

Australia:

Wollongong, New South Wales by Mara Sloan



BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Wollongong is a city located in New South Wales and is about 50 miles south of Sydney, along the eastern coast of Australia. Wollongong lies on a narrow coastal plain with the Pacific Ocean on the east and the Illawarra Escarpment, a steep sandstone precipice on the west. The city center is located in the middle. Many famous mountains are found on the Illawarra Escarpment and include, Mount Keira, Mount Kembla, Broker's Nose and Mount Murray.. Numerous beaches also line the coast and create ideal conditions for surfing or swimming, making Wollongong a supreme vacation destination.

The coastal climate in Wollongong is very moderate with average temperatures ranging between 17 degrees Celsius in the winter to 26 degrees Celsius in the summer. Precipitation usually occurs within the first part of the year with occasional thunderstorms with heavy rains and lightning.

History

Australia was first discovered in 1770 by James Cook, who was a representative from Great Britain and claimed the discovery for Britain. The native inhabitants of Australia are ancestors of present Indigenous Australia. Cook's discovery allowed for the establishment of a new penal colony or a colony for exiled prisoners and convicts with hopes to segregate them from the original population by placing them in a remote location. Many Australian's can trace their heritage back to ancestors that were convicts. British control of Australia continued until 1986 with the Australia Act 1986, which cut all ties between Australia and the United Kingdom. This ended British government roles of Australian states entirely.

] Cedar cutters were the first pioneers to the Illawarran region, more specifically Wollongong, in the 1800s. The town of Wollongong was planned in 1834 and continued to grow with the arrival of more settlers and the development of a coastal railway, but it wasn't until 1942 that Wollongong was actually proclaimed a city. The name for the city, Wollongong, is a word from the Aboriginal language and mean's "sound of the sea."

Coal mining was the industry that provided the foundation for the early years of development of Wollongong. In addition, steel became another industry that provided industry for the area. Agriculture was also an attraction for individuals in the nineteenth century due to the fertile soils along the coastal strip of Wollongong. Today most of the city's economy based off of tourism, higher education, fine arts, electricity generation and construction. A major landmark for the city today is the Wollongong Lighthouse which was established in 1937.

THE PEOPLE

Population

Wollongong is the 9th largest city in Australia and the 3rd largest city in New South Wales. The current population is about 285,000 with continual growth. Wollongong hosts a very multicultural population because many migrated to the area searching for jobs in the coal or steel industries. The cultures represented include British, Croatians, Serbians, Italians, German's Chileans, Turks, Bosnians, Yugoslavians, Greeks, Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, Malyas, and Pacific Islanders. In addition the University of Wollongong is an attraction for students from all over the world. People are employed in the areas of steel, food service and education and it is estimated that about 20,000 commute to their daily jobs in Sydney by rail and highways.

Religion

Religion does not have a huge role in most of the Australian population. But those who do choose to practice a religion are predominantly Christian, with most being Roman Catholic and Anglican. About 20% of the population does not practice any type of religious. Buddhism is the largest non-Christian religion and other non-Christian religions include Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.

Language

Australia is an English speaking country and Australian English is derived from British English, which follow the Queen's English spelling and grammar. However, Australians are known for their distinct accent and vocabulary. Other common languages spoke throughout Australia include, Chinese, Italian and Greek. The indigenous language of Australia's native people is only used by about 50,000 people.

General Attitudes

Australians are known for their strong attitudes and beliefs and believe in supporting each other. Australians are known for their "upside-down" sense of humor and strongly believe in strong friendships or "mateships." Mateships traditionally are between men and stress equality and friendship. Due to mateships, Australian culture is very anti-hierarchical and typically don't think of themselves better than one another. The Australian society appears very 'laid-back" and relaxed to visitors.

Personal Appearance

Australian dress is very casual, with few occasions requiring formal clothes. In the workplace, clean, conservative clothing is preferred.

There is not a specific national dress for Australia, yet two stereotypes of Australian people are people that wear bushwear and surfwear. Bushwear is typically, riding boots, merino woolwear, moleskin trousers and a cork hat, which is a hat with cork strung from the brim. This type of clothing is work by jackaroos (an Australian cowboy who works on a cattle ranch or "station") and swagmen (or workers that travel from farm to farm carrying their waterproof bedroll or "swag"). Surfing is one the largest recreational sports practiced throughout Australia, so many Australian wear surfing gear. Ugg boots originated in Australia and are sheepskin boots traditionally worn by men and women in the working class.

Australian military forces are known for their "slouch hats" or hats that are looped up on one side with the function of reducing brim damage when rifles are held at a slope. The slouch hat was deemed the standard Australian Army headgear in 1903 and now is a national symbol. Driza- Bone coats are another symbol of Australian culture and traditionally are work by stockmen on cattle ranches to protect horse riders from rain.

CUSTOMS and COURTESIES

Greetings

Australians are very forward and friendly to everyone from fellow countrymen to visitors. Typical greetings include "G'day" or "How ya goin" which means "How are you doing, or how is your day going?" Typically Australian greetings are very informal but in formal cases usually individuals shake hands then express "Good morning" or "Pleased to meet you." Australians usually shake with their right hand.

