



## REGIONS

**Australia**

**New Zealand**

### IN THIS CHAPTER

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  - ◆ Australia's Asian turn
- ◆ China covets Australian commodities
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The Austral Realm is geographically unique (Fig. 11-1). It is the only realm that lies entirely in the Southern Hemisphere. It is also the only one that has no land link of any kind to a neighboring realm and is thus completely surrounded by ocean and sea. It is second only to the Pacific as the world's least populous realm. Appropriately, its name refers to its location (the word **austral** [1] comes from the Latin for "south")—a location far from the sources of its dominant cultural heritage, but close to its newfound economic partners on the Asian Pacific Rim.

## ● DEFINING THE REALM

Two countries constitute the Austral Realm: Australia, in every way the dominant one, and New Zealand, physiographically more varied but demographically much smaller than its giant partner (Fig. 11-2). Between them lies the Tasman Sea. To the west lies the Indian Ocean, to the east the Pacific, and to the south the frigid Southern Ocean.

This southern realm is at a crossroads. On the doorstep of populous eastern Asia, its Anglo-European legacies are now infused by many other cultural strains. Polynesian Maori in New Zealand and Aboriginal communities in Australia are demanding greater rights and more acknowledgment of their cultural heritage. Pacific Rim markets are buying growing quantities of raw materials. Chinese and other Asian tourists fill hotels and resorts. The streets of Sydney and Melbourne display a multicultural panorama unimaginable just two generations ago. All these changes have stirred political debate. Issues ranging from immigration quotas to indigenous land rights dominate, exposing social fault lines (city versus Outback in Australia; North Island versus South Island in New Zealand). Aborigines and Maori first settled



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## major geographic qualities of

# THE AUSTRAL REALM

1. Australia and New Zealand constitute a geographic realm by virtue of territorial dimensions, relative location, and dominant cultural landscape.
2. Despite their inclusion in a single geographic realm, Australia and New Zealand differ physiographically. Australia has a vast, dry, low-relief interior; New Zealand is mountainous and has a temperate climate.
3. Australia and New Zealand are marked by peripheral development—Australia because of its aridity, New Zealand because of its topography.
4. The populations of Australia and New Zealand are not only peripherally distributed but also highly clustered in urban centers.
5. The economic geography of Australia and New Zealand is dominated by the export of livestock products and specialty goods such as wine. Australia also has significant wheat production and a rich, diverse base of mineral resources.
6. Australia and New Zealand are now integrated into the economic framework of the Asian Pacific Rim, principally as suppliers of raw materials. Mineral-rich Australia's newly discovered and exploited gas reserves are adding to its export base.
7. As a result of heightened immigration with respect to the western Pacific Rim, Australia in a cultural sense is "returning" to Asia.

this realm, then the Europeans arrived, and now Asians are an increasingly significant economic and cultural element.

## LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

Physiographic contrasts between massive, compact Australia and elongated, fragmented New Zealand are related to their locations with respect to the Earth's tectonic plates (see Fig. G-4). Australia, with some of the geologically most ancient rocks on the planet, lies at the center of its

own plate, the Australian Plate. New Zealand, younger and less stable, lies at the convulsive convergence of the Australian and Pacific plates. Earthquakes are rare in Australia, and volcanic eruptions are unknown; New Zealand has plenty of both (the big Christchurch quakes of 2010–2011 have only been the latest reminder). This locational contrast is also reflected by differences in relief (Fig. 11-1). Australia's highest relief occurs in what Australians call the Great Dividing Range, the mountains that line the east coast from the Cape York Peninsula in the north to southern

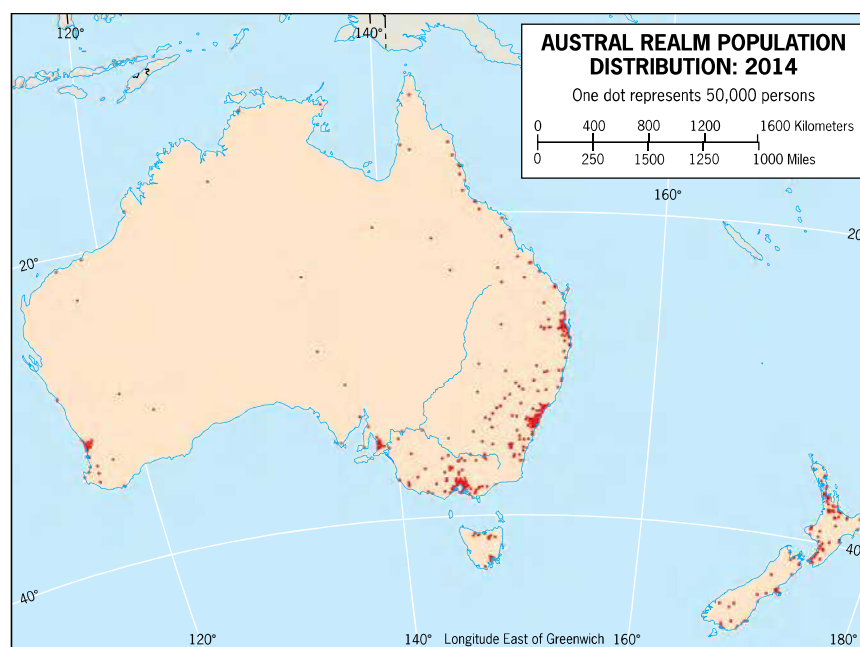


FIGURE 11-2





FIGURE 11-3

Victoria State, with an outlier in Tasmania. The highest point along these old, now eroding mountains is Mount Kosciuszko, 2230 meters (7316 ft) tall. In New Zealand, entire ranges are higher—Mount Cook in the Southern Alps, for example, reaches 3754 meters (12,316 ft). West of Australia's Great Dividing Range, the physical landscape mostly exhibits low relief, with some local exceptions such as the Macdonnell Ranges near the continental center; plateaus and plains dominate (Figs. 11-1; 11-3, top map). The Great Artesian Basin is a key physiographic region, providing underground water sources in what is otherwise desert country. To its south lies the continent's predominant Murray-Darling river system. The area mapped as *Western Plateau and Margins* in the lower map of Figure 11-3 contains much of Australia's mineral wealth.

### Climates

Figure G-7 reveals the effects of latitudinal position and interior isolation on Australia's climatology. In this respect, Australia is far more varied than New Zealand, its climates ranging from tropical in the far north, where rainforests flourish, to Mediterranean in two corners of the south. The interior is dominated by desert and steppe conditions, the semiarid steppes providing the grasslands that sustain tens of millions of livestock. Only in the extreme east does Australia possess a zone of humid temperate climate, and here lies most of the country's core area. New Zealand, by contrast, is totally under the influence of the Southern and Pacific oceans, creating moderate, moist conditions, temperate in the north and progressively colder in the south.

### The Southern Ocean

Twice now we have referred to the **Southern Ocean** [2], but try to find this ocean on maps and globes produced by such well-known cartographic organizations as the National Geographic Society. From their maps you would conclude that the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans reach all the way to the shores of Antarctica. Australians and New Zealanders know better. They experience the frigid waters and persistent winds of this great weather-maker on a daily basis.

For us geographers, it is a good exercise to turn the globe upside down now and then. After all, the usual orientation is quite arbitrary. Modern mapmaking started in the Northern Hemisphere, and the cartographers put their hemisphere on top and the other at the bottom. That is now the norm, and it can distort our view of the world. In bookstores in the Southern Hemisphere, you see upside-down maps showing Australia and Argentina at the top, and Europe and Canada at the bottom. But this matter has a serious side. An inverted view of the globe shows us how vast the ocean encircling Antarctica is (see Fig. 12-4). The Southern Ocean may be remote, but its existence is real.

