected or preferential trade with Europe. They have lost that advantage because European Union (EU) regulations stemming from the EU’s membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) prohibit such arrangements. No longer protected in their trade with Europe, local industries now face stiff competition from larger companies in Asia that benefit from much cheaper labor.

Australia and New Zealand are somewhat unusual in having achieved broad prosperity not from manufacturing, but rather from the exporting of raw materials over a long period of time and to a wide range of customers (see [Figures 11.14E](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_3.xhtml#chap11figr14) and [11.15](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_4.xhtml#chap11figr15)). Preferential trade with Europe allowed higher profits for many export industries. Meanwhile, strong labor movements in Australia and New Zealand meant that profits from these extractive industries were more equitably distributed throughout society than the profits in typical raw materials-based economies in Middle and South America and sub-Saharan Africa. Australian coal miners' unions successfully agitated not just for good wages, but also for the world’s first 35-hour workweek. Other labor unions won a minimum wage, pensions, and aid to families with children long before such programs were enacted in many other industrialized countries. For decades, these arrangements were very successful. Both Australia and New Zealand had living standards comparable to those in North America but with a more egalitarian distribution of income. Since the 1970s, however, competition from Asian companies has seen many workers in Australia and New Zealand lose their jobs and their hard-won benefits scaled back or eliminated.

More recently, competition from Asian companies has also led to lower corporate profits in Oceania. As these profits have fallen, so have government tax revenues, which has resulted in cuts to previously high rates of social spending on welfare, health care, and education. The loss of social support, especially for those who have lost jobs, has contributed to rising poverty in recent years. Australia now has the second-highest poverty rate in the industrialized world. (The United States has the highest.)

#### Maintaining Raw Materials Exports as Service Economies Develop

Although their monetary contribution to national economies remains high, industries that export raw materials are a decreasing economic sector in the economies of Australia and New Zealand in that they now employ fewer people because of mechanization. This shift to replacing human labor with machinery has been essential for these industries to stay globally competitive with other countries where living standards are lower and workers are paid much less.

Today, the economies of both Australia and New Zealand are dominated by diverse and growing service sectors, which have links to the region’s export sectors. Extracting minerals and managing herds and cropland have become technologically sophisticated enterprises that depend on many supporting services and an educated workforce rather than physical labor. Australia is now a world leader in providing technical and other services to mining and engineering companies, sheep farmers, and winemakers, and New Zealand’s well-educated workforce and well-developed marketing infrastructure have helped it break into luxury markets for dairy products, meats, and fruits. Perhaps the most visible success has been New Zealand’s global marketing of the indigenous kiwifruit *(Actinidia deliciosa*, a gooseberry native to southern China), now found in most U.S. food markets. *(Kiwi*, the slang term for anyone from New Zealand, originated with the flightless Kiwi bird, not the fruit.)

### ECONOMIC CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

In general, the Pacific islands are also shifting away from extractive industries, such as mining, farming, and fishing, and toward service industries, such as tourism and government. But, on many islands, self-sufficiency and resources from abroad cushion the stress of economic change, because many island households still construct their own homes and rely on fishing and subsistence cultivation for much of their food supply. On the islands of Fiji, for example, part-time subsistence agriculture engages more than 60 percent of the population, although it accounts for just under 17 percent of the gross national income. Remittances sent home from the thousands of Pacific Islanders working abroad are essential to many Pacific island economies and constitute more than half of all income on some islands. However, remittances are rarely reported as part of official statistics.

In the relatively poor nations and those with less-skilled populations (the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and parts of Papua New Guinea, for example), conditions typify what has been termed a [**MIRAB economy**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident19)—one based on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy. Foreign aid from former or present colonial powers supports government bureaucracies that supply employment for the educated and semiskilled. Although a MIRAB economy has little potential for growth, Islanders who can be self-sufficient in terms of food and shelter while saving extra cash for travel and occasional purchases of manufactured goods are sometimes said to have achieved [**subsistence affluence**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident20).

**MIRAB economy**

an economy based on migration, remittances, and an aid-supported bureaucracy

**subsistence affluence**

a lifestyle whereby people are self-sufficient with regard to most necessities and have some opportunities to save cash for travel and occasional purchases of manufactured goods

Where there is poverty in the Pacific, it is often related to geographic isolation, which means a lack of access to information and economic opportunity. Although computers and the new global communication networks (Internet and cell-phone service) are not yet widely available in the Pacific islands, they have the potential to significantly alleviate this isolation.

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE: Subsistence Affluence Practices Could Go Global**

Those concerned with global sustainability have noted that many of the qualities of *subsistence affluence* practiced by Pacific Islanders have the potential to be expanded upon and adapted to other places. For example, local self-sufficiency based on home gardening and resource conservation strategies has been diffused to North America by Pacific Islander emigrants. The low-key optimism and accepting attitude toward life that are characteristic of Oceania have also been recognized as admirable and teachable qualities useful in many global locales.?

**The Advantages and Stresses of Tourism**

Tourism is a growing part of the economy throughout Oceania. Tourists come largely from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Europe ([**FIGURE 11.16**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_4.xhtml#chap11figr16)). In 2013 (the latest year for which complete figures are available), 17.7 million tourists arrived in Oceania. Of those tourists, 23 percent came from Asia—16 percent from Japan alone; just 11 percent came from Europe, down from 17 percent in recent years; 33 percent came from North America; 19 percent were from within Oceania; and

FIGURE 11.16 Tourism in Oceania. Tourism plays a major role in the economies of Oceania. Australia is the most popular destination, attracting about one-third of the total volume of tourists. The origins of the tourists reflect changing trade patterns in the region, with more and more journeying from Asia. Here, you see hotels on Honolulu’s Waikiki Beach, which provide lodging for a majority of Hawaii’s 6 million or more yearly visitors. Nearby is the giant Ala Moana shopping center geared to meet the tourists' shopping needs.

Large numbers of visitors expecting to be entertained and graciously accommodated can place a special stress on local inhabitants. In some Pacific island groups, the number of tourists far exceeds the island population. Guam, for example, receives tourists annually in numbers equivalent to five times its population. Palau and the Northern Mariana Islands annually receive more than four times their populations. And although they bring money to the islands' economies, these visitors create problems for island ecologies, place extra burdens on scarce resources (land, water, fuel, food, and waste management systems), and expect a standard of living that may be far out of reach for local people. Perhaps nowhere else in the region are the issues raised by tourism as clear as they are in Hawaii.

**CASE STUDY: Conflict over Tourism in Hawaii**

Since the 1950s, travel and tourism have been the largest industries in Hawaii, accounting for around 20 percent of the gross state product in 2015. Tourism is related in one way or another to nearly 75 percent of all jobs in the state. (By comparison, travel and tourism account for 9 percent of GDP worldwide.) In 2014, tourism employed one out of every six Hawaiians and accounted for 20 percent of state tax revenues.

Dramatic fluctuations in tourist visits, often driven by forces far removed from Oceania, can wreak havoc on local economies. Decreases in tourism affect not just tourist facilities but supporting industries as well. For example, the construction industry thrives by building condominiums, hotels, resorts, and retirement facilities. The Asian recession of the late 1990s, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the global recession of 2008-2009 all affected Hawaii’s economy by creating dramatic slumps in tourist visits. By 2015, however, Hawaii’s tourism industry rebounded: more than 8.6 million visitors arrived that year, up 22 percent over 2009.

To ordinary citizens, mass tourism can sometimes seem like an invading force. For example, in 2015, Hawaii hosted eight tourists for every one Hawaiian. But what was the real net benefit of all these visitors, who had to be housed, fed, entertained (and cleaned up after)? This is a question Hawaiians continue to ask themselves. Furthermore, an important segment of the Honolulu tourist infrastructure—hotels, golf courses, specialty shopping centers, import shops, and nightclubs—is geared exclusively to foreign visitors and many such facilities are owned by foreign investors. Hawaiian citizens and even some vacationers can feel out of place in facilities focused on high-end foreign consumers.

