

**A Yank's Guide to**  
**Life in Tassie**

*Second Edition*

Ben Armacost

# **A Yank's Guide to Life in Tassie**

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To my sister, Karen Thomas  
whose questions prompted me  
to begin compiling this information

## Preface

My purpose for writing this is to help Americans understand and appreciate what Tasmania is, both physically and culturally. Being an American myself, I know how little we “Yanks” tend to know about other countries, especially Australia. Unfortunately, many people in the U.S. do not know that Tasmania even exists, or mistakenly believe it is some little country lost in the jungles of darkest Africa. Americans who are interested in knowing more about their world owe it to themselves to find out more about the little-known island on the other side of the world which we affectionately call Tassie.

I said in the preface to the first edition that this was not a research project. But since that time I have found myself digging everywhere for information, and have to admit that I have done a good bit of research and study in order to compile this information. But it is still largely an accumulation of observations that I gathered in my first year in Tasmania—while the distinctions between American and Tasmanian life were fresh and obvious. Having been here only since January 1996, we have found that in even a few months the distinctions between life in America and Australia faded considerably. Fortunately, this project has helped keep those distinctions clear.

While most of what I have compiled is based on personal observation, I have tried to be as objective as possible. I certainly hope that no one will not regard this as an authoritative account, as I am just sharing what I have seen and heard—which means that it is subject to errors due to misinterpretation. And it is by no means exhaustive, as it was never intended to be. However, I will add to it regularly as I discover more about Tasmania and the distinct elements which make it unique. If you wish to really get serious about learning about Tasmania, may I suggest you look at some of the books and

web sites listed at the end of this book. Or better yet, get on a plane and come visit!

If in fact you are planning to come to Tasmania, whether for work or recreation, reading this material is a must. It will give you a great head start (as well as a few fair warnings!) in your journeys here. Take some time to read through carefully, and start looking at some of the resources that will build your knowledge a bit. Your time here will be far more fulfilling if you do a little homework in advance—and the people here will appreciate your sensitivity to their culture and their ways.

If you are an Australian, New Zealander, or Britisher, please understand that this has been written for Americans, from an American viewpoint, in the American language. I have done my best not to be derogatory in any way, but rather to bring out the most noteworthy features of Australia's little island state.

I hope you will find this presentation of facts interesting and informative; that it answers some of your questions; and that you will develop a sense of appreciation and excitement for the life and work in which we are immersed. May it enable you to pray for us more meaningfully as we share the Savior's love on this beautiful island.

Ben Armacost  
Tasmania, Australia

## Introduction

**Tasmania.** Just the sound of its name invokes thoughts of a wild, far-off land of enchantment and wonder. And it truly is a fascinating place filled with unique, natural beauty. Amazingly, some of that beauty has never been beheld by human eyes, as there are presumed to be regions in Tasmania's southwestern wilderness that have never been explored by humans! And there are animal and plant species dwelling in the temperate rainforests here that are found nowhere else on earth.

But culturally, Tasmania is part of what we call western society, and is remarkably similar to America. In fact, I would venture to say that there are far more similarities than there are differences (although you might be willing to argue that statement after reading this book!) Most things that are different are just minor things, for the most part. The values, ideals, and life goals embraced by America and Australia are remarkably comparable. Because of the number of similarities, moving to Tasmania seemed like moving to another American state. The most obvious differences—the accent, driving on the left side of the road, and the money system—were the only real reminders that I was indeed in another country!

If you want to imagine what it's like here—and I will only speak for Tasmania and not Australia as a whole—just start off by imagining that it's the *same* as America. Then take into consideration the following “distinctives,” and you will begin to have a pretty good picture of what it's like to live in Tasmania. But I must admit—there's nothing like actually being here!

## The Aussie Mind Set

Before we dig into the fun stuff, I want to share some important facts. Perhaps the most important reason I have taken the time and trouble to write all this information is to remind Americans of one important thing: Australians are not Americans. That might sound a little silly to say, but having been in Australia for nearly 5 years now I can see how one might be ready to call it the 51<sup>st</sup> state. There are a lot of similarities. The values, goals, and ideals of Australians are certainly very much like those of Americans on the whole. But it is important that one consciously remember that, while Australians might be “like us,” they nevertheless have a unique heritage and a basic mind set that is not exactly the same as their trans-Pacific neighbors.

There are a number of factors that cause Americans and Australians to misunderstand each other. Here are just a few:

**Ignorance.** This is mostly on the part of Americans, as we tend not to know much about other countries, including Australia. But the reverse is not true! Australians have their ear to America's door—they have their hand on the pulse of America—they know what is going on far more than Americans know what is going on in Australia. This is probably due primarily to the plethora of news coverage from and about the United States. I would venture to say that many Aussies know as much about what is going on in American politics that many Americans do!

**The Media.** The media, especially TV movies, tends to present an unbalanced view of America. Frequently, when Australians discover that I am from the U.S., their comments tend to reflect a stereotype. The media tend to portray America as one big city, overrun with rich executives, greed, and violent crime. To a degree, they are

right—but we Americans know that it isn't all like that. The same can be said about the North American perception of Australia. Movies like *Crocodile Dundee* play on the stereotype, and really do not portray an accurate picture of Australian life. For example, do you really believe that Aussies walk around with wide brimmed hats decorated with crocodile teeth, and carry a really big knife in their belt? I challenge you to find even one!

**Perceived Attitudes.** Australians are traditionally “knockers,” and if something negative can be said about someone or something, they are likely to say it. This is especially true of *tall poppies*. Since America has quite a large percentage of these *tall poppy* types, Australians, by their nature, are likely to cast their share of criticisms. By the uninformed visitor, this could be interpreted as negativism or bigotry. But it is actually just their way of speaking their mind—and simply telling the truth!

**Language.** Differences in language also account for misunderstandings. What sounds rude to one person may not actually be rudeness. For an American to use the word “bloody,” mention that we were “stuffed” after a big meal, or talk about “rooting” for our favorite football team, Aussies will be terribly offended by our speech. The reverse is also true, and you may well see some examples as you read on.

Fortunately, by becoming more aware of each other's cultural idiosyncracies, we can at least make allowances for each other and give one another the benefit of the doubt.

Let's take a moment to start to understand the basic Australian mind set. Once we learn how Aussies think (and why), we can understand and appreciate them better. One of the most significant differences in mind set is in regard to personal autonomy. Australians do not readily identify with



our concept of “rugged individualism.” They are great team players and usually insist on being “part of the team.” Those who insist on doing things their own way, and taking the credit for themselves, are likely to be criticized. One who is proud, successful, rises in popularity or stands out in the crowd is called a *tall poppy* and the immediate response from other Australians is to cut them down, back on an even keel with the rest of the crowd. Perhaps this is the primary reason one seldom sees a statue of any person in any Australian town!

On the other hand, Aussies have the greatest of respect for the underdog, the one who does his best with all the courage he can muster—he is called the *battler*. Anyone who works hard and fights to survive in the face of all the odds is the one who is truly honored in this country. There is a strong concern that everyone have a *fair go*—an equal chance to succeed in whatever he or she pursues.

Australians don't like to *dob in*, that is, tattle-tale on others. While a person's choices may be offensive, most seem to consider it a greater offense to squeal on someone else. They would choose to let someone get away with something rather than to be labeled a *dobber*. Thus, particularly among the younger generation, socially degenerate behavior can run rampant without being addressed.

Ironically, while Australians are quick to protect the dignity of others who might even be doing something wrong (by not *dobbing*), they also tend to be reluctant to openly encourage others. There is a stereotype among some Americans that Aussies are tough and unwilling to show affection. This is not at all the case—they simply express it differently. They might do it with a slap on the back, or by tormenting you or giving you a *stir* (tease). In fact, if they *stir* you or *take a dig at you*, it is actually a sign of acceptance and their way of showing friendship.

Having understood this from the outset, you will appreciate Australian and its people far better as you begin to digest this information, and you will certainly be better prepared to visit.

## Basic Facts About Tassie

Tasmania is Australia's island state, the smallest and most southerly of 6 states and several territories. It is situated about 150 miles south of the state of Victoria, separated from mainland Australia by a body of water called the Bass Strait. King Island and Flinders Island, to the northwest and northeast respectively, are also part of Tasmania. Macquarie Island, comparable in size to King and Flinders, is also part of the state. However it is uninhabited, located about midway between Tasmania and Antarctica.



### History

Tasmania was discovered by Dutch navigator Abel Janszoon Tasman in 1642, an explorer on an expedition for the Dutch East India Company. Because Anthony Van Diemen was governor general of the Dutch East Indies at the time of the discovery, the island was named Van Diemen's Land. This designation remained until 1855, at which time it was renamed Tasmania to honor its discoverer. Tasmania's capital city, Hobart, was founded in 1804 and is the second oldest city in Australia. Sydney (New South Wales) is the oldest city, having been settled by the First Fleet in 1788.

Tasmania was initially settled by the British Empire as a penal colony for convicts. Its extreme remoteness at the time made it the perfect place to isolate criminals from the rest of society. Offenders were taken on the 15,000 mile journey by sea, down the West African coast and across the Indian Ocean; the trip took up to 8 months. Ironically, many of the convicts were just petty criminals, condemned for crimes as minor as stealing a loaf of bread. Port Arthur (site of the tragic April 1996 massacre) is Australia's most notable historic convict site and Tasmania's leading tourist attraction. The prison camp operated for 47 years and housed a total of 13,000 prisoners, the last of whom left in 1877. Another less-known convict site was the Sarah Island penal colony, established in the 1820's. Located in the west coast's Macquarie Harbor, it was difficult to access—and consequently difficult to escape—therefore it was set aside for the most hardened criminals. It operated for 11 years. Convicts who managed to escape from such prisons were called *bushrangers*, the most reputable of whom included men such as Matthew Brady and Martin Cash.

Aboriginal peoples once roamed Tasmania, but as European settlements increased, they were gradually exiled to the Bass Strait islands and eventually died off. The last full-blooded Tasmanian aboriginal, Truganinni, died in 1876. While some Tasmanians have aboriginal ancestors, most of the people of modern Tasmania are of European descent—mostly from the British Isles. The state's population is just over 458,000—just a fraction of Australia's 18 million people. Tasmania's population has not changed significantly for several decades.

### **Geography**

Physically, Tasmania is quite varied. Elevations range from sea level to mountain peaks exceeding 5,000 feet, with the highest—Mt. Ossa—reaching 5,305 feet. Hundreds of lakes can be found throughout the central highlands. Waterfalls abound along seemingly innumerable streams and rivers. Beneath the surface, there are miles of caves. Over 25% of Tasmania is protected in the form of state reserves and 14 National Parks;

a large part of the southwestern wilderness of Tasmania is part of the highly-protected World Heritage Area.



