

AUSTRALIA

Continent: Australia/Oceania

[Population](#): 25.8 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 83.9

[Governance System](#): Constitutional Monarchy

Capital: Canberra

[Area](#): 7,692,020 km²

Major Languages: English

[GDP \(2021\)](#): 1,542,660 US\$ Millions

Select Global Rankings

[Human Development Index](#): 5

[Fragile States Index - Inverted](#): 12

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): 9

[Human Freedom Index](#): 8

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 12

[Good Country Index](#): 18

Elite Sport System Rankings

[Global Cup Ranking](#): 6

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): 11

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): 6th

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): 17th

Football/World Cup Profile

[FIFA Region](#): OFC (qualify through AFC)

[FIFA Ranking](#): 38

World Cup Appearances: 5

Best World Cup Performance(s): Round of 16 (2006)

Qualification: AFC Playoff

[World Cup Group](#): D

Last World Cup Appearance: 2018

AUSTRALIA in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Mallory Haggith)

The Commonwealth of Australia (Australia) comprises six states and three territories. Australia occupies the whole continent of Australia—it is the only country to occupy a whole continent—and some offshore islands, [most notably Tasmania](#). Its [nearest neighbour](#) to the north is Papua New Guinea, and to the east is New Zealand.

Australia is a constitutional monarchy—while the King or Queen is the Head of State, the ability to make and pass legislation resides with the Parliament. The current Head of State is King Charles III, who ascended the throne in September 2022 after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The current Prime Minister (PM) is [Anthony Albanese, who was elected in May 2022](#).

Australia has a long colonial history. After the American War of Independence, [Britain, was faced with overcrowded prisons and prison ships and no suitable destination to transport their convicts](#). Thus, the British colony of Australia—formerly New South Wales—was [established in 1788 as a penal colony](#). The [colony was intended to](#) alleviate overcrowding in British prisons, expand the British Empire, assert Britain's claim to the territory against other colonial powers, and establish a British base in the global South. Prior to British colonization, an estimated [300,000 to 950,000 Indigenous people lived in](#)

[Australia](#). However, others estimate there were upwards of [3 million Indigenous peoples](#). The colonization severely disrupted the Indigenous society and economy, and its legacy continues to affect the Indigenous peoples today.

Australia [became a nation on January 1, 1901](#), when the British Parliament passed legislation enabling the Australian colonies to collectively govern in their own right as the Commonwealth of Australia. Australia is a [founding member of the modern Commonwealth](#) and has been active in the organization.

Australia has since strengthened its engagement within the strategically important Asia-Pacific region. [Australia is a member of](#) the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and various Pacific islands regional organizations, including the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Pacific Community (PC). Australia is also a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—a group that aims to promote economic development in the region. Thus, Australia is a secure regional power.

Australia has also cooperated closely with the United States (US) to promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. In September 2021, [Australia, the US, and the United Kingdom \(UK\) announced an enhanced trilateral security partnership \(AUKUS\)](#), further solidifying security cooperation between the partners.

Australia is notably a founding member of the United Nations (UN) and is [a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations](#) (UNESCAP) —a regional commission that promotes economic cooperation. Additionally, [Australia is a member of](#) the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Group of 20 major industrialized and important emerging market nations (G20). Thus, Australia has been a strong supporter of multilateralism.