

Australia



Australia is a region centered on the islands of the tropical Pacific Ocean. Opinions of what constitutes Oceania range from the coral atolls and volcanic islands of the South Pacific (ethnologically divided into the subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia) to the entire insular region between Asia and the Americas, including Australasia and the Maritime Southeast Asia. The term is sometimes used more specifically to denote a continent comprising Australia and proximate islands, or biogeographically as a synonym for either the Australasian ecozone (Wallacea and Australasia) or the Pacific ecozone (Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia apart either from New Zealand^[30] or from mainland New Guinea).

Australia officially the Commonwealth of Australia, is an Oceanian country comprising the mainland of the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and numerous smaller islands. It is the world's sixth-largest country by total area. Neighbouring countries include Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea to the north; the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to the north-east; and New Zealand to the south-east.

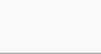
For at least 40,000 years before the first British settlement in the late 18th century, Australia was inhabited by indigenous Australians,^[16] who spoke languages grouped into roughly 250 language groups. After the European discovery of the continent by

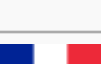
Dutch explorers in 1606, Australia's eastern half was claimed by Great Britain in 1770 and initially settled through penal transportation to the colony of New South Wales from 26 January 1788. The population grew steadily in subsequent decades; the continent was explored and an additional five self-governing crown colonies were established.

On 1 January 1901, the six colonies federated, forming the Commonwealth of Australia. Since Federation, Australia has maintained a stable liberal democratic political system that functions as a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy comprising six states and several territories. The population of 23.6 million[5] is highly urbanised and heavily concentrated in the eastern states and on the coast.

Australia is a developed country and one of the wealthiest in the world, with the world's 12th-largest economy. In 2012 Australia had the world's fifth-highest per capita income. Australia's military expenditure is the world's 13th-largest. With the second-highest human development index globally, Australia ranks highly in many international comparisons of national performance, such as quality of life, health, education, economic freedom, and the protection of civil liberties and political rights. Australia is a member of the United Nations, G20, Commonwealth of Nations, ANZUS, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

Flag	Name	Capital	Currency	Official language
	<i>American Samoa</i>	Pago Pago Insular area of the United States of America	United States dollar	English Samoan
	<i>Ashmore and Cartier Islands</i> External territory of Australia	—	—	
	Australia	Canberra	Australian dollar	None ^[a]
	<i>Baker Island</i>	—	Insular area of the United States of America	
	Cook Islands	Avarua Self-governing parliamentary democracy in free association with New Zealand	New Zealand dollar Cook Islands dollar	English Cook Islands Māori
	<i>Coral Sea Islands</i>	—	External territory of Australia	
	Fiji	Suva	Fijian dollar	
	French Polynesia	Papeete Overseas collectivity of France	CFP Franc	French

	<u>Guam</u>	<u>Hagåtña</u>	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Howland Island</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Jarvis Island</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Johnston Atoll</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Kingman Reef</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Kiribati</u>	<u>South Tarawa</u>		
	<u>Marshall Islands</u>	<u>Majuro</u>		
	<u>Micronesia</u>	<u>Palikir</u>		
	<u>Midway Atoll</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Nauru</u>	<u>Yaren</u> (seat of government)		
	<u>New Caledonia</u>	<u>Nouméa</u> <u>Sui generis collectivity</u> (special collectivity) of <u>France</u>	<u>CFP Franc</u>	<u>French</u>
	<u>New Zealand</u>	<u>Wellington</u>	<u>New Zealand Dollar</u>	<u>Maori</u> <u>New Zealand Sign</u> <u>English</u>
	<u>Niue</u>	<u>Alofi</u>	<u>Self-governing parliamentary democracy in free association with New Zealand</u>	
	<u>Norfolk Island</u>	<u>Kingston</u>	<u>Self-governing territory of Australia</u>	
	<u>Northern Mariana Islands</u>	<u>Saipan</u>	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	

	<u>Palau</u>	<u>Ngerulmud</u>		
	<u>Palmyra Atoll</u>	—	<u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	
	<u>Papua New Guinea</u>	<u>Port Moresby</u>		
	<u>Pitcairn Islands</u>	<u>Adamstown</u>	<u>Overseas territory of the United Kingdom</u>	
	<u>Samoa</u>	<u>Apia</u>		
	<u>Solomon Islands</u>	<u>Honiara</u>		
	<u>Tokelau</u>	<u>Nukunonu</u> (main settlement, although each atoll has its own administrative centre)	<u>Dependent territory of New Zealand</u>	
	<u>Tonga</u>	<u>Nuku'alofa</u>		
	<u>Tuvalu</u>	<u>Funafuti</u>		
	<u>Vanuatu</u>	<u>Port Vila</u>	<u>Vanuatu vatu</u>	<u>Bislama</u> <u>French</u> <u>English</u>
	<u>Wake Island</u>	— <u>Insular area of the United States of America</u>	<u>United States dollar</u>	
	<u>Wallis and Futuna</u>	<u>Mata-Utu</u> <u>Overseas collectivity of France</u>	<u>CFP Franc</u>	<u>French</u>

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