Just the demand for golf courses imposed by mass tourism has resulted in what Native (indigenous) Hawaiians view as the desecration of sacred sites. Land that in precolonial times was communally owned, cultivated, and used for sacred rituals was first confiscated by the colonial government and more recently sold to Asian golf course developers. Now the only people with access to the sacred sites are fee-paying tourist golfers.

Nevertheless, the golf industry cannot be ignored. As of 2015, there were more than 90 golf courses in Hawaii, and the golf industry alone contributed $1.6 billion to the state’s economy— more than twice the amount from agriculture. Golf’s total economic impact is $2.5 billion, which represents about 12.5 percent of the state’s income from the tourism sector, a fact that confuses the picture for those who oppose golf on environmental grounds.

The pressure to make land available for tourism of all kinds has decreased access to land by local citizens. For example, retired mainland Americans who relocate to Hawaii in search of a sunny spot—in what is often called *residential tourism*—have caused property values to rise steeply and thereby increased the costs of housing for local people. [Sources: *Hawaii Tourism Authority and a field report from Conrad M. Goodwin and Lydia Pulsipher. For detailed source information, see Text Sources and Credits.]*

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE: Sustainable Tourism**

Some Pacific islands have attempted to deal with the pressures of tourism by adopting the principle of *sustainable tourism*, which aims to decrease tourism’s imprint and minimize disparities between hosts and visitors. Samoa, with financial aid from New Zealand, has developed sustainable tourism components (beaches, wetlands, forested island environments, and cultural attractions) and its islanders provide *knowledge-based tourism experiences* for the conscious traveler. These experiences are information-rich explanations of Samoa’s political, social, and environmental issues. The initiative began in 2009, but by 2015, Samoa’s tourism economy, while viable, was still not on a par with those of other Pacific islands. A locally published opinion piece, by Olivia Peterkin, noted that perhaps Samoa’s sustainable tourism innovations could not result in big earnings, but they might indeed bring about long-term sustainability. *[Source consulted:* “Samoa’s Dwindling Tourism Industry,” Think Global: Oceania, November 3, 2015. <https://thinkglobaloceania.wordpress.com/2015/11/03/samoas-dwindling-tourism-industry/>.]

**THE FUTURE: DIVERSE GLOBAL ORIENTATIONS?**

Despite the powerful forces pushing Oceania toward Asia, important factors still favor strong ties with Europe and North America. In spite of the trade links and China’s recent efforts to expand diplomatic and cultural relations with Australia, both Australia and New Zealand remain staunch military allies of the United States. Over the years, both have participated in U.S.-led wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In 2012, in an apparent effort to check the growing influence of the Chinese military in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, the Australian government gave the U.S. Marine Corps access to a large tract of land near Darwin (located in Australia’s Northern Territory). The United States and Australia also opened discussions regarding the use of the Cocos Islands (Australian possessions in the Indian Ocean) for reconnaissance purposes.

In some of the Pacific islands, strong links to Europe and North America are also upheld by Europe and the United States' continuing administrative control. In Micronesia, the United States governs Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands; in Polynesia, American Samoa is a U.S. territory. Just as the Hawaiian Islands are a U.S. state, the 120 islands of French Polynesia—including Tahiti and the rest of the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands, and the Tuamotu Archipelago—are Overseas Lands of France. Any desire people in these possessions have for independence has not been sufficient to override the financial benefits of aid, subsidies, and investment money provided by France and the United States.

In 1989, the [***Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)***](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident21), a coalition of 21 Pacific countries, was formed. Today, these states account for approximately 40 percent of the world’s population, just over 50 percent of global production, and more than 40 percent of global trade. APEC members include Oceania’s most populous countries (Australia, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand), as well as Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taipei, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. APEC was organized to enhance economic prosperity and strengthen the Asia-Pacific community, and while much is made of its potential, its inability to compel its membership to act in any significant way has led some to dismiss the group as a pointless “talk shop.”

***Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)***

a group of 21 Pacific Rim countries organized in 1989 to increase trade and cooperation

An important effort to get APEC to evolve into a more potent force, perhaps to place it on a par with the European Union (after which it is partially patterned), is the [***Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)***](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident22) agreement brought forward in its final negotiated (but as of 2016, unapproved) form in October 2015. The TPP is seen by some as a way to smooth relations between Asia, Oceania, and the United States in matters of trade, food security, climate change, product regulations, and energy-efficient transportation. Others (surveyed among the public in the United States, Japan, and Mexico) view the TPP as mostly a give-away to international business that would result in the movement of jobs to low-wage Asian countries and the limiting of competition, thus encouraging higher prices for consumers. The provision that would allow multinational corporations to challenge regulations before special tribunals, in particular, is intensely opposed by critics in the United States.

***Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)***

the largest regional trade accord in history that, if approved, would set new terms for trade between the United States and eleven other Pacific Rim countries

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 2**

* **Globalization and Development:** Globalization, coupled with Oceania’s stronger focus on neighboring Asia (rather than long-time connections with Europe and North America), has transformed patterns of trade and economic development across Oceania. These changes are driven largely by Asia’s growing affluence, its enormous demand for resources, and its similarly massive production of manufactured goods.
* Service industries are becoming the dominant source of income for most of Oceania’s economies, although extractive industries remain important.
* Tourism is a significant and growing part of the economies in Oceania, but it can produce environmental and social stresses for the host countries.
* Oceania is at the center of a unique attempt by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) alliance to forge international cooperation on trade, food security, climate change, and energy-efficient transportation, which may culminate in adoption of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

# POWER AND POLITICS

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 3**

**Power and Politics:** Stark divisions have emerged in Oceania over definitions of democracy—the system of government that dominates in New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii—versus the Pacific Way, a political and cultural philosophy based on the communitarian values of traditional cultures of the Pacific islands. The global refugee crisis tests this region’s ability to maintain its reputation as a humanitarian refuge and zone of opportunity that values social cohesion.

In Australia and New Zealand, government is based on European-style parliamentary systems grounded on universal voting rights for adults, free speech, debate, and majority rule. Democratic principles influence debate and conflict resolution from the community level to the national level, and the internal and external political issues faced by Australia and New Zealand bear a strong similarity. Both have majority populations with a European heritage and large minority populations of indigenous people—Aboriginal people in Australia and Maori (Polynesian) in New Zealand. Political issues that drive internal debate in both countries include how to manage migration between the two countries and immigration from outside; how to maintain social cohesion in the face of increasing diversity; how to adjust their resource export-based economies to a greater focus on technical innovation and services; and how to reformulate international relationships as the region pivots from strong ethnic and economic connections to Europe to closer associations with Asia.

By contrast, the [**Pacific Way**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident24) is based on traditional notions of power and problem solving and refers to a way of settling issues familiar to many Pacific Islanders. It was developed in small communities where decisions are reached in face-to-face meetings, and consensus and mutual understanding are favored rather than open confrontation and majority rule. High value is placed on respect for traditional leadership (especially the usual patriarchal leadership of families and villages) rather than on political freedoms such as free speech and individuality. As such, the Pacific Way can embody very different, but not invalid, definitions of fairness and corruption than do parliamentary systems.

**Pacific Way**

the regional identity and way of handling conflicts peacefully that grows out of Pacific Islanders' particular social experiences

## The Pacific Way in Fiji

As a political and cultural philosophy, the Pacific Way was articulated as a formal concept in Fiji around the time of Fiji’s independence from the United Kingdom in 1970. It subsequently gained popularity in many other Pacific islands, most of which gained independence in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Pacific Way carries a flavor of resistance to Europeanization and has often been invoked to uphold the notion of a regional identity shared by Pacific islands that grows out of their unique history and social experience. It was particularly influential among educators given the task of writing new textbooks to replace those used by the former colonial masters. The new texts focused students' attention away from Britain, France, and the United States and toward their own cultures. Appeals to the Pacific Way have also been used to uphold attempts by Pacific island governments to control their own economic development and solve their own political and social problems.