Where do the northward limits of the Southern Ocean lie? This ocean is bounded not by land but by a marine transition called the **Subtropical Convergence** [3]. Here the very cold, extremely dense waters of the Southern Ocean meet the

warmer waters of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. It is quite sharply defined by changes in temperature, chemistry, salinity, and marine fauna. Flying over it, you can actually observe it in the changing colors of the water: the Antarctic side is a deep gray, the northern side a greenish blue.

Although the Subtropical Convergence shifts seasonally, its position does not vary far from latitude 40° South, which also is the approximate northern limit of Antarctic icebergs. Defined this way, the great Southern Ocean is a huge body of water that circulates clockwise (from west to east) around Antarctica, which is why we also call it the **West Wind Drift** [4].

### Biogeography

One of this realm's defining characteristics is its wildlife. Australia is the land of kangaroos and koalas, wallabies and wombats, possums and platypuses. These and numerous other *marsupials* (animals whose young are born very early in their development and then are carried in an abdominal pouch) owe their survival to Australia's early isolation during the breakup of Gondwana (see Fig. 6A-3). Before more advanced mammals could enter Australia and replace the marsupials, as happened in every other part of the world, this landmass was separated from Antarctica and India, and today it contains the world's largest assemblage of marsupial fauna. Australia's vegetation has distinctive qualities as well, notably the hundreds of species of eucalyptus trees native to this geographic realm. The study of fauna and flora in spatial perspective integrates the disciplines of biology and geography in a field known as **biogeography** [5], and Australia is a gigantic laboratory for biogeographers.

Biogeographers are especially interested in the distribution of plant and animal species, as well as in the relationships between plant and animal communities and their natural environments. (The study of plant life is called *phytogeography*; the study of animal life is called *zoogeography*.) In 1876, one of the founders of biogeography, Alfred Russel Wallace, posited that the zoogeographic boundary of Australia's fauna was located beyond Australia in the Sunda island chain to the northwest, between Borneo and Sulawesi, and just east of Bali (Fig. 11-4).

**Wallace's Line** [6] soon was challenged by other researchers, who found species Wallace had missed and who visited islands Wallace had not. There was no question that Australia's zoogeographic realm terminated somewhere in Indonesia's Sunda archipelago, but where? Western Indonesia was the habitat of nonmarsupial animals such as tigers, rhinoceroses, and elephants in addition to primates; New Guinea clearly was part of the realm of the marsupials. How far had the more advanced mammals progressed eastward along the island stepping stones toward New Guinea? The zoogeographer Max Weber found evidence that led him to postulate his own **Weber's Line**, which, as Figure 11-4 shows, lay very close to New Guinea.

In Australia, the arrival of the **Aboriginal population** [7] about 50,000 years ago appears to have triggered an

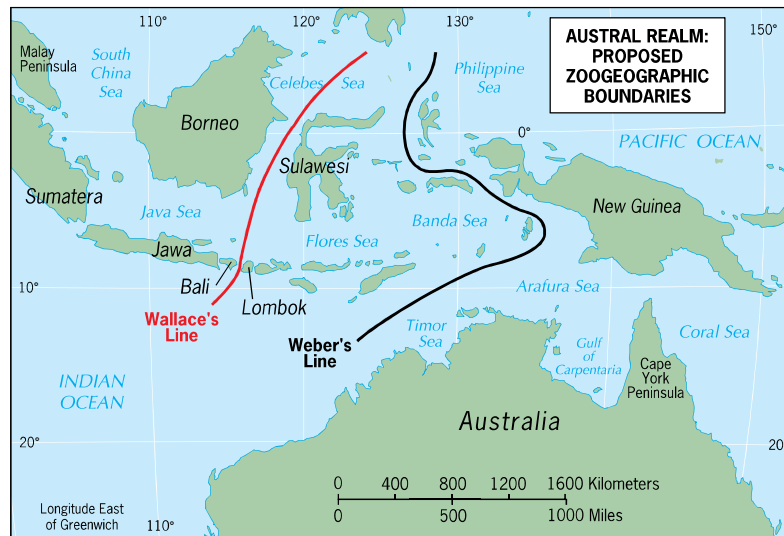


FIGURE 11-4

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ecosystem collapse. Widespread burning of the existing forest, shrub, and grassland vegetation all across Australia probably led to the spread of desert scrub and to the rapid extinction of most of the continent's large mammals soon after the human invasion occurred. The species that survived faced a second crisis much later when European colonizers introduced their livestock, leading to the further destruction of remaining wildlife habitats. Survivors include marsupials such as the koala bear and the wombat, but the list of extinctions is much longer.

## ● REGIONS OF THE REALM

Australia is the predominant component of the Austral Realm, a continent-scale country in a size category that also includes China, Canada, the United States, and Brazil. For



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## ○ MAJOR CITIES OF THE REALM

City	Population* (in millions)
Sydney, Australia	4.8
Melbourne, Australia	4.2
Brisbane, Australia	2.2
Perth, Australia	1.8
Auckland, New Zealand	1.6
Adelaide, Australia	1.3
Canberra, Australia	0.4
Wellington, New Zealand	0.4

\*Based on 2014 estimates.

two reasons, however, Australia has fewer regional divisions than do the aforementioned countries: the comparatively uncomplicated physiography of Australia and its diminutive human numbers. Our discussion, therefore, uses the core-periphery concept as a basis for investigating Australia and focuses on New Zealand as a region by itself.

## ■ AUSTRALIA

Positioned on the Pacific Rim, almost as large as the 48 contiguous U.S. States, well endowed with farmlands and vast pastures, rivers, groundwater supplies, mineral deposits, and energy resources, served by good natural harbors,

The breathtakingly beautiful Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Queensland in northeastern Australia (Fig. 11-3, top map). This is the largest coral reef on the planet, sometimes described as the only living thing on Earth that is visible from space. It was designated a World Heritage Site in 1981, and most of it now lies within Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Not surprisingly, it ranks as one of the world's most prominent ecotourism destinations.



and populated by 23.1 million mostly well-educated people, Australia is one of the most geographically fortunate countries in the world.

### Historical Geography

From the late eighteenth century onward, the Europeanization of Australia doomed the continent's Aboriginal societies. The first to suffer were those situated in the path of British settlement on the coasts, where penal colonies and

free towns were founded. Distance protected the Aboriginal communities of the northern interior longer than elsewhere; but in Tasmania, the indigenous Australians died off in just decades after having lived there for perhaps 45,000 years.

### The Seven Colonies

Eventually, the major coastal settlements became the centers of seven different colonies, each with its own hinterland; by 1861, Australia was delimited by its now-familiar pattern of straight-line boundaries (Fig. 11-5). Sydney was



FIGURE 11-5

the focus for New South Wales; Melbourne, Sydney's rival, anchored Victoria. Adelaide was the heart of South Australia, and Perth lay at the core of Western Australia. The largest clusters of surviving Aboriginal people were located in the so-called Northern Territory, with Darwin, on Australia's tropical north coast, its colonial city.

### Successful Federation

On January 1, 1901, following years of difficult negotiations, the Australia we know today finally emerged: the Commonwealth of Australia, consisting of six States and two Federal Territories (Fig. 11-5). The two Federal Territories are the *Northern Territory*, assigned to protect the interests of the substantial Aboriginal population concentrated there and agitating for statehood, and the *Australian Capital Territory*, carved from southern New South Wales to accommodate the federal capital of Canberra that was completed in 1927.

Australia's six States—as shown in Table 11-1—are New South Wales (capital Sydney), at 7.4 million the most populous and politically powerful; Queensland (Brisbane), with the Great Barrier Reef offshore and tropical rainforests in its north; Victoria (Melbourne), small but populous by Australian standards with 5.7 million residents; South Australia (Adelaide), where the Murray-Darling river system reaches the sea; Western Australia (Perth) with barely more than 2.5 million people in an area of more than 2.5 million square kilometers (nearly 1 million sq mi); and Tasmania (Hobart), the island across the Bass Strait from the mainland's southeastern corner that lies in the path of Southern Ocean storms.

