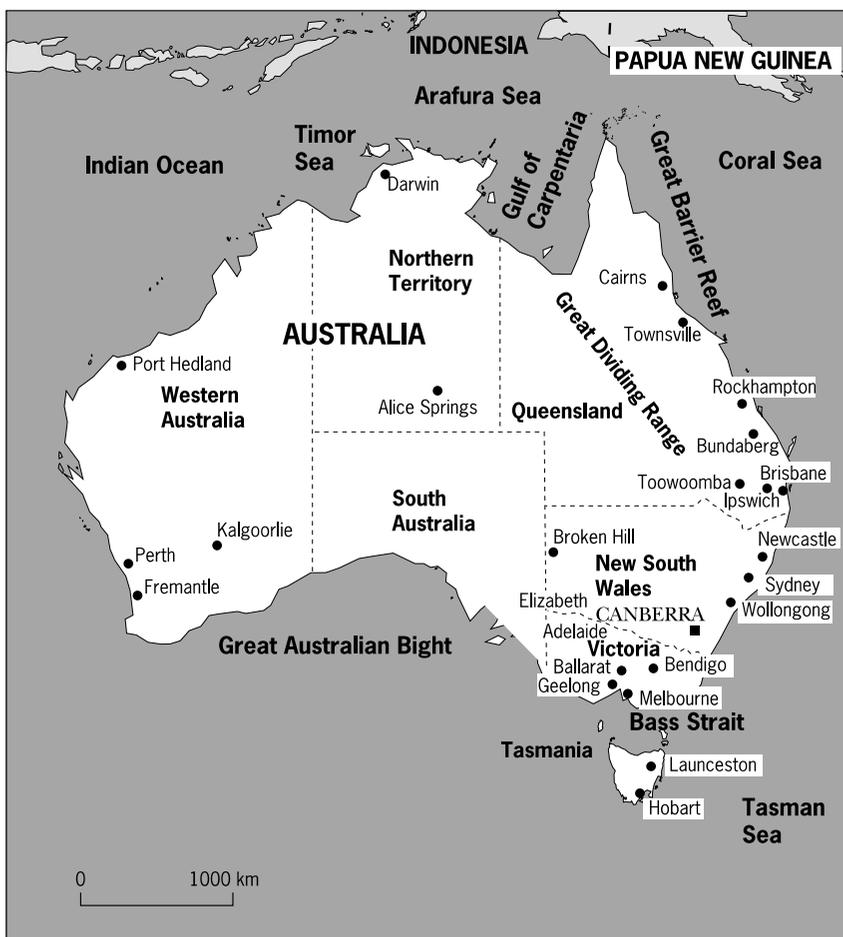


Australia



KEY FACTS

Official name: Commonwealth of Australia

Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II (since 1952), represented by Governor General Quentin Alice L Bryce (from 5 Sep 2008)

Head of government: Prime Minister Tony Abbott (ALP) (elected 7 Sep, sworn in 18 Sep 2013)

Ruling party: Liberal-National (LN) coalition (from 7 Sep 2013)

Area: 7,682,300 square km

Population: 22.77 million (2012)*

Capital: Canberra

Official language: English

Currency: Australian dollar (A\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rate: A\$1.10 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

GDP per capita: US\$67,723 (2012)*

GDP real growth: 3.58% (2012)*

GDP: US\$1,541.80 billion (2012)*

Labour force: 1.22 billion (2012)*

Unemployment: 5.24% (2012)*

Inflation: 1.76% (2012)*

Oil production: 458,000 bpd (2012)

Natural gas production: 49.00 billion cum (2012)

Balance of trade: -US\$5.07 billion (2012)*

* estimated figure

In 2012 and early 2013 Australia's economy continued to justify the epithet of the world's 'lucky country'. Few countries and even fewer industrialised countries could look back on two decades of uninterrupted annual growth accompanied by low inflation and high unemployment.

Whitlam and China

In terms of economic development, Australia has benefited from two benign factors: first, from the structural reforms made in the 1980s (some observers would say back as far as Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's re-election in 1974) and secondly from continued demand from Asia and notably (by a long chalk) China, for Australia's

considerable mineral and energy resources. The continued strength of the mineral extraction sector has helped to fuel the mining boom which in turn lead to the continued rise in value of the Australian dollar. But every silver lining (in this case the conservation of Australia's triple-AAA status) has its cloud. For Australia's crucial tourist industry, as well as its non-hydrocarbon exporters, a currency that had, since early 2009, risen by two-thirds against the American dollar, was bad news.

In its end-2012 assessment of the Australian economy, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) described the economy as 'robust' with a 'solid short-term outlook'. The OECD stressed the need for Australia

to continue adapting to ensure that its privileged place in the Asia-Pacific region contributed to long-term sustainable growth. The OECD's report recognised the economy's strong performance and its resilience to the global economic crisis, but also noted that Australia's economic activity had moderated, with growth in gross domestic product (GDP) expected to fall to around 3.75 per cent for 2012 and to about 3 per cent annually over the 2013–14 period.

Slowing down?

In the view of the OECD 'Australia has continued to weather the global economic crisis well, reflecting sound macro-economic policies and strong demand from China. Growth temporarily slowed in 2012 and 2011 as stimulus was withdrawn and households became more cautious.'

In 2013 Australia faced the prospect of a cold, or at least tepid economic shower. For Julia Gillard's government, long accustomed to bathing in the reflected glory of a mineral export boom, the lowered growth rate promised to be a challenge, as the previous mantra of 'jobs and growth' looked to have passed its sell-by date. The changed circumstances were symbolised by Ford of Australia's shock announcement that it planned to cease manufacturing in Australia in 2016. An article in the respected daily, the Melbourne based *The Age* suggested that it was likely that 'more of these kinds of announcements are to come in

manufacturing, in finance and in the services sector'. The future of Australia's leading, almost iconic automobile manufacturer, Holden, which, according to *The Age* had developed export markets more successfully, was also confronted by 'a very uncertain future'. Holden is committed to building cars in Australia until 2022, according to co-investment agreements with the federal government and the states. *The Age* reported that Ford had made its decision to leave Australia despite substantial governmental assistance, declaring losses of a whopping A\$600 million (US\$576 million) since 2009.

Although the fall in commodity prices threatened to slow Australia's overall economy, the lucky country's terms of trade (the price of exports relative to the price of imports) still hovered well above what was a more than acceptable long-term average. But those terms of trade deteriorated in 2012. The inexorably strong exchange rate had damaged the activities and prospects of the non-mining traditional activities such as tourism and manufacturing. There was also some uncertainty as to whether the mining boom would continue much longer. Were that to be the case, other economic sectors would need to pick up the slack. Perhaps predictably, the OECD exhorted Australia to continue with its structural reforms, keep its labour markets flexible and improve education and training.

The IMF

In its 2012 overview of the Australian economy the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concurred with the OECD that Australia's economy had been growing faster than most of the world's advanced countries, benefiting from its trade linkages with Asia, particularly China. Growth accelerated from 2.75 per cent in the second half of 2011 to 4 per cent in the first half of 2012, driven by private domestic demand and exports. However, reported the IMF, growth has been uneven with mining-related sectors expanding strongly, in contrast with below-trend growth in other sectors. The high Australian dollar weighed on trade-exposed manufacturing and tourism, which along with the uncertain global economic outlook contributed to a broadly pessimistic mood and weak investment growth outside the mining sector. Although survey measures of consumer and business sentiment remained below their long-run averages, household consumption grew in line with solid household income growth.

The IMF also noted that Australia's terms of trade peaked in 2011, pushing up the real effective exchange rate further and narrowing the current account deficit to 2.25 per cent of GDP. By the second quarter of 2012, the terms of trade had fallen by around 10 per cent, driven by declines in spot prices for iron ore and coking coal of 25 and 30 per cent respectively. In late 2012 the Australian dollar remained high despite lower export commodity prices and a weaker global outlook, in part related to portfolio reallocations of large reserve holders toward Australian government debt. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation eased with underlying measures of inflation remaining near the middle of the 2–3 per cent target band, largely due to the declining tradable goods prices associated with the appreciation of the exchange rate. Wage growth was also moderate, just marginally above its 10 year average in June 2012 with private sector wage growth faster than in the public sector. The Australian labour market performed well in international comparisons, with a low unemployment rate at below 5.5 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) (central bank) had lowered its interest rate by 150 basis points in the period November 2011–October 2012. Initially, when inflation moderated at the end of 2011, the RBA moved to remove a mildly restrictive monetary policy stance. During 2012, as the outlook for the global economy had deteriorated, reflecting the weaker

KEY INDICATORS		Australia				
	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	21.64	21.88	22.45	22.73	*22.77
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	1,010.50	982.10	1,242.20	1,486.50	*1,541.80
GDP per capita	US\$	46,907	44,895	55,341	65,497	*67,723
GDP real growth	%	2.2	1.4	2.4	2.2	*3.6
Inflation	%	3.7	2.1	2.7	3.1	*1.8
Unemployment	%	4.2	5.6	5.2	5.0	*5.2
Oil output	'000 bpd	556.0	559.0	562.0	484.0	458.0
Natural gas output	bn cum	38.3	42.3	50.4	45.0	49.0
Coal output	mtoe	219.9	228.0	235.4	230.8	241.1
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	189,919.0	154,788.0	212,850.0	271,844.0	257,909.0
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	194,205.0	159,003.0	194,670.0	243,498.0	262,983.0
Balance of trade	US\$m	-4,286.0	-4,215.0	18,180.0	28,346.0	-5,073.0
Current account	US\$m	-42,940.0	-43,891.0	-31,990.0	-32,882.0	*-56,385.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	30,691.0	38,950.0	38,659.0	40,409.0	44,866.0
Foreign exchange	US\$m	29,867.0	33,002.0	32,793.0	33,649.0	37,845.0
Exchange rate	per US\$	1.05	1.12	1.09	0.96	0.96
* estimated figure						

domestic outlook for 2013 and with projected inflation consistent with the target, the RBA shifted to an accommodative monetary policy stance. Interest rates for borrowers, a key indicator of the overall stance, by early 2013 were slightly below their medium-term averages.

