

## Topic Page: [Queensland](#)

Definition: **Queensland** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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**1** a state of NE Australia: fringed on the Pacific side by the Great Barrier Reef; the Great Dividing Range lies in the east, separating the coastal lowlands from the dry Great Artesian Basin in the south. Capital: Brisbane. Pop: 5 027 889 (2012 est). Area: 1 727 500 sq km (667 000 sq miles)



Image from: [The Great Barrier Reef was formed by tiny... in Geography of the World](#)

### Summary Article: **Queensland**

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

State in northeast Australia, including the adjacent islands in the Pacific Ocean and in the Gulf of Carpentaria; bordered on the west by Northern Territory, on the southwest by South Australia, on the south by New South Wales, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, and on the extreme northwest by the Gulf of Carpentaria; area 1,727,200 sq km/666,900 sq mi; population (2001 est) 3,635,100, concentrated in the southeast. The capital is Brisbane. Products include sugar, wheat, pineapples, beef, cotton, wool, tobacco, copper, gold, silver, lead, zinc, coal, nickel, bauxite, uranium, natural gas, oil, and fish.

Queensland is predominantly agricultural; the main crops are sugar cane, wheat, oats, peanuts, bananas, and pineapples. Cattle (beef and dairy) and sheep are raised. The state has rich mineral reserves; coal, lead, silver, zinc, copper, gold, and bauxite are mined, and there are deposits of oil and natural gas. Industries are mainly connected with the processing of primary produce: sugar refining, food processing, oil refining. Other industries include engineering, textile manufacture, and shipbuilding. Many tourists are attracted to the Great Barrier Reef and the beaches of the southeast coast, especially the Gold Coast, a 32-km/20-mi long stretch south of Brisbane and running into Queensland, and the Sunshine Coast, a 100-km/60-mi stretch of coast north of Brisbane, between Rainbow Beach and Bribie Island, including the resorts of Noosa Heads, Coolum Beach, and Caloundra.

**Geography** Queensland is the second-largest Australian state (after Western Australia). Its coastline is about 3,621 km/2,250 mi long, and is bordered by the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Dividing Range, stretching from Cape Melville on the northeast coast to New South Wales in the south, bisects the state vertically. A coastal range of old rocks, it is a continuation of the Australian Alps of Victoria and the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. The highest peaks are Bartle Frere (1,622 m/5,321 ft) and Bellenden Ker (1,591 m/5,220 ft) near Cairns, Mount Dalrymple (1,277 m/4,190 ft), and Mount Lindsay (1,233 m/4,045 ft), whilst the average height of the range is 600 m/1,968 ft. To the north of Cape Melville a flat ridge capped with sandstone runs through Cape York peninsula, gradually declining in height until it reaches Cape York. To the west of the Great Dividing Range the country is fairly flat, the great western plain extending west to the borders with Northern Territory and South Australia, and south to the New South Wales border. The principal rivers are the Brisbane, Burdekin, Mackenzie, Dawson, Isaac, and Burnett; the Norman, Flinders, Mitchell, Leichhardt, Diamantina, Barcoo (Cooper Creek), and Warrego rivers flow intermittently, drying up in the dry season. Channel Country is an area of southwest Queensland in which channels such as Cooper Creek are cut by intermittent rivers.

Towns and cities include Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Mackay, Ipswich, and Maryborough.

**Climate** The Tropic of Capricorn passes through the centre of Queensland, and the climate is tropical and subtropical. The wet season extends from about December to March. The rainfall on the east coast is as much as 3,425 mm/135 in a year at Innisfail, but is no more than 1,015 mm/40 in south of Port Curtis. The average rainfall of the Darling Downs is about 889 mm/35 in and on the western border about 220 mm/8½ in. Much of this is ineffective because of high evaporation. The western plains have been tapped by artesian wells.

