AJ – Australia

Australia, officially named the Commonwealth of Australia, is a country comprising the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and some smaller islands. The national currency is Australian Dollar and spoken languages are English (official) and the Aboriginal languages. It is the world's sixth-largest country by total area, but the world's smallest and youngest continent.

- island – no, continent , greenland

Australia is situated in the Southern Hemisphere between the Indian ocean and the Pacific ocean.

Interesting is that the area has about 7.7 million km square, but the population is just about 21 million inhabitants so compared to Czech republic, Australia is one houndred times bigger, but it has only twice more population. The country has the lowest population density in the world, but on the other hand the highest urbanization on the world. The capital city is Canberra and the largest city is Sydney with a population of 4.6 milion people and another big cities are Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

The country is divided into six states and two territories:

The six states are Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania

and the two territories are Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory.



The difference between states and territories is that the states are basically countries with their own rights and can in fact withdraw from the federation of Australia if they so wished. The territories have no sovereignty and are administered by the federal government.

**Geography:**

The surface of the land is mostly flat. A total of 18% of Australia's mainland is desert. The Western Australia is mostly covered by the deserts.The Central-Eastern Lowland is mainly covered by the tropic forests, savannah, creeks and lakes.

**Mountains** – On the east coast is located The Great dividing range or also called „The Australian Cordilleras“. It's the biggest mountainous system in Australia. The highest point is Mount Kosciusko with total height 2230 metres.

**Rivers** – many of Australia's rivers are dry and fill with water only during the rainy season. The longest river is the Murray river.

**Reefs** – Australia is also know for beautiful coral reefs. T**he Great Barrier Reef** is the world’s largest coral reef and one of Australia's most popular tourist attractions. It extends for just over 23,000 kilometres along Australia's north-east and it is composed of about 400 species of corals of many shapes and colours.
**Deserts** - some parts of Australia are completely dry, in central Australia there are three deserts -

the Great Sandy Desert, the Gibson Desert and the Great Victoria Desert.

**History:**

Australian native inhabitants, the **Aborigines,** arrived to the continent from Asia at least 40,000 years ago. First recorded Europeans were Dutch in 1606 under the command of Willem Jansz. The wave of immigration started in 18. century after Captain James Cook had discovered the country in 1770 and claimed New South Wales as a British colony. The reason why was Australia discovered so late is because it is divided from other continents by large distance. The idea of independence first appeared in 19th century. The proposition of the federal constitution was made and on 1st January 1901 Queen Victoria proclaimed the Commonwealth of Australia. The Parliament started to work in 1927 in Canberra.

**Political system:**

Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a federal division of powers. The official title is The Commonwealth of Australia and it is a dominion of the United Kingdom. It has a democratic, federal system. The official head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, which of course resides in the United Kingdom. So she is represented by her viceroys in Australia - the Governor-General at the federal level and by the Governors at the state level. Actual power is exercised by the Parliament and the Prime Minister. The Federal Parliament is located in the capital city of Canberra and is divided into the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are four biggest political partys: Australian Labor Party and Australian greens on the left and Liberal Party of Australia and National Party of Australia on the right. Nowadays, The labor party has parliamentary and senatorial majority. The prime minister is Julia Gillard, which is the first female prime-minister. The Governor-General is Quentin Brice. So we can say that the three most porefull people in the country are the women.

**Animals:**

Thanks to the different historical development Australia has kinds of animals that you do not see in the any other part of the world (Kangaroo, koala, dingo and Tasmanian devils, kiwi).

**Interesting places and monuments:**

**The Uluru** or Ayers Rock is a large sandstone rock formation in central Australia and it's the largest piece of rock in the world, because it's about 2,4 kilometers long and 300 meters high.

**The Sydney opera house** is arts center in Sydney, it was design by Danish architect in 1957, but because of many technical and political problems, the building was finished in 1973. The Opera house was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007.