In earlier chapters, we referred to the concept of federalism, which is a form of politico-territorial organization. The word “federal” comes from the Latin *foederis*, implying alliance and coexistence, a union of consensus and common interest—a **federation** [8]. It stands in contrast to the idea of centralized or **unitary states** [9]. For this, too, the ancient Romans devised a term: *unitas*, meaning “unity.” Most of Europe's states are unitary, including the United Kingdom. Although most Australians came from that tra-

dition, they managed to overcome their differences and forge a Commonwealth that was, in effect, a federation of States with different viewpoints, economies, and objectives, separated by enormous distances along the rim of a remote island continent.

### Sharing the Bounty

Despite the country's good fortunes, not everyone in Australia adequately shares in the national wealth. The indigenous (Aboriginal) population, although a small minority today of just over 600,000, remains disproportionately disadvantaged in almost every way, from lower life expectancies to higher unemployment levels than average, from lower high school graduation rates to much higher imprisonment ratios. But the nation is now embarked on a campaign to address these ills, with a formal apology issued by the government in 2008; its conciliatory actions range from enhanced social services for Aboriginals to favorable court decisions in support of Aboriginal land claims. Nonetheless, Australia today ranks twelfth among the world's countries in GDP, and for the vast majority of Australians life is quite comfortable. In terms of key development indicators, Australia is far ahead of all its western Pacific Rim competitors except Japan and Singapore.

### Distance

Australians often talk about distance. One of their leading historians, Geoffrey Blainey, labeled it a tyranny—an imposed remoteness from without and a divisive part of life within. Even today, Australia is far from nearly everywhere on Earth. A trans-Pacific jet flight from Los Angeles to Sydney takes about 14 hours nonstop and is correspondingly expensive. Freighters carrying products to European markets take ten days to two weeks to get there. Inside Australia, distances also are of continental proportions, and Australians pay the price—literally. Until some upstart private airlines started a price war, Australians paid more per mile for their domestic flights than air passengers anywhere else in the world.

**TABLE 11-1**  
**States and Territories of Federal Australia, 2014**

State	Area (1000 sq km [1000 sq mi])	Population (millions)	Capital	Population (millions)
New South Wales	801.6 (309.5)	7.4	Sydney	4.8
Queensland	1727.3 (666.9)	4.7	Brisbane	2.2
South Australia	983.9 (379.9)	1.7	Adelaide	1.3
Tasmania	67.9 (26.2)	0.5	Hobart	0.2
Victoria	227.7 (87.9)	5.7	Melbourne	4.2
Western Australia	2525.5 (975.1)	2.5	Perth	1.8
<b>Territory</b>				
Australian Capital Territory	2.3 (0.9)	0.4	Canberra	0.4
Northern Territory	1346.3 (519.8)	0.2	Darwin	0.1

But distance also was an ally, permitting Australians to ignore the obvious. Australia was a British progeny, a European outpost. Once you had arrived as an immigrant from Britain or Ireland, there were a wide range of environments, magnificent scenery, vast open spaces, and seemingly limitless opportunities. When the Japanese Empire expanded, Australia's remoteness saved the day. When boat people by the hundreds of thousands fled Vietnam in the mid-1970s aftermath of the Indochina War, almost none reached Australian shores. When immigration became an issue, its self-perceived comforts of isolation led Australia to adopt an all-white admission policy (officially terminated only as recently as 1976) that was out of step with most of the rest of the world.

### Immigrants

Today Australia is changing and rapidly so. Immigration policy now focuses on the would-be immigrants' qualifications, skills, financial status, age, and facility with the English language. With regard to skills, high-technology specialists, financial experts, and medical personnel are particularly welcome. Relatives of earlier immigrants, as well as a quota of genuine asylum-seekers, are admitted as well. In recent years, immigration has averaged between 140,000 and 200,000 annually, which keeps Australia's population growing because its (declining) natural rate of increase is only 0.7 percent.

Indeed, the country is fast becoming a truly multicultural society. In Sydney, one in five residents is now of Asian ancestry. Overall, no less than a quarter of Australia's population is foreign-born, and another quarter consists of first-generation Australians.

### Core and Periphery

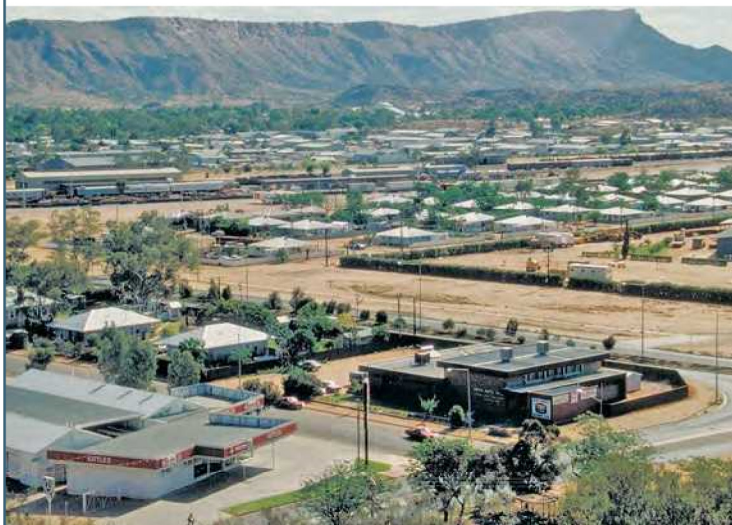
As Figure 11-2 shows, Australia is a large landmass, but its population is almost entirely concentrated in a (discontinuous) core area that lies in the east and southeast, most of which faces the Pacific Ocean (locally named the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand). Figure 11-5 shows that this crescent-shaped Australian heartland extends from north of the city of Brisbane to the vicinity of Adelaide and includes the largest city, Sydney; the capital, Canberra; and the second-largest city, Melbourne. A secondary core area has developed in the far southwest, centered on Perth. Beyond lies the vast periphery, which the Australians call the **Outback** [10] (see *Field Note*).

To better understand the evolution of this spatial arrangement, it helps to refer again to the map of world climates (Fig. G-7). Environmentally, Australia's most favored strips face the Pacific and Southern oceans, and they are not large. We can describe the country as a coastal rimland with cities, towns, farms, and forested slopes giving way to the vast, arid, interior Outback. On the western flanks of the



## From the Field Notes . . .

"My most vivid memory from my first visit to Alice Springs in the heart of the Outback is spotting vineyards and a winery in this parched, desert environment as the plane approached the airport. I asked a taxi driver to take me there, and got a lesson in economic geography. Drip irrigation from an underground water supply made viticulture possible; the tourist



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industry made it profitable. None of this, however, is evident from the view seen here: a spur of the Macdonnell Ranges overlooks a town of bare essentials under the hot sun of the Australian desert. What Alice Springs has is centrality: it is the largest settlement in a vast area Australians often call "the centre." Not far from the midpoint on the nearly 3200-kilometer (2000-mi) Stuart Highway from Darwin on the Northern Territory's north coast to Adelaide on the Southern Ocean, Alice Springs also was the northern terminus of the Central Australian Railway (before it was extended north to Darwin in 2003), seen in the middle distance. The shipping of cattle and minerals is a major industry here. You need a sense of humor to live here, and the locals have it: the town actually lies on a river, the intermittent Todd River. An annual boat race is held, and in the absence of water the racers carry their boats along the dry river bed. No exploration of Alice Springs would be complete without a visit to the base of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which brings medical help to outlying villages and homesteads."

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## AMONG THE REALM'S GREAT CITIES . . .

**MORE THAN TWO** centuries ago, Sydney was founded by Captain Arthur Phillip as a British outpost on one of the world's most magnificent natural harbors. The free town and penal colony that struggled to survive evolved into Australia's largest city. Today, metropolitan Sydney (4.8 million) is home to more than one-fifth of the country's total population. An early start, the safe harbor, fertile nearby farmlands, and productive pastures in its hinterland combined to propel Sydney's growth. Later, as road and railroad links made Sydney the focus of Australia's growing core area, industrial development and political power augmented its primacy.