**Agriculture** Queensland is still predominantly a primary agricultural producer, although, because of the arid conditions in much of the state only 2 million ha/5 million acres of the total area is cultivated. Most of the holdings are in large units with extensive farming methods which use little labour, but considerable mechanization. The major cultivated areas are on the coastal plains and valleys of the east coast where there are high temperatures and rainfall. Most of the total Australian sugar cane crop is grown in small fragmented areas of these coastal plains. A large part of the cultivated area of Queensland is planted with grains (550,000 ha/1,350,000 acres), the most important of which are wheat and grain sorghum (tropical cereal grasses, including millet). The major grain area is the Darling Downs, in the southeast of the state. Other crops include oats, peanuts, sunflowers, soybeans, maize, hay crops, sugar cane, ginger grapes, and other fruit (especially bananas and pineapples). In terms of area, most of the farms are concerned with grazing, mostly for beef cattle, though sheep, especially fine-wool breeds, are also reared. The coastal plains and valleys are grazed by dairy cattle, while beef cattle are raised in the drier inland areas and fattened on the rich coastal pastures. Sheep are mainly concentrated in the dry central regions of the state.

**Industry** Manufacturing is less developed than in states farther south such as Victoria and New South Wales. Queensland's major industrial centre is Brisbane, where shipbuilding is long established and there many more modern consumer industries. Other manufacturing centres are Townsville, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, and Toowoomba. Many industries are connected with the processing of primary produce, such as sugar cane, wheat, fruit, and milk; engineering, food processing, and the manufacture of machinery, bricks, alumina, and textiles are also important. The Townsville area is noted for copper and nickel refineries. Alumina is refined at Gladstone, using bauxite from Weipa on the Cape York peninsula, before being sent to the nearby smelter of Boyne Island for conversion to aluminium; much of the alumina is also exported to Tasmania, New South Wales, and New Zealand for smelting.

**Mining** In addition to manufacturing and food production, Queensland's economy is based on mining and energy production. The state has large mineral deposits, and steaming coal, natural gas, and oil are produced. Silver, lead, zinc, and copper are mined at Mount Isa, one of the older mining centres, in the northwest of the state. It is one of the world's largest underground mines, and Australia's-largest producer of copper. Another old mining centre, Mount Morgan, produces copper and gold. Copper and gold are also mined at Osborne and Mammoth. Nickel is produced at the Brolga open-cast mine. Bauxite is mined from Weipa, the largest single bauxite mine in the world, situated northwest of Cape York peninsula,. Uranium was mined at Mary Kathleen, near Mount Isa, from 1958–1963, and there are deposits (not currently mined) at Westmoreland, Ben Lomond, and Maureen. In the late 20th century, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a major expansion of coal mining in the state. Queensland, which by the mid-1990s was producing over 90 million tonnes of coal annually, contributes more than half the coal exports of Australia, which is the largest coal exporter in the world. Most coal in

Queensland for production is coking coal from Bowen Basin; steaming coal is mined at Newlands, Blair Athol, and mines near Brisbane (Ipswich). Black coal has been mined at Ipswich since the nineteenth century, but large-scale exploitation of coal reserves at Moura, Goonyella, Blackwater, and Blair Athol occurred in the 1960s. The major port for the export of coal is Gladstone.

With the discovery of oil in 1961, Moonie became the first commercial oil field in Australia (with production beginning in 1964). A pipeline has been constructed to refineries in Brisbane. Gas is found at Wallumbilla near Roma, and a pipeline, opened in 1969, made Brisbane the first Australian city to be supplied with natural gas. Roma is a service centre for the oil and gas fields of the Bowen Basin.

**Nineteenth century** In 1770 Captain James Cook landed at Round Hill Head, the southern point of Bustard Bay, between Bundaberg and Rockhampton, but little was known of this part of Australia until 1823, when the surveyor general, John Oxley, found the River Brisbane. The first settlement was a penal colony at Moreton Bay, 29 km/18 mi north of Brisbane, in 1824, which was relocated to the site of the present city of Brisbane in 1825. The penal settlement was finally broken up in 1839 and from 1842 free settlers were admitted to the state. The 1840s was a period of exploration and development. Pastoral occupation of the Darling Downs began in 1840. A surveyor, John Charles Burnett, while seeking an overland route to the settlement at Port Curtis, 540 km/336 mi northeast of Brisbane, discovered the river which is now named after him, and two years later Wide Bay and Burnett districts were settled. In the same period Warwick and Drayton on the Darling Downs were surveyed, and Maryborough on the Mary River was settled in 1848. In 1844–6 Ludwig Leichardt, on his journey from Brisbane to Port Essington in Arnhem Land, found the Dawson, Comet, Mackenzie, and other rivers. Another notable explorer was Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, who visited the Maranoa and Warrego districts in 1846–7 and helped open the Maranoa region to pastoralism.

