

Australia

Type of Government: Federal Democracy, strong centre, weak states

Head of Government: Tony Abbott (term ends 2016)

Capital City: Canberra

Ideology: Centrist (presently governed by a centre-right party)

Region: Geographically close Asia-Pacific Region (Same region as China, Pakistan and South Korea)

Neighbours: Indonesia, New Zealand, Timor Leste



DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 22 million. Relatively small population and highly urbanized, considering Australia is the 6th largest country by landmass. By 2050, the population is predicted to reach 45 million.
- **Religion:** Has no state religion, though 61% of people consider themselves Christian. 22.3% of the population has 'no religion'.
- **Age:** Median age of 38 years. Life expectancy 79.4 years for males and 84.0 years for females (Fourth highest), concerns surrounding an aging population are prominent.
- **Ethnicities:** 80% white, with remaining 20% comprised largely of Asian ethnicities and a very small population of Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have significantly lower life expectancies and lower levels of health and education. The largest immigrant groups are from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, China, Vietnam and the Philippines.
- **National Language:** English

ECONOMY

- Australia is the world 12th largest economy with a GDP of \$960.7 billion, and has the fifth highest per capita GDP
- Total government debt is at \$120 billion, around 20% of GDP
- Australia was the only advanced economy to avoid the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. However, its 6 major trading partners were significantly affected, thus hampering economic growth in recent years.

Major Industries

- Service sector of the economy, including tourism, education and financial services account for 70% of total GDP. Small manufacturing sector. One of the few countries with a Carbon Tax.

Exports

- **Major Trading Partners:** China, Japan, the United States, New Zealand and South Korea.
- Australia is a major exporter of agricultural products including wheat and wool, iron-ore and gold, and energy in the form of liquefied natural gas and coal.
- Although agriculture and natural resources may only account for 3% and 5% of GDP, they contribute substantially to export performance and have dramatically improved Australia's terms of trade.

Imports

- Economy is very dependent on imported petroleum and oil
- Machinery and equipment is largely imported from overseas

Natural Resources

- Coal. Australia is the world's leading coal exporter, with over 54% being exported mostly to South East Asia
- Extensive coal, iron, copper, gold and natural gas.

MILITARY

Size: 80,561 personnel includes Air Force, Navy and Army.

Army: 1,585 tanks and artillery vehicles are operational.

No nuclear or exotic weapons. Australia's foreign military relations have been driven to support the United States through the ANZUS pact. Australians troops are currently planning to withdraw troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Airforce: 106 Aircrafts including unmanned jets, fighter jets and helicopters. Air force procurements, like the rest of Australia's defensive technology, are primarily sourced from out-of-date US tech.

Navy: 14,215 permanent personnel and 51 operational vessels.



POLITICS

Domestic politics

- The #2 most developed country in the world and the 7th least corrupt, Australia is a rich, safe, peaceful, prosperous country characterised by inhabitants who refuse to acknowledge any of this.
- Main domestic concerns are cost of living, immigration, and the environment.

Foreign Policy Concerns

- Key concerns are free trade, terrorism and economic co-operation with Asia, as well as the economic and political stability of the Asia-Pacific.
- Major international issue is refugee rights – Australian public is unusually hostile to refugees, reflected in policies that routinely contravene the spirit of the Refugee Convention to which Australia is a signatory.
- The Australian Signals Directorate was discovered to have attempted to monitor mobile phone conversations of the Indonesian President, and senior diplomats.
- Australia balances its military and economic relationship with the United States with the interests of their major trading partner China.
- Complex relationship with smaller island neighbours, since Australia has occasionally intervened militarily in the region (most notably in East Timor).
- Australia is a strong advocate in the G20 Economic Nations in supporting free trade and abandoning protectionism.

More Information

Wiki: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia>

CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15674351>

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/>

Latest news from the New York Times (<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/australia/index.html>), the

Economist (<http://www.economist.com/topics/australia>),

the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/australia>), and

Al-Jazeera (<http://www.aljazeera.com/category/country/australia>),