With its incomparable setting and mild sunny climate, its many urban beaches, and its easy reach to the cool Blue Mountains of the Great Dividing Range, Sydney is one of the world's most liveable cities. Good public transportation (including an extensive cross-harbor ferry system from the doorstep of the waterfront CBD), fine cultural facilities headed by the multi-theatre Opera House complex, and many public parks and other recreational facilities make Sydney highly attractive to visitors as well (see chapter-opening photos). A healthy tourist trade, much of it from East Asian countries, bolsters the city's economy. Sydney's hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games was further testimony to its rising global visibility.

Increasingly, Sydney is evolving as a multicultural city. Its small Aboriginal sector is being overwhelmed by the arrival of large numbers of Asian immigrants. The Sydney suburb of Cabramatta symbolizes the impact: nearly 75 percent of its more than 23,000 residents were born elsewhere, at least a third of them in Vietnam. Unemployment is high, drug

Great Dividing Range lie the extensive grassland pastures that catapulted Australia into its first commercial age—and on which still graze one of the largest sheep herds in the world (about 76 million sheep, producing over 40 percent of all the apparel wool sold in the world). Where it is moister, to the north and east, cattle by the millions graze on ranchlands. This is frontier Australia, over which livestock have ranged for nearly two centuries.

### An Urban Culture

Despite the vast open spaces and romantic notions of frontier and Outback, Australia is an urban country, with 82 percent of all Australians living in cities and towns. On the map, Australia's economic spatial organization is similar to Japan's: large cities lie along the coast, the centers of manufacturing complexes as well as the foci of agricultural areas. Contributing to this situation in Japan was mountainous topography; in Australia it was the arid interior. There, however, the similarity ends. Australia's territory is 20 times larger than Japan's, and Japan's population is more than five times that of Australia's.



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use is a problem, and crime and gang violence persist. Yet, despite the deviant behavior of a small minority, tens of thousands of Asian immigrants have established themselves in some profession (as the photo and caption suggest).

These developments herald Sydney's coming of age. The end of Australia's isolation has brought Asia across the country's threshold, and again the leading metropolis is showing the way.

Japanese port cities are built to receive raw materials and to export finished products. Australian cities forward minerals and farm products from the Outback to foreign markets and import manufactures from overseas.

Distances in Australia are much greater, and spatial interaction (which tends to decline with increasing distance) is reduced. In comparatively small, tightly organized Japan, you can travel from one end of the country to the other on superhighways, through tunnels, and over bridges with the utmost speed and efficiency. In Australia, the overland trip from Sydney to Perth, or from Darwin to Adelaide (using the railroad link via Alice Springs), is time consuming and slow. Nothing in Australia compares to Japan's high-speed bullet trains.

### The Cities

For all its vastness and youth, Australia has developed a remarkable cultural identity, a sameness of urban and rural landscapes that persists from one end of the continent to the other. Sydney, often called the New York of Australia, lies on a spectacular estuarine site, its compact, high-rise central



© Robert Francis/Alamy

The name Cabramatta conjures up varied reactions among Australians. During the 1950s and 1960s, many immigrants from southern Europe settled in this western suburb of Sydney, attracted by affordable housing. In the 1970s and 1980s, Southeast Asians arrived here in large numbers, and during this period Cabramatta, in the eyes of many, became synonymous with gang violence and drug dealing. More recently, however, Cabramatta's ethnic diversity has come to be viewed in a more favorable light, and it is now seen as the "multicultural capital of Australia," a tourist attraction and proof of Australia's capacity to accommodate non-Europeans. Meanwhile, Cabramatta has been spruced up with Oriental motifs of various kinds. This "Freedom Gate" in the Vietnamese community is flanked by a Ming horse and a replica of a Forbidden City lion—all reflecting better times for an old gateway for immigrants as well as refugees.

business district overlooking a port bustling with ferry and freighter traffic. Sydney is a vast, sprawling metropolis of 4.8 million, with multiple outlying centers dominating its far-flung suburban ring; brash modernity and reserved British

ways somehow blend here. Melbourne (4.2 million), sometimes regarded as the Boston of Australia, prides itself on its more interesting architecture and more cultured ways. Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, which also anchors Australia's Gold Coast and adjoins the Great Barrier Reef, is the Miami of Australia; unlike Miami, however, its residents can find nearby relief from the summer heat in the mountains of its immediate hinterland (as well as at its beaches). Perth (*Field Note* photo), Australia's San Diego, is separated from its nearest Australian neighbor by two-thirds of a continent and from Southeast Asia and Africa by thousands of kilometers of ocean—but due to the ever-expanding mining activities of Western Australia it is increasingly drawn into the global economy.

And yet, each of these cities—as well as the capitals of South Australia (Adelaide), Tasmania (Hobart), and, to a lesser extent, the Northern Territory (Darwin)—exhibits an Australian character of unmistakable quality. Life is both orderly and unhurried. Streets are clean, slums are uncommon, graffiti rarely seen. By American and even European standards, violent crime (although rising) is uncommon. Standards of public transport, city schools, and health-care provision are high. Spacious parks, pleasing waterfronts, and plentiful sunshine make Australia's urban life more acceptable than just about anywhere else on Earth.

## Economic Geography

### Agricultural Abundance

Australia's initial prosperity was achieved in the mines and on the farms, not in the cities. Australia has material assets



## From the Field Notes . . .



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"Throughout Australia, summer weather in 2012 has been abnormal, and so it is today here in Perth on February 16th. People are wearing sweaters and jackets as a pall of smoke from nearby forest fires obscures the sun. Here on a hillside in King's Park, from where the view over the city is spectacular on a clear day (inset photo), are some historic markers, and this one gives pause: a simple but moving monument (second structure from the right) to commemorate the citizens of Perth who died in the Bali terrorist attack on October 12, 2002, including one who died of his injuries three years later. Look at Figure 11-1, and you can see why Bali is such a popular tourist destination for locals: Perth lies closer to this Indonesian island than any other major Australian city."

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of which other countries on the Pacific Rim can only dream. In agriculture, sheep raising was the earliest commercial venture, but it was the technology of refrigeration that brought world markets within reach of Australian beef producers. Wool, meat, and wheat have long been the country's big three income earners; Figure 11-6 displays the immense pastures in the east, north, and west that constitute the ranges of Aus-

tralia's huge herds. The zone of commercial grain farming forms a broad crescent extending from northeastern New South Wales through Victoria into South Australia, with a major outlier covering much of the hinterland of Perth.

And keep in mind the scale of this map: Australia is only slightly smaller than the 48 contiguous States of the United States. Commercial grain farming in Australia is big



FIGURE 11-6





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About 320 kilometers (200 mi) south-southeast of Port Hedland in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, Mount Whaleback near the town of Newman is one of the world's leading sources of high-grade iron ore. China's insatiable demand for this ore has generated the planet's largest "open-cut" iron mine, a huge and growing gash in the natural landscape—just one such impact resulting from Australia's role as raw-material supplier to industrializing economies.

business. As the climate map (Fig. G-7) would suggest, sugarcane grows along most of the humid, subtropical, coastal-lowland strip of Queensland, and Mediterranean crops (including grapes for Australia's highly successful wine industry) cluster in the hinterlands of Adelaide and Perth. Mixed horticulture concentrates in the Murray River Basin, including rice, grapes, and citrus fruits, all under irrigation. In addition, as elsewhere in the world, dairying has developed near the large metropolitan areas. With its considerable range of environments, Australia yields a great diversity of crops.