The IMF noted that the 2011/12 underlying cash deficit came in at 3.00 per cent of GDP, about 1.5 percentage points higher than forecast during the 2011–12 budget, due to both weaker receipts and higher expenditure. Structural factors kept receipts as a percentage of GDP well below pre-crisis levels and have also contributed to receipts falling short of projections by 0.9 per cent of GDP during 2011/12. High levels of mining sector investment and the associated depreciation deductions dampened growth in mining company tax receipts relative to profit growth. Changing consumer spending patterns away from the retail sector towards services has lowered retail company tax receipts. Furthermore, lower house and equity price growth rates, especially compared with pre-crisis rates, lowered capital gains tax receipts. Payments during 2011/12 exceeded forecasts by 0.6 per cent of GDP mainly due to payments related to natural disasters and the accelerated transfer payments to households and businesses as compensation for higher energy costs following the introduction of the carbon pricing system (carbon tax).

Election considerations

With an election due in September 2013, Australia's minority Labor government had hoped to lift its low popularity by turning budget deficits into surpluses. The question that had to be asked – and answered – was from where Julia Gillard was likely to garner much needed additional support. In deposing Kevin Rudd and establishing herself as the Labor Party's leader, Ms Gillard had shown herself to be an excellent political tactician. But the grander strategy that might win her a clear majority seemed to elude her. Outside Australia Ms Gillard had successfully acquired – à la Canada's former prime minister Pierre Trudeau – a positive image. At home, however, she looked increasingly unlikely to gain the support of those voters who weren't natural Labor supporters. Facing a shrinking group of Labor supporters, the gap with former Labor voters who had defected to the Greens, or even pledged their vote to the opposition coalition, loomed larger than ever. Wayne Swan, the Treasurer, had once boasted that the 'surplus years are here'.

But when he made his 2013–14 budget speech on 14 May, it was a different story, a story less likely to appeal to floating voters. The small surplus Mr Swan had originally projected for the current fiscal year had turned into a A\$19.4 billion (US\$19.2 billion) deficit. He predicted another deficit of A\$18 billion (US\$17.3 billion) for 2013–14. Mr Swan forecast that it would be three more years before a surplus showed its face. Given his earlier predictions, doubts remained about Mr Swan's forecasting proficiency. But even with more years of budget deficits than originally hoped for, Australia's economy has performed better than virtually all the other 'rich' countries. After 21 years without recession, the economy was some 13 per cent larger than it had been six years earlier, before the global financial crisis. Unemployment was at a respectable 5.5 per cent. But the high currency and falling commodity prices were beginning to erode the federal government's revenues. Prime Minister Gillard warned Australians not to expect a pre-election budget full of hand-outs. Revenue growth, she said, would be 'spectacularly lower than reasonably predicted. It fell to Mr Swan to spill the beans as to how much lower. Tax receipts in 2012 had fallen short by A\$17 billion (US\$16.3 billion), the 'second-largest revenue write-down since the Great Depression'. Another A\$60 billion (US\$57.6 billion) of expected tax receipts over the next four years had also apparently evaporated. Other forecasts likely to disappoint were revenues from a mining tax on iron ore and coal, the two biggest exports, and another tax on carbon emissions.

A week before the budget, the central bank cut a quarter of a percentage point off its benchmark interest rate, taking it to 2.75 per cent. Economists saw the move as aimed at lowering the currency, in a bid to stimulate manufacturing, housing investment and other bits of the economy outside mining. Almost A\$300 billion (US\$288 billion) had been poured into mining investment since 2004. After trading in value above the par value for its American counterpart for 11 months before the bank intervened, the Australian dollar fell to 99 cents the day after the budget. Some economists were concerned that the Australian dollar would stay above the US dollar. Economists foresaw more interest rate cuts as 2013 wore on. Despite these budget constraints, Ms Gillard seemed intent on implementing a report by one David Gonski, a businessman, to raise school funding and teaching

standards. She also launched a public-insurance scheme to look after an estimated 460,000 permanently disabled Australians. Such was the emotion surrounding the latter legislation that when she introduced the bill on the scheme after the budget, Ms Gillard uncharacteristically wept during her parliamentary speech. Mr Swan sought to fund the legislation from the A\$43 billion (US\$41.3 billion) worth of savings to be made through the spending cuts and tax increases to be introduced over the following four years, dismissing the 'European road of savage austerity' as 'not the Australian way'.

Whatever the popularity of these moves, not to mention other budget proposals, Australia's electorate seemed less than convinced. In June opinion polls favoured the conservative Liberal-National opposition to win the September election, although falling revenues will adversely affect whichever party or coalition emerges victorious. A report published by the Grattan Institute, a think-tank, foresaw deficits persisting over the next decade. The report criticised both sides of the political divide for over-spending in years of the mining boom which gave 'tailwinds' to budgets. 'Now', he claimed, 'they're turning into headwinds.'

Resources galore

In the view of the US government's Energy Information Administration (EIA) Australia has considerable petroleum, natural gas and coal reserves and is one of the few countries belonging to the OECD that is a significant net hydrocarbon exporter, exporting about two-thirds of its total energy production. Australia was the world's largest coal exporter and, according to Cedigaz, the fourth largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2010, after Qatar, Indonesia and Malaysia. Australia is a net importer of crude oil and refined petroleum products, but a net exporter of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

According to the *Oil and Gas Journal* (OGJ), Australia had 3.9 billion barrels of proven oil reserves as of 1 January 2013. Australian crude oil is of the light variety, typically low in sulfur and wax and therefore of higher value than the heavier crudes. The majority of reserves are located off the coasts of Western Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Western Australia has 64 per cent of the country's proven crude oil reserves, as well as 75 per cent of its condensate and 58 per cent of its LPG. The two largest producing basins are the Carnarvon Basin in the north-west and the Gippsland Basin

in the south-east. While Carnarvon Basin production, accounting for 72 per cent of total liquids production, is mostly exported, Gippsland Basin production, accounting for 24 per cent, is predominantly used in domestic refining.

Oil production totalled 458,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2012, having peaked in 2000 at 828,000bpd and has been declining ever since. According to the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), oil liquids production will continue to decline unless major new fields are discovered.

Australia's main frontier for oil exploration has moved in recent years to the deep-water area of the Timor Sea, although the nearby Carnarvon Basin remains the busiest area in terms of overall drilling activity. After a spike in drilling activity in the past decade, several significant discoveries are now in the process of being put into commercial operation.

The Pyrenees and Van Gogh projects offshore Western Australia came online in the first quarter of 2010, with production capacities of 96,000bpd and 150,000bpd, respectively. In fiscal year 2010–11, these projects increased oil exports by 7 per cent in line with higher production. The Kipper and Turum oilfields in the Gippsland Basin started up in 2012 at 20,000bpd. These additions to production are expected to help offset the declining output in other fields in the short term.

According to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) Australia's crude oil and condensate imports mainly come from South East Asia; Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are currently the largest sources, while Australia's refined product imports come largely from Singapore. According to the OGJ, Australia had 132.8 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of proven natural gas reserves as of January 2013, making Australia the twelfth largest holder of conventional natural gas reserves in the world. Australia also had 396tcf of technically recoverable shale gas reserves in 2009.

The Australian government has no ownership stake in the domestic oil and natural gas industry. The industry is regulated by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET) and the Ministerial Council of Energy (MCE). The MCE was created in 2001 to foster policy co-ordination between the Commonwealth and the state governments. The MCE functions as the national policy and governance body for the Australian energy market and is comprised of ministers with responsibility for energy from the Australian government

and all states and territories. Major domestic and foreign companies operating in Australia include Santos, Woodside, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Origin Energy, BG Group, Apache, INPEX, Total and Shell.

Natural gas production in Australia reached 1.73tcf in 2012. Conventional gas is largely produced from the Carnarvon Basin, the Cooper/Eromanga basin in central Australia and Gippsland/Victoria. These three basins account for 96 per cent of Australia's conventional natural gas production. Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) are the main sources for coal bed methane, which accounts for some 13 per cent of gas production. About half of natural gas production is converted into LNG for export and the other half is consumed domestically. Several major new LNG projects are under construction or advanced planning as the Asian LNG market continues to expand and domestic demand increases. Four projects currently under construction or advanced planning will use conventional gas from offshore the north-west coast and four will be based on LNG extraction from CSG in Queensland. All Australia's exports are in the form of LNG. Over the past decade, Australian LNG exports have increased by 60 per cent and are expected to continue to increase over the short to medium term. Japan is the primary destination, but other purchasers include China, South Korea and Taiwan.

Coal

As of the end of 2012, Australia contained 76.4 billion tonnes (Bst) of recoverable coal reserves, according to the British Petroleum (BP) 2013 Statistical Energy Review. Australia is the world's third largest coal producer, after China, and the United States, but it is the largest exporter. Coal is Australia's largest export commodity and it is also a significant component of domestic energy needs, accounting for about 77 per cent of Australian electricity generation.

Australia has around 107 privately owned coal mines located throughout the country. About 74 per cent of Australia's coal production comes from open pit operations, with the remainder coming from underground mines. International companies such as BHP Billiton, Anglo American (UK), Rio Tinto (Australia-UK) and Xstrata (Switzerland) play a significant role in Australia's coal industry.

In 2012, Australia produced 241.1 million tonnes of oil equivalent (toe) of coal. According to EIA estimates, over the last two decades, coal production in Australia

has grown by 99 per cent, with new projects continuing to come online every year. This growth has been supported by strong global demand and by continuing investment in new mining and export capacity and it is expected to continue over the medium term.

The states of Queensland and NSW together account for 95 per cent of Australia's black coal production, while Victoria accounts for 96 per cent of brown coal reserves. Brown coal is used largely for domestic electricity generation. According to RET, Australia exports about 70 per cent of its coal production, or about 169toe. According to the Australian Coal Association, Japan is the main destination for Australia's coal exports. Other important export markets included South Korea (15 per cent), China (14 per cent) and India (11 per cent). About 8 per cent of Australia's coal exports are to Europe.

Iron ore

Although iron ore resources occur in all the Australian states and territories, almost 93 per cent of identified resources (totalling 64 billion tonnes) occur in Western Australia, including almost 80 per cent in the Hamersley Province, one of the world's major iron ore provinces.

As with most iron ore mines throughout the world, all the major Australian iron ore mines are open cut. The ores from the major mines in Western Australia's Pilbara region are hauled from working faces to crushing and screening plants using trucks that can carry over 300 tonnes. The ore is then transported for further treatment and blending to port sites in trains consisting of up to three locomotives and over 250 wagons. Trains of this size are over 2 kilometres long and contain loads in excess of 25,000 tonnes. There are two major Pilbara iron ore producers: BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto Ltd. BHP Billiton manages the Mount Newman Joint Venture (Mount Whaleback plus three other nearby mines); the Yandi Joint Venture (Yandi/Marillana Creek mine); the Mount Goldsworthy Joint Venture (Yarrie mine); and the Mining Area C Joint Venture (C Deposit mine). It also owns the Jimblebar mine.

