

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 2 — Australia in the world: continents, the Asia-Pacific and global differences

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The world’s continents: features, countries and links with Australia

Teacher note — teaching sequence. This section owns VC2HG6K06 (Geographical Knowledge and Understanding, Management of places). It draws on elaborations VC2HG6K06.E01, .E02 and .E03 for MCQ and coverage linkage (they are illustrations, not a teaching order). The achievement standard sentence owned here is mapped in TOC §2 (shared with 1B and 2B).

Assumed from Levels 3–4: the world’s major divisions — its continents and oceans — and compass directions (VC2HG4K05), climate and the main climate types (VC2HG4K06), and how climate and vegetation fit together (VC2HG4K07). Do not assume any prior learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

Suggested sequence (about four lessons): Lesson 1 – the seven continents and their characteristics (Figures 2.1–2.5); Lesson 2 – major countries and where they sit in relation to Australia (Figure 2.6 and the countries table); Lesson 3 – Australia’s interconnections, using real ABS data (Figures 2.7–2.10) and a class discussion of the impacts on the students’ own place; Lesson 4 – the big evidence task. This section is knowledge work; the book’s fieldwork lives in 3B. The Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia priority is live content here. Handoff: 2B narrows this same map to the Asia-Pacific; 2C compares countries; 3C returns to map-making with BOLTSS.

Theory

Part 1 — The seven big pieces of the world

The land of the world is grouped into seven huge pieces called **continents**. A continent is one of the very large land masses of the Earth, with sea around nearly all of it. Geographers draw the world’s land into continents in slightly different ways — some countries teach six continents by joining Europe and Asia into one. *This book uses the seven-continent model, the one used in most Australian schools: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe and Australia–Oceania.* Every fact below uses that model, so if you meet a different count somewhere else, it is just a different way of drawing the lines, not a different world.

Figure 2.1 shows the seven continents with three of their main **characteristics** — the facts that describe what each continent is like.

The seven continents at a glance

Continent	Area (million km²)	People (2024, rounded)	Longest river
Asia	44.6	4,800 million	Yangtze (about 6,300 km)
Africa	30.4	1,500 million	Nile (about 6,650 km)
North America	24.2	600 million	Mississippi-Missouri (about 6,275 km)
South America	17.8	440 million	Amazon (about 6,400 km)
Antarctica	14.2	no permanent population	none – locked up as ice
Europe	10.2	750 million	Volga (about 3,530 km)
Australia-Oceania	8.6	46 million	Murray-Darling (about 3,672 km)

All numbers are rounded. Populations are United Nations 2024 estimates; areas and river lengths are approximate.

Figure 2.1 — The seven continents at a glance.

Three things to notice in Figure 2.1. Asia is the biggest continent and has the most people by far. Antarctica has no people living there for good — it is too cold, so only scientists stay for a season. And every continent has its own great rivers.

Population means the number of people living in a place. Figure 2.2 shows the population of each continent using rounded United Nations numbers for 2024.

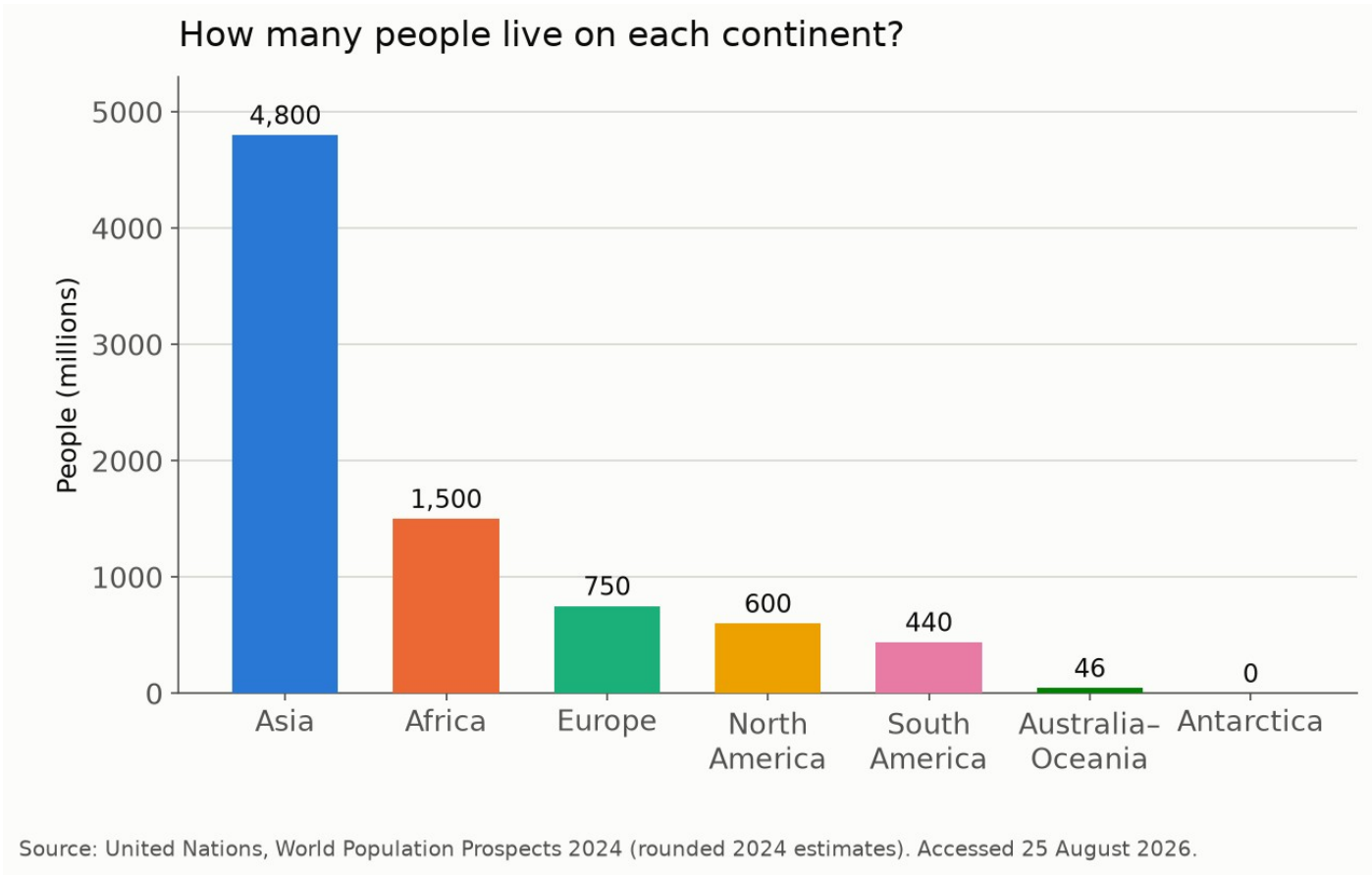


Figure 2.2 — How many people live on each continent?

Area means how much land a place covers. Figure 2.3 shows the area of each continent.

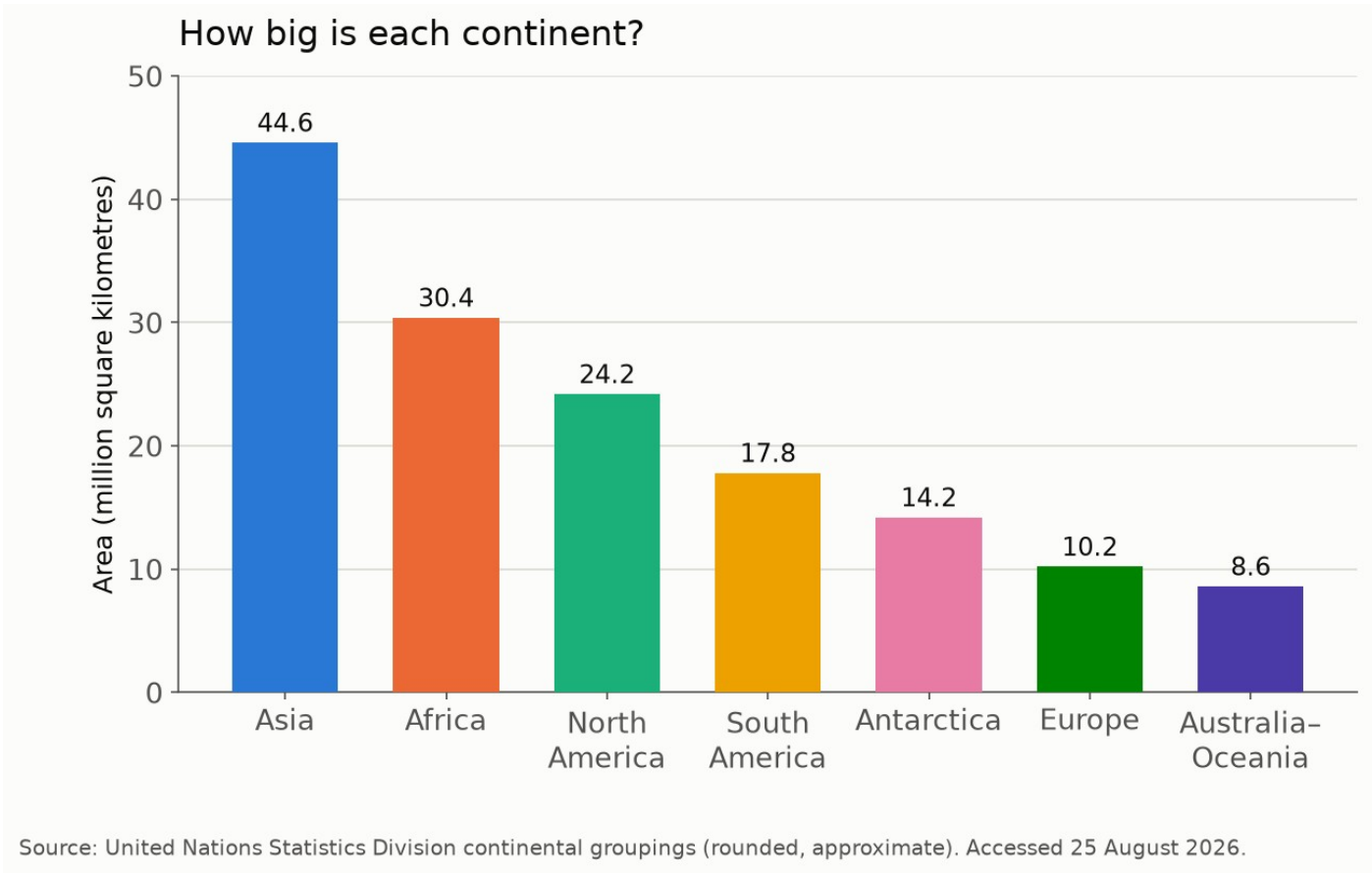


Figure 2.3 — How big is each continent?

Now put those two ideas together. **Population density** (say: *dens-ih-tee*) is how many people live on each square kilometre of land. A place with lots of people and not much land is crowded — its density is high. Figure 2.4 works it out for every continent by dividing the numbers in Figure 2.2 by the numbers in Figure 2.3.