### Mineral Wealth

Australia's mineral resources, as Figure 11-6 shows, also are diverse. Major gold discoveries in Victoria and New South Wales produced a ten-year gold rush starting in 1851 and ushered in a new economic era. By the middle years of that decade, Australia was producing 40 percent of the world's gold. Subsequently, the search for more gold led to the discoveries of additional minerals. New finds are still being made today, and even oil and natural gas have been found both inland and offshore (see the symbols in Fig. 11-6 in the Bass Strait between Tasmania and the mainland, and off the northwestern coast of the continent). The energy boom is transforming Australia's northernmost city of Darwin, which faces the fossil-fuel riches of the Timor Sea; offshore natural gas is processed here, converting it into liquid natural gas (LNG) for export to East and Southeast Asia. Similar developments are occurring in the central Queensland port town

of Gladstone on Australia's east coast; there an expanding processing-plant complex produces LNG from piped-in coal-seam gas, which is extracted with new technologies from coal deposits in interior Queensland's Bowen and Surat Basins (Fig. 11-6). But environmental groups are increasingly opposed because the new hydraulic fracturing techniques threaten the State's agricultural resources; moreover, Gladstone's coastal facilities lie within the supposedly protected confines of the Great Barrier Reef.

Coal itself is mined at numerous locations, notably in the east near Sydney and Brisbane, in Western Australia, and in Tasmania (before coal prices fell this was an especially valuable export). Substantial deposits of metallic

and nonmetallic minerals abound—from the complex at Broken Hill and the mix of minerals at Mount Isa to the huge nickel deposits at Kalgoorlie and Kambalda, the copper of Tasmania, the tungsten and bauxite of northern Queensland, and the asbestos of Western Australia. A closer look at the map reveals the wide distribution of iron ore, and for this raw material as for many others, Japan was Australia's best customer for many years until it was surpassed by China during the 2000s. By 2011, in fact, the enormous demand for raw materials from China as well as emerging India marked the longest-running commodity boom in recent Australian history—and was still going in mid-2013.

### Manufacturing's Limits

When Australia became established as a state, however, it needed goods from overseas, and here the "tyranny" of distance played a key role. Imports from Britain (and later the United States) were expensive mainly because of transport costs. This encouraged local entrepreneurs to establish their own industries to produce these goods more cheaply. Economic geographers call such industries **import-substitution industries [11]**, and this is how local industrialization got its start.

Australian manufacturing remains oriented to domestic markets, and its automobiles, electronic equipment, and cameras are decidedly not challenging the Pacific Rim's economic tigers for a place on world markets. Australian manufacturing is diversified, producing some machinery and equipment made of locally produced steel as well as textiles, chemicals, paper, and many other items. These industries cluster in and near the major urban areas where the markets are located. The domestic market in Australia is not large, but it remains relatively affluent. This makes it attractive to foreign producers, and Australia's shops overflow with high-priced goods from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States, and Europe. Indeed,

despite its long-term protectionist practices, Australia still does not produce many goods that could be manufactured at home. Overall, the continuing prominence of the **primary sector** [12] indicates that further economic development is still needed.

Because of its early history as a treasure trove of raw materials, Australia to this day is still seen worldwide as a country whose economy depends primarily on its exportable natural resources. In fact, however, Australia's economy depends mostly on services, not commodity exports, just as is the case in all highly developed economies. Indeed, tourism by itself contributes around 5 percent—about the same as the value of mineral exports. Australia's natural resources are vitally important, but most of the money is earned in those bustling coastal metropolitan areas, not in the Outback.

### Australia's Challenges

The Commonwealth of Australia may be changing, but its neighbors in Southeast and South Asia are changing even faster. Australia's European bonds are weakening as its Asian ties strengthen, and it plays a growing role in the western Pacific Rim. Australia does face certain challenges at home as well. These include: (1) Aboriginal claims; (2) concerns involving immigration; (3) environmental degradation; and (4) issues related to Australia's status and regional role.

### Aboriginal Issues

For several decades, the Aboriginal issues focused on two questions: formal acknowledgment, by the government and majority, of mistreatment of the Aboriginal minority with official apologies and reparations; and land ownership. The first question was resolved in 2008 when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd offered a formal apology for the historic mistreatment of the Aborigines. The second question has major geographic implications. Although making up less than 3 percent of the total population, the Aboriginal population of just over 600,000 (including many of mixed ancestry) has been gaining influence in national affairs, and in the 1980s Aboriginal leaders began a campaign to obstruct exploration on what they designated as ancestral and sacred lands.

Until 1992, Australians had taken it for granted that Aboriginals had no right to land ownership, but in that year the Australian High Court made the first of a series of rulings in favor of Aboriginal claimants. A subsequent court decision implied that vast areas (probably as much as 78 percent of the entire continent) could potentially be subject to Aboriginal claims (Fig. 11-7). Today the **Aboriginal land issue** [13] remains mostly (though not exclusively) an Outback issue, but it has the potential to overwhelm Australia's court system and to inhibit economic growth.

Lately, Australians have initiated debate on ways to bring so-called market-driven incentives to Aboriginal areas. At the moment, much Aboriginal land is administered

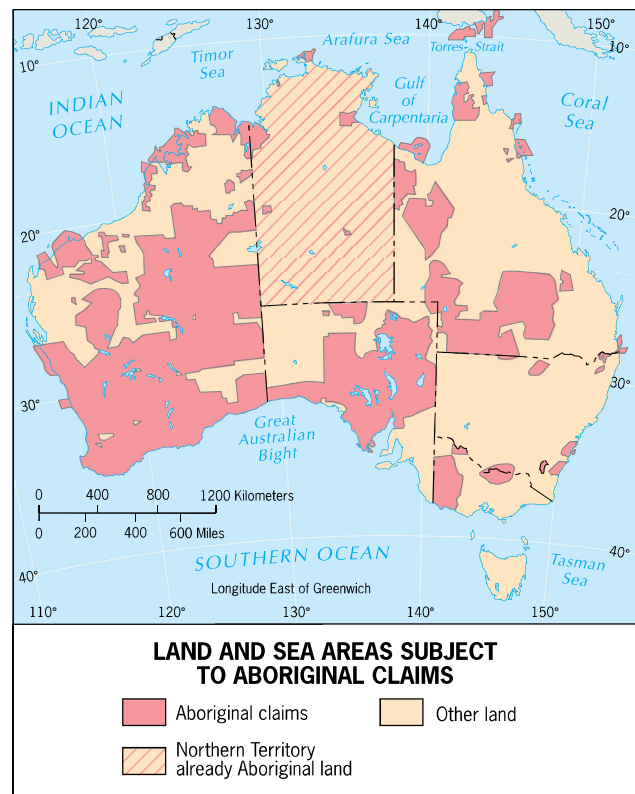


FIGURE 11-7

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communally by Aboriginal Land Councils, which makes the people land-rich but keeps them dirt-poor because the system in effect prevents private enterprise, including even the construction of family-owned housing. Some Aboriginal leaders are arguing that the system perpetuates an undesirable dependence on federal handouts, prevents jobs from becoming available, and restrains economic incentive. But not all Aboriginal leaders agree, worrying that privatization of any kind will undermine the Land Councils and create a small minority of better-off businesspeople, leaving the great majority of tradition-bound Aborigines even worse off. Still, the fact that the idea has some Aboriginal support is a sign of changing times in the relationships among Australian communities.

In 2007, Australia was shaken by a report on conditions in Aboriginal desert camps in the Northern Territory that chronicled rampant alcoholism, domestic violence, unemployment, school truancy, and a general breakdown of Aboriginal culture. The prime minister at the time, calling this a national emergency, ordered the federal government to take control of 60 Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory through the deployment of police and army patrols, health checks, and other measures. Even though there were accusations of political grandstanding and questions about sincerity, there could be no doubt that Australia's conscience was once again troubled by the fate of the country's first inhabitants left behind in the era of modernization.

## FIRST AUSTRALIANS FIRST

“Australia is becoming a multiracial society. Immigrants from Tajikistan to Thailand are changing the (mostly urban) cultural landscape. Long debates over their rights and privileges roil the political scene. Meanwhile, the Australians who got here first, most of whom live far beyond the burgeoning cities and out of sight, remain the most disadvantaged of minorities. We should remind ourselves of what they went through, and why Australia owes them—big time.

