



# 12 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT AUSTRALIA

*you probably  
didn't know*

BY THREE WISE KANGAROOS

# 1

# AUSTRALIA IS HUGE!

It is the 6th largest country in the world and the only country that occupies the whole continent.

The road distance between Perth and Sydney, two cities located on opposite sides of the country, is just over 4,000 km. It's like driving from Madrid to Moscow!







# A FOUR-DAY TRAIN JOURNEY FROM EAST TO WEST

One way to appreciate Australia's vastness and beauty is getting on board one of its iconic experiential tourist trains like the Indian Pacific, the Ghan or the Great Southern. The Indian-Pacific offers a unique experience of crossing the country east to west or vice versa in an epic 4-day, 3-night journey. One thing is for sure. You're in for one long, scenic and unforgettable ride.

# OVER TO YOU

## *talk in pairs*

What's the longest train journey  
you've ever undertaken in your life?  
What did you like and dislike about it?

Would you be interested in travelling  
across Australia on a train that took  
four days?







2

## AUSTRALIA IS A BEACH-LOVER PARADISE

Australia is an absolute mekka for beach-goers. With over 10,000 beaches to choose from, spanning across an area of 15,000 kilometres, you will be spoilt for choice.

**FUN FACT:** If you visited one beach a day, it would take you 27 years to see them all.



*and the whitest  
sand award goes to...*

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Whether you're a water sports enthusiast, a marine life lover or a tanning freak, you are bound to find a beach that will tick all the boxes for you.**

**The vast majority of beaches found Down Under are sandy and one organisation even went to the trouble of comparing and rating the whiteness of the sand from various part of Oz.**

**The first and second place went to two Western Australian beaches found in Cape Le Grand National Park.**





*A beach is*

## LOTS OF FUN



### SURFING

One of Aussies' favourite beach activities



### WHALE-WATCHING

**People in Australia go to the beach for different reasons- some just enjoy basking in the sun and getting a tan, some love water sports, some come to observe marine life while others simply go to the beach purely to relax.**

**Whatever your reason, you surely won't be disappointed with your experience.**

# OVER TO YOU

## *talk in pairs*

Have you been to many beaches in your life? Do you have your favourite one?

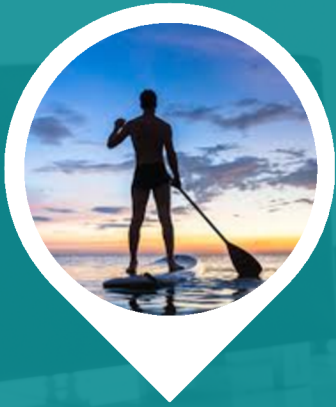
What's your favourite thing to do when you go to the beach?



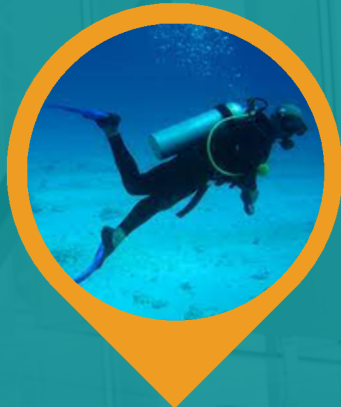


# GETTING ACTIVE

There is a whole bunch of activities you could try while at the beach. Surfing is a very popular sport, followed by stand-up paddle boarding, sailing, kayaking, windsurfing, kitesurfing, waterskiing and of course swimming. If you're curious to see what marine life the ocean is home to, you can try snorkelling and scuba diving.



**STAND-UP PADDLE  
BOARDING**



**SCUBA DIVING**



**SNORKELLING**



**KITESURFING**



**WINDSURFING**

# OVER TO YOU

## *talk in pairs*

Which of the following have you tried? Talk about your experience?

If you haven't tried any of them, which one would you like to try the most and why?

- surfing
- kayaking
- scuba diving
- snorkelling
- stand-up paddle boarding
- sailing
- windsurfing
- kitesurfing
- waterskiing





# 3

## THE MOST DANGEROUS AUSSIE ANIMAL *isn't what you think*

Many people associate the land Down Under with an abundance of deadly creatures such as venomous snakes, ferocious crocodiles, poisonous spiders and man-eating sharks. And surely there is no shortage of these majestic species here. However, Australia's most venomous animal is actually the **box jellyfish**. While not every species of box jellyfish is dangerous, there are several highly venomous varieties found here.