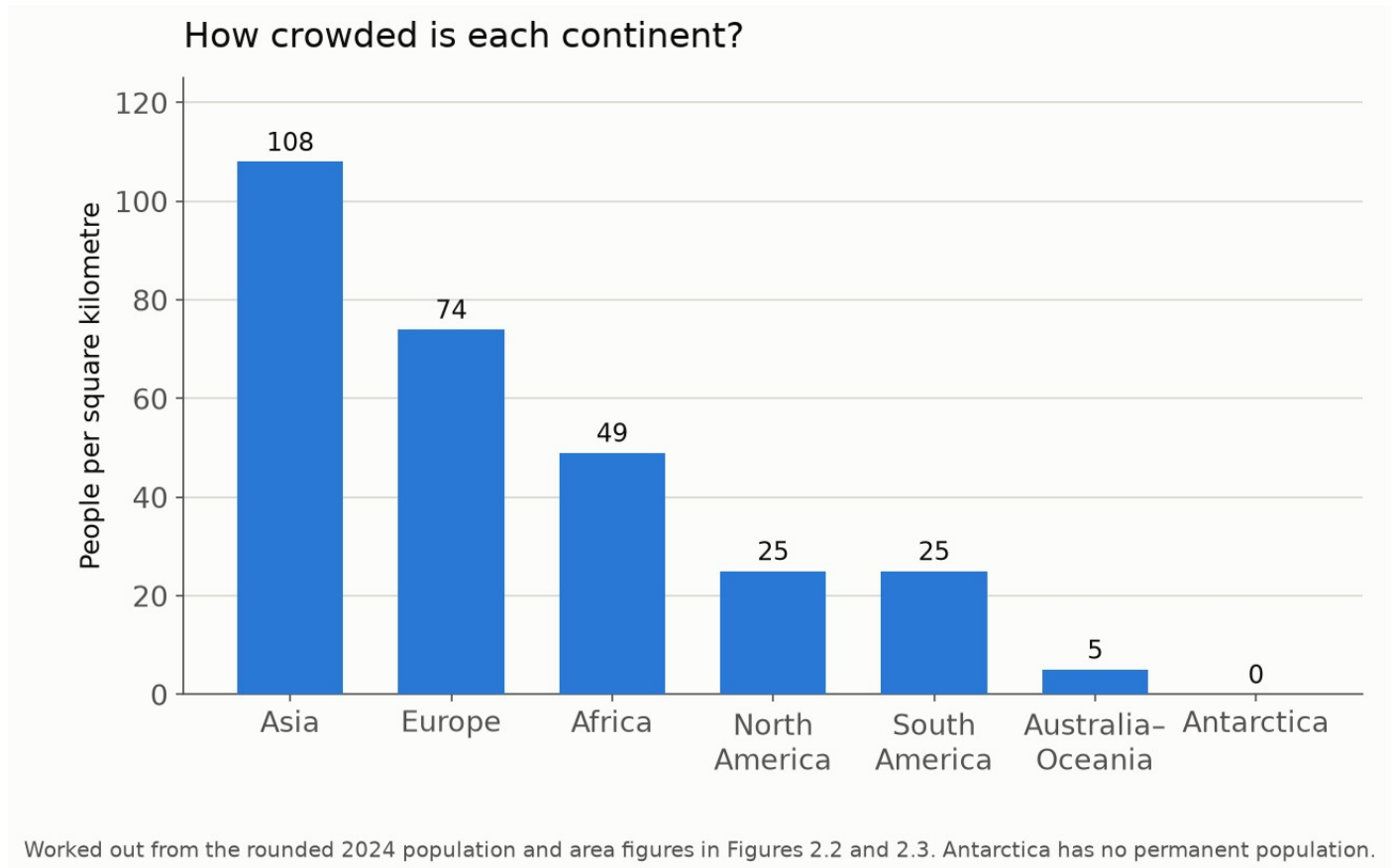


Figure 2.4 — How crowded is each continent?

Asia is by far the most crowded continent — about 108 people for every square kilometre. Australia–Oceania has only about 5 people per square kilometre, which is why so much of our continent feels wide open and empty.

Climate means the weather a place usually has, year after year. **Vegetation** means the plants that grow wild in a place. You already know from earlier years that places near the equator (the imaginary line around the middle of the Earth) are hot, and places near the poles are cold. That is why each continent has its own mix of climates and plants:

- **Asia** – hot and wet in the south with rainforests, cold and icy in the far north, and big dry deserts like the Gobi in the middle.
- **Africa** – the equator runs through its middle, so it is usually hot: the huge Sahara desert in the north, rainforest in the middle, and wide grass country (called savanna) in between.
- **Europe** – usually mild with four seasons, cold and snowy in the north, and very little desert.
- **North America** – from hot Mexico up to icy Alaska, with grass country, big forests and desert in the south and west.
- **South America** – the huge Amazon rainforest, the tall Andes mountains, and one of the driest deserts on Earth, the Atacama.
- **Australia–Oceania** – usually warm: dry desert in the middle (the outback), hot wet rainforest in the north, and mild forest and farms in the south.
- **Antarctica** – the coldest, driest and windiest continent: a land of ice with no trees at all.

Rivers shape every continent too. A river gives people water, food, travel and power, so most of the world’s biggest cities sit on rivers. Figure 2.5 shows the longest river on each continent.

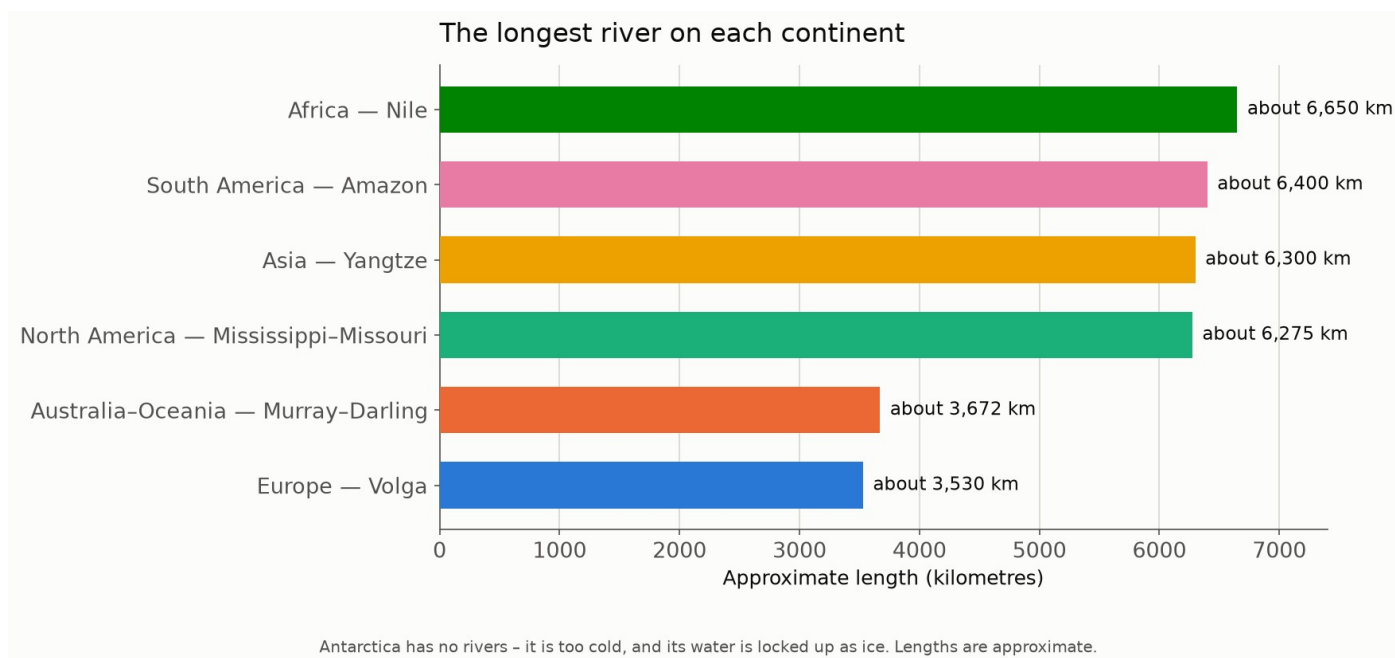


Figure 2.5 — The longest river on each continent. Antarctica has no rivers — its water is locked up as ice.

The Murray–Darling is *our* great river system. It runs through New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, and its water grows much of Australia’s food.

Part 2 — Major countries, seen from Australia

A continent is made up of **countries** — pieces of land with their own government, laws and often their own language. Some countries are called *major* countries. *In this book, a major country is one that stands out because it has many people, a large area, or strong links with Australia.* (Other books may choose slightly different lists.) Here are some major countries on each continent, with rounded 2024 United Nations population figures:

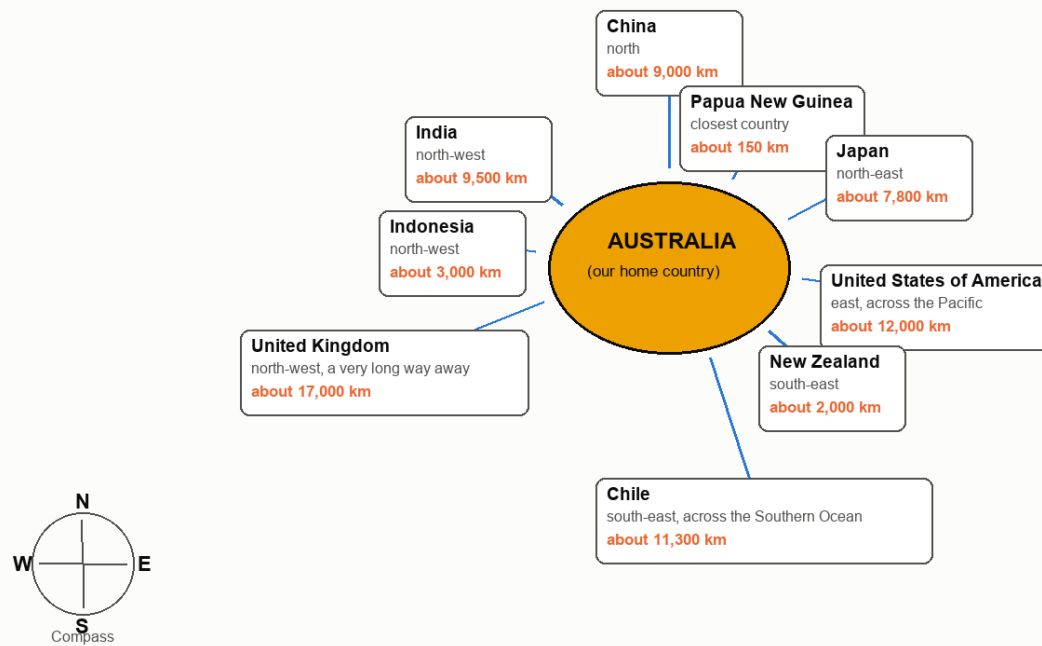
Continent	Some major countries (rounded population)
Asia	China (about 1,420 million), India (about 1,450 million), Indonesia (about 285 million), Japan (about 124 million)
Africa	Nigeria (about 235 million), Ethiopia (about 135 million), Egypt (about 115 million)
Europe	Russia (about 144 million, part of it also in Asia), Germany (about 84 million), United Kingdom (about 69 million)
North America	United States of America (about 340 million), Mexico (about 135 million), Canada (about 40 million)
South America	Brazil (about 212 million), Colombia (about 53 million), Argentina (about 46 million)
Australia–Oceania	Australia (about 27 million), Papua New Guinea (about 11 million), New Zealand (about 5.3 million)
Antarctica	no countries at all — only research stations from many countries

Notice Russia: it is so wide that part of it sits in Europe and part in Asia. Borders like that remind us that continents are a way of *grouping* land, not walls in the ground.

Now the skill this book wants you to practise: locating these countries **in relation to Australia** — using compass directions (north, south, east, west and the in-between ones) and rough distances. Stand the map on Australia, as in Figure 2.6.

Where are the world's major countries, seen from Australia?

Directions and distances are approximate. This drawing is not to scale.



Original model diagram, Geography 5. Distances are rough straight-line figures between well-known places, rounded.

Figure 2.6 — Where are the world's major countries, seen from Australia? (Not to scale; directions and distances are approximate.)

Three facts to remember from Figure 2.6:

- **Papua New Guinea is the closest country to Australia** — only about 150 km north of the tip of Cape York in Queensland.
- **New Zealand**, about 2,000 km to the south-east, is our closest major partner in the same ocean.
- The **United Kingdom** is one of the countries a very long way from Australia — about 17,000 km — yet Australia and the UK are still strongly linked by migration, sport and history.