Mineral resources are abundant and play an important part of Tasmania's economy. The primary mining products include lead, zinc, iron, copper and tin. Queenstown on the west coast is famous for its copper mines. Gold and silver are also found in small amounts along with the other metals. A gold mine was recently reopened in Beaconsfield, and is said to be potentially one of the richest gold mines in Australia; the first gold-bearing ores since 1914 were brought up from the mine in June 1998.

Major manufacturing products include paper and other wood products, textiles, cheese and candy. A large Cadbury chocolate factory is located near Hobart and uses locally produced milk. Many delicious types of cheese are made here, perhaps the most popular of which is called *Tasmanian Tasty*.

### **Beneath the Southern Skies**

Because Tasmania lies in the Southern Hemisphere, there are some astronomical curiosities worth noting. As in North America, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west; but during the day it is seen toward the *north*, not the south. This is particularly important to bear in mind if you are used to depending on the sun for your sense of direction while driving or walking! Also, the Southern Hemisphere opens up a whole new world of

stars and constellations that are not visible from America. The Southern Cross is probably the most famous, and the stars of this constellation are found on Australia's national flag. Two cloud-like features of the night sky are the Magellanic Clouds, which are actually neighboring galaxies. The North Star is not visible from Tasmania, and unfortunately there is no star close to the south celestial pole that is bright enough to serve as a "South Star." One additional astronomical phenomenon is the Aurora Australis or southern lights, usually seen best during September.

### **Seasons and Weather**

While it is politically part of Australia, Tasmania is unique as compared to the mainland. With a land area of 26,383 square miles (roughly the size of West Virginia), it represents less than 1% of the total land area of Australia. And while mainland Australia is the world's flattest and driest continent, Tasmania is well endowed with mountains and the west coast receives an astonishing average rainfall of 94 inches per year (while certain locations such as Strathgordon often report over 120 inches annually). Temperatures in summer (January) average about 60°F and in winter (July) the average is around 45°F, making Tasmania the coolest state. Summertime can bring some very warm days, but nights are generally cool enough to warrant long sleeves or a *jumper* (sweater). Although snow is extremely rare in most coastal areas, it is not uncommon to see snow on the mountains at Christmastime—well into summer. It is said that snow could fall any time of year in the highlands. Tasmania is not troubled by hurricanes, tornadoes, or other severe weather patterns, and earthquakes are virtually non-existent. The weather in most parts of Tasmania tends to change quickly and abruptly.

Culturally, Tasmania is somewhat isolated from the mainland because of its geographic separation. The populated sectors of mainland Australia present a cosmopolitan, multi-cultural scene, busy with the crowds, traffic, and hectic lifestyle well known to American city dwellers. Tasmania, on the other hand, is much more laid back, quieter, more conservative, and more

relaxed. Unfortunately, things are also a bit more expensive as well (one recent estimate says that, on average, products are about 20% higher than mainland Australia). In most other states, over half of the population live in the capital city; in Tasmania, only 40% reside in Hobart. Around 25% of all Tasmanians live in the rural parts of the state, well removed from city life.

Australia is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. As with New Zealand, Canada, Kenya, and many other countries (54 in all), Australia has distinct roots in British ways and customs, in addition to some form of allegiance to the British crown. Whereas Australia has been an independent nation for 100 years now, nearly every aspect of life reflects this relationship. Coins still bear an image of Queen Elizabeth II on the obverse, and the Australian flag carries the familiar stripes and colors of her parent nation. The language and lifestyles also bear a striking resemblance to the United Kingdom. Once the American begins to understand Australia, he will consequently begin to understand much more of the world.

## Aussie Lingo

In spite of the distinctive accent, the language of Australia is amazingly similar to that of America. Most of the words and phrases that are common in American language are used in Australia as well. Even silly words like *doohickey*, *thingamajig*, *whatchamacallit* and the parting word *toodle-oo* are commonplace. The availability of American books, periodicals, movies, and news broadcasts have certainly made their contribution to the exchange of language terms and phrases.

When you pick up an Australian book or newspaper, it will appear much like American English. In fact, you may have to hunt for the differences! However, a conversation in everyday life is filled with “Aussie vernacular” and lots of slang, not to mention a very distinctive accent. Here are just a few of the most commonly used Aussie words and phrases that one might hear in everyday conversations:

*mate* = a term of friendship used almost exclusively among men. However, it is occasionally used by women when speaking to little boys, or by a man to a woman friend.

*bloke* = man. Virtually the same as saying “guy” or “fellow.”

*sheila* = girl, woman. A girl is sometimes referred to as a *skirt* or a *bird*.

*cobber* = close friend. Not used nearly as much as *mate* and not used as much by the younger generation.



*fortnight* = a period of two weeks

*brollie* = umbrella

*nappy* = diaper

*serviette* = napkin

*Yanks* = Americans. Sorry , folks, but even if you're from the deep south, you're a Yank!

*Poms, Pommies* = Englishmen

*Kiwis* = New Zealanders

*flat out* = really busy. If you're totally overworked, it might be said you're *flat as a tack* or as the old saying goes, "*flat out as a lizard drinking.*"

*dear* = expensive

*knocked up* = to the older generation, this means to be tired or weary; however most young people would interpret this to mean getting pregnant out of wedlock.

*muck around* = usually means "mess around" or loiter, but can also mean to tinker with something.

*stickybeak* = a nosey person; someone who "sticks his nose" in someone else's business. Can be used in the verb sense: "*You've been stickybeaking again.*"

- cop* = to receive the consequences of something bad. “*He’ll cop the lot*” means that someone will get “everything that’s coming to him.”
- get stuck into it* = to get totally involved in something. Usually used in a positive manner about someone’s diligence.
- pinch* = to steal something
- shout* = to pick up the tab for someone. “*I’ll shout you a drink*” means someone is willing to pay for your beverage.
- bit* = a useful word referring to a small portion of just about anything: a *bit* (piece) of paper, or a *bit* (slice) of bread
- bum* = usually refers to someone’s backside (a polite alternative to other choice words!)
- wog* = the flu or anything else that might make you feel ill
- crook* = what you are when you get the *wog*. “*I was crook for nearly a fortnight.*” Also can mean something has broken down—it *went crook*.
- did the dirty* = to cheat or treat someone unfairly. “*He did the dirty on me.*”
- barrack for* = to cheer for a sports team. **Warning!** In Australia, one must NEVER say they are rooting for their team, as the word “rooting” carries very crude connotations.

*pegs* = clothes pins

*sticky tape* = Scotch tape

*spanner* = wrench. One might say that something “*threw a spanner in the works*” which is akin to throwing a wrench into the cogs of a machine—which naturally causes havoc.

*bitumen* = (pronounced “BIT-choo-men”) asphalt

*holiday* = vacation. Usually used in the plural: “*We went on holidays in Queensland.*”

*lift* = elevator

*bin* = trash can

*rubbish* = trash or garbage

*tip* = community garbage dump

*torch* = flashlight

*trolley* = while it could refer to a streetcar (“tram”), it usually means a shopping cart

*pram* = baby carriage

*creche* = (pronounced “craysh”) nursery for babies and young children

*manse* = parsonage or rectory

*venue* = (pronounced “VEN-yoo”) the site or location of any sort of gathering.

*arvo* = sometimes used in place of the word afternoon.  
“*See you this arvo.*”

*straight away* = right away, immediately

*return trip* = round trip

*fair dinkum* = genuine, authentic, or honest

*no worries* = nothing to worry about

*she's apples* = everything is fine

*she'll be right* = expresses an undying optimism that things will work out for the good no matter how bad it seems now

*beaut* = (pronounced “byoot”) beautiful, great, excellent

*grouse* = really good or nice. Sounds a bit like “gross” but has the opposite meaning!

*rapt* = excited

*over the moon* = really happy, delighted

*chalk and cheese* = used to describe two things that are entirely different. “*The twins are like chalk and cheese.*”

*fair to middlin'* = so-so; usually an answer to the question “How are things going for you” when things aren't going all that well.

*yakker* = work or toil. Frequently used in the phrase *hard yakker*.

*gurgler* = drain. Often used to express some sort of tragedy: “*His life savings went down the gurgler.*”

*are you right?* = are you all right? Often used by store clerks to mean “Can I help you?”

*getting on* = getting along. “*How are you getting on with your new job?*” Can also refer to growing old, for example, that someone is “getting on” in years

*spot on* = just right or right on target. “*Your sermon was spot on, pastor!*”

*good on you* = (pronounced “good-ON-ya”) good for you. “*You won! Good on ya, mate!*”

*spit the dummy* = to give up or quit in a huff. This can refer to a person, or an object such as a machine. (A *dummy* is a baby's pacifier, and when he's angry he'll spit it out—hence the phrase).

Aussies have fun with their language, if you haven't guessed by now. Many words get abbreviated into new words in the course of everyday conversation. Here are some examples:

*barbie* = barbecue

*postie* = postman

*esky* = an insulated picnic cooler. Short for the brand name *Eskimo*.

*Chrissy* = Christmas

*minnie* = minute

*breaky* = (“BRECK-ee”) breakfast

*mossie* = (“MOZ-ee”) mosquito

*chocky* = chocolate

*rellies* = relatives

*muso* = (“MYOO-zo”) musician

*rego* = (“REJ-o”) registration

*sunnies* = sunglasses

Occasionally, some words are lengthened into somewhat cryptic phrases. Here are just a few:

*dog and bone* = phone

*frog and toad* = road

*steak and kidney* = Sydney

*take a Captain Cook* = take a look

*septic tank* = Yank (American)

*trouble and strife* = wife

*dead horse* = tomato sauce (ketchup)

*bag of fruit* = suit

*Pat Malone* = alone (“*I stood there all by my Pat Malone*”)

Although these phrases are not very commonly used, you can have lots of fun with them. When someone says “*Pass me the dead ‘orse*” they want the ketchup. “*It’s time to hit the frog and toad*” means it’s time to hit the road. Taking it to utter extremes, one could say “*Take a Captain Cook at that septic tank on the dog and bone to his trouble and strife*” which would mean “take note of that American calling his wife.”

Some words are really useful, like the word *off*. When food is off it’s gone bad. If the beer is off it means it has run out. *Ticked off* can mean that a check mark ✓ was made, or that someone is really upset. A person might *nick off*, meaning he is escaping responsibility by running away or leaving. If someone thinks you are bothering them, they might tell you to *rack off* which means “go away.” If they go so far as to say *bugger off*, then I advise that you waste no time in finding someone else to bother!