The Australian box jellyfish or *Chironex fleckeri*, more commonly known as a **sea wasp** or '**stinger**', is a species of venomous and deadly box jellyfish found off the coast of tropical Australia. Box jellyfish have venom in their tentacles that can sting and kill a person in under five minutes. Just another thing to add to your 'best be avoided' list.



# 4

## AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY *is very diverse*



Out of the 27 mln people living in Australia, a staggering **30% were born overseas**.

Today's Australians identify with more than **300 ancestries**, speak around **490 languages** and observe **a wide variety of customs and traditions** making the country a true melting pot.



# 5

## ABORIGINAL CULTURE IS THE OLDEST CONTINUOUS CULTURE IN THE WORLD

A new genomic study has confirmed that Aboriginal Australians are the oldest known civilization on Earth, with **ancestries stretching back roughly 75,000 years**. Aboriginal culture, though originally dismissed as primitive when first viewed through a Eurocentric lens, holds deep wisdom in its stories and practices.

Aboriginal mythology also known as **the Dreamtime** teaches valuable lessons on the importance of **sharing with and caring for people in the community, nurturing the land and recognizing the role every creature plays in the ecosystem**.

Evidence of 30,000-year-old grindstones suggests Aboriginal people were the world's first bakers.

Traditional practices such as **fire burning** are now being recognized for their ecological benefits, showcasing the enduring value of indigenous knowledge.





*Aboriginal art*  
**IS DEEP IN ITS MEANING**

## MEANINGFUL CREATIONS

Aboriginal art is an expression of people's identity, culture, spirituality and relationships to Country. It tells stories of ceremony and creation and connects people to ancestors and kin.



# Aboriginal Art IS FULL OF SYMBOLS



SYMBOLS

MEANING



The symbols in Aboriginal dot paintings are a coded language that convey a variety of meanings including food, journeys, social values, meeting places, animals and more

# 6

## 80% OF AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS ARE UNIQUE

*to Australia*



Yep, the Aussie fauna is truly special with **80% of species found exclusively Down Under**. This is due to Australia's early history. Around 180 million years ago the supercontinent Gondwana split leading to the formation of Australia and Antarctica. By 30 million years ago, Australia had fully separated and moved northward. This isolation, along with changes in land and climate, resulted in Australia's unique flora and fauna.

Today, over 80% of its plants, mammals, reptiles, and frogs are found nowhere else in the world.



*some lesser known*

# AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL SPECIES

Some of Australia's animals are very well known like **kangaroos and koalas**. Others, like **wallabies and bobtail lizards**, perhaps less so. Here are some other species you might not have heard of.

A bilby is a small, grey, rodent-like marsupial with large, prominent ears and a long, thin tail. It is shown in a circular frame against a reddish-brown background.

a bilby

A cassowary is a large, flightless bird with a blue head and neck, a black body, and a prominent, dark, bony casque on its head. It is shown in a circular frame against a blurred background.

a cassowary

A Tasmanian devil is a small, black, marsupial with a white patch on its chest and a wide, open mouth showing sharp teeth. It is shown in a circular frame against a background of dry leaves.

a Tasmanian devil

A platypus is a small, semi-aquatic mammal with a flat, dark, bill-like snout and a brown, furry body. It is shown in a circular frame against a background of green foliage.

a platypus

An echidna is a small, spiny, egg-eating mammal with a long, pointed snout and a body covered in sharp spines. It is shown in a circular frame against a background of green grass.

an echidna

A wombat is a small, furry, marsupial with a greyish-brown coat and a small, dark nose. It is shown in a circular frame against a background of green grass.

a wombat

# OVER TO YOU

## *talk in pairs*

What animals live in the wild in your country? Can you name at least 7 species? Have you ever seen any of them in their natural habitat?

Which Australian animal would you most like to see live and why?





## 7

# THE PLATYPUS WAS ONCE BELIEVED TO BE A HOAX



Still on the topic of animals, one species in particular deserves a mention for a rather peculiar reason. The **platypus** is a truly stunning creature. Not only does it have that iconic duckbill, it also lays eggs like a bird or reptile but feeds milk to its young like a mammal. Males also have a pair of venomous spurs on their hind feet, but they don't use them for traditional attack or defence.

