

Topic Page: [Perth](#)

Definition: **Perth** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

City on the Swan River, SW Australia; capital of Western Australia. Founded in 1829, the city grew rapidly after the discovery of gold at Coolgardie in the 1890s, the development of the port at Fremantle and the construction of railways to the E in the early 20th century. Industries: textiles, cement, food processing, motor vehicles. Pop. (2005) 1,484,000.

Summary Article: **Perth**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Capital of the state of Western Australia and Australia's fourth-largest city; population (2001 est) 1,340,000. Perth is situated on the southwest coast of Australia, on the River Swan, 19 km/12 mi inland. Its port is at Fremantle, to the southwest at the mouth of the Swan. The metropolitan area of Perth, which now includes Fremantle, contains about three-quarters of the population of the state of Western Australia. Perth is a major centre of finance and of varied industry, including oil refining, electronics, food processing, steel, shipbuilding, rubber, paint, fertilizers, textiles, furniture, cement, tractors, and tourism. Perth is also an important centre for the export of primary products: refined oil, minerals, wool, wheat, meat, fruit, timber, and dairy produce.

History Perth was founded as a colony in 1829 by Captain James Stirling. It received city status in 1856. The colony suffered difficulties such as a shortage of labour, poor communications, and financial problems. This resulted in convicts being sent to Western Australia between 1850 and 1868. The town grew rapidly after the discovery of gold in 1893 at Kalgoorlie, 545 km/340 mi to the northeast, and the opening of the harbour at Fremantle in 1897. Gold production peaked in 1903. Wheat farming in Western Australia between 1905 and 1950 expanded greatly, and wheat became the most significant export for many years, along with wool. The 1930s brought a depression, but the mining industry in Kalgoorlie led to recovery. After World War II there was a demand for exports, and diversification was sought. In 1952 a steel mill and oil refinery were built at Kwinana, to the south of Fremantle. The mineral boom of the 1960s resulted in Perth's population doubling between 1965 and 1985.

Features Perth is the commercial and cultural centre of Western Australia. The Perth Cultural Centre houses the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the state museum, and the state library. The Commonwealth and Empire Games were held in Perth in 1962 and the America's Cup yachting challenge was staged from the Royal Perth Yacht Club in 1987, after the Cup had been won by *Australia II* in 1983. The city has two cathedrals. Perth is a transit centre with an international and a domestic airport. To the western end of the city centre, overlooking the city and the Swan River, is Kings Park (400 ha/988 acres) which includes a botanic garden and a large section of native bushland. Metropolitan Perth has five universities: the University of Western Australia (founded 1911); Notre Dame University in Fremantle; Murdoch University (1975); Curtin University of Technology (1987); Edith Cowan University (1990).

Perth has hot dry summers, and mild rainy winters, and the city claims to be the sunniest capital city in Australia.

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