Australia, officially the Commonwealth of Australia, is a country in the southern hemisphere comprising the mainland of the world's smallest continent, the major island of Tasmania, and numerous other islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Neighbouring countries include Indonesia, East Timor, and Papua New Guinea to the north, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia to the north-east, and New Zealand to the south-east.

History

The first recorded European sighting of the Australian mainland was made by the Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon, who sighted the coast of Cape York Peninsula in 1606. During the 17th century, the Dutch charted the whole of the western and northern coastlines of what they called New Holland, but they made no attempt at settlement. In 1770, James Cook sailed along and mapped the east coast of Australia, which he named New South Wales and claimed for Great Britain.

Politics

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional democracy based on a federal division of powers. The form of government used in Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of Australia, a role that is distinct from her position as monarch of the other Commonwealth realms. The Queen is represented by the Governor-General at federal level and by the Governors at state level. Although the Constitution gives extensive executive powers to the Governor-General, these are normally exercised only on the advice of the Prime Minister. The most notable exercise of the Governor-General's reserve powers outside the Prime Minister's direction was the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in the constitutional crisis of 1975.

The Sydney 2000 Summer Olympic Games or the Millennium Games/Games of the New Millennium, officially known as the Games of the XXVII Olympiad, were an international multi-sport event which was celebrated between 13 September and 1 October 2000 in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It was the second time that the Summer Olympics were held in the Southern Hemisphere, the first one being in Melbourne in 1956.

Sydney Opera House

The Sydney Opera House is located in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia on Bennelong Point. It was conceived and largely built by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, who in 2003 received the Pritzker Prize, architecture's highest honour. The Sydney Opera House – one of symbols of Sydney.