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE: The Value of the Pacific Way to Grassroots Sustainability**

Regardless of its global political status, the Pacific Way is likely to endure, especially as a concept that upholds Pacific regional identity and traditional culture. Furthermore, some organizations now use the Pacific Way as the basis for an integrated approach to economic development and the resolution of environmental issues. For example, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) builds on traditional Pacific island economic activities—such as fishing and local traditions that require knowledge and awareness of the environment—to promote grassroots economic development and environmental sustainability. The strategic focuses of SPREP are climate change, biodiversity, and environmental policy design. Implementation of Pacific Way procedures by SPREP has the reputation of facilitating the involvement of the public perhaps more effectively than so-called democratic approaches.

In managing political conflict, the Pacific Way has proven to have a down side, at least from the perspective of those favoring Western-style democracy, because the Pacific Way has occasionally been invoked as a philosophical basis for overriding democratic elections if the results challenge the power of indigenous Pacific Islanders. In 1987, 2000, and 2006, indigenous Fijians used the Pacific Way to justify coups d’état against legally elected governments ([**FIGURE 11.17B**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#chap11figr0017)). All three of the overthrown governments were dominated by Indian Fijians, the descendants of people from India whom the British brought to Fiji more than a century ago to work on sugar plantations.

Fiji’s population is now about evenly divided between indigenous Fijians and Indian Fijians. Indigenous Fijians are generally less prosperous and tend to live in rural areas where community affairs are still governed by traditional chiefs. Indian Fijians, in contrast, hold significant economic and political power, especially in the urban centers and in areas of tourism and sugar cultivation. In response to the coups, many Indian Fijians left Fiji, resulting in a loss of badly needed skilled workers that has slowed economic development.

**FIGURE 11.17 PHOTO ESSAY: Power and Politics in Oceania**

Politics in this region vary significantly between the more Europeanized areas of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, and the more indigenous and traditional political cultures of New Guinea and many Pacific islands. Recently, the political culture of Australia and New Zealand coupled with their proximity to Asia has made these countries the focus of people fleeing poverty and persecution in Earth’s trouble spots.

Mark Kolbe/Getty Images

**A** A funeral at an immigration detention facility on Christmas Island, Australia, for refugees from Iraq and Iran who drowned while trying to reach Australia by boat. Immigration has been a political hot-button issue in Australia for many years. Particularly controversial is Australia's so-called *Pacific Solution*—a policy of paying Pacific islands, such as Nauru and Papua New Guinea, to take in refugee asylum-seekers, who arrive by smuggler's boats, and keep them indefinitely in detention facilities. Here, they may wait for years in prison-like conditions for their applications for asylum to be judged. Some Australians believe that because relatively few refugees come to their country, those who do should be treated better and accepted more quickly. Others see refugees as a security risk or an economic drain and insist that the long detentions will discourage other refugees from coming to Australia.

William West/Getty Images

**B** A Fijian soldier during the military coup of 206, which overturned the fair election of officials who were Indian-Fijian. Military takeovers also took place in Fiji in 1987 and 20.

Torsten Blackwood/Getty Images

**C** Members of a violent criminal gang guard the entrance to their headquarters in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. Decades of rampant corruption have led to a breakdown of law and order in the capital and many other areas of the country.

The West Australian/AFP/Getty Images

**D** Corrie Bodney, an elder of the Ballaruk Aboriginal tribe, stages a sit-in at Perth International Airport, which is located on land the Ballaruk have occupied for thousands of years. In 2013, the government of Western Australia offered several Aboriginal tribes more than U.S.$1 billion to settle a larger claim, which included the entire city of Perth.

Political responses around Oceania to the Fiji coups have been divided. Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (via APEC and the state government of Hawaii) have demanded that the election results stand and the Indian Fijians be returned to office. But much of Oceania has referenced the Pacific Way in arguments supporting the coup leaders. As in Fiji, those who govern many of the Pacific islands are leaders of indigenous descent who have not always had the strongest respect for political freedoms, especially when their hold on power is threatened. Their decisions have at times upheld traditional Pacific values such as stability, respect for authority, and certain kinds of environmental awareness, while at other times these decisions have contributed to corruption and civil disorder (see [Figure 11.17C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#chap11figr0017)).

On the global stage, Fiji has been suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations (a union of former British colonies) for subverting majority-rule democracy. As a result, it is ineligible for Commonwealth aid and is not allowed to participate in Commonwealth sports events. And because sports play a central role in Pacific identity (see “Sports as a Unifying Force” on [page 655](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#page_655)), this latter sanction carries significant weight.

**Migrants and Refugees from Abroad Present a Challenge for Oceania**

Legal migrants with skills are welcomed every year to Australia and New Zealand in rather large numbers. In 2015, Australia’s net immigration was about 184,000 and New Zealand’s net immigration was about 50,000 (about 15 percent of these migrants are simply moving between Australia and New Zealand). Both countries have a high proportion of foreign-born residents. In Australia, about 30 percent of its 24 million people are foreign-born, and in New Zealand, approximately 20 percent of its 4.6 million were born abroad (in the United States, 13.7 percent were foreign-born in 2015). Both countries are just now revising their immigration rules, and both actively encourage immigration by professional workers from any country. Of those from outside Oceania, most are emigrating from India and China, with smaller percentages from the United Kingdom and Southeast Asia. Australia firmly contends that it has the right to decide who legally immigrates to its soil.

Unfortunately, ethnic and religious hostilities in places far from Oceania have unexpectedly exposed fissures in the region’s reputation for generous and humane migration policies. Ruthless human traffickers, sensing that Australia and New Zealand can be counted on to accept people fleeing Earth’s many conflict zones—Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Cambodia—offer to take people in rickety boats to the coasts of these two countries for outrageously high fees.

Both countries have humane policies for the orderly acceptance of refugees (defined as different from ordinary immigrants). In 2015, New Zealand was prepared to resettle 750 refugees, Australia (a much larger country) 13,750, and both were prepared to help such refugees adjust to life in a new place (especially those Pacific Islanders fleeing the effects of climate change). Nonetheless, the huge and unexpected influx of impoverished and desperate people from distant regions far exceeded what the public in the two countries was willing to accept. Both countries were already dealing with right-wing political objections to cultural diversity, when they were faced, as was the EU, with thousands of more refugees than anticipated from Syria and elsewhere.

As Australia and New Zealand struggled to find a way to address the overflow and simultaneously maintain their own social cohesion, they devised the controversial [***Pacific Solution***](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident25) to handle undocumented asylum-seekers—a solution that, when it was first proposed in 2001, was regarded by the international community as racist and inappropriate. Similarly viewed in the present, the Pacific Solution mandates that undocumented asylum-seekers—those who have exceeded both countries' limited quotas—be held in detention centers in Nauru and on an outlying small island off Papua New Guinea ([**FIGURE 11.18**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#chap11figr18)). Basic food and shelter are supplied and basic education is provided for the children, but for the adults, who range from physicians and teachers and technologists to unschooled farmhands, there is little to do and no future to look forward to. In April 2016, the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea declared the detention center (then holding more than 1300 people) illegal and subject to closure.

***Pacific Solution***

Australia and New Zealand’s controversial approach to the excess number of undocumented immigrants

FIGURE 11.18 Camp for refugees.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

GEOGRAPHIC THEME 3

* Power and Politics: Stark divisions have emerged in Oceania over definitions of democracy—the system of government that dominates in New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii—versus the Pacific Way, a political and cultural philosophy based on the communitarian values of traditional cultures of the Pacific islands. The global refugee crisis tests this region’s ability to maintain its reputation as a humanitarian refuge and zone of opportunity that maintains social cohesion.
* The Pacific Way, a political and cultural philosophy based on consensus, was first articulated in Fiji at the time of Fiji’s independence from the United Kingdom in 1970, but gained popularity in many islands.
* In politics, the Pacific Way has occasionally been invoked as a philosophical basis for overriding democratic elections that challenge the power of indigenous Pacific Islanders.
* Governance in Oceania is, for the most part, based on democratic principles with regular elections; however, occasionally traditional power holders have negated or threatened political freedoms.
* The Pacific Solution is a highly controversial policy devised by Australia to address the overflow of impoverished asylum-seeking refugees.