“When my European ancestors arrived on these shores there were more than a million Aboriginal people here, organized into numerous clans and subcultures. Like all peoples, they had their vices and virtues. Among the latter was that they didn’t appropriate land. Land was assigned to them by the creator (in what they call *The Dreaming*), and their relationship to it was spiritual, not commercial. They didn’t build fences or walls. Neither had they adopted some bureaucratic religion. Just imagine: a world where land was open and free, and religion was local and personal.

“Then the British showed up and started claiming and fencing off land that, under their European rules, was there for the taking. If the Aboriginal clans got in the way, they were pushed out, and if they resisted, they got killed. You don’t even want to *think* about what happened in Tasmania: a campaign of calculated extermination. Between 1800 and 1900, the Aboriginal population dropped from 1 million to about 50,000. When we became a ‘nation’ in 1901, they weren’t even accorded citizenship. They didn’t get the vote until 1962.

“None of this stopped certain white Australian men from getting Aboriginal women pregnant. And from 1910 on, church and state managed to make things even worse. They took these young children and put them in institutions, where they would be ‘Europeanized’ and then married off to white partners, so that they would lose their Aboriginal inheritance. This, if you’ll believe it, went on into the 1960s! Think of the scenes, these kids being kidnapped from their mothers by armed officials never to be seen again.

“It’s hard to believe that it took nearly another half-century before the Australian government, following a contentious and divisive debate, finally offered a formal apology for this and other misdeeds of the past. But now the question is, do Aboriginal Australians benefit from the country’s growing ethnic complexity? I work in a State government office here in Sydney that assists Asian immigrants, and all I can say is that I wish that we’d done for the First Australians what we’re doing for the stream of immigrants we admit today.”

## NO MORE SPECIAL TREATMENT

“Australia is a nation of immigrants, and we’ve all gone through rough times. I’m not complaining to the British government for what happened to my ancestors when they were shipped out here as prisoners. Like my father, I was born on this Outback sheep station about 40 years ago, and we employ a dozen Aboriginal workers, most of whom were also born in this area. I had nothing to do with what happened more than a century ago. What I would or might have done is irrelevant, and I can’t be blamed for what my great-great-grandparents may have done. All over the world people are born into situations not of their making.

“And I believe that this country has bent over backwards, in my time at least, to undo the alleged wrongs of the past. Look, the Aboriginal minority counts a bit over 600,000 or 2.8 percent of the population. Take a look at this on the map: they’ve got the whole Northern Territory and other parts of the country too, and that’s 15 percent of Australia. And now we’re required to give them even more? The Australian High Court keeps awarding Aboriginal claimants more and more land. That affects all of us. Pretty soon all of Australia will be targeted by these Aboriginals and their lawyers. And, by the way, in the old days those people moved around all the time. Who is to say what clans owned what land when it comes to claiming ‘native title’? These court cases are going to tie us up in legal knots for generations to come. So, if you’re a Japanese or Chinese buyer in search of commodities, are you going to sign contracts when you’re not sure who will own the land?

“We should take a lesson from the Kiwis, who agreed to a land deal with the Maori minority in New Zealand, and now look what’s happening over there. The place is overrun with Chinese who are making deals for supposedly ‘native’ land and are converting the whole place to milk-powder production. And the easy residence rules are making New Zealand a stepping stone for entering Australia.

“Look, I like the fellows working here, but you’ve got to realize that no laws or treaties are going to solve all of the problems they have. They’re getting all kinds of preferential access to government employment, remedial help in many areas, but still they wind up leaving school, abandoning jobs, winding up in jail. They have to grab the opportunities they now have rather than ask for more. In a lot of countries they would have never gotten them: Aussies are a pretty decent people. It’s up to them to make the best of it.”

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## VOICE FROM THE

## Region



Courtesy of Julie Tregale

Julie Tregale, Sydney, Australia

## BEING ASIAN IN AUSTRALIA

"I live in a suburb on the north side of Sydney, Australia's number-one city. Born and raised in Indonesia on the island of Jawa, I am one of many Asians who have migrated to Australia's cities in recent times. Most immigrants come here to look for work or to get an education. At the workplace and in the univer-

sities, there are always Asian faces. The government encourages immigration because Australia has an aging population and they need foreign workers. As a result, the country is changing fast. It's good that Australia has opened up to the rest of Asia and that it has become a much more diverse culture. But I can also see that people are worried about everybody getting along, about integration. Some ethnics turn their area into their little country where no one speaks English. That makes it difficult for Australians to go there. Also, it seems that gang fights between different ethnicities are happening more and more. Being a mother of two, I also see some issues at schools. The students who excel academically are usually Asians. Sometimes, Australian parents complain that Asian students have been coached and how unfair it is, etc. But I think it's about the different priorities that each family has on how they want to prepare their child and that comes from values they grew up with. I see that more Asians are geared into high academic achievement whereas the Australians are more into sports (rugby, soccer, swimming). A friend of mine who is Vietnamese-born but has lived here nearly all her life said that it's not always an advantage to have high academic achievements because in reality, in the workplace, you also need to be accepted, have the social skills, and fit in. In all, I am not surprised that the growing number of immigrants has caused some discrimination and tension. Government should take an active role to balance things out and make Australia a great place to live for all."

## Immigration Issues

The immigration issue is older than Australia itself. Fifty years ago, when Australia had less than half the population it has today, 95 percent of the people were of European ancestry, and more than three-quarters of them came from Britain and Ireland. Eugenic (race-specific) immigration policies maintained this situation until the mid-1970s. Today,

the picture is dramatically different: of 23 million Australians, only about one-third are of British-Irish origin, and Asian immigrants outnumber both European immigrants and the natural increase each year. During the early 1990s, about 150,000 legal immigrants arrived in Australia annually, most from Hong Kong, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka. Annual immigration quotas have since been reduced, but were then allowed to rise again—reaching 190,000 in 2012–2013—with Asian immigrants continuing to outnumber those from Western sources. Sydney, the leading recipient of the Asian influx, has become a mosaic of ethnic neighborhoods, some of which have gone through periods of gang violence and drug dealing, but have stabilized and even prospered over time. Still, as the economy has grown, particularly in the mining sector, the country will have to rely on immigration to meet growing skilled-labor demands. Multiculturalism will undoubtedly remain a long-term challenge for Australia.

## Environmental Issues

**Environmental degradation [14]**, unfortunately, is practically synonymous with Australia. First the Aborigines, then the Europeans and their livestock, inflicted catastrophic damage on Australia's natural environments and ecologies. Great stands of magnificent forest were destroyed. In Western Australia, centuries-old trees were simply ringed and left to die so that the sun could penetrate through their leafless crowns to nurture the grass below for pasture for introduced livestock. In island Tasmania, where Australia's native eucalyptus tree reaches its greatest concentrations (comparable to California's redwood stands), tens of thousands of hectares of this irreplaceable treasure have been lost to chain saws and pulp mills. Many of Australia's unique marsupial species have been driven to extinction, and many more are endangered or threatened. "Never have so few people wreaked so much havoc on the ecology of so large an area in so short a time," observed a geographer in Australia not long ago. But awareness of this environmental degradation is growing. In Tasmania, the Green environmentalist political party has now become a force in State affairs, and its activism has slowed deforestation, dam building, and other development projects. Still, many Australians fear the environmentalist movement as an obstacle to economic growth, and this too is an issue for the future.

Another environmental problem involves Australia's wide and long-term climatic variability. In a dominantly arid continent, droughts in the moister fringes are the worst enemy, and Australia's history is replete with devastating dry spells. Australia is vulnerable to El Niño events (see Chapter 5B), but recent global warming may also be playing a role in the process. One such serious drought (see photo pair), regarded as the worst in living memory, lasted throughout the 2000s and imperiled the entire region watered by the Murray-Darling river system, Australia's breadbasket (Fig. 11-6). Part of this is caused by nature, although other factors have to do with the increasing demand



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Photo by James Croucher/Newspix/Getty Images, Inc.

