

# QUEENSLAND

## *Contents*

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The People .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Government .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Geography .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Climate .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Flora and fauna.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Economy .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Tourism .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Health .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Transport and communications .....</b>	<b>6</b>

## **Introduction**

Queensland is Australia's second largest state, covering 1,722,000 km<sup>2</sup> and the third most populous with more than 3,000,000 inhabitants - 17 per cent of the nation's people.

It occupies 22.5 per cent of the continent in the north-east and has boundaries with New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. It is bounded by the Gulf of Carpentaria, Torres Strait and the Coral Sea in the north, and the South Pacific Ocean in the east. The total coastline is 7400 km.

Brisbane, the capital, is in the south-eastern corner of the State with a population of 1,327,000.

## **The People**

Most settlers in Queensland during the 19th century were from Britain and Europe. In recent years there has been an increasing number of new settlers from South-East Asia. About one-third of Queenslanders are migrants or the children of migrants.

The warm climate, a relaxed way of life and the economic prospects of decentralised Queensland also attract residents from other parts of Australia. Queensland's population growth in the year 1991-92 was 2.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 1.4 per cent.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise about 2.4 per cent of

the population and many who live in clan group communities retain their traditional way of life.

More than half of Queensland's population lives outside the greater metropolitan area of Brisbane - a large proportion compared with the rest of highly urbanised Australia. Distance plays a part in the strength of regional influences in Queensland. The Torres Strait islands are 2000 km north of Brisbane. Cairns, the major city of the far north, is further from Brisbane than is Melbourne, the capital of Victoria on the southern coast of the continent.

The south-east corner is the most densely populated part of the State.

## **Government**

Queensland is represented in the Federal Parliament by 25 (of 148) members in the House of Representatives and 12 (of 76) Senators. The Parliament of Queensland consists of the State Governor, representing the Sovereign, and the Legislative Assembly, consisting of 89 elected members. Queensland's cities, towns and shires are run by 134 councils elected every three years.

## **Geography**

Queensland is essentially a state of great plains which merge into high country of sharper relief to the east and north-west. To the north, the country falls gradually to meet the coastal plain which reaches the Gulf of Carpentaria as a broad tract of salt flats. The far north-west is occupied by a rugged uplands region, rich in minerals. Eastward, the country rises towards the Great Divid-

ing Range which runs from the southern border to the northern tip of the state and is the main watershed between the coastal and inland rivers.

East of the Great Dividing Range, the country drops seaward in a jumble of ranges separated by lowlands. This structure is continued in a chain of mountainous offshore islands sitting on the continental shelf. Beyond them is the Great Barrier Reef, a series of coral formations stretching for about 2000 km.

## **Climate**

Queensland is known as Australia's "sunshine state" although weather conditions vary greatly between the coastal plain and the inland.

Brisbane averages 7.1 hours of sunshine a day in winter. Inland, the days are warm and sunny and the nights cold and frosty, particularly in the south. Queensland's wet season is from December to March, when the northwest monsoons sweep down from Asia and cyclones are most prevalent.

Annual rainfall can exceed 4000 mm in the north. In the north-west, Mount Isa averages less than 400 mm a year and the average dwindles to about 200 mm in the south-west corner. Brisbane averages 1200 mm.

## **Flora and fauna**

Queensland has more than 1000 species of native vertebrates. Of these, 86 are unique to the region. There are 572 species of birds and 1600 species of fish. Many animals, such as the tree kangaroo, live only in specialised habitats.

Vegetation in Queensland varies from tropical rainforest in coastal regions to arid Mitchell grass downs in the south-west. Plant species vary from banksias and eucalypts to tropical plants common throughout South-East Asia.

## **Economy**

Mining, tourism and agriculture, are the three major industries. Queensland accounts for 24 per cent of the total Australian mining production, 37 per cent of Australia's beef production, and almost all of Australia's sugar production.

Sugar is the main export crop. Other important crops are wheat, sorghum, maize, cotton, tobacco and peanuts. Tropical fruits grow extensively along the coast. Beef cattle and sheep dominate the livestock industries.

Coal is the most important mineral followed by copper, lead, bauxite and zinc. There are major developments of bauxite near Weipa; copper, silver-lead-zinc and phosphate rock in the north-west, centred on Mount Isa; coal in the Bowen Basin of central Queensland and the Moreton Basin of the south-east; nickel at Greenvale, north-west of Townsville; natural gas and oil in the southern inland; and mineral sands along the southern beaches.

## **Tourism**

Queensland contains a number of Australia's top international destinations such as Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef, the Gold Coast and the Whitsundays.

Queensland offers a great diversity of holiday and touring opportunities, with the Great Barrier Reef, tropical islands, rainforest and wilderness, open sandy

beaches, and the vast outback, as well as the sophisticated attractions of Brisbane and major towns.

International tourist numbers are expected to escalate from 1.5 million at present to 3-4.5 million by the year 2000. In the year 2000, 1.5 million visitors will be Japanese - double the present total.

Queensland has three international airports: Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville.

## **Health**

The State Health Department provides services including the supervision of general hospitals, nursing homes, maternal and child health clinics, community health centres, dental care for primary school children, youth welfare and guidance clinics, geriatric care and services for the intellectually handicapped.

People in isolated areas are served by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Flying Surgeon and the Aerial Ambulance.

## **Transport and communications**

Queensland has modern transport and communication systems. The State's 10 011 km rail network is growing each year under a continuing development program. In 1991-92 the railways carried nearly 41 million passengers and more than 90 million tonnes of minerals and other freight. More than 130 regional airports and aerodromes complement three international airports.

Nineteen major ports dot the coast, the busiest being the Port of Brisbane.

There were more than 1 400 000 telephone services and television is available to almost all Queensland homes. Viewers in and near Brisbane have the choice of five channels, three commercial, one national and one multicultural. Major regional centres also have access to the commercial and national stations while some centres can also access the multicultural channel.

Q-NET, Queensland's first multi-purpose satellite communications network, uses the Aussat domestic satellite to extend education, health, emergency and other services to mining settlements, Aboriginal missions, isolated townships, homesteads and islands.

*Source: DFAT*