# URBANIZATION

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 4**

**Urbanization:** Oceania is only lightly populated but it is highly urbanized. The shift from extractive economies to service economies is a major reason for the urbanization of the wealthiest parts of Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Guam), where 80 to 100 percent of the population lives in cities. These trends are weakest in Papua New Guinea and many smaller Pacific islands.

The global trend of migration from the countryside to cities is quite visible in Oceania, where 70 percent of the overall population now lives in urban areas. Australia and New Zealand have among the highest percentages of city dwellers outside Europe. More than 89 percent of Australians live in a string of cities along the country’s relatively well-watered and fertile eastern and southeastern coasts. Similarly, 86 percent of New Zealanders live in urban areas. The vast majority of people in these two countries live in modern comfort, work in a range of occupations typical of highly industrialized societies, and have access to tax-supported health-care and leisure facilities ([**FIGURE 11.19A**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr0019)). Vibrant, urban-based service economies employ about three-quarters of the population in both countries. Declining employment in mining and agriculture, where mechanization has dramatically reduced the number of workers needed, has also contributed to urbanization.

Throughout the Pacific, urban centers have transformed natural landscapes. In some small densely populated countries, such as Guam, Palau, and the Marshall Islands, they have become the dominant landscape. Although cities are places of opportunity, they can also be sites of cultural change, conflict, and environmental hazards (see [Figure 11.19C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr0019)).

Most Pacific island towns and all the capital cities are located in ecologically fragile coastal settings. Many of these waterfront towns were established during the colonial era as ports or docking facilities and were situated in places suitable for only limited numbers of people. Consequently, little land is available for development and access to housing is inadequate. Squatter settlements have been a visible feature of the region’s urban areas for decades. The coastal locations for towns and cities in Oceania make these settlements particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and violent storms associated with climate change.

Multiculturalism has been enhanced by urbanization across the region. Many urban residents are letting go of the rural ways of their childhoods, as well as their ethnic identity and cultural commitments. As time goes on, more urban people are marrying across ethnic divisions, having only one or two children, and creating new patterns of social alliances and networks. Such cultural blending can ultimately result in enhanced social cohesion, but the result can also be new social tensions, which change the very nature of social life in the island Pacific. Urban unemployment and unrest are on the rise, and low rates of economic growth restrict the revenue available to governments to manage urban development.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 4**

* **Urbanization:** Oceania is only lightly populated but it is highly urbanized. The shift from extractive economies to service economies is a major reason for the urbanization of the wealthiest parts of Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Guam), where 80 to 100 percent of the population lives in cities. These trends are weakest in Papua New Guinea and many smaller Pacific islands.
* The global trend of migration from the countryside to cities is quite visible in Oceania, where 70 percent of the overall population lives in urban areas.
* Most Pacific island towns and all the capital cities are located in ecologically fragile coastal settings.
* Many urban residents are letting go of the rural ways of their childhoods, as well as their ethnic identity and cultural commitments.

**POPULATION AND GENDER**

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 5**

**Population and Gender:** In this largest but least populated world region, there are two main patterns relevant to population and gender. Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii have older and more slowly growing populations, and offer relatively more opportunities for women. The Pacific islands and Papua New Guinea have much more rural, younger, and rapidly growing populations, where women play a central role in family and community but enjoy fewer opportunities than men as economies modernize.

A number of factors are influencing population growth in Oceania; among them are important issues related to gender. While there is a trend toward equality across gender lines throughout Oceania, persistent gender inequality exists as well. A striking disparity is emerging between Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii on the one hand (where women are gaining political and economic power), and Papua New Guinea and the Pacific islands on the other hand (where change is much slower). In Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, where opportunities for women have improved, fertility rates are low at 1.9, well below replacement rates. In the islands, where opportunities for women are fewer, fertility rates range between 2.3 and 4.7.

**FIGURE 11.19 PHOTO ESSAY: Urbanization in Oceania**

There are two patterns of urbanization in Oceania. Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii are very urbanized places and have high standards of living; Papua New Guinea and many Pacific islands have high rural densities and their cities tend to have lower standards of living and be characterized by coastal shantytowns. [Source consulted: 2011 World Population Data Sheet, Population Reference Bureau, http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet\_eng.pdf.]

Torsten Blackwood/AFP/Getty Images

**A** Tourists climb the Harbor Bridge in Sydney, Australia, the largest city in Oceania and one that is consistently ranked among the most livable cities in the world, along with Melbourne and Perth, Australia, and Auckland, New Zealand.

Sandra Mu/Getty Images

**B** A free concert on Christmas Day in a public park in Auckland, New Zealand.

Torsten Blackwood/AFP/Getty Images

**C** Children wade through garbage during high tide at Funafuti Atoll, capital of Tuvalu. A very densely populated country, with 4847 people per square mile (1871 per square kilometer), Tuvalu is one of the poorest nations in Oceania, with a GDP (PPP) per capita of about U.S.$160.

Alex Ellinghausen/The Sydney Morning Herald/Morning Herald/Fairfax Media via Getty Images

**D** A 4-year-old girl in a squatter settlement outside Suva, Fiji. Incomes are relatively low here, as is access to health care and education.

**Thinking Geographically**

After you have read about urbanization in Oceania, you will be able to answer the following questions.

**A** Describe the stereotypes about Australia that leave some surprised to learn that nearly 90 percent of its population lives in cities.

**C** and **D** What best explains why Pacific island cities have lower standards of living than Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii?

Another and closely related factor affecting population growth is the age of the populations. On some of the poorer Pacific islands, close to 40 percent of the population is under the age of 15. So even if people decide to limit fertility, populations are likely to grow because a large proportion is just reaching reproductive age. This is not the case in Australia, New Zealand, and a few more wealthy islands, where just 20 percent is under age 15.

In Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, women’s access to jobs and policy-making positions in government has improved, particularly over the last few decades. New Zealand and the Australian province of South Australia were among the first places in the world to grant European women full voting rights (in 1893 and 1895, respectively). New Zealand has elected two female prime ministers, and in 2010, Australia elected a woman prime minister. Moreover, according to the 2015 Inter-Parliamentary Union report on women in lower houses of parliament, in both countries, the proportion of women in national legislatures (31.4 percent in New Zealand, 26.7 percent in Australia) is well above the global average of 22 percent. In Papua New Guinea and the Pacific islands, women generally have far less political and economic power. No woman has yet been elected to a top-level national office, and women are a tiny minority in national legislatures when they are present at all. The one exception is Fiji, where 14 percent of those serving in Parliament are women, perhaps indicating that change is underway after years of political disruption in Fiji (see pages 642-644).

In both Australia and New Zealand, young women are pursuing higher education and professional careers and postponing marriage and childbearing until their thirties. (This is also a trend in Hawaii, Guam, and the islands with a French affiliation.) Nonetheless, both societies continue to reinforce the role of housewife for women in a variety of ways. For example, the expectation is that women, not men, will interrupt their careers to stay home to care for young or elderly family members. Women in Australia receive, on average, only about 70 percent of the pay that men receive for equivalent work. This represents, however, a smaller gender pay gap than in many other developed countries.