During the first decade of the twenty-first century Australia lay in the grip of its worst drought on record, with calamitous consequences ranging from deadly forest fires to parched farmlands. One of Australia's most profitable agricultural industries, winemaking, suffered severely as many winegrowers were driven off their land. The left photo shows a once-mature vineyard near Yarrowonga, on the New South Wales-Victoria border north of Melbourne along the Murray River, desiccated and abandoned during the summer of 2009. When the rains finally came, they caused disastrous floods, washing away topsoil and eroding the heat-baked countryside. The right photo, taken in January 2010, shows the results at Coonamble, New South Wales along a tributary of the Darling River.

for water in Australia's burgeoning urban areas as well as by excessive damming, well-drilling, and water diversion in the upstream tributaries of these two vital rivers. The Australian government has now embarked on a coordinated drainage-basin-control program in this region that involves both State governments and local farmers. On the world's driest continent, water management now finally seems to be catching up.

### Australia's Place in the World

Several issues involving Australia's status at home, relations with neighbors, and position in the world are also stirring up national debate. A persistent domestic question is whether Australia should become a republic, ending the status of the British monarch serving as head of state, or whether it should continue to participate in the British Commonwealth.

Relations with neighboring *Indonesia* and *East Timor* have become more complex. For many years, Australia had what may be called a special relationship with Indonesia, whose help it needs in curbing illegal seaborne immigration. It was also profitable for Australia to counter international (UN) opinion and recognize Indonesia's 1976 annexation of Portuguese East Timor, for in doing so Australia could deal directly with Jakarta for the oil and gas reserves beneath the Timor Sea (see Fig. 10B-8). Thus Australia gave neither recognition nor support to the rebel movement that fought for independence in East Timor. But this story had a surprisingly happy ending. When the East Timorese campaign for independence succeeded in 1999 and Indonesian troops began an orgy of murder and destruction, Australia sent an effective peacekeeping force and spearheaded the United Nations effort to stabilize the situation (for more see Chapter 10B). Today, a new era has opened in Australia's relations with these northern neighbors.

Australia also maintains a long-term relationship with *Papua New Guinea (PNG)* (see Chapter 12). This association, too, has gone through difficult times. In recent years, the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea have strongly resisted privatization, World Bank involvement, and globalization generally. Australia assists PNG in several spheres, but its motives are sometimes questioned. Not long ago, the construction of a projected gas pipeline from PNG to the Australian State of Queensland precipitated fighting among tribes over land rights, resulting in dozens of casualties, and Australian public opinion reflected doubts concerning the appropriateness of this venture. When political violence and chaos overtook the *Solomon Islands* lying east of Papua New Guinea in 2003, Australian forces intervened: a failing state in Australia's neighborhood could become a base for terrorist activity.

Along with some other Southeast Asian countries, Australia is seeking closer relations with the *United States* as a counterweight to China's rapidly increasing influence across these realms; not surprisingly, the U.S. is pleased to reciprocate. Starting in 2012, several thousand rotating U.S. troops have been stationed at Australian military bases; moreover, the U.S. Air Force will now have access to Australian airfields in the Northern Territory that are within easy flying distance of the South China Sea.

Overall, Australia's growing stature in the world and its closer ties with neighboring realms has prompted a re-consideration of the country's very identity and where it best fits. Australia has both assumed a wider global presence and in certain ways (re-)turned to Asia. The exclusive relationship with Britain now belongs to the past; trade and investment relationships with nearby countries are intensifying; political sensitivity to issues in Australia's corner of the world continues to grow; and the proliferation of Asian faces on the streets of Sydney and other cities underscores the changing, twenty-first-century story.

Territorial dimensions, relative location, and raw-material wealth have helped determine Australia's place in the world and, more specifically, on the western Pacific Rim. Australia's population is still less than 25 million but the country's importance in the international community far exceeds its human numbers.

■ NEW ZEALAND

Twenty-four hundred kilometers (1500 mi) east-southeast of Australia, in the Pacific Ocean across the Tasman Sea, lies New Zealand, also known as *Aotearoa* in Maori (meaning

"land of the long white cloud"). In an earlier age, New Zealand would have been part of the Pacific geographic realm because its population was entirely Maori, a people with Polynesian roots. But New Zealand, like Australia, was invaded and occupied by Europeans. Today, its population of 4.5 million is about 70 percent European, and the Maori form a substantial minority of about 700,000, with many of mixed Euro-Polynesian ancestry (including Pacific Islanders).

New Zealand consists of two large mountainous islands and many scattered smaller islands (Fig. 11-8). The two main islands, with the South Island somewhat larger than the North Island, look diminutive in the great Pacific

