

AUSTRALIA

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AREA 7,741,220 sq km
POPULATION 21,767,000
MONEY Australian dollar

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF



The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest living thing! It is an area of coral over 2000 kilometres long, which grows in the warm sea near the coast of Queensland. The reef is also home to colourful fish that swim among the coral. They can be seen from glass-bottomed boats.



AUSTRALIA is the world's largest island, but the world's smallest continent. It is the sixth-largest country in the world, smaller than the USA or Canada, but more than twice the size of India. Yet Australia's total population is small for such a large country. Most Australians are descended from people who came from Europe in the past 150 years.

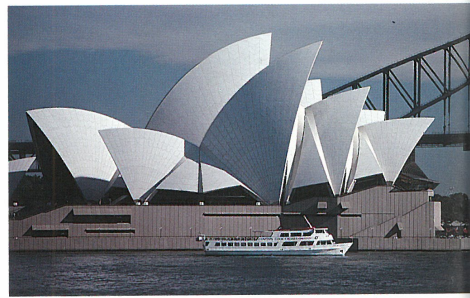
Only a few people live in the mountains or in the outback – the enormous area of semi-desert and desert that makes up most of the country. The few outback people live on huge sheep and cattle farms, in mining towns, or on special reserves for the original Australians – the Aborigines. The north of Australia is tropical – and very hot.



▲ **The Flying Doctor Service** aeroplane is used to take people from remote areas to hospital, or to fly doctors to remote farms. People in the outback use 2-way radios to get medical advice and to keep in touch with one another.



▲ **Ayers Rock** rises steeply out of the dry plains in central Australia. It is 348 metres high. The sides have deep gullies and strange caves. For the Aborigines, it is a holy place called Uluru. Many tourists come for the hard climb or to watch the rock glow deep red at sunset.



▲ **Sydney Opera House** cost millions of dollars to build and has become the new symbol of Sydney. It is by the harbour, below the famous harbour bridge (in the background) which was built in Newcastle, UK!

AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

Australia is not joined to any other continent. It has been a separate island for millions of years, and has developed its own unique wildlife. Most of the world's marsupials live in Australia.