Risk assessment

Politics	Good
Economy	Good
Regional stability	Good

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1778 Captain James Cook reached Australia and sailed the entire length of the

East Coast. He claimed the land for Britain.

1788 British Naval captain, Arthur Phillip, founded a penal colony at Sydney. He had arrived with a fleet of 11 vessels and nearly 800 convicts.

1829 The Colony of Western Australia was established at Perth by Captain James Stirling.

1837 South Australia was established with Adelaide as its capital city.

1851 The discovery of gold in New South Wales sparked a wave of migration to Australia, known as the 'gold rush'.

Within 10 years of the gold find, the population was estimated to have grown from 500,000 to 1.5 million. The Aborigines were treated badly.

1856 Australia became the first country to introduce the secret ballot for elections (known as the 'Australian ballot').

1877 The first Test cricket match between Australia and England was played in Melbourne.

1901 The Commonwealth of Australia was created. The former British colonies became the six states of Australia: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. There are two self-governing states – the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

1911 Canberra was founded as the capital city.

1914–1918 Australia fought alongside Britain during the First World War. Australian troops bore the brunt of the fighting in some theatres of war and suffered heavy casualties during the ill-fated beach landing at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915.

1929–31 Following the Wall Street Crash, the Great Depression badly affected the Australian economy. Recovery was slow and uneven. The Labor government was defeated in the elections.

1939–45 Australia fought alongside Britain and the US during the Second World War. In 1942, Japanese aircraft bombed Darwin (Northern Territory), the only direct foreign attack on Australia since its creation.

1948 Australia began to promote immigration from Europe and between the 1940–70s more than a million people arrived, a third of which came from Britain.

1950 Australia participated in the Korean War.

1951 Australia, New Zealand and the US signed the Anzus Pact, a security pact for the South Pacific.

1963 The 'White Australia' policy of immigration restrictions was ended.

1965 Australia fought alongside the US in Vietnam. At the height of Australia's involvement, the task force numbered 8,500 troops.

1967 A national referendum approved changes to the constitution: the section which excluded Aboriginal people from the official census was removed and another change enabled the federal government to pass laws on Aboriginal issues.

1975 Australia restricted the immigration of non-skilled workers. The governor general, Sir John Kerr, dismissed Gough Whitlam's government following its repeated failure to pass the budget in the upper house of parliament. A caretaker government under Malcolm Fraser was installed.

1985 The issue of Aboriginal land rights was first addressed.

1986 Australia's legislative links with the UK were severed by the Australia Act, which abolished the UK parliament's residual legislative, executive and judicial controls over Australian state law.

1990 Bob Hawke and his Australian Labor Party (ALP) government narrowly won the federal election – the first ALP administration to win three consecutive elections.

1991 Paul Keating (ALP) succeeded Bob Hawke as prime minister.

1992 The Citizenship Act was amended to remove the obligation to swear an allegiance to the British Crown.

1993 The ALP won the general election with an increased majority. The Native Title Act granted the Aborigines compensation for the loss of land rights.

1996 The Liberal Party (LP)-National Party (NP) (referred to jointly as the Coalition) won a landslide victory in elections and John Howard, leader of the LP, took over as prime minister.

1998 The LP-NP coalition was re-elected at the general elections, but with a reduced majority.

1999 A national referendum opposed Australia becoming a republic by 55 per cent. After East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia, Australia led an intervention force to counter pro-Indonesia militia violence.

2001 Howard won a third term in the federal elections after gaining support for his 'Pacific Solution' – the policy of refusing entry to asylum seekers and directing them to other countries in Asia-Pacific.

2002 There were riots in the Woomera desert detention camp for asylum seekers. Eighty-eight Australian citizens were killed in a night club bombing in Bali, Indonesia.

2003 Australia sent 2,000 troops to the Iraq War. The Senate passed a no-confidence motion in Prime Minister Howard over his handling of troops in Iraq. Australia headed a peacekeeping Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (Ramsi) force to the Solomon Islands.

2004 The first passenger train service (the Ghan) to cross Australia from Adelaide in the south to Darwin in the north began services. A parliamentary committee cleared the government of lying about the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. With an increased majority, John Howard won a fourth term as prime minister.

2006 Australia experienced its worst drought on record. Troops were sent to aid the Timor-Leste government against mutinying soldiers.

2007 Heavy rain began to fall in south-east Australia, breaking a six-year drought; however it did not rain in the Murray-Darling river system, the principal crop-growing region. In parliamentary elections the opposition ALP won 44.0 per cent of the vote (86 seats out of 150); Kevin Rudd became prime minister. One of his first acts was to sign the Kyoto Agreement on greenhouse gas emissions targets.

2008 The prime minister made a formal apology to indigenous Aboriginal peoples for former government policies, which included the forcible removal of Aboriginal children – 'the stolen generation' – from their families, in a policy of assimilation. Quentin Bryce, the first woman to hold the post, was sworn in as governor general of Australia.

2009 The worst forest fires ever recorded killed 173 people, injured around 500 and destroyed over 1,000 homes, with more badly damaged. Over 5,000 people were left homeless. The fires devastated 3,000 square km, including some towns in the state of Victoria. Arson was suspected to have caused a number of the fires. The Senate passed legislation setting a target of 20 per cent renewable sources of energy by 2020.

2010 Kevin Rudd was replaced as leader of the ALP, just months before a general election; deputy leader, Julia Gillard, was elected leader and automatically became prime minister. She called a snap general election and the result was a hung parliament – the ALP won 72 seats, the Coalition 73 seats, Greens one and independents four. Three independent members of parliament (MPs) supported the minority ALP government. Australia recorded 6,535 irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) (asylum seekers and unauthorised migrants) during the year.

2011 At the beginning of January, after two months of heavy rains, major flooding in the State of Queensland caused widespread damage and mass evacuations. It was the worst recorded flooding since 1961 and steel and coal production were badly affected. By mid-January, floodwaters, which had inundated over 60 per cent of the state, were the worst in

recorded history. Over 20 people were killed with over 70 missing in flash-floods. The capital, Brisbane, suffered flooding to its outer suburbs. Estimates were that the total damage would run to around US\$13 billion in reconstruction. A bilateral agreement was signed in May between the governments of Australia and Malaysia for IMAs attempting to land in Australia to be held in camps in Malaysia until their applications for settlement are processed. Annually, around 900 IMAs are expected to be held in Malaysia. Talks were also underway with Papua New Guinea and Nauru to provide more IMA camps. In August, the High Court rejected government plans for a Malaysian IMA centre. The court said that Australia had signed treaties not to send asylum-seekers to another country that could not adequately protect them. The plan by the government to accommodate asylum seekers and illegal migrants in Malaysia, until their *bona fides* were determined, was discarded in October. During the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit, held in Perth, on 28 October, the 16 countries in which the British monarch is Head of State unanimously agreed to change the royal line of succession from that of first born son to the first born child (regardless of its gender). The change will be enacted after the succession of Prince William (currently second in line to the throne, after his father Prince Charles).

2012 On 30 July, Australia and New Zealand agreed to restore full diplomatic relations with Fiji as it moves towards democratic elections in 2014. On 13 August an independent panel recommended the reopening of overseas IMA camps and the government immediately began negotiations. On 20 August, the PNG government agreed to reopen the Manus Regional Asylum processing centre (on Manus Island), to be funded by the Australian government. Dismay from activists in Australia came when funds for the facility were drawn from the foreign aid budget. On 15 September, the first group of IMAs were flown to Nauru on 15 September, the first since the revival in farming out immigration detention facilities. The government began talks to open similar detention centres in PNG. The offshore centres are meant to deter refugee boats and people-smuggling.

2013 Months of infighting in the Labor party over who should lead them in to the September election resulted in a vote on 26 June which was won by Kevin Rudd with 57 votes to Mrs Gillard's 45. Mr Rudd was sworn in by Governor General Quentin Bryce the next day. On 4 August Prime Minister Rudd announced that the election would be brought forward to 7 September. In the first televised debate,

held on 11 August, Prime Minister Rudd and opposition leader Tony Abbott debated the economy and immigration. A candidate for the One Nation Party withdrew her candidacy after she mistook Islam for a country in a TV interview. The treatment of asylum seekers was hotly debated in the run up to the election with both leaders proposing harsher treatment. Liberal Party leader Abbott launched his campaign on 26 August, vowing to control government spending and build a stronger economy by putting 'bulldozers on the ground and cranes into our skies'. The election was won convincingly by Tony Abbott's Liberal-National (LN) coalition with 89 seats (out of 150) (53.15 per cent) to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) 56 seats (46.85 per cent). Tony Abbott said he would work quickly to abolish the tax on carbon emissions and stop asylum-seekers arriving by boat. Kevin Rudd resigned as Labour leader on 10 September. Bill Shorten, who had been involved in the ousting of both Mr Rudd and Ms Gillard, announced he would be standing in the election to replace him. On 13 September former deputy prime minister Anthony Albanese announced he would also be standing. Mr Abbott announced his cabinet on 17 September, including Julie Bishop as finance minister and Mathias Cormann as finance minister. He was sworn in as prime minister on 18 September. Mr Abbott began his first overseas visit on 30 September, to Indonesia. Discussions were expected to centre on trade and Australia's controversial asylum policy of returning refugee boats to Indonesia.

Political structure

Constitution

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. It consists of a federation of six states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) and two territories (Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Northern Territory). Each state has its own constitution, government, administration and judiciary. There are some 900 local government bodies at city, town, municipal and shire levels.

The federal government is located in Canberra, ACT. Federal responsibilities tend to be those with an international and national focus while state governments deal with regional issues. However, the overlap of power is considerable and companies must be prepared to deal with both levels of government.

Any amendment to the constitution must be passed by an absolute majority in each House of Parliament and must be approved in a referendum by the majority of

electors in a majority of states and territories. In the past, three states (Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia) have consistently blocked any changes to the constitution.

There is compulsory universal adult suffrage for Australian citizens, with a voting age of 18. An automatic fine of A\$50 (US\$35) is issued by post to those who fail to cast a vote, although this is rarely imposed through legal proceedings.

Form of state

Federal commonwealth, with the British monarch as Head of State.

