

AUSTRALIA

Capital	:	Canberra
Population (2006)	:	20,555,300
Area	:	2,967,893 Sq. mile (7,686,850 Sq.km)
GDP (per capita)	:	\$ 34,740 (IMF)
Monetary Unit	:	Australian dollar (AUD)
Language	:	English
Religions	:	Anglican, Roman Catholic and other Christian

The continent of Australia, with the island State of Tasmania, is approximately equal in area to the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). Mountain ranges run from north to south along the east coast, reaching their highest point in Mount Kosciusko. The western half of the continent is occupied by a desert plateau that rises into barren, rolling hills near the west coast. The Great Barrier Reef lies along the northeast coast. The island of Tasmania is off the southeast coast.

The first inhabitants of Australia were the Aborigines who migrated there at least 40,000 years ago from Southeast Asia. There may have been between a half million to a full million aborigines at the time of European settlement; today there are about 350,000.

Free settlers and former prisoners established six colonies, i.e., New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, Northern Territory. These six colonies became states and in 1901 federated into the commonwealth of Australia with a constitution that incorporated British Parliament and U.S. Federal traditions. Australia became as its liberal legislation. Various gold rushes attracted settlers, as the mining of other minerals, sheep farming and grain soon became important economic enterprises.

Commonwealth of Australia is a democratic country. Symbolic executive power is vested in the British Monarch, who is represented throughout Australia by Governor General.

Australia is one of the leading mineral producing countries in the world. It produces a large number of minerals, leading natural resources like, bauxite, coal, iron ore, copper, tin, silver, uranium, nickel, tungsten, mineral sands, lead, zinc, diamond, petroleum & natural gas.

In Australia, there is no central, Commonwealth mining legislation but various states have their own mining legislation.