Throughout Papua New Guinea and the Pacific islands, gender roles and relationships vary greatly over the course of a lifetime. Because of the emphasis on community, male and female Pacific Islanders contribute to family assets through the formal and informal economies. Traditionally, men are the boat builders, navigators, fishers, and house builders. And men are usually the preparers of food, though women often supply some of the ingredients through their gathering and cultivating efforts ([**FIGURE 11.20**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr20)). Most traders in marketplaces are women, and, aside from fish, the items they sell are also made and transported by women. Many young women today fulfill traditional roles as mates and mothers and practice a wide range of domestic crafts, such as weaving and basketry. In middle age, however, these same women may return to school and take up careers. With the aid of government scholarships, some Pacific Island women pursue higher education or job training that takes them far from the villages where they raised their children. Thus, the expectation that Aurora (in this chapter’s opening vignette) will study far from home and then support her family and elders is in line with evolving gender roles in Pacific ways of life. Aurora can expect that as her credentials and experience accumulate, she will enjoy a position of considerable power in her community, an honor typically accorded to only elderly women on Pacific islands.

**POPULATION NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION**

Although Oceania occupies a huge portion of the planet, its total population is only 40 million people, close to that of the state of California (38 million). The people of Oceania live on a total land area slightly larger than the contiguous United States but spread out in bits and pieces across an ocean larger than the Eurasian landmass ([**FIGURE 11.21**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr21)). The Pacific islands have nearly 4.75 million people, including Hawaii’s 1.43 million; Australia has 23.9 million; Papua New Guinea, 7.7 million; and New Zealand, 4.6 million.

Population densities remain low in Australia, at 7.8 people per square mile (3 per square kilometer) for the country as a whole and about 130 per square mile (50 per square kilometer) on Australia’s arable land. New Zealand’s arable land density is quite a bit higher, at 2064.4 people per square mile (794 per square kilometer). In the Pacific islands, densities vary widely. Some are sparsely settled or uninhabited, while others—including some of the smallest, poorest, and lowest in elevation (which are thus some of the most exposed to rising sea levels; see [Figure 11.19C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr0019))—are extremely densely populated. For example, French Polynesia, in the eastern Pacific, and Palau, in Micronesia (see [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)), have 26,689 and 4625 people, respectively, per square mile (10,265 and 1779, respectively, per square kilometer).

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

**GEOGRAPHIC THEME 5**

* **Population and Gender:** In this largest but least populated world region, there are two main patterns relevant to population and gender. Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii have older and more slowly growing populations, and offer relatively more opportunities for women. The Pacific islands and Papua New Guinea have much more rural, younger, and rapidly growing populations, where women play a central role in family and community but enjoy fewer opportunities than men as economies modernize.
* New Zealand and the Australian province of South Australia were among the first places in the world to grant European women full voting rights (in 1893 and 1895, respectively).
* In Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, young women are pursuing higher education and professional careers and postponing marriage and childbearing until their thirties.
* In some Pacific islands, women can inherit or personally accrue considerable power in their own communities over the course of a lifetime, but compared to men, they enjoy fewer education and job opportunities.
* Although Oceania occupies a huge portion of the planet, its total population is only 40 million people, close to that of the state of California (38 million). Nonetheless, some islands are unusually densely occupied.

FIGURE 11.20 LOCAL LIVES: Foodways in Oceania A A winemaker in Australia’s Hunter Valley assesses the shiraz grapes at her winery. Australia is the fourth-largest exporter of wine in the world, after Italy, France, and Spain.

**B** Taro is harvested in Hawaii. Grown in flooded fields, taro was originally brought to Oceania from Southeast Asia. It is now a major part of diets throughout the Pacific islands. While the leaves are also eaten, the cooked tuber is particularly prized as a source of calories when processed into *poi*, a paste of variable thickness that is eaten with the fingers.

**C** Food is removed from a Maori earth oven, or *hangi*, in New Zealand. First a pit is dug, and then a fire is made to heat stones placed in the pit. Baskets of food are placed over the hot stones (which are covered with cloth and then earth) for several hours until the food is cooked.

**GEOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OF HUMAN WELL-BEING**

Human well-being varies dramatically across Oceania as measured by the customary indicators used in this book: gross national income per capita (GNI per capita, adjusted for PPP), rank on the UN Human Development Index (HDI), and the Gender Development Index (GDI). Australia in 2015 ranked 2nd on the HDI. New Zealand ranked 9th in 2015. [**FIGURE 11.22**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr22) offers maps delineating these three measures of human well-being across the region.

[Figure 11.22A](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr22) shows that, except for Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, Oceania has low levels of GNI per capita. Over the last decade, Australia typically has ranked among the top 20 countries in GNI per capita PPP (in 2015, it ranked 17th). New Zealand is usually among the top 25; in 2015, it ranked 23rd. Hawaii, part of the United States, typically has a GNI per capita PPP that is about $2000 higher than the average for the United States; in 2015, Hawaiian GNI per capita was $54,516.

FIGURE 11.21 Population density in Oceania. Population density on this map is calculated for total area, much of which (especially in Australia, but also on many islands) is not usable for agriculture (arable). Population growth is slowing throughout Oceania as more people move to the cities, where health care is better and women are more likely to pursue careers—factors that make large families less likely. Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii are furthest along in the urbanization process, with smaller families and increasingly older populations. Papua New Guinea and some small islands (French Polynesia and Palau, for example) are relatively densely occupied and still have high growth rates. The size of the region and the smallness of most islands make showing density difficult at printable scales.

[Figure 11.22B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr22) shows each country’s rank on the HDI, which is a calculation (based on adjusted real income, life expectancy, and educational attainment) of how adequately a country provides for the well-being of its citizens. Again with the exceptions of Australia (2), New Zealand (9), and Hawaii (because it is a state with an unusually well-developed social welfare system, Hawaii would rank higher than the overall U.S. level of 8 on the HDI), the rest of Oceania ranks low on HDI or the data are not available. However, it should be remembered that, while the Pacific islands have low levels of income and human development as measured in official statistics, *subsistence affluence* (discussed on [page 639](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_4.xhtml#page_639)) and the strong communitarian values of the *Pacific Way* (see the discussion on [page 642](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#page_642)) can result in higher-than-expected actual well-being.

[Figure 11.22C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr22) shows the GDI, which is calculated on three sets of data: reproductive health, political and education empowerment, and access to the labor market. The countries with rankings closest to 1 have the highest degree of gender equality, meaning that the genders are tending toward equality. Australia (1), New Zealand (2), Samoa (2), Tonga (2), Fiji (3), and Vanuatu (4) are the only countries for which data were available in 2015. Hawaii would share the rank of 1 with the United States.

FIGURE 11.22 Maps of human well-being. (A) Gross national income (GNI) per capita, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP)

(B) Human Development Index (HDI)

(C) Gender Development Index (GDI)

# SOCIOCULTURAL ISSUES

The cultural sea change in Oceania, away from Europe and toward Asia and the Pacific, has been accompanied by new respect for indigenous peoples, and increasing economic interdependence with Asia has diminished historic discrimination against Asians in this region.

### ETHNIC ROOTS REEXAMINED

Until very recently, most people of European descent in Australia and New Zealand thought of themselves as Europeans in exile. Many considered their lives incomplete until they had made a pilgrimage to the British Isles or the European continent. In her book *An Australian Girl in London* (1902), Louise Mack wrote: “[We] Australians [are] packed away there at the other end of the world, shut off from all that is great in art and music, but born with a passionate craving to see, and hear and come close to these [European] great things and their home[land]s.”

These longings for Europe were accompanied by racist attitudes toward both indigenous peoples and Asians. Most histories of Australia written in the early twentieth century failed to even mention the Aboriginal people, and later writings described them as amoral. At midcentury, there were numerous projects to take Aboriginal children from their parents and acculturate them to European ways in boarding schools known for abuse and brutality. From the 1920s to the 1960s, whites-only immigration policies barred Asians, Africans, and Pacific Islanders from migrating to Australia and discouraged them from entering New Zealand. As we have seen, trading patterns in that era further reinforced connections to Europe.