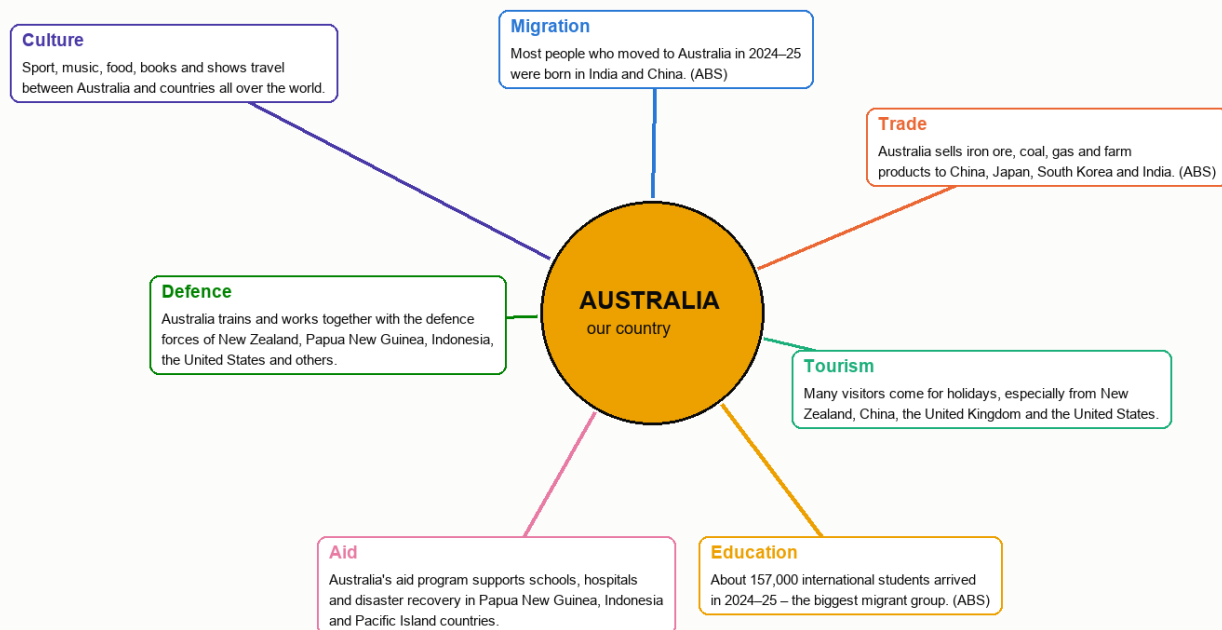
Distance does not decide how connected two countries are. That is the next big idea.

Part 3 — Interconnections with Australia

Interconnection (one of geography's big ideas) means the ways places are joined to each other and affect each other — by people moving, goods being sold, ideas and culture travelling. Countries can be close in connection even when they are far in distance.

Figure 2.7 shows seven ways Australia is connected with other countries. The boxes marked (ABS) use real numbers from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. (In this book, *defence* means countries' armed forces training and working together.)

Seven ways Australia is connected with other countries

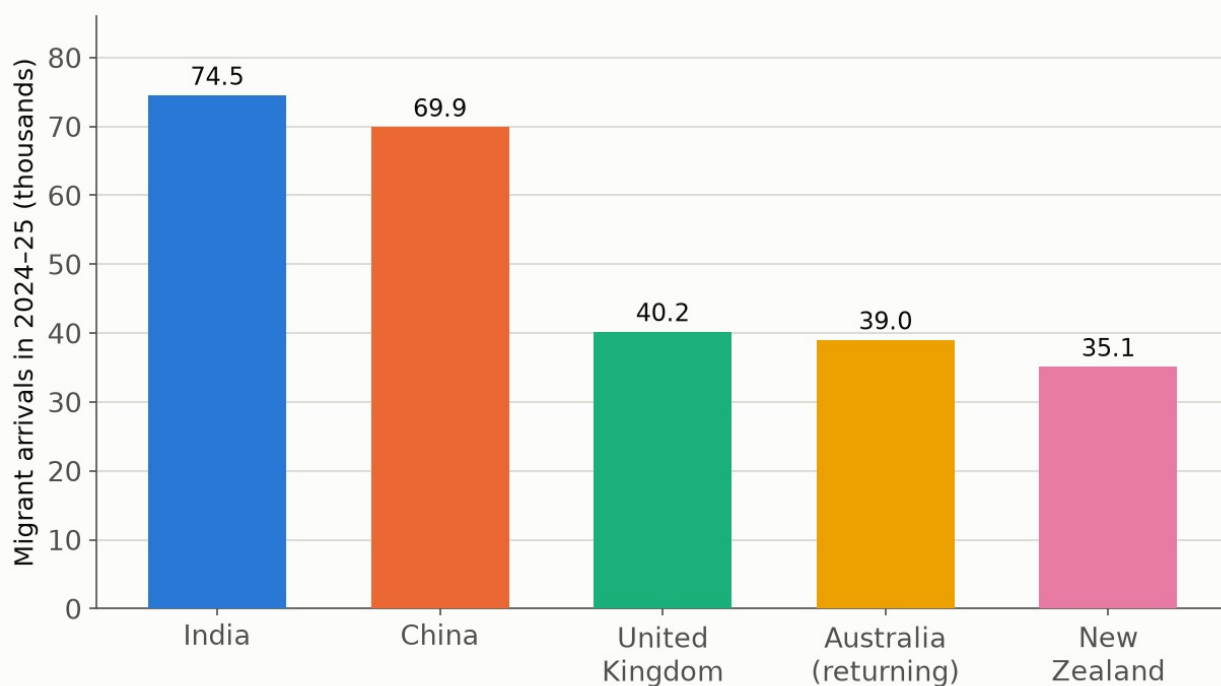


Original model diagram, Geography 5. Facts marked (ABS) use real Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for 2024–25 and 2026.

Figure 2.7 — Seven ways Australia is connected with other countries.

Migration means people moving from one country to live in another. Figure 2.8 uses real ABS numbers to show where people moving to Australia in 2024–25 were born.

Where did people moving to Australia come from?



Source: ABS, Overseas Migration, 2024–25 (cat. 3412.0), year ending June 2025, top five countries of birth. Accessed 25 August 2026.

Figure 2.8 — Where did people moving to Australia come from? (ABS, 2024–25.)

Figure 2.9 shows the **net** number — what you get when you take the departures away from the arrivals. When the bar is red and below the line, more people left Australia than arrived.

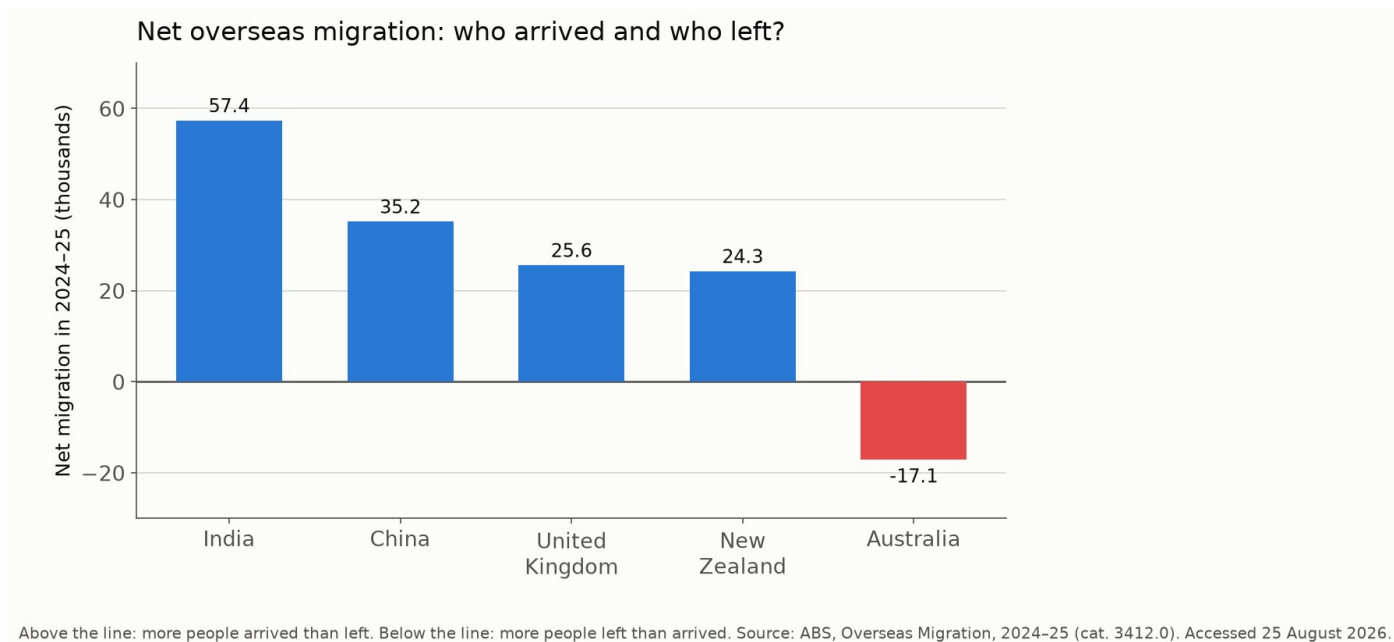


Figure 2.9 — Net overseas migration: who arrived and who left? (ABS, 2024-25.)

So the countries with the closest **migration** interconnection with Australia in 2024-25 were India, China, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

What does that mean for your own place? Look at Victoria in Figure 2.10: the biggest gains were people born in India and China, just like the national picture.

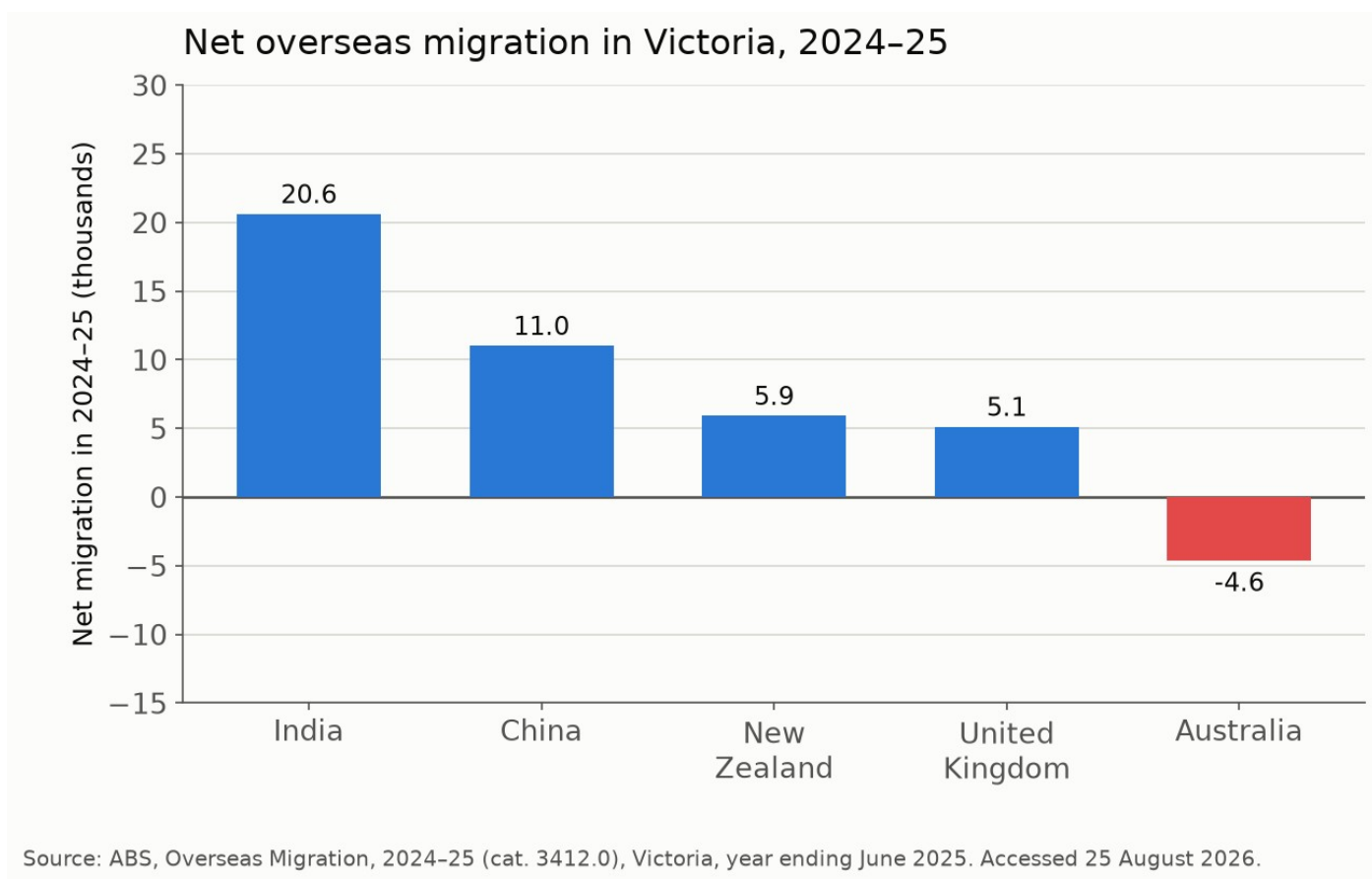


Figure 2.10 — Net overseas migration in Victoria, 2024-25 (ABS).

