

AUSTRALIA

10 interesting facts

Australia is well known for its strong international sporting teams. Australians have very strong teams in cricket, hockey, netball, rugby league, rugby union, cycling, rowing and swimming.

Australia is the smallest continent in the world.

Australia is the largest island in the world.

The Great Barrier Reef is the longest reef in the world at over 2010 kilometres.

The most popular sport watched in Australia is Australian Rules Football.

Australia was first inhabited over 40,000 years ago by Aboriginal people. These tribes of Aborigines in the states and across the country spoke over 200 languages and dialects. However, more than half of these dialects are now extinct, as over ninety percent of the original Aborigines were killed when the British settled the continent, mostly as a result of diseases Europeans brought over.

Up until 1901, Australia was made up of six separate British self governing colonies. On 1 January 1901 the Proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia was held in Centennial Park, Sydney. Sir Edmund Barton was sworn in as the interim Prime Minister, leading an interim Federal ministry of nine members.

60% of the population is concentrated in five capital cities- Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

Melbourne's famous tramway system is the largest outside the European continent and the fourth largest in the world. It stretches along 244 kilometres (152 miles) of track, and has 450 trams.

On the 26th of January, 1788, The First Fleet of 11 ships with 1500 aboard, half of them convicts from Britain, arrived at the south eastern shores of Australia. The town of Sydney grew from that first small, British penal settlement. Australia day commemorates this.