The executive

The governor general represents and is appointed by the British sovereign. The role of governor general is largely ceremonial, but he has the power to dissolve parliament or the government and call new elections. He is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. If the governor general is ill, dies, resigns or is out of the country, an administrator is appointed to undertake the governor general's duties.

Day-to-day executive responsibility is held by the national government, which is composed of a cabinet of senior ministers formed by the party with a majority in the House of Representatives.

National legislature

The Parliament of Australia or Commonwealth Parliament has two chambers. The House of Representatives (lower house) has 150 members, elected by instant runoff voting (or alternative voting), whereby a candidate with a majority of preferential votes wins the seat. The number of seats is dependent on electoral distribution and may change at any given election. Members sit for three-year terms.

The Senate (upper house) has 76 members, 12 from each state and two for each territory, elected by proportional representation. Senators serve six-year terms with half the senators of each state standing every three years. Senate elections generally coincide with those of the lower house. Senators take up their seats on 1 July following the election and stand down on 30 June.

Under the constitution both Houses have equal standing and legislation must be passed by both chambers. Only the lower house can introduce legislation to raise taxes, therefore only the party or coalition in the majority in the lower house holds power. The prime minister and cabinet sit in the lower house.

Universal suffrage begins at age 18 years and voting is mandatory.

Legal system

The legal system is based on the constitution of 1901. The governor general and state governors appoint judges on the advice of the cabinets of federal and state

governments. Each state has state courts, federal courts, family courts and a supreme court. The High Court of Australia, which has seven judges, is the ultimate court of appeal. The High Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals and judgments, decrees, orders and the sentences of most lower courts, but since 1984 cases have only been referred to it if there is a difference of opinion at lower levels. The High Court's main task is to interpret the Australian Constitution.

Last elections

7 September 2013 (House of Representatives)

Results: Parliamentary: Liberal-National (LN) coalition won 89 seats (out of 150) (53.15 per cent); Australian Labor Party (ALP) 56 seats (46.85 per cent); The Greens 1 seat; Katters Australian Party 1 seat; Palmer United Party 1 seat; independents 2 seats.

Senate (2010): 18 seats won (total 34 seats) (out of 76), ALP 15 (31), The Greens six (nine), Democratic Labor Party one (one). Senate (2007): LN coalition won 18 seats (total 37 seats), ALP won 18 seats (total 32), The Greens won three (total five).

Next elections

7 September 2013 (House of Representatives)

Political parties

Ruling party

Liberal-National (LN) coalition (from 7 Sep 2013)

Main opposition party

Australian Labor Party (ALP)

Population

22.77 million (2012)*

About 21 per cent of the total population is under 15 years of age. Sixty-three per cent of the population live in the eight major conurbations on the coast and 85 per cent of the population live in urban areas. Much of the interior is practically uninhabitable because of lack of rain, the absence of cultivable soil and the considerable distances involved in travel. There is a continuing drift to the cities from rural areas.

Last census: 8 August 2006:

20,061,646

Population density: Two inhabitants per square km (2000). Urban population 89 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 1.3 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

The population is comprised mainly of immigrants and their descendants from over 120 countries, with Aboriginals and Torres Straits Islanders accounting for only 1.5 per cent of the population. The single largest immigrant group is from the British Isles, followed by Asians, New

Zealanders, Italians, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Bosnians, Macedonians, Greeks, Germans, Vietnamese, Dutch, Poles and Lebanese. Over 20 per cent of the total population were born outside the country.

More than half the Aboriginal population lives in urban areas.

Religions

Predominantly Christian (Anglican and Roman Catholic), although many are non-practising. There are significant Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities in many cities.

Education

In most states, children start primary school at the age of five when they enrol in a preparatory or kindergarten year, after which primary education continues for either six or seven years followed by secondary education, available for either five or six years and may be completed by tertiary education of a student's level and choice.

State and Territory governments and the Federal government provide major financial support for primary and secondary education, delivered in public and fee-paying schools run by governments and non-government providers.

Links between the education and training sectors have been strengthened, through the introduction of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) national system of vocational education and training in co-operation with all levels of governments and industry. Two national communications campaigns began in late 2000 based on extensive market research into the vocational education and training needs of Australian individuals and enterprises.

Total expenditure on education is 5.3 per cent of GDP. In 2001, government expenditure on higher education totalled US\$5.8 billion.

Compulsory years: 6 to 15; Tasmania: 6 to 16.

Pupils per teacher: 18 in primary schools.

Health

While health care funds direct assistance to hospitals and rebates individuals under the Medicare national health insurance system, consideration of private medical insurance is central to federal health budget funding.

Primary healthcare is provided by independent and privately owned medical practices, offering general and specialist treatment including minor surgery. Hospitals may be state, or privately run institutions.

HIV/Aids

There were an estimated 20,000 people living with HIV in 2009 (Unicef 2012)

HIV prevalence: 0.1 per cent aged 15–49 in 2009 (Unicef 2012)

Life expectancy: 82 years, 2010 (Unicef 2012)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 1.9 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef 2012)

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 5 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Welfare

Social security payments are intended as a 'safety net' to help low income groups and anti-fraud measures are increasingly tough. In recent years, payments have been the subject of intense scrutiny to ensure that they are only distributed to those in genuine need, this has resulted in cuts in some benefits while other categories, especially disability and service pensions, have increased. Other priority groups have been defined as low-income: families with children; the long-term unemployed; and single parents.

Pensions

Australia has a forced savings 'superannuation' scheme for employees, the total value of which is approaching A\$1 trillion (US\$620 billion). The scheme involves compulsory contributions by employees of 9 per cent of their income. The scheme does not cover the self-employed or low-income workers. It is estimated that 94 per cent of pension schemes operate through trusts. Employees often have no choice in becoming a member and are ill-informed as to who heads the trust.

Main cities

Canberra, (national capital, estimated populations 339,106 in 2012; state capitals – Sydney (3.8 million (m)), Melbourne (3.6m), Brisbane (1.9m), Perth (1.3m), Adelaide (1.1m), Hobart (128,686), Darwin (62,513), Gold Coast (631,200).

Languages spoken

Aboriginal dialects are becoming scarce. Italian is spoken by 2.6 per cent of the population and Greek by 1.8 per cent. A wide variety of other languages are spoken, particularly from Asia, reflecting the diverse origins of Australia's population.

Official language/s

English

Media

Press

In 2007 the government relaxed the laws on media cross-ownership of press and broadcasting and allowing greater levels of foreign ownership. Around 80 per cent of all print media is owned by four newspaper publishers, News Limited, Fairfax Media Publications, APN News and Media and West Australian Newspapers Holdings. All newspapers have a home market based on the major city and state

in which they are published and very few are sold elsewhere.

Dailies: The only national daily is *The Australian* (www.theaustralian.news.com.au). Major regional publications include, in NSW *The Sydney Morning Herald* (www.smh.com.au), *Sun Herald* (www.sunherald.com.au) and *The Daily Telegraph* (www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph); in VIC *The Age* (www.theage.com.au) and *Herald Sun* (www.news.com.au/heraldsun) a tabloid with the biggest circulation; in *The Canberra Times* (<http://canberra.yourguide.com.au>); in QLD *Courier Mail* (www.news.com.au/couriermail), *The Brisbane News* (www.brisbanenews.net); in SA *The Advertiser* (www.news.com.au/adelaidenow); in WA *The Western Australian* (www.thewest.com.au); in NT *Northern Territory News* (www.ntnews.com.au); in Tasmania *Mercury* (www.news.com.au/mercury).

Weeklies: All major dailies produce weekend editions. There are a comprehensive range of magazines catering for all interests personal and professional. APC (www.acp.com.au) publishes many of the leading magazine titles including *The Australian Womens Weekly*, *TV Week* and *Cleo* (<http://aww.ninemsn.com.au>). *Beat Magazine* (www.beat.com.au) is an arts and entertainment magazine. *The Chaser* (www.chaser.com.au) and *Brainsnap* (<http://brainsnap.com>) are satirical publications.

Business: The only national daily is the *Australian Financial Review* (www.afr.com). All daily broadsheets have business sections. Weekly publications include *Western Australian Business News* (www.wabusinessnews.com.au), which has the largest circulation, *Business Review Weekly* (www.brw.com.au), with comprehensive articles on national matters, *Lloyds List DCN (Daily Commercial News)* (www.lloydslistdcn.com.au) dealing with transport matters and *Stock & Land* (<http://sl.farmonline.com.au>), reporting on agriculture. Monthly publications include *Sydney Business Review*. There are numerous commercial and trade journals, including reports from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics (Abare) (www.abareconomics.com).

Periodicals: For politics and culture *Monthly* (www.themonthly.com.au) and *Quarterly Essay* (www.quarterlyessay.com).

Broadcasting

The principal public broadcaster is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), providing national, local and

Pacific regional radio, TV and Internet services.

Radio: There are hundreds of commercial radio stations which in a combined number represent the largest audiences. They broadcast local interest shows and are affiliated to major, usually city stations, with personality presenters who command significant listenership numbers.

National radio services are provided by the public services ABC (www.abc.net.au) and SBS (www20.sbs.com.au) (with programmes broadcasts in many of the immigrant community languages), and commercial radio by Austereo (www.austereo.com.au), DMG Radio (www.dmgradio.com.au) and Southern Cross Broadcasting (www.southerncrossbroadcasting.com.au). Radio Australia (www.abc.net.au/ra) is the ABC's external service.

Television: National, public TV is provided by the ABC (www.abc.net.au) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), which provides multicultural programmes in over 50 languages. Both broadcast additional digital channels aimed children and world news programmes respectively. There are three, free-to-air, commercial channels, Seven (<http://au.tv.yahoo.com>), Nine (<http://channelnine.ninemsn.com.au>) and Ten (<http://ten.com.au>). Channels Seven and Nine regularly vie for top ratings, with domestically produced programmes and popular imports.

The conversion to digital services is expected to be completed by 2010. There are more than 250 privately owned regional TV stations that are affiliates to the metropolitan stations, the largest of which is WINTV (www.wintv.com.au).

Pay-to-view services have grown substantially since the 1990s, using terrestrial, cable and satellite platforms, including Foxtel (www.foxtel.com.au) and Optus (www.optus.com.au).