Impacts of these interconnections on a Victorian place might include: new classmates at school and new languages heard in the street; more Indian and Chinese restaurants and grocery shops in Melbourne suburbs; big public festivals

such as Lunar New Year and Diwali in Melbourne each year; and Victorian farms selling beef, dairy and wine to customers in China, Japan and India. Connections change what a place looks like, sounds like and sells.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with steps: reading a density chart

Question: Which continent is the most crowded, and how do we know from Figure 2.4?

Step	What to do	What we find
1	Read the title and the labels on the sides of the chart.	The bars show people per square kilometre.
2	Find the tallest bar.	Asia, at about 108.
3	Compare it with another bar.	Australia–Oceania is about 5 — Asia is more than 20 times as crowded.
4	Say the answer in a full sentence.	Asia is the most crowded continent, with about 108 people on every square kilometre, because it has by far the most people for its size.

Example 2 — with steps: reading migration data like a geographer

Question: Which countries had the closest migration interconnection with Australia in 2024–25? Use Figures 2.8 and 2.9.

Step	What to do	What we find
1	Read the source line under each chart.	Both charts are real ABS numbers for 2024–25.
2	Read Figure 2.8 (arrivals).	Most arrivals were born in India (about 74,500) and China (about 69,900).
3	Read Figure 2.9 (net).	India added about 57,400 people and China about 35,200 — the two biggest gains. The red Australia bar (–17,100) means more Australian-born people left than returned.
4	Say the answer in a full sentence.	In 2024–25, India and China had the closest migration interconnection with Australia, followed by the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Use Figure 2.1. Name the seven continents, starting with the one with the most people and ending with the one with no permanent population.

Q2. Use Figure 2.5. Match each river to its continent: (a) Nile, (b) Murray–Darling, (c) Amazon, (d) Yangtze.

Q3. Use Figure 2.2. (a) Which continent has the most people? (b) About how many people live in Africa? (c) Which continents have fewer than 100 million people?

Q4. Use Figure 2.3. (a) Which is the biggest continent by area? (b) Which is bigger, Antarctica or Europe? (c) Name the smallest continent.

Q5. Use Figure 2.4. (a) Which continent is the most crowded, and what is its number? (b) Which continent with people is the least crowded? (c) Why is Antarctica's number 0?

Q6. Use Figure 2.6. (a) Which is the closest country to Australia, and roughly how far away is it? (b) Which country sits about 7,800 km to the north-east? (c) Name one country that is east of Australia.

Q7. Use Figure 2.8. (a) Which country sent the most people to Australia in 2024–25? (b) About how many people arrived from India? (c) One bar is labelled “Australia (returning)”. What do you think that bar means?

Q8. Use Figure 2.7. (a) Name three ways Australia is connected with other countries. (b) Which three boxes carry real ABS numbers? (c) Which box do you think connects with your own family? Explain in one sentence.

On your own

Q9. Choose one continent. Using Figures 2.1–2.5, write three facts about it: one about its people, one about its land or rivers, and one about its climate or vegetation.

Q10. Look at the red Australia bars in Figures 2.9 and 2.10. In your own words, explain what they show about Australian-born people in 2024–25.

Q11. Draw your own simple diagram like Figure 2.6: Australia in the middle and four countries around it, each with a compass direction and a rough distance. Give it a title and a north arrow.

Q12. “India has a stronger connection with Australia than the United Kingdom does.” Do you agree? Use evidence from at least two figures to support your answer.

Big task — evidence first

Our place in the world. Write a short paragraph (5–6 sentences) answering: *Which countries is your place most connected with, and how?* Include: at least two real numbers from this section's figures, the name of the figure each number came from, one impact of these connections on your own place, and one way you and your class are part of these connections (for example: food, sport, music, family, school). Then add a small labelled map like Figure 2.6 showing the countries you named.

Answers

Q1. Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America, Australia–Oceania, Antarctica.

Q2. (a) Africa. (b) Australia–Oceania. (c) South America. (d) Asia.

Q3. (a) Asia. (b) About 1,500 million. (c) Australia–Oceania and Antarctica.

Q4. (a) Asia. (b) Antarctica. (c) Australia–Oceania.

Q5. (a) Asia, about 108 people per square kilometre. (b) Australia–Oceania, about 5. (c) Because nobody lives there for good — only visiting scientists.

Q6. (a) Papua New Guinea, about 150 km. (b) Japan. (c) The United States of America (or Chile).

Q7. (a) India. (b) About 74,500. (c) Australians who had been living overseas and came home.

Q8. (a) Any three of: migration, trade, tourism, education, aid, defence, culture. (b) Migration, trade and education. (c) Any sensible personal link with a one-sentence reason.

Q9–Q12. See the step-by-step solutions for what a good answer includes.

Big task. See the step-by-step solutions for the checklist.

Solutions shown step by step

Q9. A good answer names the continent and gives one correct fact from each group, for example for South America: about 440 million people live there; the Amazon is its longest river; it has hot wet rainforest and the dry Atacama desert.

Q10. A good answer says that the red bars are below the line, so more people born in Australia left the country (and left Victoria) in 2024–25 than moved in — while people born in India and China made up the biggest gains.

Q11. A good diagram has Australia in the middle; four countries with sensible directions and distances (for example New Zealand south-east, about 2,000 km); a title; and a north arrow.

Q12. A good answer picks a side and uses two figures, for example: agree — Figure 2.9 shows India added about 57,400 people to Australia while the UK added about 25,600, and Figure 2.8 shows more arrivals from India (about 74,500) than from the UK (about 40,200). A good disagree answer might use Figure 2.7 (defence and culture links with the UK) and Figure 2.6 (distance), but must still face the migration numbers. Either side earns full marks with honest reasoning from the figures.

Big task. A strong response names at least two countries; quotes at least two real numbers with their figure numbers (for example “India +20.6 thousand, Figure 2.10” and “about 74,500 arrivals from India, Figure 2.8”); gives one impact on the student’s own place (shops, festivals, classmates, goods sold overseas from Victoria); says one way the class is part of the connection; and includes a simple labelled map with directions.

Sources

- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects 2024* — rounded 2024 population figures for continents and countries. Accessed 25 August 2026.
- United Nations Statistics Division, continent groupings — rounded continent areas. Accessed 25 August 2026.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Overseas Migration, 2024-25 financial year* (cat. 3412.0, released 19 December 2025) — Figures 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10. Accessed 25 August 2026.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *International Trade in Goods, June 2026* — iron ore and coal shipments to China, Japan and South Korea (Figure 2.7, trade box). Accessed 25 August 2026.
- River lengths, climate and vegetation descriptions: standard reference values, rounded and put together by the author; distances and directions in Figure 2.6 are approximate straight-line figures between well-known places.

The Asia-Pacific region: geographical diversity, locations by latitude and longitude, environments and populations

Code VC2HG6K07 — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Geography, Levels 5–6, strand *Geographical Knowledge and Understanding*, sub-strand *Management of places*.

What do we mean by the “Asia-Pacific region”? In this section we use the VCAA’s frame (see code **VC2HG6K07.E01**): the region is **South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand**. Other definitions exist — for example, the APEC group also takes in parts of North and South America — so when you read “Asia-Pacific” somewhere else, check which countries the writer includes. On our maps, Australia is shown in grey as a familiar reference point only; it is not counted as one of the region’s five parts here.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

1. **Set the frame.** Use the definition box above and Figure 1 to name the five parts of the region. Stress that “Asia-Pacific” is a named frame with other versions, and that Australia sits nearby as our reference point.
2. **Meet the countries.** Figure 2 for the major countries and capital cities; quick oral check — point to a country, class names it and its sub-region.
3. **Pinpoint place.** Teach the grid (Figures 3 and 4): Equator and Prime Meridian first, then latitude before longitude, always N/S then E. Demonstration 1 models the skill; tasks 3–4 (with help) practise it.
4. **Environments and settlements.** Figures 5 and 6; students match environments to descriptions, then sort settlement types and discuss the pattern (most big cities sit on coasts and river plains).
5. **People in numbers.** Figures 7 and 8; Demonstration 2 models reading two bar charts side by side (population in millions, life expectancy in years). Tasks 7–8 practise the same reading.
6. **Ties with Australia.** Figures 9–11: birthplace (Census), goods trade, and migration. Define *interconnection* and have students name a tie of their own (food, family, sport, school).
7. **Local connection (VC2HG6K07.E06).** Task U4 sends students to ABS Census QuickStats for their own suburb or town, so the national picture in Figure 9 is checked against a local one.
8. **Evidence task.** The country profile at the end of the section; students must name the figures they used. Use the checklist for feedback.

Elaborations **VC2HG6K07.E01–E06** are illustrated across the section rather than taught one-by-one; skills such as map conventions are practised here but formally taught in the skills sections of this book.

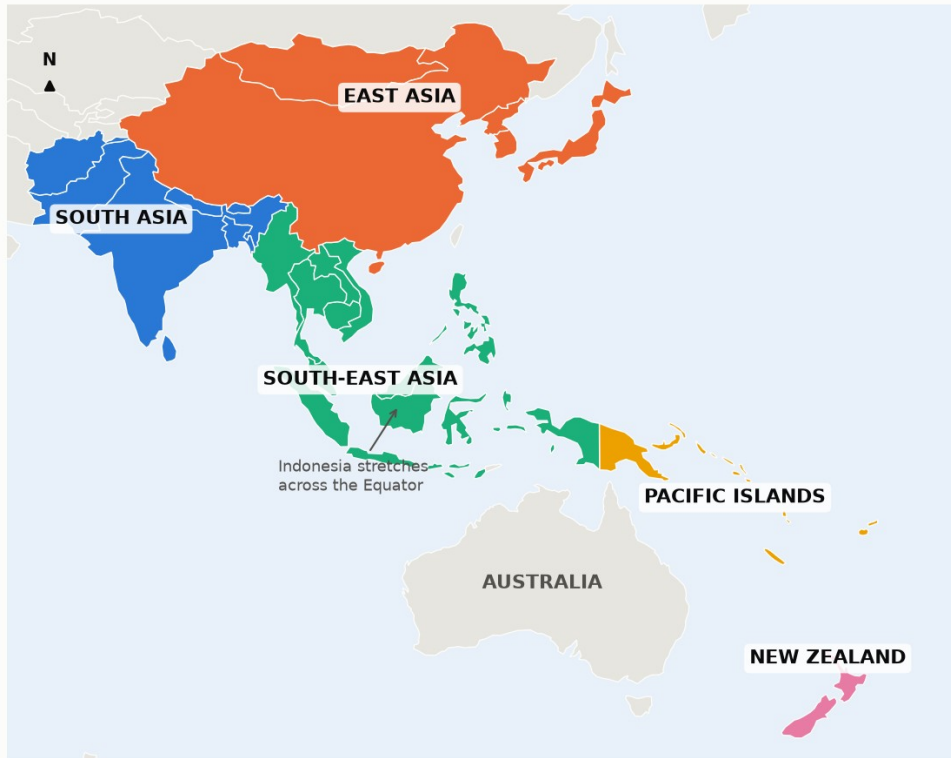
Theory

1. One region, five parts (VC2HG6K07.E01)

A **region** is an area we group together because its places share something. The Asia-Pacific region, as the VCAA defines it, has five parts: **South Asia** (for example India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), **South-East Asia** (for example Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines), **East Asia** (for example China, Japan, South Korea), the **Pacific Islands** (for example Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu), and **New Zealand**.