#### Weakening of the European Connection

When migration from the British Isles slowed after World War II, both Australia and New Zealand began to lure immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, many of whom had been displaced by the war. Hundreds of thousands came from Greece, Italy, and what was then Yugoslavia. The arrival of these non-English-speaking people initiated a shift toward a more multicultural society. Eventually, the whites-only immigration policy was abandoned and people began to arrive from many places. There was an influx of Vietnamese refugees in the early 1970s during the frantic exodus that followed the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. More recently, skilled workers from India and elsewhere in Asia have been helping to meet the growing demand for information technology (IT) specialists throughout the service sector.

As of 2015, 30 percent of the Australian population was foreign-born. The fastest-growing group was from India. Nevertheless, while new immigration policies are increasing the numbers of immigrants from China, Vietnam, and India, people of Asian birth or ancestry remain a small percentage of the total population in both Australia and New Zealand. In 2010, the latest year for which statistics are available, at least 26 percent of Australia’s foreign-born residents were from Europe and 18 percent from Asia ([**FIGURE 11.23**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr23)). New Zealand has similar proportions among its foreign-born residents, and most immigrants continue to come from Europe. Although (because of low birth rates and high immigration rates) Europeans are slowly decreasing as a percentage of the population in both Australia and New Zealand, they are projected to still constitute two-thirds or more of both countries' populations by 2021.

#### The Social Repositioning of Indigenous Peoples in Australia and New Zealand

Perhaps the most interesting population change in Australia and New Zealand is one of identity. For the first time in 200 years, the number of people in both countries who claim indigenous origins is increasing. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of Australians claiming Aboriginal origins rose by 33 percent. By 2009, the Aboriginal population was estimated at 528,600. In New Zealand, the number claiming Maori background rose by 20 percent (to 652,900) between 1991 and 2009.

These increases are mostly due to changing identities, not to a population boom. More positive attitudes toward indigenous peoples have encouraged the open acknowledgment of Aboriginal or Maori ancestry. Also, marriages between European and indigenous peoples are now more common. As a result, the number of people with a recognized mixed heritage is increasing.

FIGURE 11.23 Australia’s cultural diversity in 2010. More than 30 percent (7.17 million) of Australia’s people were born in other places, making Australia one of the world’s most ethnically diverse nations. [Source *consulted:* Australian Bureau of Statistics, “Main Countries of Birth,” *Year Book Australia*, 2008, Table 7.39, http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/078D6ED0E197FE38A6CA2573E7000EC2AD/-File/13010\_2008.pdf.]

As society has acknowledged that discrimination has been the main reason for the low social standing and impoverished state of indigenous peoples, respect for Aboriginal and Maori culture has also increased. The Aboriginal Australians base their way of life on the idea that the spiritual and physical worlds are intricately related ([**FIGURE 11.24**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr24)). The dead are present everywhere in spirit, and they guide the living in how to relate to the physical environment. Much Aboriginal spirituality refers to the *Dreamtime*, the time of creation when the human spiritual connections to rocks, rivers, deserts, plants, and animals were made clear. However, very few Aboriginal people continue to practice their own cultural traditions or live close to ancient homelands. Instead, many live in impoverished urban conditions where the guidelines for living a respectful Aboriginal life are breaking down. In New Zealand, where the Maori constitute about 15 percent of the country’s population and Auckland has the largest Polynesian population (including Native Maori) of any city in the world, there are now many efforts to bring Maori culture more into the mainstream of national life.

#### Aboriginal Land Claims

In 1988, during a bicentennial celebration of the founding of white Australia, a contingent of some 15,000 Aboriginal people protested that they had little reason to celebrate. During the same 200 years, they were assumed to have no prior claim to any land in Australia, they had lost basic civil rights, and they had effectively been erased from the Australian national consciousness. Into the 1960s, it was even illegal for Aboriginal Australians to drink alcohol.

FIGURE 11.24 Aboriginal rock art. A Mimi spirit painted on a rock at Kakadu National Park, Australia. To the Aboriginal Australians, Mimi spirits are teachers who pass between this world and another dimension via crevices in rocks. They are responsible for many teachings on hunting, food preparation, use of fire, dance, and sexuality.

FIGURE 11.25 A performer at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, Australia. Intermittently since 1972, and continuously since 1992, Aboriginal activists have camped out on the grounds of Australia’s House of Parliament in Canberra. Considered by many to be the most effective political action ever taken by Aboriginal Australians, the first tent embassy was a response to the Australian government’s denial of land ownership and other land rights to Aboriginal Australians in territories they had continuously occupied for thousands of years. As Aboriginal land rights have gained recognition, the tent embassy has championed other causes, including opposition to mining that threatens Aboriginal communities and cultural sites, as well as the plight of the Aboriginal urban poor, such as the community of Redfern in Sydney. The tent embassy remains controversial, and it has been targeted by arsonists. The Australian government plans a more permanent structure but will then ban camping at the embassy.

British documents indicate that during colonial settlement, all Australian lands were deemed to be available for British use. The Aboriginal Australians were thought to be too primitive to have concepts of land ownership because their nomadic cultures had “no fixed abodes, fields or flocks, nor any internal hierarchical differentiation.” After increasing pressure from Aboriginal activists, the Australian High Court declared this position void in 1993. After that, Aboriginal groups began to win some land claims, mostly for land in the arid interior previously controlled by the Australian government. [**FIGURE 11.25**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr25) shows the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 2012, versions of which have stood on the grounds of Parliament in Canberra for more than 40 years. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy was instrumental in raising public awareness of injustices and remains a national symbol of Aboriginal civil rights. Court cases and other efforts to restore Aboriginal rights and lands continue (see [Figure 11.17D](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_5.xhtml#chap11figr0017)).

#### Maori Land Claims

In New Zealand, relations between the majority European-derived population and the indigenous Maori have proceeded only somewhat more amicably than in Australia. In 1840, the Maori signed the Waitangi Treaty with the British, assuming they were granting only rights of land usage, not ownership (see [Figure 11.28B](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr28)). The Maori did not regard land as a tradable commodity, but rather as an asset of the people, used by families and larger kin groups to fulfill their needs. The geographer Eric Pawson writes: “To the Maori the land was sacred … [and] the features of land and water bodies were woven through with spiritual meaning and the Maori creation myth.” The British chose to assume that the treaty had given them *exclusive* rights to settle the land with British migrants and to extract wealth through farming, mining, and forestry.

By 1950, the Maori had lost all but 6.6 percent of their former lands to European settlers and the government. Maori numbers had shrunk from a probable 120,000 in the early 1800s to 42,000 in 1900, and the Maori came to occupy the lowest and most impoverished rung of New Zealand society. In the 1990s, however, the Maori began to reclaim their culture, and they established a tribunal that forcefully advances Maori interests and land claims through the courts. Since then, nearly half a million acres of land and several major fisheries have been transferred back to Maori control. As of 2016, Maori in New Zealand number about 712,000 or 15 percent of the population, but, according to Australian censuses, about 100,000 more Maori live in Australia. Altogether, those who identify as Maori outnumber those who are officially ethnically Maori, which seems to indicate a shift toward popular acceptance of Maori identity. Nonetheless, the Maori still have notably higher unemployment, lower education levels, and poorer health than the New Zealand population as a whole.

### GENDER ROLES IN OCEANIA

Perceptions of Oceania are colored by many myths about how men and women are and should be. As always, the realities are more complex than the myths.

#### Gender Myths and Realities

Because of Oceania’s cultural diversity, there are many different acceptable roles for men and women. As mentioned previously, in the Pacific islands, men traditionally were cultivators, deepwater fishers, boat-builders, and masters of seafaring. In Polynesia, men also were responsible for many aspects of food preparation, including cooking. In the modern world, men fill many positions, but idealized male images continue to be associated with vigorous activities.

In Australia and New Zealand, the hypermasculine, white, working-class settler has long had prominence in the national mythologies. In New Zealand, he was a farmer and herdsman. In Australia, he was more often a many-skilled laborer—a stockman, sheep shearer, cane cutter, or digger (miner)-who possessed a laconic, laid-back sense of humor. Labeled a “swagman” for the pack he carried, he went from station (large farm) to station or mine to mine, working hard but sporadically, gambling and drinking, and then working again until he had enough money or experience to make it in the city ([**FIGURE 11.26**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr26)).