Other news agencies: AAP (Australian Associated Press): <http://aap.com.au>
ABC News: www.abc.net.au/news

Economy

Continent-sized Australia, with a modest sized population, has a range of productive industries, which not only provides for its own citizens but also allows for exports. By far the most profitable sector is mining, with Australia a world leader (in quantity) in brown coal, lead, uranium and zinc. Australia is ranked second for gold, copper, bauxite, silver and industrial grade diamonds; it is third ranked in producing manganese and fourth (by weight) in producing gem quality diamonds. Total exports of minerals in 2010–11 were around A\$58.4 billion (US\$59.58 billion), excluding oil and natural gas. At the end

of 2011, petroleum production was 562,000 barrels per day; natural gas production was 50.4 billion cubic metres (an increase of 5.1 per cent on the 2009 figure) and coal production was 235.4 million tonnes of oil equivalent.

The Australian agriculture sector, when not blighted by drought, exports grain and live animals. Australia has become a world renowned wine producer with export sales reaching A\$1.89 billion (US\$2.5 billion) in 2011. Exports reached a record, by volume, of 786 million litres in 2007 (valued at A\$3 billion (US\$3.6 billion)). The volume fell by 18 per cent to 698 million litres in 2008. Although exports grew over 2009–10 the value has experienced a persistent four-year decline, averaging 11 per cent.

Australia's GDP growth remained positive throughout the global economic crisis; however it fell from 4.9 per cent in 2007 to 2.2 per cent in 2008, and then averaged 2 per cent over 2009–11. The banking sector remained profitable while other countries were forced into recession. The Reserve Bank of Australia introduced wholesale funding and retail deposit guarantees to provide sufficient liquidity and helped maintain stability in the financial sector in 2009, staving off potential risk from sizable short-term wholesale funding. Commodity exports, particularly to China, began to pick up in 2009–10 and remained healthy in 2010.

Australia was the first OECD and G20 country to lift its interest rates after the decline, with cash rates rising by 25 basis points to 3.25 per cent in 2009. The rebound in the economy was the result first of China's continued purchases of Australian raw materials and secondly the strength of the banking sector which was less exposed to toxic debts than those in the US and Europe. Exports account for around 20 per cent of GDP; iron ore and coal are the highest exports by value. GDP growth had grown for five consecutive quarters by July 2010, although at a slower rate in the first three months (0.5 per cent) than in the same period in 2009 (1.1 per cent).

In December of 2010 the Australian dollar reached the threshold of A\$1.0 per US1 dollar and strengthened against the US dollar through 2011.

In March 2012, Australia and China agreed to swap the equivalent of US\$31 billion in each other's currencies in a measure intended to safeguard them during another global economic crisis and strengthen trade ties. Both central banks will be able to exchange each other's currency (up to the US\$31 billion) without consideration to fluctuation in the money markets.

External trade

Australia is a member of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (Sparteca) along with 13 regional nations, which allows products duty free access by Pacific Island Forum members to Australian and New Zealand markets (subject to the country of origin restrictions).

Export marketing organisations established under government statutes supervise and promote the export of primary income-earning commodities, and the Export Market Development Grants scheme provides taxable cash grants for developing overseas markets. Australia has an industrial base that includes vehicle assembly, steel, aluminium and nickel smelting, textile and paper manufacturing and telecommunications and IT suppliers. There is a huge international trade in raw materials, minerals and agricultural produce supplying the Asia and Pacific region.

Australia has a free trade agreement (FTA) with the US (AUSFTA) and signed its biggest FTA with the Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean) and New Zealand in February 2009, under which tariffs will be reduced and trade in beef, dairy products and pharmaceuticals, as well as automotives and electrical machinery, are all expected to benefit.

Imports

Principal imports are finished products such as vehicles and parts, industrial machinery, computers and office equipment, electrical goods, textiles and crude oil and petroleum products.

Main sources: China (18.4 per cent in 2012), US (12.6 per cent total, 2005), Japan (7.9 per cent).

Exports

Principal exports are minerals: coal, gold, diamonds, alumina, iron ore, uranium; agricultural products: wheat, meat, wool and live animals; manufactures include vehicles, processed food, computers and telecommunications equipment.

Main destinations: China (29.5 per cent total in 2012), Japan (19.3 per cent), South Korea (8 per cent).

Agriculture

Agricultural output has doubled since the early 1960s, but the sector now only contributes 4 per cent of GDP, a reduction from 14 per cent, although agricultural production still accounts for 22 per cent of exports.

Larger, technologically-enhanced farms employing fewer workers are replacing many smaller operations; the number of farms has fallen by 25 per cent since the 1980s.

The long-running drought, which was only given a short-lived respite with rains in

2007, returned with greater force in 2008 with the driest June on record. Australia's principal food growing region, the Murray-Darling basin, which produces 40 per cent of the country's fruit, vegetables and grain, was particularly hard hit. Nationwide wheat production in 2006–07 was down by 59 per cent and was at its lowest since 1982–83. Severe cuts in water allocations also cut rice and cotton production by 90 per cent and 42 per cent respectively, with some farmers abandoning parts of their crops in the field and using the reduced water to irrigate smaller areas and maximise their returns. In 2008, the government and land users agreed to water conservation plans with the commitment of A\$3.7 billion (US\$3.6 billion) in investment immediately and a further A\$9.2 billion (US\$9.5 billion) to restore the river system. It has been estimated that 10,000 farming families have been forced off the land since 2002 when the drought took hold, while those farmers that remain are adopting water efficient cropping methods.

Government involvement tends to be focussed on improving infrastructure as a means of facilitating investment.

Australia is the world's fourth-largest wheat producer, after the EU, the US and Canada. Since the 1980s, Australia has successfully diversified its wheat production, increasing the number of varieties grown and improving marketing. China's membership of the WTO has benefited Australian wheat growers, who have seen a rise in exports to Asia. As living standards improve in Asia, consumption of higher value commodities such as rice and noodles will increase.

A new variety of pineapple was launched in Queensland in September 2010, following 15 years of plant breeding. The Australian Jubilee has twice as much vitamin C of a typical pineapple. The pineapple industry is worth A\$70 million (US\$75 million) annually.

Australia typically produces 220,000 tonnes of seafood and 13,000 tonnes of freshwater fish per annum. Around 80 per cent of annual fishing production is exported. Rock lobsters from Western Australia account for 30 per cent of exports by value. Other species include prawns, molluscs, carp and eels. The main destinations for fish exports are Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, while exports to the US and Europe have benefited from the weakness of the Australian dollar.

Following the annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), held on Cheju Island, South Korea, all members agreed to a 20 per cent cut in the roughly 17,000 tonnes in 2009 bluefin tuna catches from 2010. Scientists had warned

that without a cut fish stocks could crash as numbers had become dangerously low. For Australia, which had a larger proportion of the quota for the bluefin tuna catch, the overall cut was 30 per cent.

South Australia had the world's first tuna fish farm industry. However the last tuna cannery in operation, Port Lincoln Tuna Processors in South Australia, announced in February 2010 that it would close in May 2010 due to the lack of fish caused by the 2009 tuna quota cutbacks.

There is a substantial forestry industry in tropical Queensland, producing approximately 22 million cubic metres (cum) of timber annually, worth over A\$1 billion (US\$694 million). Japan has traditionally been the sector's biggest customer, with New Zealand the second largest export market. The sector employs around 75,000 people. There are projects for new plantations to increase production by 300 per cent.

Industry and manufacturing

Australia embarked on a basic reorientation of its economy in the 1980s, and has transformed itself from an inward-looking, import-substitution economy to an internationally competitive, export-oriented economy. In the early 1990s, the sector suffered from poor investment, despite boosts to exports provided by the low exchange rate. However, having shed labour, gained more effective investment and a sharper export focus, Australian industry has become more competitive internationally with manufacturers of wood and paper products, food, beverages and tobacco becoming dominant.

The Liberal Party (LP)-National Party (NP) coalition government, first elected in 1995, quickly made clear its aim of transforming a traditional commodity-based economy by value-added processing of domestic raw materials into high-value consumer products for the global market. At the heart of industrial policy is a package to support innovation and improve access to venture capital for the commercial application of research and development. The government has also pledged to commit Australia to a free trade approach to the electronic market place – goods ordered and delivered electronically will remain duty free.

Tourism

Australia is a continental sized country with many of its major attractions thousands of mile apart. The tourist industry markets itself as three-centres, typically including the Great Barrier Reef (off the Queensland state coast), Uluru (Ayers Rock) in the centre of Australia and any one of its major cities. Likewise the distance Australia is from its potential

markets shapes the way visitors view Australia as a place for an extended (and thus more expensive) visit. New Zealanders outnumbered all other visiting groups with 1.32 million visitors in 2009, followed by the UK (819,000), China (761,000) and the US (628,000).

In May 2012 a major new promotional campaign began, to attract more visitors from Asia, especially China, as the number of visitors from the US and Europe fall.

The sector is managed with government backing, strong private investment and sophisticated sales and marketing, and has a network of tourist offices at federal, state and local levels to co-ordinate and target many niche markets.

The tourist industry suffered from a drop in the number of visitors during the global economic crisis of the late 2000s and suffered a resultant fall in revenue. International tourist expenditure fell by 2.9 per cent in 2009 over 2008 and overnight accommodation fell by 1.4 per cent; domestic tourist expenditure fell by 2.6 per cent and overnight accommodation fell by 3.6 per cent. Tourist revenue in 2011 was forecast to be A\$41.8 billion (US\$42.3 billion).

The forecast direct contribution of tourism to total GDP in 2011 was 3.3 per cent, A\$47.6 billion (US\$48.2 billion); the indirect contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was forecast to be A\$187.1 billion (US\$189.4 billion). Direct employment in the sector was expected to be 648,000 jobs (5.7 per cent of total employment) with 1.856 million indirect jobs related to travel and tourism. Investment in the industry was forecast to be A\$21.7 billion (US\$22 billion) in 2011, constituting 5.5 per cent of total investment in the economy.

The rising value of the Australian dollar in 2011 was identified as the sector's greatest threat to growth, while tourist promotions continue to highlight Australia's value for money.

Environment

Under the government's Eastern Australia Marine Bioregional profile, a new Coral Sea Conservation Zone, bounded by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu was established in 2009, offering environmental protection for one million square kilometres of ocean off Australia's north eastern coast. Existing users such as fishermen, scientific research and cruise ships will be allowed to continue work at current levels; expansion will be limited. Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are the countries with the most coral reef fish species.

In June 2012, Australia announced plans to create the world's largest marine reserve of 3.1 million square kilometres, including the Coral Sea. The reserve, incorporating over one-third of Australia's territorial waters, will restrict fishing and oil and gas exploration.