The Asia-Pacific region: five sub-regions

The region studied in this section (shown in colour) is South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand.



Source: Natural Earth v5 admin-0 boundaries (public domain), accessed 2026-08-25. Sub-regions as defined in the Victorian Curriculum F-10 Geography, Levels 5-6 (VC2HG6K07.E01).

Map of the Asia-Pacific region with its five parts shaded in different colours: South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand, with Australia shown in grey for reference

The region is full of **diversity** — many different kinds of places. Using maps, geographers pick out its main characteristics: major rivers (the Ganges, the Mekong, the Yangtze), climates (hot and wet near the Equator, four seasons far to the north and south, dry deserts in between), vegetation (dense rainforest, grass country, mountain forest), **population density** (how crowded a place is — the number of people living in each square kilometre), and languages and religions (hundreds of languages are spoken; among the religions with the most followers are Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity).

2. The major countries and their capitals (VC2HG6K07.E02)

Figure 2 locates the region's major countries and marks their capital cities. Maps and geospatial tools (for example, Google Earth) all do the same job: they let you name a country and point to exactly where it is.

Asia-Pacific countries and their capitals

Each black dot marks a national capital. Australia and the region's five sub-regions are tinted lightly.



Source: Natural Earth v5 admin-0 boundaries and populated places (public domain), accessed 2026-08-25.

Map of the Asia-Pacific region showing the major countries in light tints and their capital cities as dots, for example Tokyo, Beijing, New Delhi, Bangkok, Manila, Singapore, Jakarta, Port Moresby and Wellington

Notice two things. First, the countries are very different in size — China and India are huge, Singapore is a tiny island city-country, and Pacific countries such as Fiji and Tuvalu are spread over wide ocean. Second, many capitals sit on the coast (Tokyo, Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila, Wellington), which is a clue about where people choose to live.

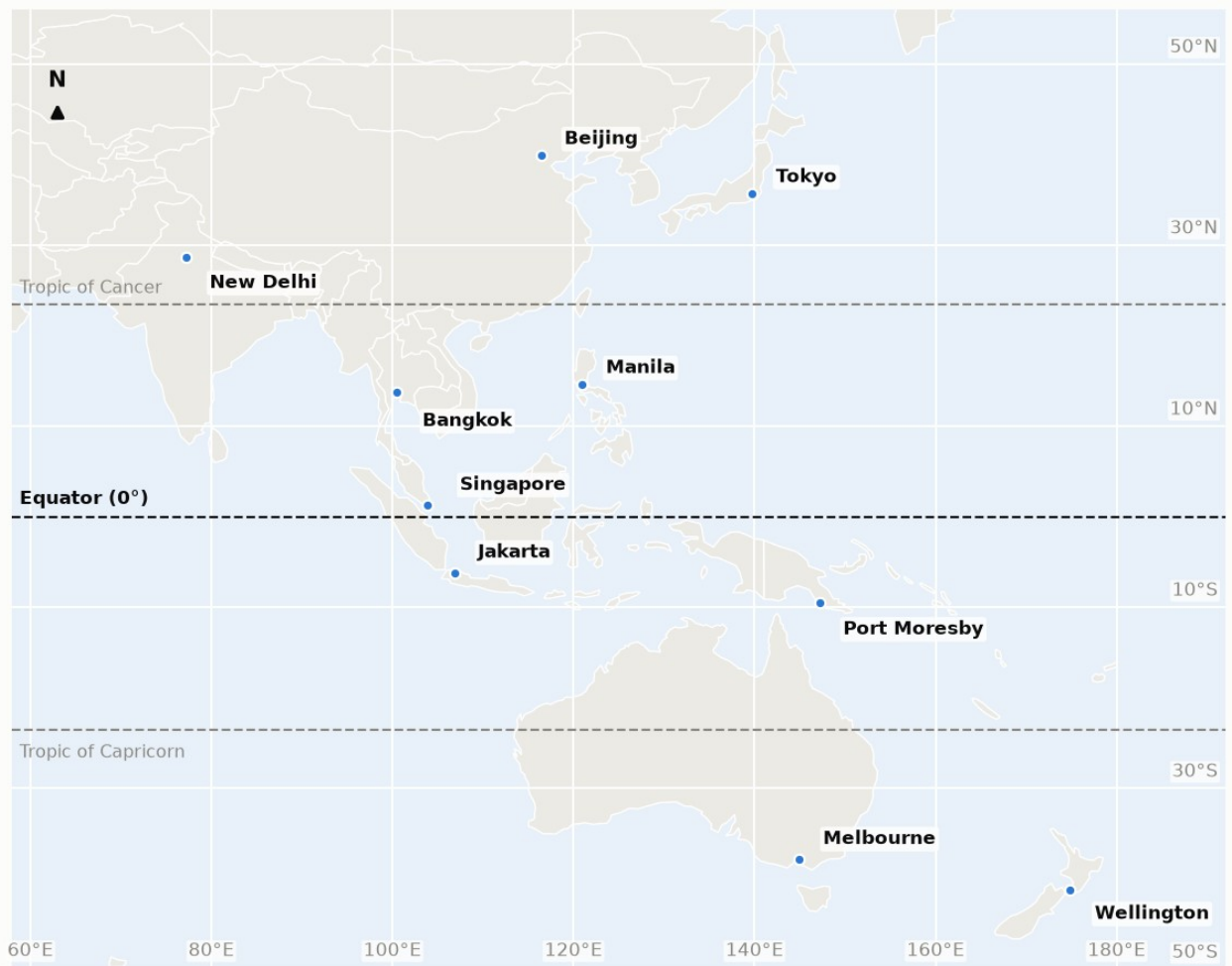
3. Pinpointing place: latitude and longitude (VC2HG6K07.E03)

A description like “near the top of the map” is not exact, so geographers give every place an **absolute location** — its exact position on Earth, written as **latitude** then **longitude**.

- **Latitude** tells you how far north or south a place is from the **Equator** (the line at 0° that goes around the middle of the Earth). Lines of latitude run east–west and are measured in degrees (°) north (N) or south (S).
- **Longitude** tells you how far east or west a place is from the **Prime Meridian** (the 0° line through Greenwich, England). Lines of longitude run north–south and are measured in degrees east (E) or west (W). Everything in our region is east of the Prime Meridian, so our longitudes all carry an E.

Latitude and longitude: ten cities of the Asia-Pacific

Find a city's row in the table below, then read its position on this grid: latitude first (N or S), then longitude (E).



Source: base map Natural Earth v5 (public domain), accessed 2026-08-25; city coordinates from Natural Earth v5 populated places, rounded.

Map of the Asia-Pacific region with a 20-degree latitude and longitude grid, the Equator and the Tropics marked, and ten cities plotted, including Tokyo, New Delhi, Singapore, Jakarta, Port Moresby, Melbourne and Wellington

Read latitude first, then longitude. Singapore sits almost on the Equator, at about 1.29° N — so it is hot all year. Melbourne (37.82° S) and Wellington (41.29° S) are the far-southern cities of the grid, while Beijing (39.90° N) is about as far north as Melbourne is south.

Absolute location of ten cities (latitude first, then longitude)

Check each row against the map above. Same city, same position — the numbers are the map in words.

City	Country	Latitude	Longitude
Tokyo	Japan	35.69° N	139.75° E
Beijing	China	39.90° N	116.39° E
New Delhi	India	28.60° N	77.20° E
Bangkok	Thailand	13.75° N	100.51° E
Manila	Philippines	14.61° N	120.98° E
Singapore	Singapore	1.29° N	103.85° E
Jakarta	Indonesia	6.17° S	106.83° E
Port Moresby	Papua New Guinea	9.46° S	147.19° E
Melbourne	Australia	37.82° S	144.97° E
Wellington	New Zealand	41.29° S	174.78° E

Source: Natural Earth v5 populated places, coordinates rounded, accessed 2026-08-25. N = north of the Equator; S = south of the Equator; E = east of the Prime Meridian.

Table giving the absolute location of ten cities: city, country, latitude and longitude, for example Tokyo 35.69 degrees north 139.75 degrees east, and Wellington 41.29 degrees south 174.78 degrees east

4. Environments and settlements (VC2HG6K07.E04)

An **environment** is the natural setting of a place — its landforms, climate and living things. A **settlement** is any place where people live, from a single camp to the biggest city. Figure 5 shows how different the region's environments are; Figure 6 shows the kinds of settlements people build in them.

Seven very different environments in the Asia-Pacific region

One region, many environments — from frozen peaks to coral atolls.

Environment	Real example	What it is like
High mountains	the Himalaya — Nepal, India, China	the world's tallest peaks; snow and ice all year
Fertile river plains	Ganges plain — India, Bangladesh	rich soil; crowded rice and wheat farms
Dry desert and steppe	the Gobi — Mongolia, China	little rain; wide open grazing country
Tropical rainforest	Borneo, Sumatra — Indonesia, Malaysia	hot and wet all year; dense forest
Monsoon coasts	Vietnam and Thailand	wet and dry seasons; rice paddies and big ports
Low coral atolls	Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji	tiny flat islands only a little above sea level
Cool temperate islands	northern Japan; New Zealand	four seasons; winter snow in the ranges

Source: descriptive summary of well-known physical environments (Natural Earth v5 base knowledge), accessed 2026-08-25.

Table of seven environments in the region with a real example and a short description for each: high mountains such as the Himalaya, fertile river plains such as the Ganges plain, dry desert and steppe such as the Gobi, tropical rainforest on Borneo and Sumatra, monsoon coasts in Vietnam and Thailand, low coral atolls such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, and cool temperate islands in northern Japan and New Zealand

Two of those words need unpacking. A **monsoon** is a seasonal wind that brings a wet season and a dry season; a **monsoon coast** gets heavy summer rain that lets farmers grow rice. An **atoll** (say it “AT-ol”) is a low ring-shaped island built of coral, only a little above sea level.

From megacity to herders' camp: how people in the region live

Most people in the region live in towns and cities, but many still live in villages — and a few keep moving with their herds.

Type of settlement	Real example in the region
Megacity (10 million or more)	Tokyo (the world's largest), Delhi, Jakarta, Manila, Beijing
Big city	Seoul, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City
Medium city	Wellington (about 400,000 people), Colombo
Small town	Queenstown, New Zealand; Hoi An, Vietnam
Village	rice-farming villages on the Mekong delta, Vietnam
Camp of moving herders	Mongolia's Gobi — families follow their animals with the seasons

Source: settlement types and named examples as in the UN World Urbanization Prospects (population.un.org/wup), accessed 2026-08-25; Wellington population, NZ Government census 2018.