Another useful word is *lot*. When you order a hamburger with everything, then you get a burger with *the lot*. You will hear it at garage sales: when you see a box of stuff, the seller might say “*I’ll take \$5 for the lot.*” You can even use it to refer to your kids: “*Come on, you lot, it’s time to go!*” But when referring to a large amount of anything, you could say “lots” but

Australians prefer the word *heaps*. My daughter Joy has *heaps* of friends, and she has *heaps* of fun playing with them.

The adjective *jolly* is used quite frequently in Tasmania, particularly among older people. Unlike the American usage (which usually finds its way into discussions about Santa Claus), *jolly* can mean silly, crazy, or frustrating: “*I got in the car but I couldn't get the jolly thing started.*” It is also frequently used to give emphasis to a sentence, as in “*We had a jolly good time.*”

There are a number of other words that are a bit different from American usage. Among them is *ta*, a commonly used expression meaning “thanks.” *Ta-ta* is frequently said instead of goodbye. Rather than saying counterclockwise, Australians say *anticlockwise*. The word *whilst* often replaces the word *while*, for example, “*He saw the incident whilst he was taking his morning walk.*” *Oi* is sometimes heard as an exclamation—usually in frustration at someone else; it is much like the corresponding “Hey” in American language: “*Oi! Give it back!*”

There are few other differences worth mentioning. People drop the word “the” before the word *hospital*, for example, “*He was in hospital for a week*” or “*They rushed her to hospital on Friday.*” Some Australians will say *me* instead of *my*, such as in “*I left me bike outside.*” If the weather is getting nicer after a spell of rain, some people might say it is *fining up*.

When you offer someone something to read, you may hear them say, “*I'll have a read of it.*” Likewise, when prompting someone with a decision, their response might be “*I'll have a think about it.*”

Australians treat the name of organization as if it were plural. In America you would say “*K-Mart is having a sale.*” But here they would say “*K-Mart are having a sale.*” The same applies to a team name: “*If Sydney win the next game, they will be in the Grand Final.*”



And finally, a word of warning to you ladies. Don't say you're going to trim your bangs, as Australians won't know what you are talking about. The hair over your forehead is your *fringe*.

### **Pronunciation**

Before I proceed, may I take a moment to remind you that this discussion of accents and pronunciation is from an American point of view. Bear in mind that I will take the liberty of interpreting sounds as I think Americans hear them. Australians or Britishers reading this may readily disagree with my interpretations because, in their ears, things such as vowels will sound different (and therefore “normal”) to what we Americans hear.

While it is very easy to tell if a person is speaking with an Australian accent, I have found it difficult to pinpoint what exactly makes it Aussie. A big reason for this is that different people will pronounce the same word slightly different ways, so it is not easy to make hard and fast rules for the language. But as I see it, there are basically three key elements that distinguish Australian speech from that of North Americans:

1. Pronunciation of the vowels, particularly long vowels
2. Pronunciation of the letter “r”
3. Syllable length

### Vowels

The first and most obvious characteristic of the Australian accent is the pronunciation of the vowels. Again, these rules aren't consistent among everyone—nor are they consistent with all words. But generally, these are some basic guidelines for vowels:

- ✓ short o sounds like “aw” – *block* would sound like “blawk”

- ✓ long a sounds like long i – *mate* sounds like “mite” and *snake* sounds bit like “snike”
- ✓ long i sounds like “aw-ee” or even “oi” – *flight* might sound like “flaw-eet”
- ✓ long o has a lot of variation. It may sound like our long o, but often it is pronounced like “ah-oh” (*no* would sound like “na-o”). Some people make it sound like “oh-ee,” so the word *no* might come out sounding something like “noy.”
- ✓ long u is usually pronounced like “yoo.” *Stupid* would usually sound like “styoopid” or even “schtyoopid.” The letter “d” followed by a long “u” sound is often pronounced like a “j,” so the word *duration* would sound like “joo-ration,” and *subdue* would be “sub-joo.”
- ✓ ou often sounds more like “ail” or “eel” - *round* might sound a bit like “reelnd”

### The Letter R

Another obvious distinctive of Australian speech is the way the letter “r” is pronounced. An “r” at the beginning of a syllable is generally given its full strength. But as in the New England states of northeastern America, the letter r often sounds as though it has been omitted from the end of most syllables. Instead of the strong r sound, Aussies would utter more of an “uh” sound, as in the word *mercy*, which would be rendered something like “muh-sy,” or in the name *Peter* which would be pronounced “Peetah.”

On the other hand, some people might add an r sound to the end of a word not ending with that letter: the word *drama* might come out sounding like “drammer”!

### Syllable Length

The third distinguishing element is the length of the syllable. Of the three characteristics, this is the hardest to detect. Sometimes the syllable is drawn out slightly, giving it a bit more emphasis (usually for a diphthong or the letter r). The word “Bible” is a prime example, as the first syllable would be held for longer, producing a word that sounds like “Baw-ee-ble.”

While some syllables are lengthened, others are shortened. Words that end in -tory are shortened to a quick “tree” sound; words ending in -bury end up sounding like “bree.” *The observatory in Westbury* would be “The ob-ZUH-va-tree in WEST-bree.”

Beyond these 3 main characteristics, there are some other distinctions worth noting. When saying the letters of the alphabet, “Z” is *zed* as in many European languages. “H” is often pronounced “hay-ch,” but again it depends on the person speaking. The letter “h” is frequently not pronounced at the beginning of a word, so *horse* would likely come out “orse.” The letter s in words like *Tassie* and *Aussie* are always pronounced like z's; say them like “Tazzie” and “Ozzie.” Because Australians love to abbreviate words, Australia is sometimes reduced to *Oz*.

### **Spelling**

While pronunciation is hard to pinpoint, spelling is more clear-cut. Here is a sampling of words that are spelled differently—yet pronounced basically the same—as in America:

- ✓ Many words ending with “-or” end in “-our”: *neighbour, flavour, colour, honour*
- ✓ Many words ending with “-ize” end in “-ise”: *recognise, realise, baptise*. (Keep in mind that even though there’s no letter z in these words, they are still pronounced as though the s were z).

- ✓ Many words ending with “-er” end in “-re”: *theatre, metre, centre*
- ✓ Other words spelled differently but pronounced virtually the same include *tyre* (tire), *kerb* (curb), *draught* (draft), *storey* (as in a 3-storey building), *manoeuvre*, *oesophagus*, *encyclopaedia*, *cheque*, *pyjamas*, and *gaol* (jail).

Then there are words that are spelled the same as in American usage, but pronounced differently. Usually the difference is just where the syllable is accented, for example *controversy* (con-TRAH-ver-see) and *laboratory* (la-BOR-a-tree). And—you guessed it—there are a few words that are both spelled and pronounced differently, bearing the same meaning. One such word is *fillette* (FILL-it), which corresponds to our word fillet. While there are many examples of distinctions between American and Australian language, they are both remarkably similar and perhaps becoming more so due to the many forms of communication in place today.

## Transportation

If Aussie language isn't enough of a shock for a North American coming to this part of the world, then wait until you have to drive a car! In Australia you drive on the *left* side of the road. This means the driver sits on the right side of the car, and must shift gears with the left hand and operate the turn signal with the right. Imagine how strange it would be to sit in the passenger seat for the first time and feeling like you need a steering wheel in your hands—and having no control of the vehicle! Fortunately, the pedals are the same as in American vehicles, so at least that's one consolation.



**How would you like to get used to this rule?**

The “left side” rule carries over to other aspects of driving as well. You board and exit a bus on the left side, and vans have the sliding door on the left (and sometimes on both sides). At McDonald's, the drive-thru goes *clockwise* around the building! Motorcycle sidecars are sometimes seen here, as they are legal. That's right, you guessed it already—the sidecar is on the left side of the driver!

As with driving, you are expected to stay to the left when walking down a *footpath* (sidewalk) or in a store aisle—so even if you are not driving, you have to keep in mind the left side rule.

Most, if not all American states now have a “right turn on red” rule. There's no “left turn on red” rule at traffic lights in Tasmania. You must wait for a red light to turn green before you can proceed.

As with many aspects of Tasmanian life, automobile transport carries some vernacular worth noting. Cars have a *windscreen* (windshield), a *boot* (trunk) and a *bonnet* (hood). If you can't start your car, your battery might be *flat*. But when your tire goes flat, you're likely to be told you have a *puncture*. A pickup is called a *ute* (pronounced "yoot") which is an abbreviation for *utility*. A large truck is sometimes called a *lorry*. A *caravan* is a camper or travel trailer. *Caravan parks* (or *holiday parks*) are found throughout the state and provide electrical and water hookups for those who are *on holidays* (vacation). When you want to park your car, you look for a *car park* (parking lot). Otherwise, you need to *reverse park* (parallel park) along the *kerb*.



**The Australian version  
of a yield sign.**

It is quite rare to see a stop sign in Tasmania. Instead, most intersections have a yield sign that looks just like ours, but it doesn't say yield, it says "*Give Way*." Some intersections have no signs at all, in which case you are expected to give way to the car on your right (remember, the steering wheel is on the right side in Australia).

Many intersections have a *roundabout* (circle or rotary) rather than a traffic light.

But of course you go around them clockwise! Cars on the *roundabout* have the right-of-way.

In Australia, gasoline is called *petrol* (PE-trul). "Gas" refers to LP (propane) gas, which is actually used as a fuel in many cars specially equipped for it. Therefore one must be careful not to ask for "gas" if you want gasoline!

Motorists are limited to 60 kph (37 mph) in most towns, but one can travel at 100 kph (62 mph) on most highways and 110 kph (68 mph) on the Bass Highway, Tasmania's only federally funded road (akin to America's Interstate highways). One does not have to stop for school buses, but the motorist must slow to 40 *kph* (kilometres per hour) when passing either way. Buses usually pull all the way off the road when they stop to pick up or let off students.

The lines on roads are basically the same as in America. One important difference is that they are only white here: there are no yellow lines. Can you imagine white double lines? The dangerous thing is that dashed lines - - - in the center of a single-lane highway give you the impression that you are on a multi-lane highway because it looks like an interstate (since the lines are white). So there is a temptation to stay in the right lane when you are *overtaking* (passing)! Another difference is that the sides of roads are lined with wooden posts, spaced about 100 yards apart, bearing reflectors: red ones on the left, and white ones on the right. As in many U.S. states, the center lines of major roads also have embedded white reflectors which are very helpful in foggy or rainy weather. Most back roads don't have any lines at all.