In 2009 the Bureau of Meteorology in Melbourne announced that the gigantic hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica and Australasia had begun to shrink and could be closed by 2100. News of an ozone hole in the 1980s and its significance to the welfare of the planet became the spark for awareness of the state of the planet and prompted the first worldwide action on the use of CFCs gases that were known to breakdown the ozone layer.

Mining

Mining contributed around 8.5 per cent of GDP in 2004 and employs 4 per cent of the workforce. Australia has major deposits of a variety of minerals, possessing the world's biggest economic reserves of lead, uranium, silver, zinc, tantalum, mineral sands and low-cost uranium. Australia is a significant producer of gold, iron ore, bauxite, nickel, diamonds, alumina, ilmenite, zircon and rutile. Australia is the largest exporter of gold and iron ore in the world. Total mining exploration expenditure had fallen dramatically by 2001, but the trend had reversed by 2005 to levels equalling those of 1997, when spending on exploration was US\$676 million.

In March 2009 China won a bid to buy up to 17.5 per cent of the Australian mining company Fortescue Metals Group; the first in a series of bids. While cash-strapped Australian companies were looking for investment during a time of global economic downturn, China began hunting for all the vital raw materials it could secure.

Hydrocarbons

Australia is rich in natural resources and has considerable deposits of hydrocarbons. Proven oil reserves at the end of 2011 totalled 3.9 billion barrels, with production at 484,000 barrels per day (bpd), which was a drop of -14.5 per cent on the 2010 production figure. The rate of production has been in decline since 2000, partly due to depleting reserves and the growing consumption of natural gas, nevertheless, oil consumption at 1 million bpd in 2011 means that imports are required to make up for its shortfall. Australia's main oil-fields are situated offshore in the Bass Strait and Carnarvon Basin; there are a number of smaller and younger fields becoming operational. There are also shale oil reserves in Queensland, estimated at around 30 billion barrels, but exploitation has been hampered by the

cost of the technology necessary to utilise it, and environmental considerations.

There is a well-developed network of oil and gas pipelines that allow transport to domestic and export outlets. Refinery capacity was 742,000bpd in 2011, primarily producing petrol (gasoline) and diesel fuel. Refining production has fallen since 2002 due to overcapacity in refining in other Asian countries and the costs of shipping crude oil to Australia which made the end product uneconomic.

An oil rig in the Timor Sea, off the north-west coast of Australia, erupted in 2009 spewing out around 400 barrels per day of oil and gas, making it Australia's worst drilling accident and causing serious environmental damage. An attempt to plug the leak on failed, and the oil platform was engulfed by fire, which was later plugged. Although the natural gas industry is wholly privately owned the government set up the Ministerial Council of Energy (MCE) in 2001, to provide a national oversight and co-ordination in the energy sector and provide national leadership in convergence issues across state and territories lines. In May 2011, the Federal Government announced that a new national petroleum regulatory body for the offshore energy industry will be established to ensure best operating standards were applied. The new body is in response to the public inquiry into the 74-day oil and natural gas spill in the Timor Sea in 2009 that concluded the industry needed an independent, overarching body to implement and maintain world standards in production and safety. The government funds seismic and geological data from Geoscience Australia for access free of charge by hydrocarbon companies to aid exploration of its on- and off-shore sites.

There were 3.8 trillion cubic metres (cum) of proven natural gas reserves at the end of 2011; production was 45 billion cum, a fall of -1.3 per cent on the 2010 rate and marks a steady trend of increase from the 29.8 billion cum in 1997. Projections have shown that Australia can maintain self-sufficiency in natural gas until at least 2016. There has been a steady growth in exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) so that by 2011 Australia was the world's third largest exporter, with exports of 25.9 billion cum, of which 19 billion cum went to Japan.

The Gorgon Gas Project (GGP), when completed (scheduled for 2014), will be Australia's single largest resource project. It is due to convert natural gas from the offshore Carnarvon Basin gas field (Western Australia) into liquefied natural gas (LNG) on Chevron, the US-energy company's processing plant on Barrow Island. When the 15 million tonne per annum

LNG plant is in full production it will be the one of the world's largest processing plants. In May 2011, the Dutch energy company Shell announced that it would build the world's first floating LNG plant. Industry observers estimated the cost of the Prelude project could be between US\$8–15 billion. The custom-built ship will be moored 200km off the Australian coast and process Australian natural gas to provide 3.6 million tonnes of gas per year delivered ready to go on-stream at any Asian importer's designated port. Proven coal reserves were 76.4 billion tonnes at the end of 2011, representing 8.9 per cent of world reserves. However the majority of reserves (39.3 billion tonnes) are lower quality coking (brown) coal, which is used almost exclusively in power stations and produces a greater quantity of carbon dioxide emissions than other primary energy sources. Production in 2011 was 230.8 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe) a fall of -2.2 per cent on the 2011 figure. Australia exports around 60 per cent of its production in both thermal and coking coal, of which 60 per cent is destined for Japan.

Energy

Total generating capacity is over 4,900MW, with 240 billion kilowatt hours (KWh) produced in 2007. Around 75 per cent is produced by coal-fired power stations, most of the rest by gas and hydropower. In June 2009 a proposal to build Australia's biggest wind farm, near Broken Hill in New South Wales (NSW), was given permission to proceed. Around 600 wind turbines will generate enough electricity to provide NSW with almost 5 per cent of its energy needs. Plans for other wind farms are under consideration; the Senate passed legislation in August setting a target of 20 per cent renewable sources of energy by 2020.

Plans for a new hydroelectric power plant in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to supply electricity to northern Queensland were announced on 17 September 2010. The Australian power company Origin Energy and PNG's Energy Developments will build the power plant, with the first phase generating 1800MW to be supplied via an undersea cable to Weipa initially and then to Townsville, by about 2020. The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) took control of the energy market from state entities in 2006 and is responsible for the economic regulation of energy markets. It promotes investment, ensures supply security and monitors prices faced by end users.

Although Australia has a nuclear power station in southern Sydney at Lucas Heights it does not generate electrical energy.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Australian Securities Exchange (ASX)

Banking and insurance

In 2010 the government overhauled its taxation system to allow for growth in Islamic banking, finance and insurance products.

Central bank

Reserve Bank of Australia

Main financial centre

Sydney

Time

There are three time zones:

Queensland, New South Wales, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania (Eastern Standard Time (EST)) – GMT +10 hours.

South Australia and Northern Territory (Central Standard Time (CST)) – GMT + 9.30 hours.

Western Australia (Western Standard Time (WST)) – GMT + 8 hours

Daylight saving, plus one hour to GMT times in all states and territories except Western Australia and Queensland, (October to March).

Geography

Australia is an island continent with the Indian Ocean to the west, the Coral Sea to the east and the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean to the south. Australia is the flattest of the continents, the average elevation being less than 300 metres. It has three major landform features: the western plateau, the interior lowlands and the eastern uplands. Much of the land is desert.

Hemisphere

Southern

Climate

The climate ranges from tropical to temperate. About half of Queensland and Western Australia and 80 per cent of the Northern Territory are within the tropics. The remainder of the states and territories — New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory — are in the temperate zone. Temperatures vary greatly from warm to very hot in summer (December—February) to cool and rainy in winter (June—August). In July, the temperature in Sydney averages 17 degrees Celsius (C) and in Melbourne 14 degrees C, but in the desert centre can reach 36 degrees. Average annual temperatures can vary from 25 degrees C in the far north to 13 degrees C in the far south. For most of Australia the hottest month is January.

Much of the country receives low rainfall, but some parts of Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales have annual rainfall of up to 4,200mm. Tropical cyclones develop over the seas to the north-west and the north-east in summer. An average of about three cyclones hit the

Queensland coast every year. The Snowy Mountains in New South Wales, a famous ski resort, receives heavy snowfalls most years.

Some 70 per cent of the continent is arid, with extremes of daytime and night-time temperatures in the interior.

Dress codes

For business a suit and tie for men; suit, dress or skirt and blouse for women.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all.

Visa

Required by all and must be obtained in advance and from outside Australia.

Most citizens of EU and North America can apply for an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) which can be issued by a travel agent or airline, or can be applied for online. See www.eta.immi.gov.au for details of those eligible, and follow links to the application site. ETA-eligible business visitors may stay for up to three months without additional documentation.

Those not eligible for an ETA must apply using form 456, through the nearest embassy or mission. Business visas will require a letter of invitation from a local company or organisation, a business letter from an employer stating purpose of trip and details of employee's function, proof of sufficient funds, and a full itinerary. Further details and application form can be obtained at www.immi.gov.au/business-services/index.htm.

Currency advice/regulations

This import and export of local and foreign currencies are unrestricted but amounts over A\$10,000 (or foreign equivalent) must be declared.

Travellers cheques are widely accepted.

Customs

Personal effects are exempt. Duty-free shops are open to international visitors on arrival in Australia.

Prohibited imports

Strict quarantine regulations make it inadvisable to carry food, fruit, vegetables, seeds, animals or plants without prior approval. Travellers are not permitted to carry fruit, vegetables or plants into the State of Victoria. Aircraft cabins are sprayed with insecticide before disembarkation.

Importation of certain items is prohibited, including narcotic and dangerous drugs, firearms and birds. Both import and export of protected wildlife or goods derived from (ie made from skins, feathers, shell, bone, etc) is strictly prohibited.

Health (for visitors)

Mandatory precautions

Vaccination certificates are required for yellow fever if travelling from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

UK nationals can obtain free hospital treatment through a reciprocal arrangement between the two governments, but they must pay for other medical treatment. Australia provides moderately expensive, good quality medical care.

Travellers should be wary of exposure to the sun and the use of sun screening creams is advised. Australia has a high incidence of skin cancer in peoples from northern Europe. The Northern Territory has occasional outbreaks of dengue fever; prevention measures include mosquito repellents, nets and clothing that fully cover the body at dawn and dusk.

Hotels

There is a full range of hotels in all cities, they should be booked well in advance, particularly during holiday seasons. A 10 per cent tip is optional.

Credit cards

Major international credit and debit cards are accepted by virtually everyone. Some taxis also accept credit card payments, check with the driver before the journey begins.

Public holidays (national)

In addition to official public holidays observed throughout Australia, extra statutory holidays are observed in individual states and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 26 Jan (Australia Day), 25 Apr (Anzac Day), 27 Sep (Queen's Official Birthday, WA only), 25 Dec (Christmas Day), 26 Dec (Boxing Day).

If Christmas Day or New Year's Day falls on a Saturday, the next Monday is given as a holiday.

