



**Otázka:** Australia

**Jazyk:** Angličtina

**Přidal(a):** Werczii

## 1) GEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA

Australia is the only country which is also a continent. In area, it ranks as 6<sup>th</sup> largest country and the smallest continent. It lies on the south-east from Asia. Around Australia are Oceans – Indian and Pacific. Sometimes people refer to Australia as “**down under**” because it lies entirely within the Southern Hemisphere. It is a federation of six states and its two territories. New South Wales, lying in the south east corner, is the most populous state. Tasmania is a large island which belongs to Australia. Australian Capital Territory is the capital city of Canberra. Big cities in Australia are Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, etc. The north east has heavy rain falls, on Cape York Peninsula are jungles. Deserts are Great Sandy and Great Victoria – they are arid.

Most of Australia is low and flat. Australia can, however, be divided into 3 major land regions. They are, from west to east, *the Western Plateau, the Central Lowlands and the Eastern Highlands*. **The Western Plateau** is mostly a vast desert. In **the Central Lowlands** are tropical forests, savannah and lakes (Eyre, Torrens, Gairdner). In **the Eastern Highlands** are the Great Dividing Range, the Darling River (dry), the Blue Mountains and Australian Alps. It is the most heavily populated part of Australia. In the east coast is much of Australia's city life. The east coast is a sharp contrast between west coast (life country – sheep raising, cattle raising). The cattle ranches are called stations. The interior of Australia is called the Outback. Mount Kosciusko, in the Snowy Mountains, is 2,228 meters high. The Murray River is Australia's longest permanently flowing river. Australia's leading farm products are cattle, wheat and wool along with dairy product, fruit and sugar cane.



## 2) GOVERNMENT

Australia is a constitutional monarchy like Great Britain and Queen Elizabeth II is the symbolic head of state. It is the self-governing federation.

The Parliament consists of Crown (Elizabeth II), the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The unofficial national anthem is **Waltzing Matilda**, a country folk song. It is about a swagman who captured a sheep to eat because he was hungry. Sheep's owner and policemen arrived to arrest him for theft. A swagman suicide by drowning himself in the pond. His ghost haunts the site.

- *waltzing* (travelling around looking for work)      - *coolibar tree* (eucalyptus tree)      -
- swagman* (a bush traveller, hobo, vagrant)      - *billabong* (pond)      - *tucker bag* (food bag)
  
- *jumbuck* (sheep)      - *billy* (cooking pan)

## 3) HISTORY

The original inhabitants of Australia were people called **Aborigines**. The first known European discovery of the continent by a Dutch navigator named *Willem Jansz* who briefly visited the northern coast. Dutch sea captain *Abel Tasman* landed on the island which was eventually named after him, Tasmania. *James Cook* of the British army became the first European to sight and explore Australia's east coast. Cook claimed the region for Great Britain and named it New South Wales. The first white settlement in Australia was made up of about 730 prisoners sent there to relieve overcrowding in British prisons. They were accompanied by about 300 British soldiers. They landed at Botany Bay, on Australia's east coast. The nearby settlement was the beginning of the city of Sydney. A great increase in the population of Australia occurred after the discovery of gold in the southwest. 1901 six colonies became states of a new nation, *the Commonwealth of Australia*.

## 4) ABORIGINES

Australia has been remarkably slow to acknowledge the rights of the continent's first people. The 1901 constitution says they were not to be counted as citizens. Only in 1962 were they allowed to vote. The first Aboriginal Member of Parliament was elected in 1971. The country used to have a "*White Australia*" policy when immigrants were carefully selected by the colour of their skin. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century white politicians, bureaucrats and churchmen did their best to speed up the process of Aboriginal disappearance. They removed children of mixed parentage from their Aboriginal mothers to bring them up in institutions. This policy was abandoned only in the 1960s. Historians think Australia's first people may have arrived from Southeast Asia at least 50,000 years ago. Today there are about 390,000 Aboriginals living in Australia. They make up less than 2% of the country's population. Their *life expectancy* is about 15 years lower than that of the average Australian. *Infant mortality* is several times higher. Diabetes and ear and eye diseases are much more common. Drink and drug problems are widespread. Unemployment among Aboriginals is running at four times the national level. A large proportion of children drop out of school. Housing standards are often poor.

## **5) SCENIC BEAUTY SPOTS AND PLACES TO VISIT**

**The Great Barrier Reef** – it is the longest coral reef in the world. It stretches for 2,300 km off the Queensland coast. The most popular tourist activities on the Great Barrier Reef are helicopter trip, diving, snorkelling and diving in glass bottomed boat. The GBR was created by living organisms. The GBR's inhabitants are sharks, clown fish, sea snakes, sea turtles or starfish.

**Ayers Rock (Uluru)** – located in central Australia, is also a popular tourist attraction. It is called the world's biggest rock. It has many small caves. The walls of these caves are covered with rock paintings made long ago by Aboriginal artists.

**The Twelve Apostles** – a group of natural rock stacks (= columns), near the shore of **south-eastern** Australia are a popular tourist attraction. Because of erosion over the years, some of the stacks have fallen. They are still "Twelve Apostles", but there are only eight of them left today.