A typical speed limit sign indicating 60 kph.

The *National Highway* system is similar to America's Interstate system, except it is not always a divided highway, nor does it always provide limited access. Tasmania only has one national highway, running from Burnie to Hobart. Other highways are labeled according to the type of road: those with "A" and 1 digit are major highways; roads beginning with "B" and 2 digits are secondary highways; and those with "C" and 3 digits are

back roads and often gravel roads. *A7*, *B71*, and *C708* are among the roads I would take when driving from Port Sorell to Launceston.

Highway abbreviations are a little different: *JCN* for junction, *DVE* for drive, *CRS* for crescent, and *BVD* for boulevard. The term “dead end” is not usually used; instead, such a road will be marked *No Through Road*.

If you wreck your car then you *pranged it*, *smashed it*. Then you'll need to take it to a body shop, often called a *smash repairs shop* or a *panel beater*. If you don't want to get it repaired, then a new car is certainly an option. Keep in mind that if you're looking for a new car dealer in the Yellow Pages, look under *Motor Cars*, not *Automobiles*! Many car brands available in Australia are ones familiar to Americans: Ford, Toyota, Nissan, Volvo, Subaru, and Mitsubishi. Then there is the Holden, the truly Australian car. Daihatsu, Scania, Volvo and Mercedes Benz are popular truck brands.

Unlike the U.S., cars are issued a *registration tag* (license plate) for the life of the car. Tags are generally not transferred, and replacement tags usually bear the same numbers as the old one. For this reason, cars do not have registration cards.

Australian drivers seem less tolerant of the high beams of oncoming traffic, than those of America. One is expected to dim his lights far in advance, or the approaching driver is likely to flash his beams.

If you don't want to drive your car, there are many other transportation options. You can take a bus, the major choices being *Tasmanian Redline* and *Tigerline*. In order to get across to the mainland, you need to travel by *aeroplane* or boat. Among airlines, you may choose *Qantas* or *Ansett Australia*. *Kendell Airlines* is a small airline that services several towns in Tasmania and Victoria. The *Spirit of Tasmania*, which is the world's 6<sup>th</sup> largest ferry, travels between Devonport and Melbourne 3 times per week; the trip takes 14 hours overnight. Of course there is the alternative of



hitchhiking. But while some hitchhikers use their thumbs, most point toward the middle of the road to request a ride.

In Tasmania, you will find that many cars have spider webs strung between the outside mirrors and the door. Apparently there is a type of spider that likes to make its home in the mirror housing. Brush the webs off, and they'll probably be there again the next day!

## Around the House

One way Australians express their individuality is through the homes in which they live. Houses come in a great variety of shapes, sizes and colors, some with very interesting architecture, and virtually no two houses are alike. Houses built on level ground rarely have basements, but of course those thousands that are built on the steep hillsides of Tasmania have two or more levels. Houses in town tend to be very close together. Fences are found along almost every border between houses, as Australians value their privacy. Most houses have a ceramic tile or corrugated tin roof—virtually no other types of roofing are seen in Tasmania.

Many Australians who live in city or suburban areas also have a *shack* or vacation home in the mountains or by the beach. Although Americans might think of a shack as being a run-down little hovel, an Aussie holiday shack is usually a fully-equipped home.

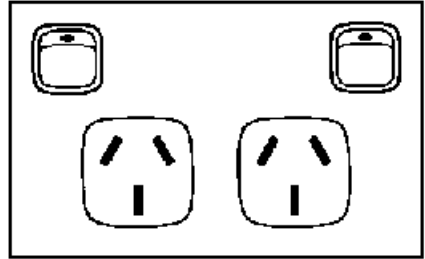
The vast majority of homes do not have central heat. Many use *wood heaters* (wood stoves), but electric heat is also very popular. Most electrical power comes from a network of hydroelectric power stations found all over the state. Gas heaters and heat pumps are sometimes installed.

Australians are big do-it-yourself-ers. *D.I.Y.* is quite a familiar abbreviation in hardware and home supply stores.

One might be appalled at the high cost of carpet. But it is important to note that most floor coverings are sold by the linear unit, not square unit. In other words, 3 metres of carpet would give you a piece 3 metres by 12 feet wide (the standard width), unlike in America where 3 yards is just 3 square yards!

Sinks have hot and cold *taps* (faucets) but you won't always find the hot on the left; sometimes it's on the right. The sink in a bathroom is called a *basin*.

Electrical power is 240 volts, 50 cycles (America typically uses 120 volts, 60 cycles, meaning that most American appliances will not work in Australia). Most types of light globes (bulbs) don't screw in; they are the bayonet types that you push in and turn. Electrical outlets are called *power points* and most are equipped with a little rocker switch which allows you to turn it on and off for added safety. Light switches are very small and are almost always located on the door jamb. By the way, in Australia, switches go *down* for on, *up* for off!



**A typical *power point*. Note the rocker switches in the upper corners. The vertical slot is the *earth* or *ground* terminal.**

If nature calls while you are in an Aussie home, don't ask for the bathroom or the host might send you to a room with a sink and a bathtub or shower. The toilet is usually by itself in a separate room which is called the *toilet* or the *loo*. When you're there, they will say you are "in the toilet" which might sound a bit embarrassing at first! An outdoor toilet is called a *dunny* and is an integral part of Australian folklore.

Many homes has what is called a *rumpus room*, which is essentially a family room. The living room is commonly referred to as the *front room* because of its usual location near the front door, and is the place where you might sit for afternoon tea. When you want to move to another house, you *shift* or *move house*; and you will probably need the help of a *removalist*.

There is quite a bit of diversity among mailboxes. Mail is delivered Monday through Friday, except public holidays. If you want to sent a letter, you must take it to an *Australia Post* office or to a red post box; mail is not collected from your personal mailbox. Because your mailbox is for

receiving mail only, there are no restrictions for mailboxes as in the U.S. You will see many unusual and creative designs among Australian mailboxes. Many are simply made out of a plastic jug with the bottom cut out and fastened to the top of a post!

The clothing that people wear in Tasmania is not noticeably different from that of the U.S. In fact, you will frequently notice someone wearing something very American like a Chicago Bulls tee-shirt! Those visiting from other countries might find that Australians do dress more casually (although mainlanders will tend to dress more casually than Tasmanians on the whole). Aussies are less likely to go to church with a suit and tie, and in fact, may show up in a tee-shirt, shorts and thongs or sandals, or maybe even bare feet!

The main difference with some clothing is the names given to them. A pull-over sweater is called a *jumper*, while a button-up sweater would be called a *cardigan*. A *skivvy* is a shirt or sweater with a turtle neck, and *wind cheater* usually refers to a sweatshirt. In order to go swimming, both men and women don their *bathers*, sometimes called a *bathing costume* or *cosy* for short.

Sneakers or tennis shoes are often called *sand shoes*. *Gum boots* are simply rubber boots, so named for the rubber resin from which they are made. The most popular type of shoe is called a *Blundstone* or *blunny*. This is a brand name, although there are many look-alikes which are referred to by the same name. It is a high-top shoe with elastic along the ankles, allowing one to slip them on and off quickly.

Bed sizes are the same as in America: single, twin, queen, etc. But when shopping for linens, go to the *manchester* section of the store, because that's what linens are called. Many people use electric blankets, but the kind used here are fastened onto the mattress under the fitted sheet. On top, Australians use a large fluffy comforter called a *doona* on their beds. It is

like a huge, flat pillow filled with feathers, and usually is fitted with a cover like a large pillowcase.

## Tucker

Food in any country or culture has its own distinctions and importance. Australia is certainly no exception. Australian food, and the way it is prepared, is very similar to that of North America. Yet of course there are exceptions that every would-be traveler might find helpful to know.

*Tucker* is the common Australian slang word for food. There's good tucker and bad tucker, you might find it in a tucker box or at a tucker shop but it's all that stuff we can't live without.

Australians eat 3 meals a day, with breakfast being the lightest and least formal of the three. Like Americans, many Aussies have cereal for breakfast. Perhaps the main difference is that one is not apt to find near the variety of cereals in Tasmania as he might find in the States. Kellogg's Rice Krispies are called *Rice Bubbles*. Another company makes a cereal called Rice Krispies that looks just like corn flakes, except they are made of rice, and I must assume that's the reason Kellogg's had to change the name of their product. A very popular cereal is called *Weet-Bix*. They are something like shredded wheat, but compressed flakes rather than strands of wheat. It soaks up a lot of milk and gets all mushy—kind of revolting at first, but it's one of those things a person quickly grows to love. Plus, it's really cheap: about US\$2.50 for a 2-pound box!

We Americans love jelly on toast. But in Tasmania, don't ask for jelly if you want jam. *Jelly* usually refers to gelatin, what we commonly call Jello, and not too many people have that for breakfast! Aussies to like jam or preserves on toast, but there is another truly Australian food quite unlike jam that you must be aware of—*Vegemite*!

If you've ever been introduced to Vegemite, you will either like it or absolutely hate it. There is no middle ground! It's a purely Australian

phenomenon that's been around since the 1920's. It's a thick, gooey, pungent spread that many Aussies like to eat on toast. My first impression was quite negative, and I used to say "it looks a lot like axle grease, but isn't nearly as tasty." I made the mistake of dipping a knife into the jar to get a taste, and that was enough for me; I resolved that I'd never touch it again. But after about 2 years I decided to give it a second chance. I tried it the right way: spread it very, very thinly on a slice of buttered toast. Believe me, it has taken sometime to acquire a taste for it, but I do like it. I would imagine that most Americans would despise it as first, just like Australians by and large shake their head in disgust at the thought of a peanut butter and jam sandwich!

Coffee and tea are not only staple early-morning beverages, they seem to be a vital part of the social fabric of life. But the word *tea* can mean many things. It's the brownish hot beverage which Americans enjoy (but be informed that Australians do not drink iced tea). If you take your tea without cream, ask for a *black tea*, and if you prefer cream, *white tea*; the same applies to coffee. *Cuppa* refers to a cup of tea or coffee. Visiting someone at their home, you will doubtless be asked, "*Will you have a cuppa?*" A cup of coffee or tea after a meal is standard procedure. Tea also refers to a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack in which coffee, tea, and biscuits are served.

The word *tea* also refers to the evening meal, which is rarely referred to as dinner. It is therefore not uncommon to hear someone talking about "*Eating tea.*" And then there is *supper*, a snack that you have later in the evening or before bedtime. Evening meetings are usually accompanied by such a *supper*.

