



## **HISTORY**

Aborigines were the first people to inhabit Australia. They came to Australia more than forty thousand years ago.

Aborigines lived there for thousands of years with very little contact with the rest of the world. They hunted marsupials and lived in small family groups. In 1600 there were about half a million Aborigines in Australia.



In 1770, the Englishman James Cook landed in Australia. He wanted Australia to be a British colony, and the first British people started to arrive in 1788. As a result, thousands of Aborigines died from European diseases brought by the settlers. Other Aborigines died in battles when the new settlers took their land for farms. By 1900, there were fewer than 100,000 Aborigines. After 1950, immigrants from other European countries, for example Italy and Greece, also came to Australia. After 1975, people from Asia began to come to Australia, too.

## **AUSTRALIA TODAY**

Australia became independent from Britain in 1931. People still speak English and many of them have family in Britain. In the last ten years, more than a million immigrants have arrived in Australia from all over the world. They have become Australian, but they have kept their own cultures, too.

Today, about 23 million people live in Australia and this multiculturalism makes Australia an exciting place to live and to visit. Sydney is the biggest city and has a population of about 4 million people. But the capital city is Canberra.

## THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is the biggest coral reef in the world. It's over 2,600 km long and there are hundreds of islands there, too. The Reef is a national park and a lot of tourists visit it. Unfortunately, because of climate change, the coral in parts of the Reef is dying. The government is trying to protect it, but it's not easy.



## THE OUTBACK

About 80% of Australia is 'the Outback'.

The Outback is the empty area in the centre of Australia and it's very hot and dry. It's enormous – about 6,500 km coast to coast. Traditionally the inhabitants of the Outback are the Aborigines. In some areas of the Outback, where it rains more, people have farms. The farms are huge! The largest farm, Anna Creek Station, is bigger than Sicily. Only 17 people work there and they have to travel around the farm by plane.