### Sydney

– the nickname of the Sydney Opera House – **French football playing nun** (shape of its roof –



sails)

- Sydney Harbour Bridge is called **coat hanger** - **Circular Quay** - busy junction and gateway to the city (ferries and ships land here)
- modern transport typical for Sydney - **Single tracker line** - **the** highest free-standing structure - **Sydney Tower (AMP Tower)**
- equipment for zooming of details of the metropolis - **binoculars** - **Rocks** - first British convicted colony; today - café
- **the Queen Victoria Building** - shopping centre, replicas of British crown jewelleryes - where have a rest or spend lunch breaks - **Hyde Park**
- **the Sydney Fish Market** - fish and seafood (salmon, tuna, scampi, crab, Tasmanian oysters) - **Taronga Zoo** - crocodiles, koalas, kangaroos, giraffes, echidna

### Melbourne

- the Melbourne's busiest railway station - **Flinders Street Station** - **Captain Matthew Flinders** - the first sailor who sailed around whole Australian continent
- Melbourne hasn't got the least British features of all Australian cities. - Melbourne is not as hectic as Sydney. - Melbourne was founded by free citizens.

## 6) THE LANGUAGE

**Strine** is the **term** for Australian spoken **English**.

- a) **shortening of words** - uni (university), postie (postman), ta (thank you)
- b) **rising intonation in affirmatives sentences** (oznamovací věty)
- c) **broader pronunciation of vowels** - day (dai), say (sai), see (sei)



d) **“bloody”** – adjective, often use

e) **rhyming slang**: “kitchen sink” = drink (I could really do with a “kitchen sink”. I’m thirsty.)

Many slang words have been borrowed from the original Australian inhabitants (the Aborigines).

English and Irish convicts → they developed their own rhyming slang so that the authorities would not understand them.

The gold rush era + WW I. + WW II.: digger (courageousness, hardiness) AUS. – soldiers (GB.)

If it sounds like Cockney to you, you are right. It has its origin in this East London dialect. Some of the first colonists who came to Australia were convicts from England.

## 7) WILDLIFE

Australia is famous for its **eucalyptus trees**. Australia also has many **rainforests** which can be found in **New South Wales**, for example, **Victoria**, the **islands state** of **Tasmania**. **The oldest rainforests on earth** are in the **Daintree National Park** and the **Cape Tribulation National Park**.

The most **native mammals** are **marsupials**. These include **koalas, kangaroos, possums, flying foxes** and the **ferocious Tasmanian devil**. Australia also has many **varieties of crocodile**. **Lizards** are very common. The **Platypus** is an **aquatic, furred mammal** with a **bill like** that of a **duck**. Australia is **populated** by many **colourful bird species** such as **parrots, budgerigars**.

The **Emu** is Australia’s largest bird. The most **venomous snakes (brown snake, the Mulga, the King Brown)** and **spiders** can be found in Australia as well as the **deadly box jelly fish**.



## **Koalas**

- tree-dwelling marsupials
- they have gray and white woolly fur, fluffy ears and broad distinctive noses
- koalas are nocturnal – during the day, they sleep up in high trees
- at sunset they become most active, eating the leaves of specific types of eucalyptus trees
- the leaves contain sufficient water so that koalas don't have to leave their trees to drink
- in the language of the aborigines, "koala" means "no drink"
- a koala has a pouch, with a similar use as the kangaroo
- it is also used to carry young ones until they are able to walk independently

## **Wombats**

- closely related to koalas
- wombats are energetic burrowers while koalas live almost exclusively in trees
- wombats are the largest burrowing marsupials
- flattened heads and rumps and stumpy, powerful limbs
- all four legs are used for burrowing and each is equipped with a broad paw and short, strong claws

## **Platypus**

- found in freshwater habitats in Eastern Australia and Tasmania
- lives in burrows on the banks of rivers and streams
- well adapted for both swimming and burrowing as they have streamlined bodies, no external ears or obvious neck
- webbing between their toes helps propel them through the water and their broad flat tail acts as a rudder
- their limbs have strong claws for digging
- most typical attribute is its duckbill – made of bone and covered with soft, sensitive skin

### **Numbats**

- marsupial anteater are beautifully coloured (coarse reddish-brown fur flecked with numerous white hairs, black and white bands span their rumps)
- move by hopping with their bushy erect tails

### **Kangaroo**

- marsupial
- quite active in the early morning and late afternoon
- short forelimbs (mostly used for holding food and scratching)
- hind limbs – quick moving, move simultaneously and use as a counterweight
- they use their tail as a fifth limb and carry out a “five-legged” walk



### **Bandicoot**

- a slender, medium-sized marsupial
- long pointed nose with whiskers and long pointed ears
- fur is coarse and olive-brown except for some white on its belly and limbs

### **Tasmanian devil**

- also referred to simply as “the devil”
- is a carnivorous marsupial – “meat eater”
- now found in the wild in the Australian island state of Tasmania
- it is the largest carnivorous marsupial in the world
- looks like a small dog, with its black fur, offensive when stressed, extremely loud and disturbing screech and ferocity when feeding

### **The Dingo**

- a feral dog (it has escaped from domestication and returned, partly or wholly, to its wild state)
- though commonly described as an Australian wild dog, modern dingoes are found throughout southeast Asia
- it does not bark, it howls

### **The frilled necked lizard**