



AUSTRALIA – IT'S AWESOME!

Alex's favourite fast facts

(including who the first police officers were)

- ➔ Australia's official name is the 'Commonwealth of Australia' and it is the 6th largest country in the world. It is approximately 4,000 kilometres wide from east to west, and 3,200 kilometres from top to bottom. That's pretty big! Australia is made up of six states and two territories.
- ➔ Close to 30% of Australia's population of around 27 million people were born overseas. This means about 70% of our population were born here in Australia. The largest number of immigrants have come to Australia from England (about 4%) then India, (about 3%) then China (about 2.5%) and then New Zealand (just over 2%) The remaining immigrants have come from nearly every other country in the world!
There is thought to be about 250 different Aboriginal groups living in Australia and they each have their own language. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people account for around 3.3% of Australia's population.
- ➔ Back in 1901, after Federation, (when six separate colonies that existed then) came together to form our magnificent country that it is today. Australia required a flag to represent it as a whole and united nation.
A design competition was conducted and almost 33,000 entries in the competition were received. Apparently, five of the competition entries were so close in design that they were all given equal first prize! Wow!
- ➔ Incredibly, Australia has about 150 volcanoes. Thankfully, none of them have erupted in thousands of years because they are extinct or dormant. PHEW!
- ➔ Australia has a very straight railway line that stretches for 480 kilometres across the Nullarbor Plain. This incredible stretch of railway is the longest in the world.
- ➔ Australia has about 10,685 fabulous beaches! How cool it that! Incredibly, close to 90% of Australia's population live within about 50km from the coast.
- ➔ Australian Rules Football (AFL) was thought to have been invented in the late 1850s so that Australian cricketers had a winter sport to play to keep fit.





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- ➔ The Great Barrier Reef is so large that it can be seen from space. It consists of approximately 3,000 small and large reefs and is known to be the largest living structure in the world.
- ➔ Australia's first Police Officers were actually convicts! They were given their policing jobs because they were deemed to be very well-behaved prisoners.
- ➔ There is an interesting meaning behind the words of the song 'Waltzing Matilda'. The first word, 'Waltzing' is Australian slang for 'travelling on foot' and 'Matilda' is slang for 'swag', which refers to a rolled-up blanket, that people travelling around Australia on foot or horseback carried, to sleep in.
- ➔ Australia was the second country in the world that allowed women to vote in a federal election back in 1902. South Australian women were voting in their state elections from 1894. That doesn't sound very fair today, does it?
- ➔ During the 19th century camels were bought to the Australian outback because they could carry large loads and didn't need regular water. Today there are thought to be more than 1,000,000 camels wandering around outback Australia. Amazingly, when Saudi Arabia need camels, they buy them from Australia! Our camels are wild and very healthy so they are exported for their meat but also for breeding some of the best camels in the world for camel racing!
- ➔ Australia consists of more than 769 million hectares of land and our farmers manage approximately 51% of the land. Farmers manage the soil, our natural vegetation and our water ways, while at the same time producing all the food and fibre we rely on.
- ➔ On average, every Aussie farmer grows enough food to feed about 600 people - 150 people in Australia and 450 people overseas. Australian farms produce around 93% of all the fresh food eaten in Australia. Two-thirds of what our farmers produce each year is exported for the world to enjoy. Overseas countries love Australian grown food because they think it is a quality product and safe to eat. I think they are right!





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References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.abs.gov.au/>
- Hello Sydney Kids Fun Australian Facts: <https://www.hellosydneykids.com.au/>
- Australian Farmers Farm Facts: <https://farmers.org.au/>
- Big Australia Bucket List Australia Facts: <https://bigaustraliabucketlist.com/>