Variable dates

Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queen's Official Birthday (second Mon in Jun).

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Thu: 0930–1600; Fri: 0930–1700.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700.

Shops

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700; Sat: 0900–1200. Late night shopping (to 2100) in Sydney, Perth and Darwin on Thursday, and in Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart and Canberra on Friday.

Telecommunications

In a move that will change the structure of Australia's broadband market major telecommunications companies Telstra and Optus agreed in June 2011 to join the government's A\$36 billion (US\$34 billion) plan to roll-out high-speed internet across the country. The two companies will close down their infrastructure and transfer customers to the National Broadband Network Company (NBNC). Government has plans to connect 90 per cent of households to a super-fast network and although both Telstra and Optus already have extensive broadband networks government considers it will be more economical to bring the three parties together. Current broadband speeds in Australia are behind other industrialised countries.

Mobile/cell phones

GSM 3G service is available in major cities only, 900/1800 services are available in all most populated areas.

Electricity supply

220–250V AC, with 3-pin plug fittings (not UK style) and bayonet-type light sockets. Leading hotels also supply 110V outlets for razors and small appliances.

Weights and measures

Metric system

Social customs/useful tips

Australians tend to be informal, first names are quickly adopted. A handshake is normal for greetings. Business, with traditional blunt, straight-to-the-point talk, is often conducted over lunch or dinner accompanied by local wines and beers.

Australians love outdoor life and business tends to come to a standstill on weekends and public holidays, when there is a steady exodus to country areas, particularly beaches or ski-slopes depending on the season.

Visitors often complain about bureaucracy and patience is required in dealing with government departments and large corporations. There are no short-cuts and although sometimes an approach to the top official of a department might help speed up matters, this must be done with extreme caution as Australians do not tolerate queue-jumping.

Australia has strict drink-driving laws, police conduct random roadside breath tests and penalties can be severe.

From December 2012 cigarettes can only be sold in olive green packets, with graphic images warning of the consequences of smoking.

Security

Australian cities are relatively safe though care should be taken, particularly at night. Each capital city has separate emergency numbers on the inside cover of phone

books. Otherwise dial 000 and the operator will direct you to the appropriate service.

Getting there

Air

National airline: Qantas Airways.

International airport/s: All states have international airports (with the exceptions of the capital territory, (which is served by NSW), and Tasmania) with connecting inter- and intra-state flights.

NSW: Kingsford Smith (SYD), 8km south of Sydney; Victoria: Tullamarine (MEL), 21km from Melbourne; Western Australia: Perth (PER), 10km from Perth, all of which have duty-free shop, bar, restaurant, bank, post office, shops; Queensland: Brisbane International (BNE), 11km north-east of city, with duty-free shop, bar, restaurant; South Australia: West Beach (ADL), 8km from Adelaide, with bar, restaurant, post office, shops; Northern Territory: Darwin (DRW), 8km from city with bar, money exchange and duty-free shops.

Other airport/s: Tasmania: Hobart (HBA), 17km north of city, with restaurant and bar. Queensland: Cairns (CNS), 4km north-west of Cairns, with duty-free shop, hotel reservations; Townsville (TSV), 5km from city. (More information on local airports is provided on: www.airportsaustralia.com).

Airport tax: None

Surface

Water: There are regular sea links with New Zealand. Cruiseliners call at major ports in Australia. International shipping lines that maintain contacts with Australia may provide passenger services on cargo ships.

Main port/s: There are more than 30 ports. The main ports are at Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle. Sea transport is extensively used for internal and international freight shipment. Containerised cargo facilities are available.

Getting about

National transport

Air: Air transport is widely used and well developed. Regular services linking main centres and nearly 440 airfields are operated by Australian Airlines, East-West Airlines, Air Queensland and over 25 other operators. Charter aircraft are also available. Travellers holding international air tickets can obtain concessionary air, rail and bus fares within Australia.

Road: All cities have good arterial roads. Despite the vast distances, there are good highways and bus services between all major centres, but conditions in the interior are rugged, with road transport more limited. Seek advice from the appropriate local automobile association before

travelling in remote areas, as roads may be affected by weather conditions.

Buses: Air-conditioned express coach services link main centres, including Tasmania via ferries. Buses provide good services on main town routes, but convenient cross-town transport is not always available.

Rail: Railways, mainly government-owned and operated, provide express inter-urban passenger services, electrified suburban services and long-distance freight services, using a 38,563km network of tracks. Long-distance passenger trains are air-conditioned, with dining and sleeping facilities, they are generally a slower option of transport than road or air. Advance booking is recommended. The Ghan passenger train runs directly from Adelaide to Darwin through the centre of Australia, via Alice Springs. The refurbished, 47-hour, 2,979km transcontinental journey, began its regular services in 2004. Alice Springs is the closest base for access to the region around Uluru/Ayers Rock national park and Kings Canyon.

There are rail extensions to the Ghan from other state capital cities of Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

Water: There is a regular passenger/vehicle ferry link between Melbourne and Hobart, Tasmania.

City transport

Taxis: Metered taxis operate in all main cities and towns from major hotels, shopping areas and signposted taxi ranks. Radio-controlled taxis are listed in local telephone directories. Tipping is not expected, but a tip of the balance of the fare rounded up to the nearest dollar is sometimes given.

Buses, trams & metro: Sydney (NSW): the rail service AirportLink connects Sydney international airport with the city centre; trains depart at 10 minute intervals, journey time 13 minutes. State Transit run extensive services of buses, trains and ferries around the city and suburbs. Melbourne (Vic): VicTrip operate trams, buses and trains around the city and suburbs. See www.victrip.com.au for a journey planner. Skybus links the airport to city centre; services run 24 hours, every day with daytime departures every 15 minutes, journey time 20 minutes. Brisbane (Qld): Buses and trains link the airport to the city centre, journey time 20 minutes, as well as to all other parts of the city and suburbs.

Ferry: In Sydney, ferries are an easy, regular and enjoyable mode of transport to the city centre and harbour suburbs. The main ferry terminal is at Circular Quay. In Brisbane there are over a dozen passenger stops along the city's river.

Car hire

Hire cars are widely available. Current overseas licences are recognised, but International Drivers Permits are recommended. The required third-party insurance is normally included in car hire charge. Use of seat belts is compulsory and speed limit in towns is generally 60km per hour. Driving is on the left. Trams have the right of way. Drink driving rules are vigorously enforced, with sizeable fines.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Australia is +61, followed by area code and subscriber's number:

Adelaide	8	Hobart	3
Brisbane	7	Launceston	3
Cairns	7	Melbourne	3
Canberra	2	Newcastle	2
Darwin	8	Perth	8
Gold Coast	7	Sydney	2
Wollongong	2	Townsville	7

Useful telephone numbers

Emergency Services: 000.

Chambers of Commerce

ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 12a Thesiger Court, PO Box 192, 2600 Deakin West (tel: 6283-5200; fax: 6260-3369; e-mail: chamber@actchamber.com.au).

Australian Business Chamber, 140 Arthur Street, Locked Bag 938, North Sydney, NSW 2059 (tel: 9458-7500; fax: 9923-1166; e-mail: moreld@abol.net).

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 50 Burwood Road, PO Box E14, Kingston, ACT 2604 (tel: 6273-2311; fax: 6273-3196; e-mail: acc@acci.asn.au).

Commerce Queensland, 375 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, QLD 4000 (tel: 3842-2244; 3832-3195; fax: 3832-3195; e-mail: qcci@qcci.com.au).

New South Wales State Chamber of Commerce, Level 12, 83 Clarence Street, GPO Box 4280, Sydney NSW 2000 (tel: 9350-8100; fax: 9350-8199; e-mail: worldtradecentre@thechamber.com.au).

Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 5/2 Shepherd Street, GPO Box 1825, Darwin, NT 0800 (tel: 8936-3100; fax: 8981-1405; e-mail: darwin@ntcci.com.au).

South Australian Employers Chamber of Commerce, 136 Greenhill Road, Unley, SA 5061 (tel: 8300-0000; fax: 8300-0001; e-mail: enquiries@business-sa.com).

Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 30 Burnett Street, PO Box 793, 7001 Hobart (tel: 6234-5933; fax: 6231-1278; e-mail: admin@tcci.org.au).

Victoria Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 196 Flinders Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000/ PO Box 4352QQ, Melbourne, VIC 3001 (tel: 8662-5333; fax: 8662-5462; e-mail: webmaster@vecci.org.au).

Western Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 180 Hay Street, East Perth, WA 6004/ PO Box, East Perth, WA 6892 (tel: 9365-7555; fax: 9365-7550; e-mail: info@cciwa.com).

Banking

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, 100 Queen Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000 (tel: 9273-5555).

Australia & New Zealand Savings Bank Ltd, Collins Place, 55 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000 (tel: 9275-5555).

Barclays Bank Australia Ltd, Barclays House, PO Box 3357, 25 Blich Street, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9233-6622; fax: 9221-3060).

Colonial State Bank of New South Wales, PO Box 41, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9226-8000).

Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Pitt Street and Martin Place, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9378-2000; fax: 9312-9905).

Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia, GPO Box 2719, Pitt Street & Martin Place, Sydney, NSW 2001 (9227-7111; fax: 9232-6573, 9235-1653).

National Australia Bank, 500 Bourke Street, PO Box 84A, Melbourne, Vic 3001 (tel: 9605-3500).

Natwest Australia Bank Ltd, 41st Level, Qantas International Centre, International Square, George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9250-8500; fax: 9251-2763).

Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia, PO Box E237, 54-58 Barrack Street, Perth, WA 6001 (tel: 9320-6206; fax: 9320-6444).

State Bank of Victoria, PO Box 267D, 385 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Vic 3001 (tel: 9604-7000; fax: 9602-2150).

State Bank of New South Wales, PO Box 41, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9226-8000).

State Bank of South Australia, 97 King William Street, PO Box 399, Adelaide, SA 5001 (tel: 9210-4411; fax: 9210-4758, 9212-3056).

Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook

Westpac Banking Corporation, 60 Martin Place, PO Box 1, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9226-3311).

Australian branches

Bank of New Zealand, 333 George Street, PO Box 507, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9290-6666).

Banque Nationale de Paris, 12 Castle-reagh Street, PO Box 269, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9232-8733).

Central bank

Reserve Bank of Australia, 65 Martin Place, PO Box 3947, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9551-8111; fax: 9551-8000; e-mail: rbainfo@rba.gov.au).

