



Where in the world are the Australian States?

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We here in America have a close affinity to Australia. We consider Australia an ally, a vacation destination, and soon to be the host of the 2000 Summer Olympics. But our knowledge of Australian history as reflected in stamps from this country seems limited to the concept that it was a penal colony for Great Britain. Well, Australia has a wonderfully rich history involving the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and, of course, British influences. This article will just skim over some of this history noting particularly the development of Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania---the Australian states that have issued postage stamps.

British presence in Australia was formalized when Captain Arthur Phillip on May 13, 1787 set sail from Portsmouth with the "First Fleet". This fleet was composed of 11 ships with 400 seamen and 759 convicts. Phillip arrived at Botany Bay in Australia on January 18, 1788. A settlement was soon established at Port Jackson on January 26, 1788, a day that would come to be known and celebrated as Australia Day. This settlement was named Sydney, for Great Britain's Home Secretary at the time. The territory granted to Phillip was huge covering half of the current continent of Australia. Penal colonies and settlements both prospered in the years that followed. The sending of convicts to New South Wales was abolished in 1850, and in 1852 to Van Dieman's Land. All told about 150,000 convicts were sent to these two colonies.

By the middle of the 19th Century free colonization had replaced the old penal settlements. The colonies of New South Wales (1770), Tasmania (1825), Western Australia (1829), South Australia (1834), Victoria (1851), and Queensland (1859) were established during this time.



New South Wales is the southeastern most state in the current country of Australia, roughly the size of California. New South Wales is the oldest colony in Australia and was named in 1770 by British explorer Captain James Cook. Mining is an important industry in New South Wales with mining products including gold, silver, coal, copper, tin, lead, zinc and cobalt being mined. Farming is also a main source of income in New South Wales, with 2/3rds of the colony covered with farms. Currently, New South Wales is highly urbanized, with over 3.7 million of its six million inhabitants living in Sydney. Philatelically, New South Wales began issuing its own stamps in 1850, and continued issuing stamps until 1907. All told 131 regular issue stamps were issued with varieties. This colony also issued two semi-postal stamps in 1897, four Registration stamps between 1856 and 1863, ten Postage Due stamps between 1891-1892 and 40 official stamps between 1879 and 1894. Stamps from this colony are very collectable and exhibit a variety of watermarks, paper, color and plate varieties for the collector.



Tasmania is an island off the southeastern coast of the current Australia. The island settlement of Van Dieman's Land; now Tasmania, was created as a separate colony in 1825 by an Executive Order of the British Government. The first European to visit this island was the Dutch

navigator Abel Tasman in 1642. Tasman named the island Van Dieman's Land, after the governor of the Netherlands Indies. Great Britain first claimed the island in 1788 and British convicts were the first European settlers in 1803. In 1825, after the arrival of some free settlers, Van Dieman's Land became a separate colony. In 1856, the name Tasmania was adopted. This state encompasses the island of Tasmania, many nearby small islands and the sub-arctic island of Macquarie. Currently, Tasmania has a diversified economy including mining (copper, iron, lead, tin, tungsten, zinc, gold, silver and coal) dairy products, sheep fruits and vegetables. Between 1855 and 1857 a series of 13 stamps plus varieties were issued for Van Dieman's Land. In 1858 these stamps were replaced with stamps with the name Tasmania on them. Between 1858 and 1912, a total of 117 face different stamps were issued by Tasmania with a multitude of varieties.



Western Australia, as the name implies, is a colony in Western Australia. This is currently the largest state in Australia, occupying about a third of this continent. Except for a fertile crescent on the southwestern coast, called Swanland, this colony/state is a large sandy, dry plateau with little vegetation. Western Australia is the most sparsely settled region in the world. Perth is the current capital city. Kalgoorlie, in the interior, is a center for gold mining in the region. Further north, the Kimberley region has one of the world's largest diamond mines. Western Australia began issuing stamps in 1854 and continued issuing stamps until 1912. During this period of time a total of 103 face different stamps were issued by Western Australia. The vast majority of the stamps issued by this colony depict a swan.

South Australia is a colony/state located in south central Australia. South Australia became a colony in 1836. Much of the terrain of South Australia is barren arid wasteland. Adelaide is South Australia's capital



and largest city. Industries in South Australia include the smelting of lead and silver, the quarrying of marble and granite and the mining of iron and coal. The state also contains large reserves of uranium. Between 1855 and 1912 South Australia issued 157 different stamps with varieties. Between 1868 and 1903 85 different official stamps were also issued many by overprinting regular issue stamps with the letters “O.S.” (Official Service) in a variety of formats and varieties.



Victoria became a Crown colony in 1851. This colony between 1836 and 1851 was part of New South Wales. The colony became self-governing in 1855. Victoria is located in the extreme southeastern part of Australia. The capital and largest city of Victoria is Melbourne. The mountains in Victoria are rich in minerals. Gold was found here in 1851 caused one of several gold rushes in Australia. More recently the mining of lignite (brown coal), petroleum and natural gas have achieved importance. The Gippsland region has the world’s largest deposits of brown coal. Other industries include farming, cattle/sheep/pig raising, dairy, fabricated metal products and textiles. Victoria began issuing stamps in 1850 and continued until 1912. During this time this colony was prolific in its production of stamps, issuing 232 regular issue, 21 postal-fiscal, four semi-postal, one late fee, and 28 postage due stamps. The vast majority of these issues prominently display a portrait of the then current British monarch

Queensland is located in northeastern Australia. The Great Barrier Reef shelters much of the eastern coast of Queensland. One of the



principal cities of Queensland is Brisbane. The first settlement in Queensland was a convict colony established in 1824. Early in the 1840s free settlers began to arrive. In 1859, Queensland was recognized as a separate colony; it was created from the existing colony of New South Wales. Farming and agriculture were initially important industries to this colony. Now, in addition to these industries, minerals, tourism, machinery, ships, cement and basic consumer goods have all become important industries. Queensland began issuing stamps in 1860 and continued until 1909. During this period a total of 144 different regular issue stamps, with varieties, carried mail. Sets of two semi-postal stamps were issued in 1900 and a set of three registration stamps issued between 1861 and 1864.

As early as 1847 there was much discussion about unification of the colonies. A conference in Sydney in 1891 laid the groundwork for a constitutional convention. Eventually all six colonies agreed and approved the formation of a national government, with a federal constitution, and parliamentary government. The Commonwealth of Australia was approved by the British Parliament in 1900 and became a reality on January 1, 1901. Neither Sydney nor Melbourne was deemed to be acceptable as the national capital, so in 1911 the Australian Capital Territory was established for a new capital, Canberra.

The Commonwealth of Australia is now made up of six states, namely: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australian, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia and two territories the Australian Capital District (similar to the District of Columbia in the United States) and the Northern Territory. External dependencies of Australia include: the Territory of the Ashmore and Cartier Islands, the Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Island, the Territory of the Cocos Islands (Keeling Islands), the Coral Sea Islands Territory, the Territory of Heard Island and MacDonal Islands and Norfolk Island. The

Commonwealth of Australia began issuing stamps in 1913 and has maintained its stamp issuing status into the current day. To this day Australia and the Australian States provide the stamp collector with much variety and opportunities for specialization. So.... now you know where in the world the Australian States of New South Wales, Tasmania , Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria , and Queensland are located!

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