Table of settlement types from largest to smallest with real examples: megacity such as Tokyo, big city such as Seoul, medium city such as Wellington, small town such as Queenstown, village such as rice-farming villages on the Mekong delta, and camp of moving herders in Mongolia’s Gobi

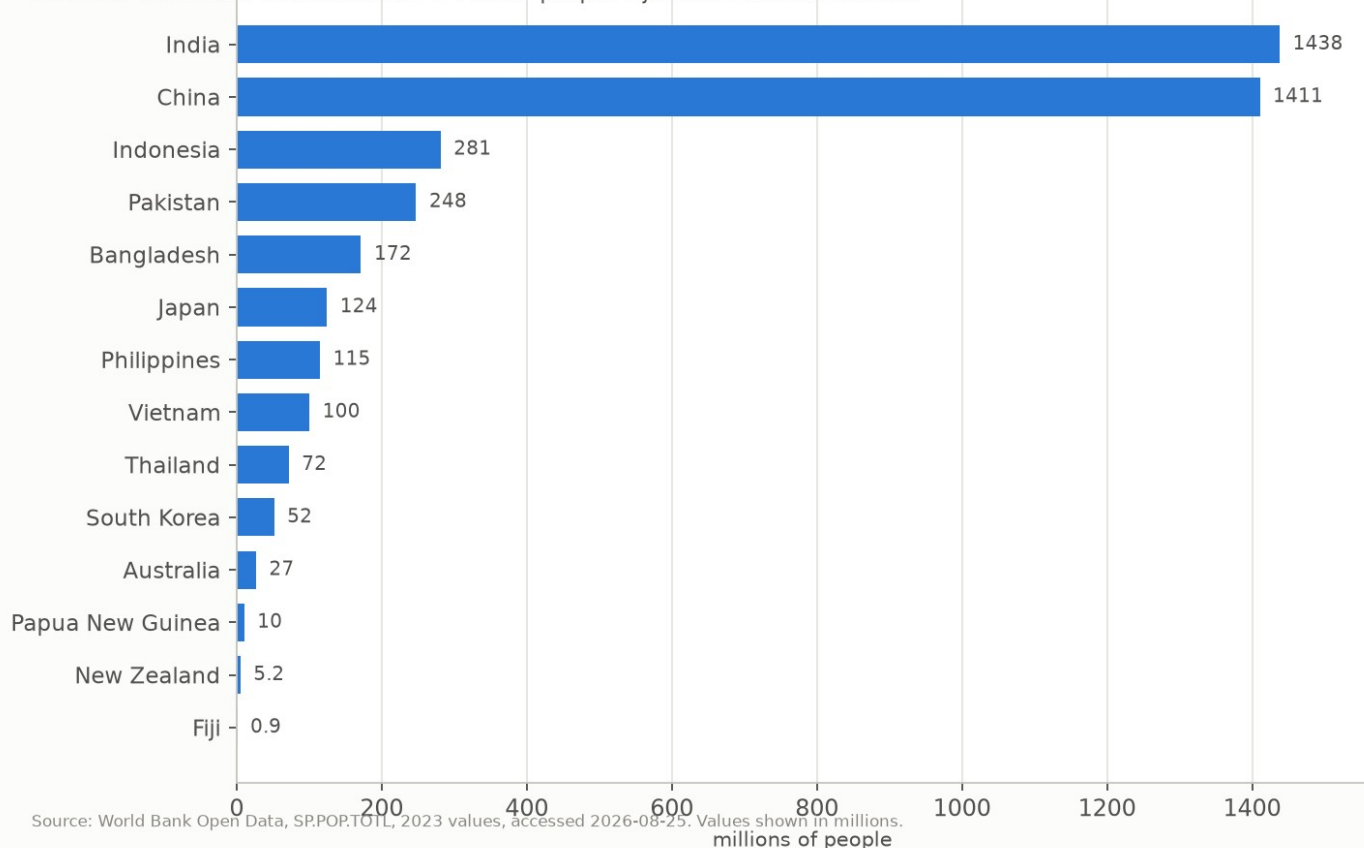
A **megacity** is a city area of ten million or more people; Tokyo is the world’s largest. Now look for the pattern: most of the region’s big settlements sit on river plains and coasts, where soil, water and trade make life easier, while mountains, deserts and rainforest hold far fewer people. At the other end of the scale, some families in Mongolia’s Gobi still move camp with their animals as the seasons change. (A **delta** is the flat, branching mouth of a river, where it drops its mud before reaching the sea — perfect for rice.)

5. People in numbers: population and life expectancy (VC2HG6K07.E05)

The **population** of a country is the number of people living there. **Life expectancy** is the number of years a newborn baby could expect to live if life stayed the same as it is now. Both are easy to read off a bar chart — and the differences inside our region are enormous.

How many people live in each country? Population in 2023

India and China each hold more than 1.4 billion people. Fiji holds under one million.

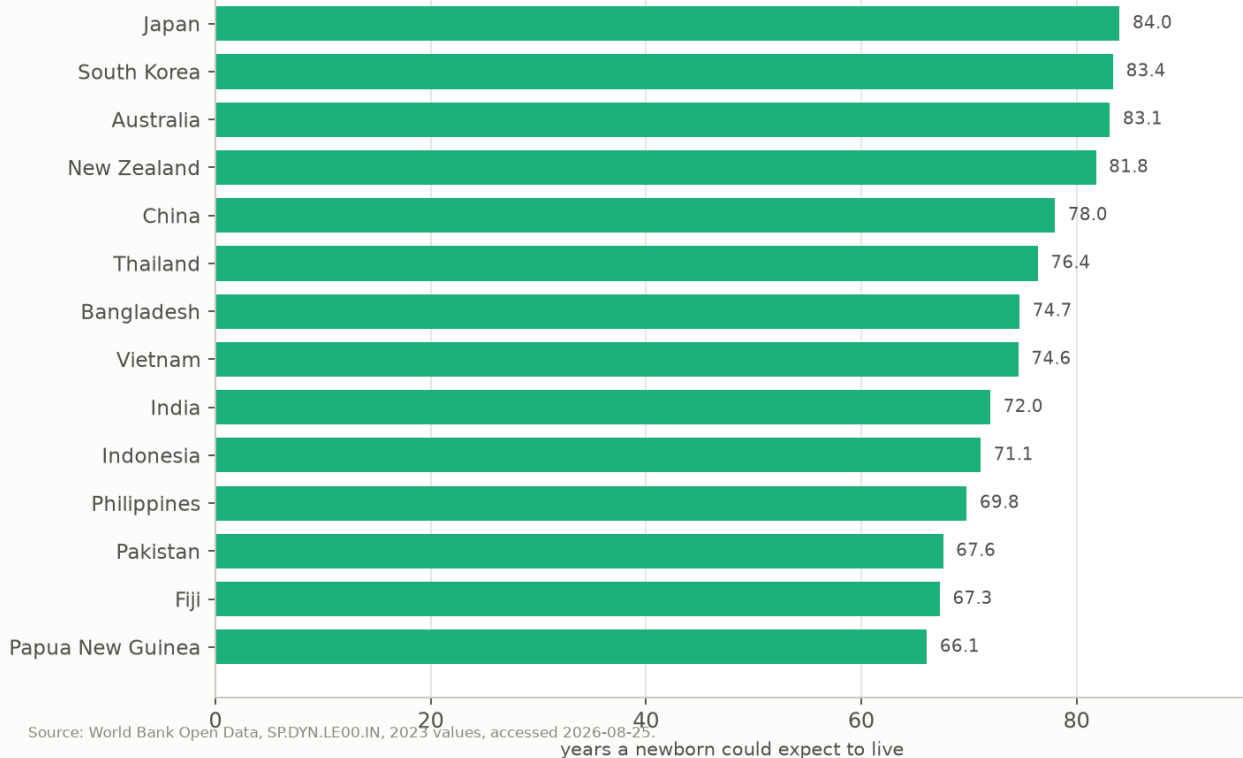


Bar chart of population in 2023 for fourteen countries of the region plus Australia, in millions: India 1438.1, China 1410.7, Indonesia 281.2, Pakistan 247.5, Bangladesh 171.5, Japan 124.5, Philippines 114.9, Vietnam 100.4, Thailand 71.7, South Korea 51.7, Australia 26.7, Papua New Guinea 10.4, New Zealand 5.2, Fiji 0.9

India and China each hold well over a billion people, while Fiji holds under one million — the smallest bar on the chart. Australia's 26.7 million sits near the bottom too: most of the region's giant populations are to our north.

Life expectancy at birth, 2023

A baby born in Japan in 2023 could expect about 84 years; a baby in Papua New Guinea about 66 — a gap of 18 years in the same region.



Bar chart of life expectancy at birth in 2023 for the same countries, in years: Japan 84.0, South Korea 83.4, Australia 83.1, New Zealand 81.8, China 78.0, Thailand 76.4, Bangladesh 74.7, Vietnam 74.6, India 72.0, Indonesia 71.1, Philippines 69.8, Pakistan 67.6, Fiji 67.3, Papua New Guinea 66.1

A baby born in Japan in 2023 could expect about 84 years; a baby born in Papua New Guinea about 66 — a gap of 18 years inside one region. And compare the two charts: big population does not mean long life. India has the biggest population on the first chart but sits mid-table on the second, while small New Zealand beats every country except three.

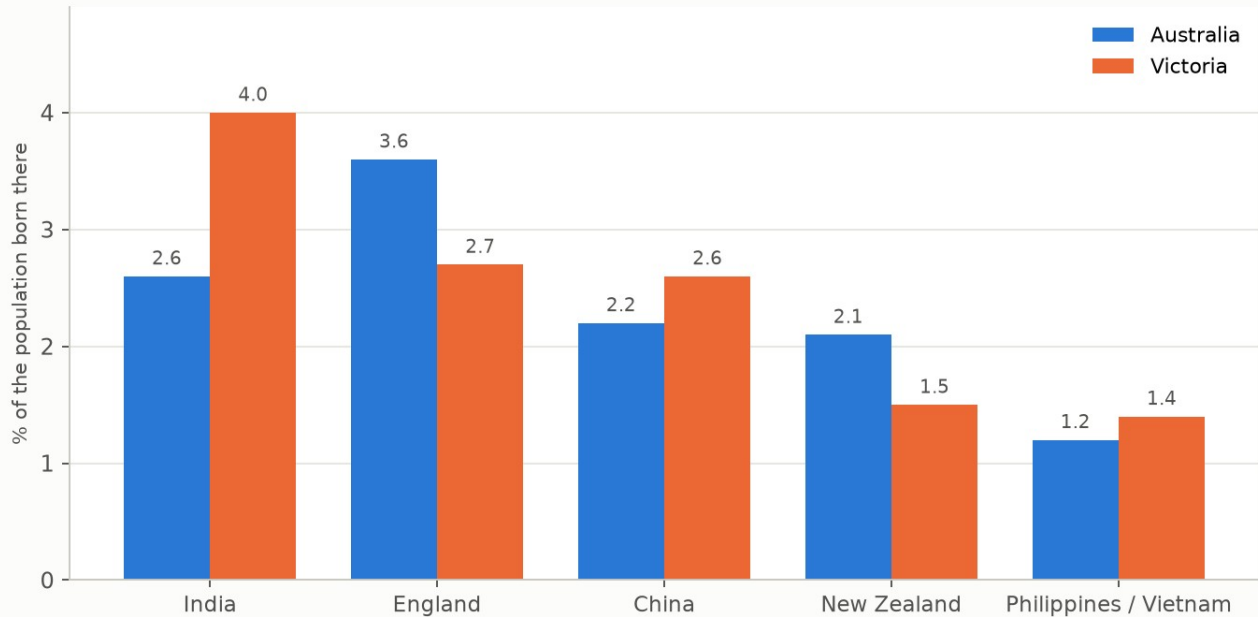
6. Ties with Australia (VC2HG6K07.E06)

An **interconnection** is a link between places — people, goods, money and ideas moving between them. Australia has strong ties with the Asia-Pacific region, and three datasets make that easy to see.

Birthplace. At the 2021 Census, 66.9% of Australians were born in Australia and 33.1% were born overseas. The most common overseas birthplaces were England (3.6% of all Australians), India (2.6%), China (2.2%), New Zealand (2.1%) and the Philippines (1.2%). Victoria's pattern is a little different: 65.0% born in Australia, and the top overseas birthplaces are India (4.0%), England (2.7%), China (2.6%), New Zealand (1.5%) and Vietnam (1.4%). Group those countries into world cultural regions using Figure 1 and a pattern jumps out: most of the biggest overseas birthplaces are *inside* the Asia-Pacific region (South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and the Pacific), with England standing for the older tie to Europe.