Stock exchange

Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), www.asx.com.au

Australian Pacific Exchange (APX), Sydney, www.apx.com.au

National Stock Exchange of Australia (NSX), www.nsx.com.au

Travel information

Australian Capital Territory Tourist Bureau, Canberra Centre, Northbourne Avenue, Canberra City, ACT 2601 (tel: 6233-3666).

Automobile Association of the Northern Territory (AANT), 79-81 Smith Street, Darwin, NT 0800 (tel: 8981-3837).

Australian Tourist Commission, 80 William Street, PO Box 2721, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011 (tel: 9360-1111; fax: 9361-1385; internet: www.atc.net.au).

Holiday WA Centre, 772 Hay Street, Perth, WA 6000 (tel: 9322-2999).

National Roads and Motorists Association (NRMA), 151 Clarence Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9260-9222).

NSW Government Travel Centre, 16 Spring Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9231-444).

Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau, 31 Smith Street, Darwin NT 5750 (tel: 8981-6611/3).

Qantas Airways, Qantas Centre, QCA9, 203 Coward Street, Sydney, NSW 2020 (tel: 9691-3472; fax: 9691-4547; internet: www.qantas.com).

Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, Corner Adelaide and Edward Streets, Brisbane, QLD 4001 (tel: 3312-211; internet: www.tq.com.au).

Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ), 300 St Paul's Tce, Brisbane, QLD 4006 (tel: 3253-4444).

Royal Automobile Association of South Australia, 41 Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide, SA 5000 (tel: 8223-4555).

Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT), Corner Patrick & Murray Streets, Hobart, Tas 7001 (tel: 6382-200).

Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), 123 Queen Street, Melbourne, Vic 3174 (tel: 9790-2211).

Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia Inc (RACWA), 228 Adelaide Terrace, Perth, WA 6000 (tel: 9421-4444).

South Australian Government Travel Centre, 18 King William Street, Adelaide, SA 5000 (tel: 8212-1644).

Tasmanian Government Tourist Bureau, 80 Elizabeth Street, Hobart, Tas 7000 (tel: 6300-211).

Victoria Tourism Commission, 230 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000 (tel: 9619-9444).

VicRail Information: 619-1111 (Melbourne).

Ministry of tourism

Department of Tourism, Burns Memorial Building, 28 National Circuit, Forrester, ACT 2603 (tel: 6279-7111; fax: 6248-0734).

National tourist organisation offices

Tourism Australia, PO Box 2721, Sydney NSW 1006 (tel: 9360-1111; fax: 9331-6469; internet: www.tourism.australia.com)

Ministries

Department of Administrative Services, GPO Box 1920, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6275-3000; fax: 6275-3819).

Department of Communications and the Arts, GPO Box 2154, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6279-1000; fax: 6279-1901; internet site: <http://www.dcit.gov.au>).

Department of Defence, Treasury Building, Newland Street, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6265-9111; fax: 6273-3021; internet site: <http://www.defence.gov.au>).

Department of Employment, Education and Training, GPO Box 9880, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6240-8111).

Department of Finance, Treasury Building, Newlands Street, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6263-2222; fax: 6273-3021; internet site: <http://www.dofa.gov.au>).

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Administrative Building, Parkes Place, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6261-9111; fax: 6261-3111; internet site: <http://www.dfat.gov.au>).

Department of Housing and Regional Development, GPO Box 9834, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6289-2222).

Department of Human Services and Health, GPO Box 9848, Canberra, ACT 2601.

Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, PO Box 25, Belconnen, ACT 2616 (tel: 6264-1111; internet site: <http://www.immi.gov.au>).

Department of Industrial Relations, GPO Box 9879, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6243-7333).

Department of Industry, Science and Technology, GPO Box 9839, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6276-1000; fax: 6276-1111; internet site: <http://www.industry.gov.au>).

Department of National Development and Industry, Tasman House, Hobart Place, PO Box 5, Canberra, ACT 2600.

Department of Primary Industries and Energy, GPO Box 858, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6272-3933; fax: 6272-5161).

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Locked Bag 14, Queen Victoria Terrace, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6271-5111; fax: 6271-5414; internet site: <http://www.dpmc.gov.au>).

Department of Social Security, Box 7788, Canberra Mail Centre, ACT 2610 (tel: 6244-7788).

Department of Transport, GPO Box 594, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6274-7111; fax: 6257-2505; internet site: <http://www.dot.gov.au>).

Department of the Treasury, The Treasury, Parkes Place, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6263-2111; fax: 6273-2614; internet site: <http://www.treasury.gov.au>).

Department of Veterans' Affairs, PO Box 21, Woden, ACT 2606 (tel: 6289-1111; fax: 6281-3822; internet site: <http://www.dva.gov.au>).

Foreign Investment Review Board, Department of the Treasury, Parkes Place, Parkes, ACT 2600 (tel: 6263-3795; fax: 6263-2940).

Other useful addresses

ACT Department of Business, Arts, Sport and Tourism, Level 8, FAI House, 197 London Circuit, Canberra, ACT 2601 (tel: 6207-5111; fax: 6205-0577).

Attorney-General, Suite MF 21, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600 (tel: 6277-7300; fax: 6273-4102; internet site: www.law.gov.au).

Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics, MacArthur House, Lyneham, ACT 2601 (tel: 6246-9111).

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cameron Office, Chandler Street, Belconnen, ACT 2617 (tel: 6252-7911).

Australian Dairy Corporation, Dairy Industry House, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, VIC 3004 (tel: 9819-4000).

Australian Embassy (USA), 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC

20036-2273 (tel: (+1-202) 797-3000; fax (+1-202) 797-3331; e-mail: library.washington@dfat.gov.au).

Australian Industrial Development Corporation (AIDC), 212 Northbourne Avenue; PO Box 3024, Canberra, ACT 2600 (tel: 6230-1300).

Australian Mining Industry Council, 216 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon, ACT 2601 (tel: 6249-8955).

Australian Securities Commission, Corporate Affairs Commission, National Mutual Centre, 15 London Court, Canberra City, ACT 2601 (tel: 6247-5011; internet site: www.asc.gov.au).

Australian Stock Exchange Ltd, Stock Exchange Center, 530 Collins Street, PO Box 1784 Q, AU Melbourne, VIC 3001 (tel: 9617-8611; fax: 9614-0303; internet site: www.asx.com.au).

Australia Trade Commission, Austrade Centre Cnr Bary Drive and Northbourne Ave, Canberra City, ACT 2601 (tel: 6276-5111; fax: 6276-5105).

Australian Trade Development Council, Department of Trade and Resources, Canberra, ACT 2600.

Australian Wheat Board, Ceres House, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 (tel: 9605-1555).

Australian Wool Corporation, Wool House, Royal Parade, Parkville, VIC 3000 (tel: 9341-9111).

British High Commission, Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla, Canberra City, ACT 2600 (tel: 6270-6666; fax: 6273-3236).

Business Council of Australia, Ethos House, 28 Ainslie Avenue, Canberra City, ACT 2601 (tel: 6247-8208).

Business Victoria, Level 13, 55 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 (tel: 9651-9999; fax: 9651-9962).

BZW Australia Ltd, Level 22, 255 George Street, Sydney 2000 (tel: 9259-5913; fax: 9259-5477); Airports Team, GPO Box 4675, Sydney 1042 (fax: 9259-5477).

Confederation of Australian Industry, 12a The Siger Court, Deakin, ACT 2600 (tel: 282-2199); PO Box E14, Queen Victoria Terrace, Canberra, ACT 2600 (tel: 6732-3111; fax: 6733-196).

International Trade Department Centre, Edgecliff Centre, 203 New South Head

Road, Edgecliff, NSW 2027 (tel: 9329-297).

Major Projects Tasmania, 10/fl, 22 Elizabeth Street, Hobart, TAS 7000 (tel: 6233-5869; fax: 6233-5755).

New South Wales Department of State, Level 44, Grosvenor Place, 225 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9242-6963; fax: 9242-6970).

New South Wales Government Department of Industrial Development and Decentralisation, GPO Box 4169, Sydney, NSW 2001 (tel: 9927-2741).

Northern Department of Asian Relations, Trade and Industry, 1/fl Development House, 76 The Esplanade, Darwin, NT 0800 (tel: 8999-5210; fax: 8999-5106).

Northern Territory Development Corporation, GPO Box 2245, Darwin, NT 5794 (tel: 8989-4211).

Queensland Department of Economic Development & Trade, Executive Building, 100 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000 (tel: 3224-5970; fax: 3225-8914).

South Australia Department of Trade and Industry, Terrace towers, 178 North Towers, Adelaide SA 5000 (tel: 8303-2400; fax: 9303-2410).

Telecom Australia, 199 William Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 (tel: 9606-5511).

US Embassy, Moonah Place, Yarralumla, ACT 2600 (tel: 6214-5600; fax: 6214-5970).

Western Australia Department of Industry and Trade, 170 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA 6000 (tel: 9327-5666; fax: 9322-3361).

Western Australian Development Corporation, 28th Floor, City Mutual Tower, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth, WA 6000 (tel: 9322-7933).

World Trade Promotions (trade fairs and exhibitions), 291 Sussex Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (tel: 9267-5122).

Internet sites

Austrade (information for overseas business people): www.austrade.gov.au/index.asp

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): www.abc.net.au

Australian Capital Territory government: www.act.gov.au

British Chamber of Commerce: www.whoswhere.com.au/abcc

Customs service: www.customs.gov.au
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: www.daff.gov.au

Department of the Environment and Heritage: www.environment.gov.au

Department of Health and Aged Care: www.health.gov.au

Foreign Affairs & Trade Dept: www.dfat.gov.au

Farmwide information on weather reports, commodity prices, etc: www.farmwide.com.au

Federal Government: www.fed.gov.au

Federal Parliament (Canberra): www.aph.gov.au/

General Information: www.about-australia.com

Immigration Department: www.immi.gov.au

Invest Australia: www.investaustralia.gov.au

New South Wales state government: www.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory state government: www.nt.gov.au/

Qantas: www.qantas.com.au

Queensland state government: www.qld.gov.au/

Reserve bank: www.rba.gov.au

South Australia: www.sa.gov.au

Stock Exchange: www.asx.com.au

Statistics: www.abs.gov.au

Tasmania state government: www.tas.gov.au

Taxation office: www.ato.gov.au

Tourism: www.australia.com

Tourism: www.tourism.australia.com

Victoria state government: www.vic.gov.au

Western Australia state government: www.wa.gov.au/

White pages: www.whitepages.com.au

Yellow pages: www.Yellowpages.com.au