Butcher shops and supermarkets provide a large variety of sausages with a variety of flavors and spices. There are also *saveloys*, which are similar to hot dogs covered with rubbery red skins. Sausages and saveloys are quite popular items at a typical *barbie* (barbecue) or *sausage sizzle*.

A common beverage is a concentrated syrup called *cordial* (pronounce it “CORE-dee-ool,” not “CORE-jool”) which you mix with water to produce something much better than Kool-Aid but not as good as fruit juice. Soda is not really popular here, and is very expensive. But don't call it soda; Aussies refer to them as soft drinks, *fizzy drinks* or *fizzy cordial*. *Lemonade* usually refers to carbonated lemon soda.

Ketchup is not quite the same here—it's a little milder, and they call it *tomato sauce*, or just *sauce*. Oh, and don't forget tomato is pronounced “toe-MAH-toe.” Mustard is not really popular here and can only be bought in small containers. However, a wide range of mustard types are available including American, English, whole seed, Russian, and even tomato mustard—which is like mustard and ketchup mixed together.

What Americans call pudding is called *custard* here. Custard is usually not eaten alone, but instead poured on cakes or fresh fruit to add flavor. *Pudding* refers to a fruit and raisin cake which is boiled rather than baked. It is quite popular around Christmastime and usually served topped with custard.

Raisins and currants are found in virtually every Australian kitchen. The most common raisins here are white raisins and are called *sultanas* (from the Sultana grape). *Raisins* refer to a much larger variety of raisin, about twice the size of ordinary raisins, which usually contain *pips* or seeds. A commonly used fruit is the *blackcurrant*. This fruit is not popular in North America because it is a host to a disease that is deadly to the white pine tree. But it is quite abundant in Tassie, and its fruit is used in a variety of ways including jams, cordial, and as a dried fruit.

Desserts include a wide variety of delicious creations. Cookies are usually called *biscuits* or *bickies*, although you do occasionally see the word “cookies” on store-bought brands. What Americans call biscuits are called *scones* (pronounced “scons”) here. A favorite way to prepare *scones* is to



split them in half, spread strawberry or raspberry jam on them, and top them with fresh whipped cream. Another favorite sweet treat is simply called *slice* which comes in countless types—usually some sort of bar cookies prepared in a baking dish and “sliced” into squares. *Cream cakes* made with fresh whipped cream (the real stuff) are common. *Lamington* is sponge cake covered with a chocolate sauce and rolled in shredded coconut (similar to Zingers®). *Pavlova* is a light, crispy meringue pie with whipped cream and fruit slices, usually kiwi fruit, and bits of chocolate sprinkled on top.

*Takeaway* shops are very common. You can go in and order *chips* (french fries), and any of a variety of fish: *flake* (battered shark steak), *flounder*, *trevally*, *blue grenadier*, or *couta* (barracuda). You can also get battered *prawns* (shrimp) or *calimari* (squid) rings. When you order fish & chips they will deep fry them while you wait, and you go away with a nice hot meal for the equivalent of about two or three American dollars. You can also buy a number of other things like hamburgers or *chook* (chicken), or oriental goodies like *spring rolls* or *dim sims*. Traditionally, the most popular “fast food” is the *Australian Meat Pie*, which is a little 4-inch pot pie filled with a gravy-like filling made of *mince* (ground beef). *Sausage rolls* and *pasties* are also quite common, and are basically variations of the meat pie. A *dairy bar* is much like a *takeaway shop*, except that it specializes more in ice cream and other frozen treats.

Of course, if you hanker for a little bit of America, there's always McDonald's (often referred to as *Macca's*), Kentucky Fried Chicken, or Pizza Hut. But keep in mind that you won't be asked “Here or to go?” but rather “*Eat in or take away?*”

*Lollies* refers to any kind of candy. In town you're likely to see a *lolly shop* filled with all kinds of candies and other goodies. Just about every takeaway shop will offer a fair assortment of lollies.

Shrimp are called *prawns*. King prawns are the big ones. *Shrimp* would refer to the really little ones—more true to the name. *Crayfish* or *crays* are lobsters, and in Tassie there are both fresh and salt-water crays.

Sliced *beet root* (red beets) is often found with meals, and will often find their way into sandwiches along with shredded carrot. *Pumpkins* are an important food in Tasmania, but most of them are green in color, not orange! Pumpkins are often sliced, cooked and served with just a pat of butter. *Pumpkin soup* is very popular, but you will rarely find pumpkin pie as Australians find the idea of it rather revolting!

Australia has a lot of the familiar brands we are accustomed to in the States, such as Kellogg's, McCormick, Kraft, and Nestle. You can get Nestle's Quik—chocolate, strawberry, banana, and caramel—but it comes in a round can. Other familiar food brands include Cadbury, McCormick spices, IGA, Maxwell House coffee, Coca-cola, Pepsi, and Continental. Unfortunately, Hershey's chocolates are not available in Australia. Dr. Pepper soft drink was just introduced to Australia a few years ago, but no one here seems to like it!

Common food brands you probably haven't heard of include Home Brand (generic), Black & Gold (generic), Four Roses (a Tasmanian company), Sanitarium (cereals), Rosella (tomato sauce), Arnott's (cookies and crackers), Cottee's (cordial), Ardmona Foods, and Bushell's (tea).

## Flora, Fauna, and Farming

Tasmania is located about 40° south of the equator, which corresponds with the New England states in the U.S. But because of its maritime climate, many things grow here that don't grow outside Florida or southern California, such as passion fruit vines and lemon trees.

Most trees are broadleaf evergreens. That means in the fall, only a few trees turn color and lose their leaves. Eucalyptus is one of the most common trees, which Australians call *gum trees*. There are about 600 species of eucalyptus in Australia, 37 of which are found in Tasmania. The *blue gum* bears the pungent, aromatic leaves you find in flower shops in America. The *swamp gum* is the largest hardwood tree in the world, reaching an impressive 280 feet in height. Other varieties found in Tassie include the *Mountain White Gum*, *Cider Gum*, *Weeping Gum*, and *Snow Gum*. The most common gums in Tassie have leaves that resemble those of a weeping willow. And strangely enough, the leaves don't fall off, but the bark does! It tends to gradually peel off in long strips.

Other tree varieties in Tassie include the *wattle* (which produce yellow blossoms in the middle of winter), *myrtle*, *celery top pine*, *pencil pine*, *King William pine*, *huon pine*, *Tasmanian oak*, *blackwood*, *sassafras*, *bottle brush*, *cabbage*, *she-oak*, and *banksia*. The *macrocarpa pine* is widespread but is not native to Tasmania. The wood from these trees has its own unique beauty and is used in a wide variety of craft items.

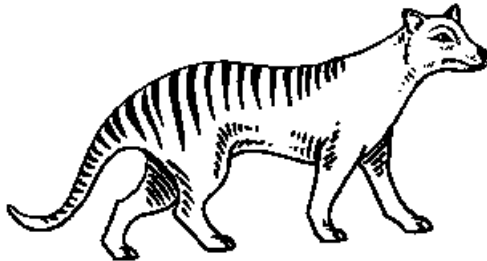
There is a large variety of small plant life. Beautiful flowers, both native and introduced, adorn flower gardens and roadsides alike. *Pig face* is a creeping succulent which bears bright orange or pink flowers which almost seem to glow in the sunlight. Many kinds of lilies can be seen growing in the wild. A plant commonly found growing in sandy soil along the beach is *spear grass*, somewhat like a large tuft of grass about 3 feet high, with

pointy ends that poke through even heavy clothes (it's quite an experience to walk through a patch of it in shorts).

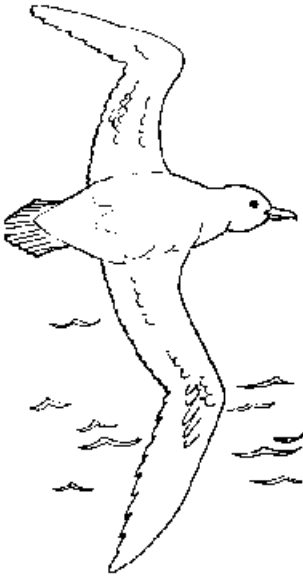


**The Tasmanian Devil**

The animal life of Tasmania is most intriguing. The most famous of the Tasmanian wild animals is the *Tasmanian devil*. Unlike the Warner Brothers cartoon, the Tassie devil is about the size of a large cat, black in color and usually with white markings on the chest and near the tail. Being nocturnal, as are most Tasmanian animals, it is rarely seen in the wild. It has a voracious appetite, but feeds solely on carrion (dead animals). So you're safe in the bush—just don't play dead! Other native animals include the *wallaby* (a small kangaroo), *tiger quoll* (brown with white spots), *Tasmanian tiger* (almost definitely extinct), *bandicoot*, *brush-tailed possum*, *ring-tailed possum*, *wombat*, *echidna* (also known as a spiny anteater), *numbat*, and *platypus*. Rabbits are very common but are not native. You don't see squirrels or chipmunks here. There are no wild *koalas* in Tassie; they are only found on the mainland. And because of its history of strict import/export regulations, Australia does not have a single case of rabies!



**The Tasmanian Tiger, thought to be extinct.  
The last one in captivity died in Hobart Zoo  
in 1936.**



**Tasmanian muttonbird, or shearwater**

Bird species include the *magpie*, *plover*, *raven*, *skylark*, *wedge-tailed eagle*, and the famous *kookaburra* with its loud, cackling laugh. *Rosella parrots* are greenish yellow in color. The *black swan* may be seen near lakes and rivers. A bird commonly seen along the road is the native hen, resembling a small brown chicken. The *rookeries* (underground nesting sites) of the *fairy penguin* can be found in various places around the state. These small penguins are only about 12" in length and can be seen at dusk coming in from the sea, where they spend the day looking for food. Another bird is the *Tasmanian muttonbird*, also known as the *shearwater*. It is a small bird with an annual migration route between Tasmania and Alaska—a distance of nearly 7,000 miles. These birds nest in burrows in the ground and mate for life. Dressed muttonbirds are commonly available for eating.

Fishing is popular in Tasmania. There are hundreds of lakes in the central part of the state, and several of the larger ones have been stocked since the turn of the century with many species including *Brown Trout*, *Rainbow Trout*, *Brook Trout*, and *Atlantic Salmon*. Salt-water fishing does not require a license, and provides the fisherman access to the hundreds of species of fish native to the marine waters around Tasmania.

Among farm animals, sheep are the most numerous by far. There are reportedly about 140 million in



**The Fairy Penguin**

Australia, which amounts to 8 sheep for every person. Sometimes you will see a pasture with hundreds of them. Wool and lamb meat are important farm products.