When a skin and an illustration of the animal were first sent to the British Museum from the newly colonised and largely unexplored Australia back in the 1790s, the British scientists suspected it to be an **elaborate hoax**-perhaps a taxidermy construction of a duck's bill attached to the body of a mole!

## 8

## AUSTRALIA'S COAT OF ARMS

*has a message embedded in it*



There is one thing that **kangaroos and emus** have in common and it is their **inability to walk backwards**. It is exactly the reason why the two iconic species were chosen to feature in the Australian coat of arms to symbolise that the only way for Australia is to **move forward**.

## 9

# AUSTRALIA COULD HAVE BEEN A DUTCH-SPEAKING COUNTRY



When thinking about the early European discovery and settlement in Australia, most people think of Captain James Cook and his arrival on the east coast in the 1770s after which Australia became a British penal colony.

But Cook wasn't the first European explorer to set foot Down Under. In fact it was **the Dutch** who first navigated and charted the northern, western and southern coasts of Australia at the start of the 17th century. They named the newly-found land **New Holland** but deemed it unsuitable for colonisation due to lack of water and fertile soil.



# FUN FACT

*can you believe it?*

Western Australia's most iconic island Rottnest Island translates as '**rat nest**' after the Dutch mistook the endemic **quokkas** for giant rats.

However, quokkas are marsupials and belong to the same family as kangaroos.



10

# *Australia has* **20 UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES**

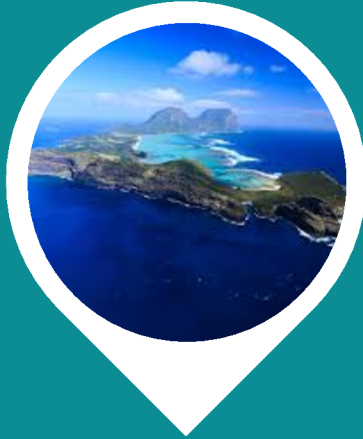
from natural wonders to culturally significant places, one of them being The Great Barrier Reef - the largest coral system in the world.



**GREAT BARRIER REEF**



**ULURU**



**LORD HOWE ISLAND**



**KAKADU NATIONAL PARK**



**NARACOORTE CAVES**



# OVER TO YOU

*talk in pairs*

Have you been to any places that are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites? Which ones? What did you think of them?

Do you generally prefer travelling to places of natural beauty or visiting man-made structures?

Which places in your country are UNESCO listed? Would you add places more to the list?





# 11

## CANBERRA WAS CHOSEN AS A COMPROMISE *between two larger cities*



The two biggest cities Down Under are **Sydney** and **Melbourne**, each inhabited by over 5 million residents. When, at the start of the 20th century, the question arose as to which of them should become the capital and no agreement could be reached, it was decided that a new city was going to be planned and built somewhere in the middle. This is how **Canberra** was born.

# 12

## IN COOBER PEDY

*the opal capital of the world*

### ITS INHABITANTS LIVE UNDERGROUND

Coober Pedy, a town and a mining field in South Australia is famous for two things - **opal mining** and the **underground living quarters known as 'dugouts'**.

Since the town is located in the desert with temperatures often exceeding 40°C, many residents prefer to live in dwellings bored into the hillsides which maintain a comfortable temperature between 19°C and 25°C throughout the year.

Coober Pedy even has an underground motel and an underground church!



*How much do you remember?*

## QUIZ TIME



**1 Name 7 activities you can do at the beach.**

**2 What is Australia's most dangerous animal?**

**3 Why was Canberra chosen to be Australia's capital city?**

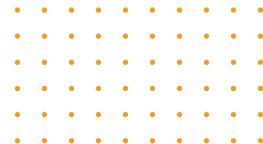
**4 Which nationality first navigated and charted Australia's coast?**

**5 How many UNESCO World Heritage Sites does Australia have? Can you name one of them?**

**6 Name 6 species of animals which are unique to Australia.**

**7 What message does the Australian coat of arms carry?**

**8 Which mineral is mined at Coober Pedy?**







# PROJECT TIME

*work in pairs*

Create a presentation  
entitled  
**12 facts you probably didn't  
know about my country**

**THANK** *You*

F O R Y O U R A T T E N T I O N