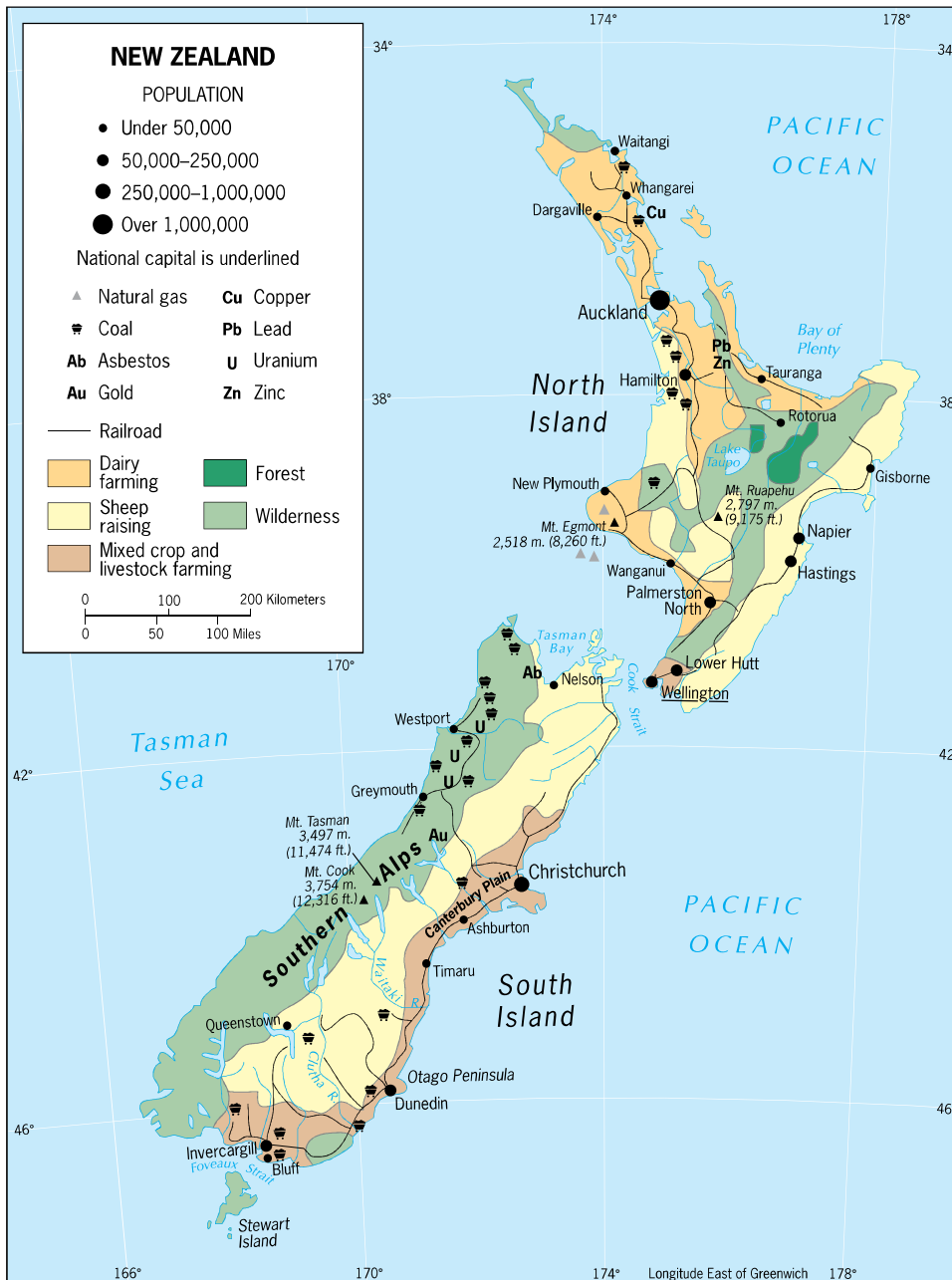


FIGURE 11-8





## From the Field Notes . . .



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"The drive from Christchurch to Arthur's Pass on the South Island of New Zealand was a lesson in physiography and biogeography. Here, on the east side of the Southern Alps, you leave the Canterbury Plain and its agriculture and climb into the rugged topography of the glacier-cut, snowcapped mountains. A last pasture lies on a patch of flatland in the foreground; in the background is the unmistakable wall of a U-shaped valley sculpted by ice. Natural vegetation ranges from pines to ferns, becoming even more luxuriant as you approach the moister western side of the island."

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Basin, but together they are larger than Britain. In contrast to generally low-relief Australia, the more rugged terrain of the two large islands contains several peaks rising far higher than any on the Australian landmass. The South Island has a spectacular snowcapped range appropriately called the Southern Alps, with numerous summits reaching beyond 3300 meters (10,000 ft). The smaller North Island has proportionately more land under low relief, but it also has an area of central highlands along whose lower slopes lie the pastures of New Zealand's chief dairying district.

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, the convergence of the Australian and Pacific tectonic plates underlies much of New Zealand, and it renders the country prone to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. On February 22, 2011, a magnitude 6.3 quake struck very close to the center of Christchurch, the South Island's biggest city (essentially a delayed aftershock of an even stronger earthquake five months earlier, whose epicenter was located at the edge of this urban region). Structural damage to the CBD and its immediate surroundings was severe, and the death toll reached 182, making it New Zealand's deadliest quake in 80 years.

### Human Spatial Organization

The most promising areas for habitation, therefore, are the lower-lying slopes and lowland fringes on both islands. On the North Island, the largest urban area, Auckland, occupies a comparatively low-lying peninsula. On the South Island, the largest lowland is the agriculture-dominated Canterbury Plain, focused on Christchurch.

What makes these lower-elevation zones so attractive, apart from their availability as cropland, is their magnificent pastures. The range of soils and pasture plants allows both summer and winter grazing. Moreover, the Canterbury Plain, the chief farming region, also produces a wide variety of vegetables, cereals, and fruits. About half of all New Zealand is pasture land, and much of the farming provides fodder for the pastoral industry. About 31 million sheep, 6 million dairy cattle, and 4 million beef cattle dominate these livestock-raising activities, with wool, milk products, and meat providing about two-thirds of the islands' export revenues.

Despite their contrasts in size, shape, physiography, and history, New Zealand and Australia share a number of characteristics. Apart from their joint British heritage, they share a sizeable pastoral economy with growth in specialty goods such as wines, a small local market, the problem of great distances to world markets, and a desire to stimulate (through protection) domestic manufacturing. The very high degree of urbanization in New Zealand (86 percent of the total population) once again resembles Australia: substantial employment in city-based industries—mostly the processing and packing of livestock and farm products—as well as government jobs.

Spatially, New Zealand further shares with Australia its pattern of **peripheral development [15]** (Fig. 11-2), imposed not by deserts but by high rugged mountains and the fragmented layout of the country. The country's major cities—Auckland and the capital of Wellington on the North Island; Christchurch and Dunedin on the South Island—are all located on the coast, and the rail and highway



## From the Field Notes . . .



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“It was Sunday morning in Christchurch on New Zealand’s South Island, and the city center was quiet. As I walked along Linwood Street I heard a familiar sound, but on an unfamiliar instrument: the Bach sonata for unaccompanied violin in G minor—played magnificently on a guitar. I followed the sound to the artist, a Maori musician of such technical and interpretive capacity that there was something new in every phrase, every line, every tempo. I was his only listener; there were a few coins in his open guitar case. Shouldn’t he be playing before thousands, in schools, maybe abroad? No, he said, he was happy here, he did all right. A world-class talent, a street musician playing Bach on a Christchurch side street, where tourists from around the world were his main source of income. Talk about globalization.”

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networks are therefore entirely peripheral in their configuration. Moreover, the two main islands are separated by Cook Strait, a windswept waterway that can only be crossed by ferry or air (Fig. 11-8). On the South Island, the Southern Alps are New Zealand’s most formidable barrier to surface communications.

### The Maori Factor and New Zealand’s Future

Like Australia, New Zealand has had a history of difficult relations with its indigenous population. The Maori, who account for 15.5 percent of the country’s population today, appear to have reached the islands during the tenth century AD. By the time the European colonists arrived, the Maori had had a tremendous impact on the islands’ ecosystems, especially on the North Island where most of them lived. In 1840, the Maori and the British signed a treaty at Waitangi that granted the colonizers sovereignty over New Zealand but guaranteed the Maori rights covering established tribal lands. Although the British abrogated parts of the treaty in 1862, the Maori had reason to believe that vast reaches of New Zealand, as well as offshore waters, were theirs in perpetuity.

As in Australia, judicial rulings during the 1990s supported the Maori position, which led to expanded claims and growing demands. Culturally, the declaration of Maori as an official language in New Zealand and its teaching throughout the school system are seen as significant progress toward an acceptance of the Maori cultural heritage. But the most persistent Maori complaint concerns the slow pace of integration of this minority into modern New Zealand society. Although Maori claims encompass

much of rural New Zealand, they also cover prominent sites in the major cities. Today, the Maori question is the leading domestic issue.

### The Green Factor

New Zealand is well known for its progressive politics and superior quality of life. Among the factors that contribute to the country’s environmental progressiveness is its status as one of the leading “green” societies in the world, with a long-active Green Party and an established program of environmental conservation. Although the Maori and then the European colonists degraded New Zealand’s landscapes, their descendants have been exemplary in observing environmentally friendly and sustainable policies.

Environmental scientists recently ranked New Zealand first in the world (the United States was 28th) in a report that examined a range of environmental indices such as clean water, air pollution, renewable energy, and biodiversity conservation. With approximately 30 percent of its land area now protected from development, New Zealand in 2007 declared that it would become the world’s first carbon-neutral country by 2020. More than 75 percent of its energy is already derived from renewable sources (hydro and geothermal), compared to 10 percent in the United States. New Zealand is also a nuclear-free country that does not permit even visiting naval vessels with nuclear capabilities to anchor at its ports. And the country has even established Environmental Courts to hear cases involving environmental management decisions. With its pioneering green initiatives, New Zealand demonstrates that a country, albeit one with a small

population, can successfully work to improve its natural environment if its leaders possess the necessary political will.

Dominant cultural heritage and prevailing cultural landscape form two criteria on which the delimitation of the Austral Realm is based. But in both Australia and New Zealand, the cultural continues to change and the convergence with neighboring realms is well underway.

### POINTS TO PONDER

- Australia's population growth is marked by an annual immigration rate that exceeds the natural increase rate.
- Britain was Australia's most important trading partner until the 1980s, when it was displaced by Japan. China took over that role in 2007, and since then has been pulling away as the country's leading trading partner.
- New Zealand experiences more than 10,000 earthquakes each year; as many as 150 can be felt, and about 20 are strong enough to cause damage on the human landscape.
- Australia may soon be on the road to energy independence thanks to the 2012–2013 discoveries of massive, fracking-friendly shale oil reserves. These deposits lie beneath South Australia's Arckaringa Basin northwest of Adelaide, and may be nearly equal in size to the estimated reserve total for all of Saudi Arabia.