Holsteins are called *Friesians* here. There are quite a few in Tassie, in addition to other breeds. Some dairy farms on the Northwest Coast have several hundred cattle. One farm in the extreme northwest of the island, known as Woolnorth, reportedly has well over 1,000 milking in one milking herd.

Contour farming is not widely practiced on the Northwest Coast; one may see *paddocks* (fields) with rows going straight up and down steep hills. Runoff is apparently not a problem because of the high content of clay in the soil, which is of volcanic origin. Common food crops include potatoes, onions, peas and pumpkins. Fruits include apples, pears, and berries. Flower farms are abundant, with *lavender* being a significant source of fragrant oil. The *Granny Smith Apple* was developed in Australia from Tasmanian stock. *Greengages* look like plums except that they are entirely green.

Poppies are grown for pharmaceutical purposes, and the poppy fields are carefully protected; they produce beautiful pinkish-white blossoms in December that brighten hundreds of acres of countryside. Pyrethrin is also grown for use in producing insect sprays. Their yellowish-white blossoms likewise appear in December, and these two flower fields are beautiful to behold in full bloom!

## Measurements and Money

One of the biggest differences between the United States and Australia concerns our systems of measurement. In Australia, the metric system is the national standard. The change was officially made in 1980, and although it has been in place 20 years, many people—even young adults—still talk in miles, feet and inches. The metric system is easier to use, but there's no doubt about it, old comfortable ways are hard to leave behind.

One part of the metric system that has been fully accepted in Australia is the measurement of temperature. Virtually no one talks about Fahrenheit any more. In Celsius, water freezes at 0° (32°F) and boils at 100° (212°F). While this might seem more logical, it takes getting used to. For example when baking *biscuits* (cookies), you would probably set the oven at 190°C (375°F). What a mistake it would be to set your oven for 375°Celsius!

These different measurements, along with the different value of currency, make shopping a challenge. You might be appalled to find that steak is \$10.00 a *kilogram*! But that works out to be only about \$2.50 a pound in American money. It is necessary to convert not only the measurement, but the currency as well. *Petrol* (gasoline) is about 96¢ per *litre*, which works out to nearly two U.S. dollars per gallon.

The money system was changed around 1966 from pounds/shillings/pence to dollars/cents, so the system is like ours. Australian coins don't have names like American coins. Coins include the 5-cent, 10-cent, 20-cent, 50-cent, 1-dollar, and 2-dollar. Australia no longer uses one-cent coins, so prices are rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Australian "paper" money is actually made of a plastic compound and is virtually indestructible (Australia was the first nation in the world to use such a material). The notes have a clear plastic window on one end, and each denomination has

its own unique size and color, unlike American money. The smallest denomination is the 5-dollar note.

When prices are marked, there is often a dash instead of a decimal point, so the price would look like this: \$3-50. In America we would say “three dollars and fifty cents” but in Australia one is more likely to abbreviate it by simply saying “*three dollars fifty.*”

When you buy something in Tasmania, you don't pay any additional sales tax—it's already figured into the price of the item. Tax used to amount to a whopping 22% or more, depending on the item. By the time taxes and tariffs were applied to imported goods such as electronics and cars, the total price became astronomical. However, as of July 1, 2000 the GST (goods & services tax) was implemented, placing a flat 10 percent tax on all taxable items. Again, this tax is included in the prices of all items and services, so no additional costs are added at the cash register.

Occasionally, someone will use the word *bob* to indicate money. It was the nickname for a sixpence in the old money system. They might tell you that “*Two-bob won't buy what it used to.*” And don't we know how true that is.



## The Telephone

As in most countries today, the phone is an integral part of Australian life. You don't "call" someone on the phone, you *ring* them, or perhaps you'd say "*I'll give you a bell.*" If you ring someone and the line is busy, you would say the line is *engaged*. When an Aussie gives you a phone number (or most any number) with a double letter they will say double-whatever. The number 13 1166 would be "*One-Three Double-One Double-Six.*"

Australia's major phone companies are *Telstra* and *Optus*. Telstra was once owned by the government but has been privatized. Optus was the first competitive phone company, and others are rising into a position to help bring prices down. Every call from a private home phone costs 25¢.

Phone numbers in Australia are quite different than in America. In 1994, there were 54 area codes, and phone numbers had a varying number of digits. As of 1998, there were just 4 area codes, and all numbers have been standardized to 8 digits. This has been a monumental task in which virtually every phone number in Australia was successfully changed in less than five years.

Pay phones, located in *phone boxes*, are quite different in appearance from American ones. They are usually bright orange in color and most are equipped with a digital display. Local calls from a pay phone cost 40¢.

You can usually tell what kind of call you are making by the prefix. Naturally, the area code gives information about where you are calling. Phone numbers beginning with 1800 (previously 008) are *freecall* (toll-free) numbers, as in the U.S. Numbers beginning with 13 (or 1300) are charged as a local call. Numbers beginning with 0055 are part of an information network and are charged at *STD* (Subscriber Trunk Dialing) rates. *Mobile phones*, or cellular phones as we know them in North America, are very

commonplace. Mobile phone numbers begin with a 0, for example 018, 019, 0402, 0409, 0417, etc.

Directory assistance is free, even for other countries. From Australia, for example, I can dial a certain number and an operator can contact a stateside operator to get a listed phone number—and it doesn't cost anything for the service. Try that in America!

When you call someone in the U.S. and they must put you on hold, they would probably say, “Just a moment”; in Australia, the response would likely be “*I won't be a moment.*” Either way, you can be pretty certain that more than a moment will pass while you listen to pretty music...

## The Media

Residents of Tasmania get four TV channels: *ABC* (Australian Broadcasting), *Southern Cross*, *SBS*, and *WIN*. *ABC* is mostly educational, documentary, and Australian and British programming. *Southern Cross* and *WIN* play lots of American programs: movies, news, and shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, *Oprah Winfrey*, *Home Improvement*, *Friends*, and so on. Cable TV exists but is not widely available outside the major city regions. Movies seen on TV are usually American, although *SBS* features quite a few French, Italian, Japanese and other foreign films with subtitles. Video stores have basically the same repertoire of movies you would see in American video stores.

Although Hollywood productions are very popular here, Australians have their own productions as well. *Bananas & Pyjamas* is a well-known children's program which has become popular in America. *Skippy* is a family show featuring a pet kangaroo. Included in the prime-time arena are *Neighbours* (basically a soap opera) and the police drama *Blue-Heelers*. I understand that quite a few movies are made in Australia as well.

Then there are the American "look-alikes," which are purely Australian but are based on those familiar to North Americans. Examples are: *Australia's Most Wanted*, *Australia's Funniest Home Videos*, *The Price Is Right*, *Family Feud*, *Wheel of Fortune*, and others. Even the theme songs are the same!

The video format used in Australia is called PAL, and a PAL videotape will not play properly on an American (NTSC) video player, or vice-versa. However, many VCR's are available here that will play both formats.

Radio has long been an important medium. In Tasmania, many radio stations are designated by a "7" followed by two or three letters that usually identify the town where the station is located, for example, *7LA* is in

Launceston, 7SD is in Scottsdale, and 7AD is in Devonport. ABC (Australian Broadcasting) is a popular broadcast. AM is far more popular than FM, probably due to the larger radius of coverage in this rural state.

The three major newspapers in Tasmania are *The Advocate* (Northwest Coast), *The Examiner* (Launceston), and *The Mercury* (Hobart).

## Sport & Leisure

Aussies love sports. When they ask you about your involvement, they would say, “*Do you play sport?*” whereas Americans would use the plural, sports. And it seems that just about every Australian has either a favorite sport to play, or sporting team to cheer for, or both.

*Aussie Rules Football*, affectionately called *Footy*, is the most popular sport here. It's kind of a cross between rugby and *grid-iron* (American football). It's quite amazing to watch: players don't stop for a huddle, and they don't wear any helmets or padding at all. It's non-stop action for two straight hours. There's even a TV program called “*The Footy Show.*” 1996 was the *Centenary* (centennial) year of the *AFL* (Australian Football League).

Baseball is becoming more popular, but is still relatively unknown among many Australians. *Cricket* is a British sport, somewhat resembling baseball but actually quite different—and immensely popular among the masses. On a professional level, Australians play a number of other Commonwealth nations in test matches—but on a recreational level, people love to play just for fun on the beach or in the back yard.

Golf is another very popular sport here. There are many very nice golf courses throughout Tasmania.

Basketball is gaining ground as one of the most popular sports. Apparently, a number of American basketball players have come to Australia to play professionally. But a sport not known among most Americans is *netball*, much like basketball except that the basket does not have a backboard, and the ball is not dribbled, only passed from one team member to another. It is primarily a women's sport and in my opinion, requires a greater level of skill than basketball.

Although tenpin bowling is common here, *lawn bowls* is by far more popular. Just about every town has a *Bowls Club*. It is played outdoors on a specially prepared *green* throughout the summer months. The player rolls a small ball called a *jack* or *kitty* down the green. Then players take turns rolling larger, specially-weighted balls toward it. The object is to get as close to the jack as you can. The trick is that the larger balls are weighted on one side, so they curve when they roll. It takes quite some skill to get them to go where you want! During the winter months, *Indoor Bowls* is played on large felt mats. The balls are smaller and the green is shorter, but virtually all the other rules apply.

Car racing is another popular sport. Each year in April or May, there is a 6-day race called *Targa Tasmania* involving 200-300 cars. Competitors from all over Australia and other countries compete in a race that tours back roads throughout the state.

Australians truly appreciate their leisure time. They enjoy *going on holidays* (taking a vacation) when they get an opportunity. Some will drive great distances on their vacations, whether it be to the mountains or the beaches. Many people dream of taking a road trip around all the Australian continent, and will do so if they have a few months to spare. Ironically, Australians don't like to drive far to work—even a 15 minute drive is too long for some to bear!

As in America, Australia will provide Monday off for the observance of a holiday. Australia has been called “the land of the long weekend” because of the number of holidays they would have during a typical year. Some of the most important holidays are:

**Australia Day (January 26).** Corresponding to the American 4th of July, this holiday marks the arrival the First Fleet in 1788, at the settlement of what is now Sydney. It officially marks the first European settlement in the Great South Land.

**ANZAC Day (April 26).** This abbreviation stands for Australia New Zealand Army Corps, and the holiday commemorates the soldiers of World War I. The British had trained a host of Aussie soldiers in Egypt, then used them to attempt to overcome Turkish troops at Gallipoli (gu-LIP-uh-lee). The battle was an utter defeat, yet Australians honor the soldiers who gave the lives for their country.