First names are commonly used between individuals in Australia and the formal title or surname is only used in formal situations. Australians also like to be looked in the

eye when having a conversation just because it shows respect and interest in the conversation.

Humor

Australian's "upside-down" humor is based on joking criticism of others due to their belief in "anti-snobbery." This is due to their historical rejection of the English class system. They also believe in the term "fair-go" which means equality for all or giving everyone a fair chance. Australians focus their humor on those that consider themselves better than everyone else. Humor is more a form of social acceptance than an offence.

Social Gatherings

In Australia, when someone offers to "shout" you a drink or "take" you to dinner, they have the intentions of paying. When invited to a home, it is polite to bring something with you such as a bottle of wine, food or a small gift. Barbeques are commonly BYO or "bring your own" where you are expected to take your own food and drink.

Cuisine

Australian food is as diverse as their culture and is influenced by the multiculturalism of the Australian culture. Much of the cuisine is based off of Mediterranean and Asian food. "Modern Australian" food is produced from interpretations or fusions of exotic influences. British heritage also influences Australian food with common British foods like pies and fish and chips. Areas in Australia with tropical climates are able to provide the country with many varieties of fresh produce.

Barbeque is a huge part of Australian culture, from which many stereotypes about Australians are based. Common barbeque components include sausages on white bread with tomato or barbeque sauce, which are entitled "Sausage Sizzles"

There are many iconic Australian food which include Vegemite (a yeast derived spread typically served on toast with butter), Dim sim (a Chinese dumpling), Tim Tams (chocolate cookies) and one of the national dishes, pavlova. Pavlova is a meringue dessert named after Anna Pavlova, a Russian ballet dancer.

LIFESTYLE

Housing

Australia has many different housing arrangements from single suburban homes to flats in high-rises in the inner city. Many Australians live in the suburbs of the state capital cities. Living in the country is less expensive than the city and allows for individuals to purchase their own house and land.

Dating and Marriage

Women asking men out and even splitting the bill or paying the full amount is acceptable in Australia. Australian weddings are very lavish and the bride's dress color is

traditionally white. Wedding ceremonies include family and friends and incorporated traditions of British marriages.

Diet

Usually Australians eat three meals per day with an afternoon tea break. Breakfast is eaten between 7 and 10 a.m. Tea is served around 4 pm and includes tea and biscuits, small sandwiches, scones or cakes. Dinner is usually served around 6 p.m. and is eaten European style (form in left hand with tines pointing down and the knife in the right hand).

Meat is a large component in Australian's diets which include beef, kangaroo, lamb, pork, poultry and seafood. A typical Australian breakfast includes, fruit, toast with Vegemite, fried eggs and bacon and juice. Lunch is a lights salad or sandwich. A common dinner would consist of leg of lamb or barbecued shrimp, vegetables, a salad and a tart or custard for dessert.

Recreation

Australians enjoy many outdoor activities such as hiking, camping and swimming or surfing in the ocean. The arts are enjoyed by Australians and include literature, theater, architecture, painting and sculpture, movies, music, and television. Australians are known for their love of sports including Australian rules football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union, soccer and netball. The world-renowned professional tennis tournament the Australian Open is held in Melbourne and attractions thousands of people from all over the world every year. Due to the location of the Great Barrier Reef along Australia's Eastern coast, there are many opportunities for scuba diving as a recreational activity.

Wollongong provides many beaches which are prime recreation sites for swimming, surfing and snorkeling.

Holidays

Public Holidays in Australia include Australia Day (Jan 26);which is recognition of the arrival of the First Fleet or the group of ships from England that established a colony in Australia,Anzac Day (Apr 25); which is a commemorative holiday for Australian and New Zealand veterans, New Years Day (Jan 1), Good Friday, Easter Monday, Christmas Day (Dec 25) and Boxing Day (Dec 26); from British influence and includes giving gifts of money, goods, or food to the poor.

SOCIETY

Government

The Australian government system is a federal constitutional monarchy under a parliamentary democracy. The Australian Constitution provides the terms of an agreement between the six Australian states. The government is under federalism and separation of powers which is separated into legislative, executive and judiciary branches.

Economy

The Australian economy is a modern market economy and represents about 1.7% of the world economy. Australia is the 23rd largest exporter and the 21st largest importer. Currency for Australia is the Australian dollar and Australia is home to some of the largest world companies like, Billiton, Rio Tinto Group, News Corp and BHP.

Natural resources are abundant in Australia so the country is a significant exporter of wheat, wool, minerals, liquefied natural gas and coal.

Transportation

Public transportation by bus or rail is prominent throughout most of Australia's major cities. The major railway connecting Sydney to Wollongong is called the South Coastline Railway. Many people also travel using private transport with cars or motor bikes on Australia's road systems.

Health

Private and government institutions provide health care for Australians. The federal government is responsible for primary health care. Medicare is the current health care system and is funded mostly by general revenue.

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