The first emigrant ship direct to Moreton Bay was the *Artemisia*, which arrived in 1848. In the 1850s squatters (free settlers who took up crown land) founded stations in the countryside around Rockhampton, 637 km/396 mi north of Brisbane. The progress made by settlers led to a desire for Queensland to be independent from New South Wales; this separatist movement resulted in the creation, on 8 June 1859, of a separate colony (with the name Queensland) for the northeast part of the colony of New South Wales, as it then was. The fatal attempt by Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills in 1860–1 to make the first south–north crossing of Australia, and the relief expedition of John McKinlay, W Howitt, and others, opened up the western district of Queensland between the Gulf of Carpentaria and the border with South Australia, and many pastoral settlements were made on the Warrego and Flinders rivers. A large number of prospectors arrived in the area following the discovery of gold in the area: gold was discovered in Queensland in 1858 at Canoona and in 1868 at the head of the Mary River, where mines were established at Gympie, 172 km/107 mi north of Brisbane; gold was found at Mount Morgan in 1882, establishing an industry which still continues.

**Twentieth century** Political unrest followed a severe drought in 1901 and the local Labor party gained considerable popularity by its attitude. The Labor Party came into office in 1915, and among the changes it effected was the abolition of the Legislative Council in 1921. In 1989 the ruling National Party was defeated after 32 years in power and replaced by the Labor Party, who maintained power in the 1992 elections. In the Queensland Election of 1995, the National–Liberal Coalition won more than 54% of the vote, and holds Government, with the Australian Labor Party in opposition.

**Tourism** In the 1970s and 1980s tourism became increasingly important and Queensland capitalized on

its climate and natural attractions. Growth has occurred around the Gold Coast area, renowned for its sandy beaches and offshore islands, nightlife, and theme parks (including Movieworld, a major film production theme park). Tourism has also been important further north around the Great Barrier Reef, which stretches for 2,012 km/1,250 mi along the Coral Sea coast, and many of the islands at the reef have been transformed into tourist resorts, including the Whitsunday Islands, Magnetic Island, and Hamilton Island. Coastal towns such as Cairns, Townsville, Port Douglas, Rockhampton, and Mackay, have prospered from the development of the tourist industry around the Great Barrier Reef.

**Government** Queensland became self-governing in 1859 when the state was separated from New South Wales. Legislation is vested in the Legislative Assembly, the only chamber of Queensland Parliament, whose 89 members are elected to serve for three years. The state has a governor and lieutenant-governor, with an executive council of ministers. Adult men and women over 18 are entitled to vote, and electoral enrolment is compulsory for all persons 18 years of age and over who are British subjects by birth or naturalization and who have lived in Australia for six months, in Queensland for three months, and in an electoral district continuously for one month.

**Demography** The first settlers to Queensland (and most of Australia) were of Anglo-Celtic heritage (including convicts). With the gold rush, many people of Asian descent arrived, and eventually settled in Queensland. People from the Pacific islands were often illegally recruited to work in the sugar cane fields and cotton plantations. Aboriginals live in Queensland in proportionally higher numbers than elsewhere in Australia. Since World War II Queensland has developed rapidly, and about one third of Queensland's population are now migrants from Asia and Europe, or are second generation descendants of migrants. Queensland is Australia's fastest growing state, with a strong migration movement from New South Wales and Victoria to Queensland.

#### **weblinks**

Destination Queensland

#### **images**

Barron River

Queensland – flag

Queensland farmland

Whitsunday Islands

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"Queensland." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/queensland>

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