In cities, the swagman often felt ill at ease and chafed to return to the wilds. Now immortalized in songs (“Waltzing Matilda,” for example), novels, and films, these men are portrayed as a rough and nomadic tribe whose social life is dominated by male camaraderie and frequent brawls. No small part of this characterization of males derived from the fact that many of Australia’s first immigrants were convicts from the British Isles.

FIGURE 11.26 Gender and national mythology. Australian wild horse hunter George Girdler epitomizes the hypermasculine, white, working-class settler that is central to the national mythologies of Australia and New Zealand and often serves as a role model for young men.

Today, as part of larger efforts to recognize the diversity of Australian society, new ways of life for men are emerging and are breaking down the national image of the tough male loner. Nonetheless, the old model persists and remains prominent in the public images of Australian businessmen, politicians, journalists, and movie stars.

Perhaps the most enduring myth Europeans created regarding Oceania was their characterization of the women of the Pacific islands as gentle, simple, compliant love objects. (Tourist brochures still promote this perception.) There is ample evidence to suggest that Pacific Islanders did have more sexual partners in a lifetime than Europeans did. However, the reports of unrestrained sexuality related by European sailors were no doubt influenced by the exaggerated fantasies one might expect from all-male crews living at sea for months at a time. The notes of Captain James Cook are typical: “No women I ever met were less reserved. Indeed, it appeared to me, that they visited us with no other view, than to make a surrender of their persons.” Over the years, such notions about Pacific island women have been encouraged by the paintings and prints of Paul Gauguin ([**FIGURE 11.27**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr27)), the writings of novelist Herman Melville *(Typee)*, and the studies of anthropologist Margaret Mead *(Coming of Age in Samoa*), as well as by movies and musicals such as *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *South Pacific.*

Historically, in the Pacific islands, women’s roles varied considerably from those in Europe, but not in the ways early European explorers imagined. Women often exercised a good bit of power in family and clan, and their power increased with motherhood and advancing age. In Polynesia, a woman could achieve the rank of ruling chief in her own right, not just as the consort of a male chief. Women were primarily craftspeople, but they also contributed to subsistence by gathering fruits and nuts and by fishing. And in some places—Micronesia, for example—lineage was established through women, not men (a custom that makes sense when a woman is likely to have more than one sexual partner).

FIGURE 11.27 *Arearea* (“Amusement“) by Paul Gauguin. In this 1892 painting, Tahitian women are rendered in a European Romantic pastoral style that emphasizes their gentle, compliant demeanor.

Today, there are some trends toward equality across gender lines throughout Oceania, but the persistence of inequality is tenacious. A striking disparity is emerging: in Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and a very few other islands (see [Figure 11.22C](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_7.xhtml#chap11figr22)), women are gaining political and economic empowerment; in Papua New Guinea and most of the Pacific islands, change is much slower.

**FORGING UNITY IN OCEANIA**

Although wide ocean spaces and the great diversity of languages in the region sometimes make communication difficult, travel, sports, and festivals ([**FIGURE 11.28**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr28)) are three forces that help bring the people of Oceania closer together.

**Languages in Oceania**

The linguist David Crystal tells us that each language through its vocabulary and structure offers a unique vision of the world. The Pacific islands—most notably Melanesia—have a rich variety of languages, each presenting a slightly different perspective. Some islands in a single chain can have several different languages. A case in point is Vanuatu, a chain of 80 mostly high volcanic islands to the east of northern Australia (see [Figure 11.1](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11.xhtml#chap11figr0001)). At least 108 languages are spoken by a population of just 180,000—an average of 1 language for every 1600 people. It is easy to see that such remote languages spoken by so few are endangered in a globalizing world.

While language can be both an important part of a community’s cultural identity, it can also be a hindrance to cross-cultural understanding. In Melanesia and elsewhere in the Pacific, the need for communication with the wider world is served by a number of [**pidgin**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident28) languages that are similar enough to be mutually understood. Pidgins are made up of words borrowed from several languages by people involved in trading relationships. Over time, pidgins can grow into fairly complete languages, capable of fine nuances of expression. When a particular pidgin is in such common use that mothers talk to their children in it, then it can literally be called a “mother tongue.” In Papua New Guinea, a version of pidgin English is the official language. Increasingly, English is the lingua franca for everyone in Oceania and, as such, it threatens the 1300 indigenous languages of the region.

***pidgin***

a language used for trading; one made up of words borrowed from the several languages of people involved in trading relationships

FIGURE 11.28 LOCAL LIVES: Festivals in Oceania **A** A young Aboriginal dancer at the Garma Festival, which is held to encourage the practice of the traditional dance, singing, visual art, and ceremonies of the Yolngu people. The festival is held every year in Arnhem Land, which overlooks the Gulf of Carpentaria in Australia’s Northern Territory.

**B** Waitangi Day in New Zealand, a national holiday that commemorates the signing of a treaty between the indigenous Maori of New Zealand and the British. The long boats shown here are Maori canoes, known as *waka*, and are part of a reenactment of the treaty’s signing.

**C** The aerial theater and comedy troupe Dislocate performs at the Sydney Festival, a 3-week-long international arts festival that is held every January in Sydney, Australia.

FIGURE 11.29 The haka, a Maori tradition. A haka performed by the New Zealand men’s rugby team, the All Blacks, before a match against Australia.

**Interisland Travel**

One way in which unity is manifested in Oceania is interisland travel. Today, people travel in small planes from the outlying islands to hubs such as Fiji, where jumbo jets can be boarded for Auckland, Melbourne, and Honolulu. Cook Islanders call these little planes “the canoes of the modern age,” and people travel for many reasons. Dancers from across the region attend the annual folk festival in Brisbane; businesspeople from Kiribati, Micronesia, can fly to Fiji to take a short course at the University of the South Pacific; a Cook Islands teacher can take graduate training in Hawaii; and sports fans can visit multiple locations over time.

**Sports as a Unifying Force**

Sports and games are a major feature of daily life throughout Oceania. The region has shared sports traditions with and borrowed them from cultures around the world. Surfing evolved in Hawaii and, like outrigger sailing and canoeing, derives from ancient navigational customs that matched human wits against the power of the ocean. On hundreds of Pacific islands and in Australia and New Zealand, rugby, volleyball, soccer, and cricket are important community-building activities. Baseball is a favorite in the parts of Micronesia that were U.S. trust territories. Women compete in the popular sport of netball (similar to basketball but without a backboard).

Pan-Oceania sports competitions are the single most common and resilient link among the countries of the region. Attendance at regional sports events is so desirable that low-income islanders will hold yard sales and raffles to amass the cash necessary to make the trip. The centrality of such competitions in daily life encourages regional identity and provides opportunities for ordinary citizens to travel extensively around the region and to other parts of the world.

The *haka* ([**FIGURE 11.29**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr29)) is an example of how, in the postcolonial modern era, indigenous culture in Oceania is being revived, celebrated, and appropriated in new places by those who wish to project a multicultural image. The haka is a highly emotional and physical traditional dance performed by the Maori to motivate fellow participants and to intimidate opponents before a confrontation or major event, even an event such as a wedding. Dances like this have historically been a part of many cultures in the islands of Oceania, but the haka has now become an integral part of rugby, the region’s most popular sport ([**FIGURE 11.30**](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_ch11_8.xhtml#chap11figr30)). Before almost every international match for the past century, the All Blacks (the New Zealand men’s rugby team) have performed the haka: chanting, screaming, jumping, stomping their feet, poking out their tongues, widening their eyes to show the whites, and beating their thighs, arms, and chests.

Outside Oceania, those who perform the haka include the rugby teams at Jefferson High in Portland, Oregon, and Middlebury College in Vermont, and the football teams at Brigham Young University and the University of Hawaii. All these teams have players who are of Polynesian heritage. Most practitioners speak of the haka as filling them with the necessary exuberance, aggression, and spirituality to play a vigorous and successful game. To see Maori-created videos of the haka, go to [http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/) and type in “Wedding Haka -Subtitled & translated.”