**Good Friday/Easter Monday.** As in the U.S., Easter is an important holiday. But unlike the U.S., Good Friday is held in very high regard, with virtually everyone taking the day off and many churches holding special services. The day after Easter is called Easter Monday and is considered a public holiday. Most schools have off an entire week (or two) during the Easter holiday.

**Christmas.** It is important to note that Australia does not observe Halloween or Thanksgiving Day. But Christmas is a big season here, probably the most significant holiday of all. Christmas in Australia is very similar to Christmas in the United States. Children look forward to Santa Claus, guided by his reindeer, to bring their presents from the North Pole. They hang stockings up with hopes that it will be filled on Christmas morning. They get together with their families to exchange gifts and enjoy a big Christmas meal. Many churches in Australia have Christmas Day services, which are very short—usually only a half hour of Christmas carols and a brief message. The main difference between American and Australians Christmas concerns the kind of weather. You need to remember the fact that in the southern hemisphere, December, January and February is summertime! That means that Christmas in Australia is warm, sunny, and pleasant. There is no trace of snow or cold weather in December—in fact, it is one of the hottest months of the year. Because of this, kids like to imagine that Santa comes to their house in shorts, and t-shirt, and flip-flops! Why would he want to dress up warmly in the summer?

Christmas heralds the beginning of summer—the long awaited time of leisure and travel. Summer in Australia brings about major changes. Airline rates go up, many people travel, and many stores will adjust their hours or close down completely during January. Many churches downgrade to a bare minimum to cope with the number of people who will be away for the summer. This all comes to an end in early February when schools reopen and business is back to normal. But until then, Aussies will have fun while it lasts!



## Life in the Public Arena

### Shopping

Stores are generally open by 9am. But unlike America, most stores are closed by 5 or 6pm at latest, Monday through Thursday. Some stores will be open until 8 or 9pm on Friday evening. Shops which open Saturdays are usually closed by mid-afternoon. Many stores are closed on Sundays.

Most small towns in Tasmania still have a butcher shop, bakery, and *chemist* (pharmacy) but the supermarket trend seems to be taking hold quite well. The major supermarket chains, *Roelf Vos (or Purity)*, *Cole's*, *Tiger Superbarn* and *Value Plus*, carry virtually everything you would find in an American grocery store. One very noticeable difference is the wheels on the *trolleys* (shopping carts): all 4 of them are caster wheels, making them difficult to maneuver, especially on hilly parking lots. Also, you'll get your groceries packed in plastic bags; paper bags are never used here.

Convenience stores, fuel stations offering a range of most-needed items, have made their appearance here, but you will be hard pressed to find one open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

### Schools

Because summer falls during the months of December-February, the school year runs from mid-February through mid-December. There are three 2-week breaks throughout the school year (one being during Easter), with a short summer over Christmas and January. Grades 11 and 12 are optional years, often called college or *matric* (short for matriculation and pronounced ma-TRICK). Schooling after these years, which we would call college, is called *uni* (short for university). The familiar yellow-orange school bus is never seen in Tasmania, as most school bus routes are contracted out to bus companies.

Australians never refer to a grade by saying, for example, “seventh grade.” They always refer to it as “grade seven” or “year seven.”

Arithmetic or math is referred to as *maths*. Languages are taught in Tasmanian schools, but French and Spanish are not usually options. Instead, Indonesian and Japanese are among the languages taught, as well as German in some schools. Language classes are often designed to teach a little of several languages and would be called LOTE - Languages Other Than English.

### **Town Shows**

The larger towns of the state have show days, much like carnivals in the U.S. Businesses shut down, schools close, and people flock by the thousands to cash in on the entertainment.

A huge agricultural trade fair is *Agfest*, held each year in May and drawing thousands of spectators from all over Australia. Exhibits include the latest farm implements, livestock shows, and a huge craft exhibit. It is said to be Australia’s largest agricultural fair.

### **Emergency Services**

The local police, ambulance service, or fire *brigade* (department) can be contacted by dialing 000, not 911. There are no fire hydrants like the ones familiar to Americans. Instead, there is simply a metal box embedded in the *footpath* (sidewalk), with the lid painted yellow, in which a water valve is located. A yellow arrow in the street points to it.

### **Medical**

The medical world is a bit different from America. For one thing, Australia has a national health care system. This has its financial benefits but may require people to wait for several months to receive much-needed medical care. A family doctor is often referred to as a *G.P.* which stands for General Practitioner. A *doctor's surgery* may sound pretty serious, but it’s simply a

doctor's office where you would have a normal checkup. If you really need surgery, however, you would be wheeled into the surgical *theatre* of the hospital, which is the operating room.

### **Restaurants**

Tasmania has no shortage of restaurants, ranging from fast-food chains to fine dining. In Australia, you are almost never expected to pay a tip, although it would not be considered offensive to do so.

### **Clubs**

Akin to the American Legion and V.F.W is the *R.S.L.A.*, which stands for Returned Serviceman's League of Australia. The Lion's Club and Rotary Club are very active here, as is Christian Business Men Australia. Gambling is legal in Australia, albeit with restrictions. Tasmania has major casinos in Launceston and Hobart (Wrest Point), and many pubs now have slot machines or *pokies* where customers can spend a buck and try their luck.

### **The Pub**

No discussion of Tasmania would be complete without mentioning the pub. It is for many a place where like-minded people gather to talk, recreate, eat, or bury their problems in drink. The Australian pub, referred to as a *hotel*, provides accommodation and fine counter meals along with alcoholic drinks. If any commercial building exists in even the smallest rural town, it will surely be a hotel. It is often said jokingly that in Australia, a town isn't a town unless it has a pub! Beer, also known as *grog*, *slops*, or *suds*, is a basic Australian tradition, a part of the very fabric of society. *James Boag's* is the single most popular beer in the state, and advertisements for it can be seen virtually everywhere, along with others such as Victoria Bitter, Carlton Cold, and Foster's. There are drive-through bottle shops where people can literally drive their car in and pick up beer by the case.

## Religion and Church Life

One of the biggest differences in Australian and American heritage concerns religion. America was founded on Christian principles, and in many cases a refuge for those suffering religious persecution. Australia began as a penal colony where criminals were forced to spend the rest of their lives in isolation. This fact influences the religious temperature today. Religion is regarded as a private matter among most Australians, and a very large number of people in this country have never had any meaningful form of church involvement. Because Australia is a post-modern culture, non-believers have very little experience (and thus interest) in Christianity. Most churches are attended exclusively by believers, and it is not likely for a non-Christian to be in a church service. Statistics say that anywhere from 10-14% of the population is active in church, meaning that over 85% of Tasmanians are unchurched.

In spite of the low percentage of church attenders, there are quite a few religious groups and denominations in Tasmania. *Roman Catholics* are the largest religious group, with about 26% of the population claiming to be adherents. The *Anglican Church*, or *Church of England*, is known in America as the Episcopal Church. This denomination comprises about 25% of Australia's population, just behind the Catholics. Over half of the state's population is claimed by these two groups!

The *Uniting Church* was formed many years ago when most Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches decided to merge into one denomination. The *Brethren Church* is very common, and an individual church is usually called a *Gospel Hall*. Brethren churches generally do not have a pastor, but are governed by elders. Speakers from within the church and from other churches are invited to bring the message each week.

The first *Baptist* worship service in Australia took place in April 1831, and Baptist work began in Tasmania around the 1860s. At present, they make up less than two percent of the Australian population. The *Baptist Union of Tasmania* consists of 35 churches and fellowships, with a total of just over 2,200 members. In Australia, there are not numerous Baptist denominations as in the U.S.; for the most part churches either belong to the Baptist Union, or are independent.

In northern Tasmania, there is a group of Christians, about 150 in number, who gather for weekly meetings on Sunday afternoons. Their faith is based on the Bible but they refuse to systematize it into doctrines or creedal statements. They have no printed materials, no pastors, and don't even have a name for themselves! They simply gather each Sunday in a rented hall for singing (without instruments) and a message from the Bible. Every few weeks they move to another town.

Australian churches are typically small. Mainland churches average 70 in attendance, whereas Tasmanian churches average about 50. Very few exceed 500 in number, and a large church is very rare. *Hills Christian Life Centre* in Sydney is one notable exception. Their music ministry, *Hillsongs*, produces many original Christian songs and choruses which have become very popular among Australian churches, including *Power of Your Love* and *Shout to the Lord*.

Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Church, two pace-setting churches in North America, have had a tremendous impact on Australian church life among many denominations. These two churches, among others, have had a significant outreach to secular people who are basically turned off to the traditional church. Australian churches have capitalized on many of these principles by incorporating them into their ministries.

Religious expression is more accepted in Australian schools. Many schools permit people to come in and teach religious education in some form or other. A program called "*Christian Option*" is an optional class about Christianity taught for a week or two during the school year. Christian schools are found in many parts of the state. Unlike ones in America, Australian Christian schools can qualify to receive generous government grants for building programs and other projects.

While religion is not as popular or as widespread as it is in North America, it is openly expressed here at Christmastime. It is not at all unusual to see businesses with Bible verses and Bible scenes plastered across their windows, or religious displays inside. Even McDonald's in Devonport had a large manger scene on display next to the counter, in plain view by all, and apparently people do are not offended by such displays!

## “Odds & Sods” (Odds & Ends)

*Australia Post* is the name of the postal service here. When you want to *post* (mail) a letter to someone, be sure to include the *postcode* (zip code). Every city and town in Australia uses a 4 digit postcode. Tasmania's postcodes all start with 7.

People traveling to Australia might assume that since household current is different from the U.S. that batteries might be different as well. But batteries are the same: D-cells, C's, AA's, AAA's, 9-volt, and so on, with the same voltages as America. Most cars and trucks use 12-volt batteries.

At the end of company names you'll often see *Pty. Ltd.*, or just *P/L*. This stands for “*Propriety, Limited*” and is like saying, “Company, Incorporated.” It's based on the British system of business.

People refer to your first and last name as *Christian name* and *surname*. My *surname* is Armacost, and my *Christian name* is Ben. Common first names not often heard in U.S. include Kylie, Claire, Ian, Bronwyn, Peta, Kieran, and Graeme (pronounced much like Graham). A fairly popular man's name is Laurie, and there are probably as many males named Kim as there are females. The name Marie is pronounced MAH-ree, and Maria would be pronounced Mah-RYE-uh.