Born overseas: top birthplaces of Australians and Victorians, 2021

Each bar is the share of people living here who were born in that country. In Victoria, India is the most common overseas birthplace.



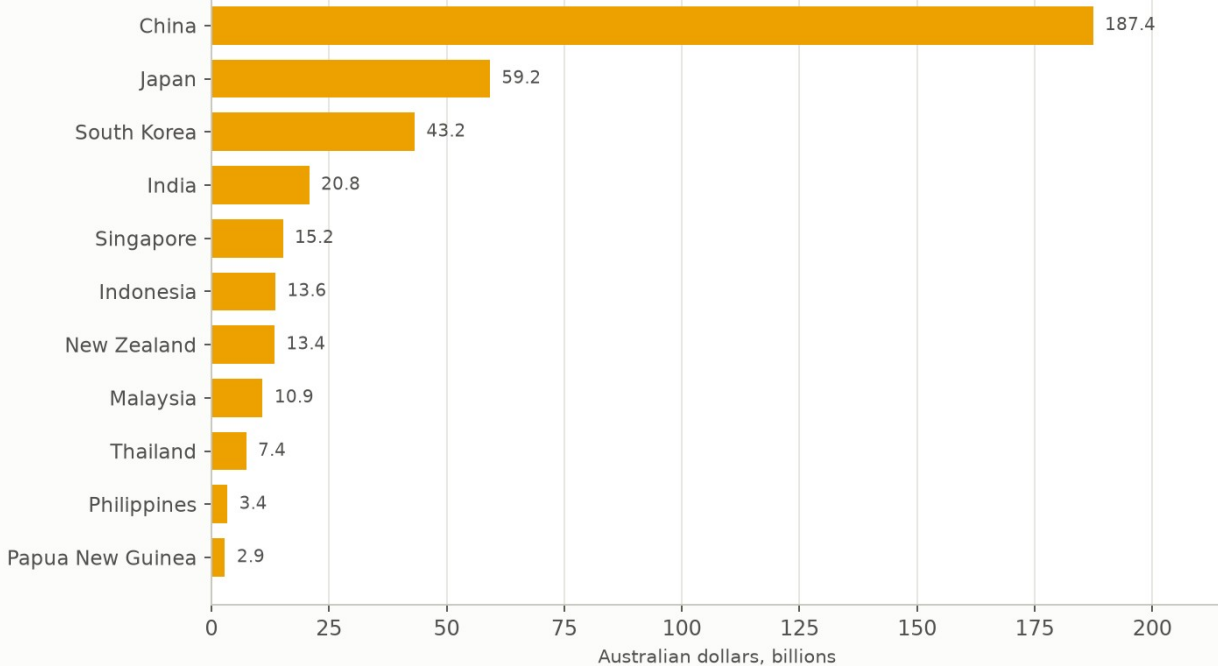
Source: ABS 2021 Census QuickStats, Australia and Victoria, accessed 2026-08-25.

Grouped bar chart comparing Australia and Victoria: share of people born in India, England, China, New Zealand, and the Philippines for Australia or Vietnam for Victoria, from the 2021 Census

Trade. Australia sells goods — things like iron ore, coal, gold, wheat and beef — to the region. In 2025-26, China alone bought A\$187.4 billion of Australian goods, more than the next three markets (Japan, South Korea and India) added together.

What Australia sells to the region, 2025-26

China buys more of Australia's goods than the next three markets together.



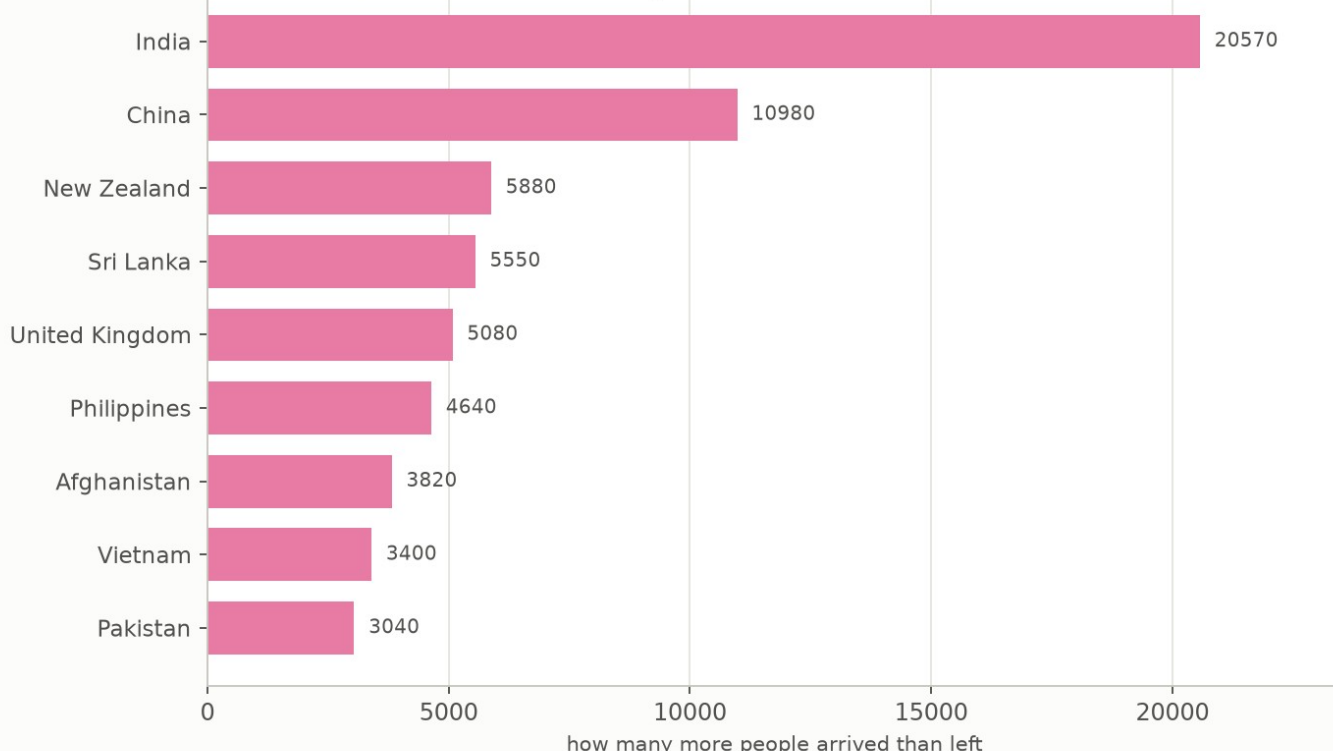
Source: ABS 5368.0 International Trade in Goods, June 2026 release (released 6/08/2026), table 14a, monthly exports summed over the 2025-26 financial year; accessed 2026-08-25.

Bar chart of Australian goods exports in 2025-26 in billions of Australian dollars: China 187.4, Japan 59.2, South Korea 43.2, India 20.8, Singapore 15.2, Indonesia 13.6, New Zealand 13.4, Malaysia 10.9, Thailand 7.4, Philippines 3.4, Papua New Guinea 2.9

Migration. Migration is people moving to live in a new place; net overseas migration counts how many more people arrived than left. In 2024-25, Victoria gained 20,570 people born in India — more than from the next two countries (China and New Zealand) added together — and most of the top nine birthplaces were in the Asia-Pacific region.

New Victorians: net overseas migration by country of birth, 2024-25

Most of Victoria's new arrivals were born in the Asia-Pacific region.



Source: ABS 3407.0 Overseas Migration, 2024-25 (released 19/12/2025), data cube 34070DO001_202425, table 1.3; accessed 2026-08-25.

Bar chart of net overseas migration to Victoria in 2024-25 by country of birth: India 20570, China 10980, New Zealand 5880, Sri Lanka 5550, United Kingdom 5080, Philippines 4640, Afghanistan 3820, Vietnam 3400, Pakistan 3040

So the region is not just “nearby” — it is part of daily Australian life: the birthplaces of many Australians, the buyers of our goods, and the newest arrivals in our towns.

Worked examples

Demonstration 1 — Reading absolute location from the map and the table (Figures 3 and 4)

Goal: find the absolute location of Bangkok, then check it against the table.

1. Find Bangkok’s blue dot on Figure 3. It sits a little way *above* the Equator, between the 0° and 20°N lines, closer to 20°N — so its latitude is a bit under 20° N.
2. Now read *down* to the longitude labels. The dot is just past the 100°E line — so its longitude is about 100° E.
3. Write latitude first, then longitude, with N/S and E attached: *about 14° N, 100° E*.
4. Check Figure 4: Bangkok, Thailand — 13.75° N, 100.51° E. Our map reading (“a bit under 20° N, just past 100° E”) matches the exact numbers.

Say it as a sentence: “The absolute location of Bangkok is 13.75 degrees north of the Equator and 100.51 degrees east of the Prime Meridian.”

Demonstration 2 — Reading two bar charts together (Figures 7 and 8)

Goal: compare India and Australia on population, then on life expectancy.

1. Figure 7, India: the bar runs to 1438.1 — that is 1438.1 *million* people, or about 1.44 billion. Australia: 26.7 million.

- Compare by how many times: $1438.1 \div 26.7$ is about 54, so India holds about 54 times as many people as Australia.
- Figure 8, India: 72.0 years. Australia: 83.1 years. The gap is $83.1 - 72.0 = 11.1$ years.
- Put the two readings together in one careful sentence (describe — do not say more than the numbers show): “India’s population is about 54 times Australia’s, yet a baby born in Australia in 2023 could expect about 11 more years of life than a baby born in India.”

Check your habit: always read the chart’s unit label first (millions? years?) before you compare bars.

Practice questions

With help

S1 — Sub-regions (Figure 1). Match each country to its part of the region: India, Japan, Vietnam, Fiji, New Zealand. (Choices: *South Asia · South-East Asia · East Asia · Pacific Islands · New Zealand*)

S2 — Capitals (Figure 2). Write the capital city for: (a) Japan, (b) India, (c) Thailand, (d) Indonesia, (e) New Zealand.

S3 — The grid (Figures 3 and 4). Copy the table and fill in the blanks from Figure 4, then circle N or S.

City	Latitude	Longitude	North or south of the Equator?
Manila		120.98° E	N / S
Jakarta	6.17° S		N / S
Wellington			N / S

S4 — Writing absolute location (Figure 4). Finish the sentences: (a) “Jakarta’s absolute location is ...” (b) “Melbourne’s absolute location is ...” Remember: latitude first, then longitude.

S5 — Environments (Figure 5). Match: (a) the world’s tallest peaks, snow and ice all year; (b) hot and wet all year, dense forest; (c) tiny flat islands only a little above sea level. (Choices: *high mountains · tropical rainforest · low coral atolls*)

S6 — Settlements (Figure 6). Put each example under its settlement type: Tokyo; Queenstown (New Zealand); a rice-farming village on the Mekong delta; Wellington. (Types: *megacity · medium city · small town · village*)

S7 — Population (Figure 7). Finish: “The two most populated countries are _____ and _____, each with more than _____ million people. The smallest population on the chart is _____, with _____ million.”

S8 — Life expectancy (Figure 8). Finish: “Life expectancy is highest in _____, at _____ years. It is lowest in _____, at _____ years. The gap between them is about _____ years.”

S9 — Birthplace (Figure 9). Finish: “For Australia as a whole, the most common overseas birthplace is _____. In Victoria it is _____. One birthplace in Victoria’s top five that is not in Australia’s top five is _____.”

On your own

U1. Choose any two countries shown on Figures 7 and 8. In three to four sentences, compare their population and their life expectancy, quoting the numbers.