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

* Oceania’s long-standing cultural and economic links to Europe are being challenged by reinvigorated native traditions and identities and by economic globalization, which is strengthening the region’s links to Asia.
* The number of Asian immigrants in Australia and New Zealand has been increasing over the past two decades, while the number of European immigrants has been on the decline. Asians, however, still make up only a small minority of the populations of both Australia and New Zealand.
* Indigenous people throughout the region are asserting their rights and finding empathy among their fellow citizens.
* Idealized gender roles have characterized perceptions of the region: the hypermasculine swagman or jack-of-all-trades workman for Australia and New Zealand, and the beautiful and compliant seductress for the Pacific islands. Both are limiting and untrue.
* Sports and festivals are unifying forces for the region, inspiring fundraisers that allow ordinary citizens to travel to games, thus reinforcing regional and ethnic identity and social cohesion

FIGURE 11.30 Rugby around the world. In more than 136 countries, women, men, boys, and girls play rugby. All of these countries have men’s national rugby teams, and 58 women’s national teams. The men’s World Cup rugby competition began in 1987, the women’s in 1991. In April 2010, New Zealand boasted the top team for both men and women, but the ranking of the men’s teams can change weekly. [Source *consulted:* http://www.irb.com/aboutirb/organisation/index.html.]

**GEOGRAPHIC THEMES: Oceania Review and Self-Test**

1. **Environment:** Oceania faces a host of environmental problems and public awareness of environmental issues is keen. Global climate change, primarily warming, has brought about rising sea levels and increasingly variable rainfall. Other major threats to the region’s unique ecology have come from the introduction of nonnative species and the expansion of herding, agriculture, fishing, fossil fuel extraction, waste disposal, and human settlements.
   * Explain why some parts of Oceania are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others? Which parts of the region contribute the most and least to greenhouse gas emissions?
   * Why are coral reefs important ecologically, and how are they threatened by climate change?
   * How have European farm animals and crops introduced in Australia and New Zealand affected the economies of those countries? How would you assess the purpose and success of the Dingo Fence? How do foreign patterns of consumption affect this region, and what are the threats to Oceania’s food security?
2. **Globalization and Development:** Globalization, coupled with Oceania’s stronger focus on neighboring Asia (rather than long-time connections with Europe and North America), has transformed patterns of trade and economic development across Oceania. These changes are driven largely by Asia’s growing affluence, its enormous demand for resources, and its similarly massive production of manufactured goods.
   * What does Asia buy from the Pacific islands, and what are Asia’s trade connections to Australia and New Zealand?
   * How does the loss of preferential trading ties with Europe affect the region’s workers and tax revenues?
   * What sector is the basis of most economies in this region?
   * Explain why many Pacific Islanders can be said to have subsistence affluence despite having rather low monetary incomes.
3. **Power and Politics:** Stark divisions have emerged in Oceania over definitions of democracy—the system of government that dominates in New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii—versus the Pacific Way, a political and cultural philosophy based on the traditional cultures of the Pacific islands. The global refugee crisis tests this region’s ability to maintain its reputation as a humanitarian refuge and zone of opportunity that maintains social cohesion.
   * How do ideas about the proper exercise of political power in the Pacific islands differ from those in Australia and New Zealand and some Europeanized islands?
   * Why and when did the political philosophy known as the Pacific Way develop?
   * In what situations has the Pacific Way been invoked? To what extent could the Pacific Way be construed as just a different version of democracy?
   * How does the *Pacific Solution* to the asylum-seeker crisis in Australia fit philosophically with either Western democracy or the Pacific Way?
4. **Urbanization:** Oceania is only lightly populated but it is highly urbanized. The shift from extractive economies to service economies is a major reason for the urbanization of the wealthiest parts of Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Guam), where 80 to 100 percent of the population lives in cities. These trends are weakest in Papua New Guinea and many smaller Pacific islands.
   * Why, despite its low average population densities, is the region so highly urbanized?
   * Which parts of Oceania are both densely populated and threatened by climate change?
   * Explain how it can be said that parts of Oceania are both highly urbanized and lightly populated.
   * What kind of cultural impact are immigration and emigration having in Oceania?
5. **Population and Gender:** In this largest but least populated world region, there are two main patterns relevant to population and gender. Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii have older and more slowly growing populations, and offer relatively more opportunities for women. The Pacific islands and Papua New Guinea have much more rural, younger, and rapidly growing populations, where women play a central role in family and community but enjoy fewer opportunities than men as economies modernize.
   * Contrast the population growth rates in Australia and New Zealand with those in Oceania.
   * In which parts of this region is the aging of the population of most concern and why?
   * Which parts of this region were among the first in the world to grant European women the right to vote?
   * Describe the possible changing gender roles of Pacific island women over the course of their lifetimes.
   * What are some physical, social, and economic reasons for Oceania’s relatively small overall population?

##### Critical Thinking Questions

1. What has been the impact of European colonialism on the demography and settlement patterns of Aboriginal Australians and Maori peoples?
2. What do you find most remarkable about the navigation skills of Pacific Islanders? How might recognition of these skills contribute to general multicultural understanding?
3. Describe and explain the changing orientation of Oceania to Europe, the Americas, and Asia over the years since the 1500s.
4. As Australia and New Zealand have moved away from their intense cultural and economic involvement with Europe, new policies and attitudes have evolved to facilitate their deeper involvement with Asia. If you were a college student in Australia or New Zealand, how might you experience these changes? Think about fellow students, career choices, language learning, and travel choices.
5. Discuss the emerging cultural identity of the Pacific islands, taking note of the extent to which Australia and New Zealand share or do not share in this identity. What factors are helping to forge a sense of unity across Polynesia and beyond? (First, review the spatial extent of Polynesia.)
6. Discuss the many ways in which Asia has historic, and now increasingly economic, ties to Oceania. In your discussion, include patterns of population distribution, mineral exports and imports, technological interactions, and tourism.
7. To what extent can the countries of Oceania exercise control over the future as the climate changes?
8. Australia and New Zealand differ from each other physically. Compare and contrast the two countries in relation to water, vegetation, and prehistoric and modern animal populations.
9. Indigenous peoples worldwide are taking action to safeguard their cultures, rights, and access to land and resources. Discuss how the indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific islands are serving as leaders in this movement and what measures they are taking to reconstitute a sense of cultural heritage.
10. How is tourism both boosting economies and straining environments and societies throughout the Pacific islands? Describe the solutions that are being proposed to reduce the negative impacts of tourism.
11. Compare how women do and do not have political and economic power in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific islands.
12. Compared with other regions, Australia and New Zealand are somewhat unusual in having become broadly prosperous on the basis of raw materials exports. How would you explain this achievement?

# Chapter Key Terms

1. [Aboriginal Australians](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident13)
2. [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident21)
3. [atoll](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident05)
4. [endemic](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident08)
5. [Gondwana](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident01)
6. [Great Barrier Reef](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident02)
7. [hot spots](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident03)
8. [invasive species](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident12)
9. [makatea](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident04)
10. [Maori](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident06)
11. [marsupials](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident09)
12. [Melanesia](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident15)
13. [Melanesians](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident14)
14. [Micronesia](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident16)
15. [MIRAB economy](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident19)
16. [monotremes](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident10)
17. [Pacific Solution](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident25)
18. [Pacific Way](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident24)
19. [pidgin](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident28)
20. [Polynesia](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident17)
21. [Roaring Forties](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident07)
22. [subsistence affluence](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident20)
23. [Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)](https://jigsaw.chegg.com/books/9781319127213/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/pul_9781319048044_glo.xhtml#chap11asident22)

1 The IDL is adjusted to the east so that all the islands of Kiribati are in the same time zone.