If you're wondering about household brand names, we have quite a few here. Australia's trade with the far east and the U.S. means that many brand names here will be familiar to Americans. Tool brands include Stanley, Ryobi, Makita, Black & Decker, and Hitachi. Then there's HPM (electrical parts), Sutton, and Frost, which are all Australian companies. Electronics include the familiar ones such as Philips, Teac, Yamaha, Roland, Panasonic, JVC, Sony, Hitachi, and Akai. Appliance brands are more localized and

would include Simpson, Linda, Fisher & Paykel (a New Zealand company), Tiffany, Kelvinator, Volta, and Hoover.

America uses letter and legal size paper. Australia conforms to the International Paper Size standard. *A4* is the most common paper size and is a little narrower and a little longer than American 8½ x 11 paper. *A3* is twice the size as *A4*, and *A5* is half the size, and so on.



## **Travel and Touring Information**

### **Calling Australia By Phone**

Australia's country code is 61. Keep in mind that when dialing phone numbers from outside Australia, you must drop the initial "0" in the area code. For example, to reach Trowunna Wildlife Park from the United States or Canada, you would dial 011-61-3-6363-6162.

### **Restrictions on Baggage**

Australia has strict import laws to prevent the introduction of diseases and pests. On international flights arriving to Australia, the flight attendants will issue a declaration card for each passenger. On this card you must declare certain categories of things, among them wooden items, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and anything that could potentially be a carrier of diseases or pests. As a precaution, the flight attendants may spray the plane prior to your arrival. Agents with *sniffer dogs* will meet you in the airport and will readily locate what you should not have! It is advisable that you be honest, not only because it is the right thing to do but also to protect this country from potential harm.

### **Visa Information**

For visits up to 6 months, only a valid passport is required for residents of the U.S. and Canada. Be sure to ask your travel agent about any specific needs concerning immigration to Australia.

For visits longer than 6 months, you will need to apply for a visa. Be sure to allow 3-6 months for this to be processed. To apply for a visa, contact the Australian Consulate nearest you.

### **Airlines**

Major airports are located in Hobart and Launceston. Virtually all international flights to Tasmania first stop at a mainland city, usually Sydney or Melbourne. Smaller airports are located in Devonport and Wynyard and are limited to small craft. Here are some of the major air carriers and their contact numbers:

**Qantas**

(800) 227-4500 (U.S.)

**Ansett Australia**

(800) 366-1300 (U.S.)

**Kendell Airlines** provide small craft service between Tasmanian and Victorian towns, and across the Bass Strait.

(03) 6424 1411

**Airlines of Tasmania** offers flights around the island.

(03) 6323 2320

**Wildlife Parks**

While it is likely you will see wildlife in Tasmania, you will be richly rewarded at close-up views of Tasmanian devils, wallabies, wombats, quolls, and many other creatures. These parks both house animals that have been orphaned or rescued from road accidents.

**Trowunna Wildlife Park**

Mole Creek, located 1 hour west of Launceston.

(03) 6363 6162

**Tasmanian Devil Park**

Taranna, located near Port Arthur.

(03) 6250 3230

## **Bushwalking Information**

Much of Tasmania is invisible to the casual motorist, so plan to do some bushwalking while you're visiting.

### **Wilderness Society**

130 Davey Street  
Hobart, TAS 7000  
(03) 6234 9366

### **Cradle Mountain/Lake St. Clair National Park**

One of Australia's most popular bushwalking sites. Consider taking the "Six Day Walk." Located 2 hours west of Launceston.  
(03) 6492 1133

### **Department of Environment and Land Management**

134 Macquarie Street  
Hobart, TAS 7000  
(03) 6233 3382

## **Tourist Attractions and Touring Agencies**

### **Port Arthur**

This is Tasmania's number one tourist attraction. Be sure to see the ruins of this famous convict settlement. Located about one hour east of Hobart.  
(03) 6250 2363

### **Australian Tourist Commission (U.S.)**

2121 Avenue of the Stars  
Suite 1200  
Los Angeles, CA 90067  
(213) 552-1988

**Australian Tourist Commission (Tasmania)**

Tasmanian Travel and Information Centre

20 Davey Street

Hobart, TAS 7000

(03) 6230 8233

**World Heritage Cruises**

Both this and the Gordon River Cruises give you a peek into the otherwise restricted World Heritage area via the Gordon River.

PO Box 93

Strahan, TAS 7468

(03) 6471 7174

(03) 6471 7431 (fax)

**Gordon River Cruises**

PO Box 40

Strahan, TAS 7468

(03) 6471 7187

(03) 6471 7317 (fax)

## **Books About Tasmania**

### ***The Tasmania Book***

Blacksnake Publishing Pty. Ltd.

Published annually, it includes a nature guide, a calendar of events, travel maps, points of interest, accommodation and restaurant guide, and lots more.

### ***For the Term of His Natural Life***

Marcus Clarke

Launceston: Tasmanian Book Company.

A novel based on actual historical accounts of convict life.

### ***The Men that Time Forgot***

Richard Butler

Hutchinson and Company Ltd.

Copyright by Richard Butler, 1975.

### ***And Wretches Hang***

Richard Butler

Melbourne: Hyland House

Copyright by Richard Butler, 1977.

### ***A Man and a Mountain: The Story of Gustav Weindorfer***

Margaret Giordano

Launceston: Regal Publications, 1987.

### ***The Splendour of Tasmania***

Roddy MacLean

Photography by Dennis Harding

Launceston: Tasmanian Book Company, 1993.

***Tasmania: The Beautiful Island***

Jennifer Pringle-Jones

Hobart: The Franklin Press, 1989.

***A Portrait of Tasmania***

Sharon Webb

Photography by Dennis Harding

Launceston: Tasmanian Book Company, 1995.

***Tasmania, A Place to Remember***

Michelle Dale

Photography by Dennis Harding

Erina Fair, NSW: Tasmanian Book Company, 1997.

***Tasmania***

Michael Cook

Crow's Nest, NSW: Little Hills Press, 1996.

***Explore Tasmania***

Ringwood, VIC: Penguin Books, 1997.

***Roaming Tasmania***

Launceston: Elphin Publishers.

***Beautiful Tasmania***

Heather Lethborg

Photography by Geoff Lethborg

Launceston: Elphin Publishers.

***A Tasmanian Wilderness Experience***

Dennis Harding

Erina Fair, NSW: Tasmanian Book Company, 1998.

***Wilderness Tasmania: The Untouched Land***

Dennis Harding

Michelle Dale

***For the Love of Tasmania***

Martin Gilmour

Photography by Owen Hughes

Launceston: Owen Hughes, 1985.

***Touring Tasmania***

Launceston: Elphin Publishers.

***Tasmania—A Guide***

Sally Farrell Odgers

Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1989.

***Tasmania: Walks, Wildlife and Wonderful Food***

Libby Buhrich

Alexandria, NSW: Millennium Books, 1995.

***A Short History of Tasmania***

Lloyd Robson

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

***Tasmania***

Joe Shemesh and Mike Bingham

Sydney: New Holland Publishers, 1998.

## Internet Web Sites

### **Focus on Tasmania**

A well-rounded and very informative site based in St. Helens.

[www.focusontas.net.au/np.html](http://www.focusontas.net.au/np.html)

### **Spirit of Tasmania**

Ferry service between Melbourne and Devonport.

[www.tt-line.com.au](http://www.tt-line.com.au)

### **About Australia**

[www.about-australia.com/about.htm](http://www.about-australia.com/about.htm)

### **Announce Australia**

[www.aaa.com.au](http://www.aaa.com.au)

### **Tasmania Online**

A listing of Tasmania-related web sites.

[www.tased.edu.au/tasonline](http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline)

### **Tasmanian Index**

[www.tassie.net.au/~amorris/tasmanidx.html](http://www.tassie.net.au/~amorris/tasmanidx.html)

### **Tourism Tasmania**

[www.tourism.tas.gov.au](http://www.tourism.tas.gov.au)



## Tasmania's Claims to Fame

- ✓ The oldest existing theater in Australia is the *Theatre Royal* in Hobart, built in 1836.
- ✓ The first game of golf played in Australia was played on the site of the Bothwell Golf Club in south central Tasmania.
- ✓ The Black war, fought from 1824 to 1831, was the only war ever fought on Tasmanian soil.
- ✓ In Richmond stands a beautiful sandstone bridge, the subject of many photos and paintings. Built in 1823, it is the oldest bridge still in use in Australia.
- ✓ Catagunya Dam is Australia's largest pre-stressed concrete dam. Standing 160 feet high, it is located on the Derwent River in south central Tasmania. Gordon Dam, an imposing 459 feet in height, is Australia's largest concrete arch dam and was once the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere.
- ✓ The Tasmanian freshwater crayfish is the world's largest freshwater crustacean.
- ✓ Macquarie Island—halfway between Tasmania and Antarctica—is the home of the world's largest penguin colony. Half a million Macaroni penguins spend 7 months breeding and molting on the south end of the island.
- ✓ Tasmania is the only place in the world where certain animals are found in the wild. Among these is the Tasmanian Devil. Live Tassie

devils are found in only about eight zoos in the world outside Australia.

- ✓ The world's largest botanical maze is *Tasmazia*, just outside Sheffield. It consists of 6 mazes grown from various types of shrubs.
- ✓ The Deloraine Craft Fair, held every November, is the largest craft exhibition in the southern hemisphere.
- ✓ Tasmania has many tree varieties which are found nowhere else in the world. The most famous of these is the *Huon pine*, which is also among the oldest living things in the world. Some have been dated as old as 2,300 years—thus already a substantially old tree by the time of the birth of Christ. It grows extremely slowly and yields an aromatic, oily timber which is virtually rot-proof. Because of this quality it was once used extensively in shipbuilding.
- ✓ The *swamp gum* reaches an impressive 280 feet in height, and is the largest hardwood tree in the world.
- ✓ David Foster, resident of Latrobe, holds the title of world champion axeman.
- ✓ Tasman Peninsula, the location of Port Arthur in Tasmania's southeast, has the highest sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere. Some of these cliffs approach 400 feet in height, dropping straight into the ocean.
- ✓ Calvin Christian School in Kingston was the first Christian school in Tasmania. The school opened in January 1962.

## **Feedback**

If you have read this book, please take a moment to send your comments to me via email: [tassiebear@vision.net.au](mailto:tassiebear@vision.net.au) I also appreciate any corrections or suggestions which may be considered for future editions of this book.

You can also find further information, photos, and current news about us at our website: [www.vision.net.au/~tassiebear](http://www.vision.net.au/~tassiebear)

Thank you for your responses, and may God bless you beyond measure!

- Ben -