U2. Study Figures 2 and 6. Describe the pattern of where people live in the Asia-Pacific region: which kinds of settlement are most common, and where the biggest cities sit. Write four to five sentences.

U3. Pick one country from Figure 10 or Figure 11. Explain two interconnections between that country and Australia (one about trade or migration, one of your own choosing — for example food in your supermarket, a sport, or family links). Name the figure you used.

U4 — Local data (VC2HG6K07.E06). Use the ABS Census QuickStats finder (abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats) to look up your own suburb or town. List its top three overseas

birthplaces, say which part of the Asia-Pacific region (Figure 1) each one is in, and compare your local list with Victoria's list in Figure 9. Two to three sentences of comparison.

Evidence task

Country profile. Choose one Asia-Pacific country. Produce a half-page profile that includes: (1) a small sketch map showing the country's location, labelled with its sub-region and one country next to it; (2) the absolute location of its capital from Figure 4 (or, if your country is not in the table, its position described against the grid in Figure 3); (3) one environment found there (Figure 5); (4) its population and life expectancy compared with Australia's in one sentence each (Figures 7 and 8); (5) one interconnection with Australia (Figures 9–11 or your own checked example). **You must name the figure number for every fact.** Checklist: location ✓ · environment ✓ · two numbers compared with Australia ✓ · one interconnection ✓ · sources named ✓.

Answers

S1. India — South Asia; Japan — East Asia; Vietnam — South-East Asia; Fiji — Pacific Islands; New Zealand — New Zealand. **S2.** (a) Tokyo, (b) New Delhi, (c) Bangkok, (d) Jakarta, (e) Wellington. **S3.** The rows read: Manila 14.61° N (north); Jakarta 106.83° E (south); Wellington 41.29° S, 174.78° E (south). **S4.** (a) 6.17° S, 106.83° E. (b) 37.82° S, 144.97° E. **S5.** (a) high mountains, (b) tropical rainforest, (c) low coral atolls. **S6.** Megacity — Tokyo; medium city — Wellington; small town — Queenstown; village — Mekong delta rice-farming village. **S7.** India and China, each with more than 1400 million (1438.1 and 1410.7); Fiji, 0.9 million. **S8.** Japan, 84.0 years; Papua New Guinea, 66.1 years; about 18 years. **S9.** England; India; Vietnam. **U1–U4 and evidence task:** see the solutions shown in full below; answers will vary.

Solutions shown in full

U1 (model: Vietnam and Australia). In this model, Vietnam's population is 100.4 million, about four times Australia's 26.7 million (Figure 7). Life expectancy is 74.6 years in Vietnam and 83.1 years in Australia (Figure 8), a gap of 8.5 years. So Vietnam holds far more people, while Australian babies can expect the longer life. *Check:* four sentences, both charts used, numbers quoted.

U2 (model). Most people in the region live in towns and cities, and the biggest of them — the megacities Tokyo, Delhi, Jakarta, Manila and Beijing — dwarf everything else (Figure 6). These big cities sit on coasts or river plains — Figure 2 shows Tokyo, Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila and Wellington all near the sea. Few people live in the high mountains, deserts and rainforest of Figure 5, and some families in the Gobi still live in moving herder camps. So the pattern is: crowded coasts and river plains, thin settlement in the harsh interior.

U3 (model: India). Figure 10 shows India bought A\$20.8 billion of Australian goods in 2025-26 — Australia's fourth-biggest market — so Australian farms and mines sell into India. Figure 11 shows 20,570 people born in India moved to Victoria in 2024-25, more than from any other country, so families and students tie the two countries together. A third, everyday tie: Indian restaurants and cricket are part of Australian weekends.

U4 (model method). Step 1: open the QuickStats finder and search your suburb. Step 2: under "Country of birth", copy the top three that are not Australia. Step 3: place each on Figure 1 — for example, a Melbourne suburb might give India (South Asia), China (East Asia) and Vietnam (South-East Asia). Step 4: compare — "My suburb's top three match Victoria's top birthplaces in Figure 9, but in a different order." (Your numbers will be your own — that is the point: real local data, checked against the state picture.)

Evidence task (model outline: New Zealand). (1) Sketch: two main islands south-east of Australia, in the "New Zealand" part of the region; closest country: Australia, across the Tasman Sea. (2) Capital Wellington: 41.29° S, 174.78° E (Figure 4). (3) Environment: cool temperate islands — four seasons, winter snow in the ranges (Figure 5). (4) Population 5.2 million against Australia's 26.7 million — about a fifth (Figure 7); life expectancy 81.8 years against 83.1 — close to Australia's (Figure 8). (5) Interconnection: 5,880 people born in New Zealand net-migrated to Victoria in 2024-25 (Figure 11), and New Zealand bought A\$13.4 billion of Australian goods (Figure 10). Every fact above names its figure, as yours must.

Sources

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Geography, Levels 5–6 (VCAA): content description VC2HG6K07 and elaborations VC2HG6K07.E01–.E06 — codes referenced here, text not reproduced.
- Natural Earth v5, 1:110m admin-0 countries and populated places (free to use and share) — base maps and city coordinates; accessed 2026-08-25.
- World Bank Open Data, population total (SP.POP.TOTL) and life expectancy at birth (SP.DYN.LE00.IN), 2023 values; accessed 2026-08-25.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census QuickStats — Australia and Victoria (birthplace shares); accessed 2026-08-25.
- ABS 5368.0 International Trade in Goods, June 2026 release (released 6/08/2026), table 14a, monthly exports summed over the 2025-26 financial year; accessed 2026-08-25.
- ABS 3407.0 Overseas Migration, 2024-25 (released 19/12/2025), data cube 34070DO001_202425, tables 1.1 and 1.3; accessed 2026-08-25.
- World Urbanization Prospects, United Nations (population.un.org/wup) — settlement types and megacity examples; accessed 2026-08-25.
- ABS Census QuickStats finder: abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats (for task U4).

How countries differ: money, people, ways of life — and how they connect

Teacher note — teaching sequence. This section owns VC2HG6K08 (Geographical Knowledge and Understanding, Management of places). It draws on elaborations VC2HG6K08.E01, .E02, .E03, .E05 and .E06 as the linkage list for the future question bank (they are illustrations, not a teaching order). VC2HG6K08.E04 is excluded by the recorded §2A decision (flagged for human review) and must not be taught or assessed here. The achievement standard sentence owned here is mapped in TOC §2.

Assumed from 1B, 2A and 2B: interconnection as one of geography's big ideas (1B); the mental map of the world — continents, major countries and directions and distances from Australia (2A); latitude and longitude and the variety of places in the Asia-Pacific region (2B). Do not assume any earlier learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

Suggested sequence (about four lessons): Lesson 1 – the four kinds of differences, and income groups (Figures 2C.1–2C.3); Lesson 2 – demographic and social differences, including change over time (Figures 2C.4–2C.6); Lesson 3 – cultural differences: the world's major religions (Figures 2C.7–2C.8); Lesson 4 – interconnections: trade, migration and aid, then the big evidence task (Figures 2C.9–2C.11). Handoff: 3D re-uses these graphs for pattern and thematic map work; 4A turns them into conclusions based on evidence; 4C uses them in referenced explanations. Every real-world number in this section carries a source line (D6).

Theory

Part 1 — Four ways countries differ, and one way they connect

Geographers compare countries in four big ways. **Economic** differences are about money: how much income people have, what work they do, and what they buy and sell. **Demographic** differences are about people: how many live in a country, whether the number is growing or shrinking, and whether most of the people are young or old. **Social** differences are about wellbeing: how long people live, how healthy they are, how much schooling they get, and how much energy and clean air they have. **Cultural** differences are about ways of life: the languages people speak, the religions they follow, and the food, music and sport they love. Figure 2C.1 puts the four together with the other big idea of this section — **interconnection**, the ways countries are joined to each other and affect each other.

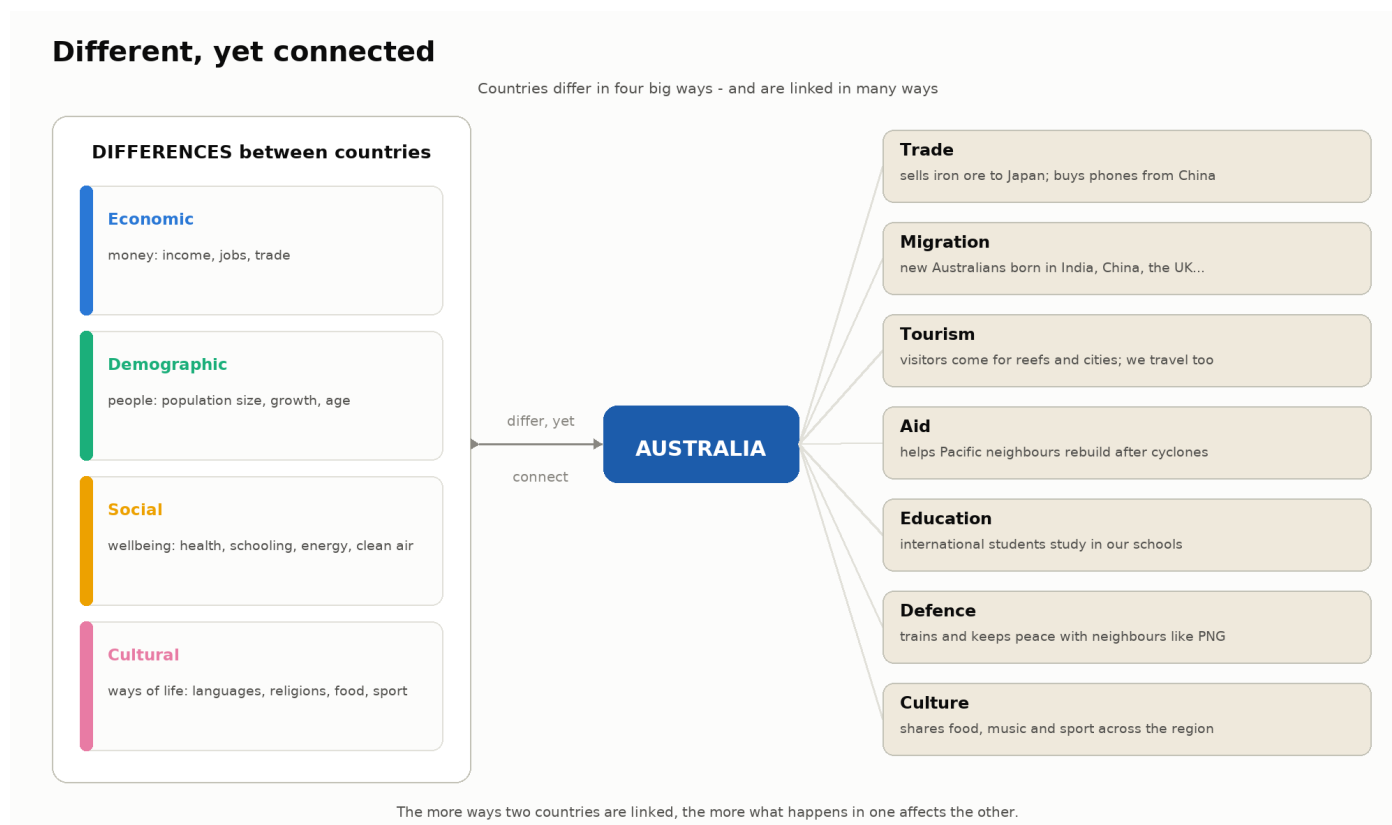


Figure 2C.1 — Countries differ in four big ways, and connect in many ways.

Start with the economic differences, because they shape many of the others. The **World Bank** (an organisation that keeps the world’s money facts) works out how much income each person in a country has in a year, on average. That number is called **per capita income** (say: *per person income*). The World Bank then sorts every country into one of four **income groups**: low income, lower middle income, upper middle income and high income. Figure 2C.2 shows the per capita income of sixteen countries in 2025, coloured by their income group.

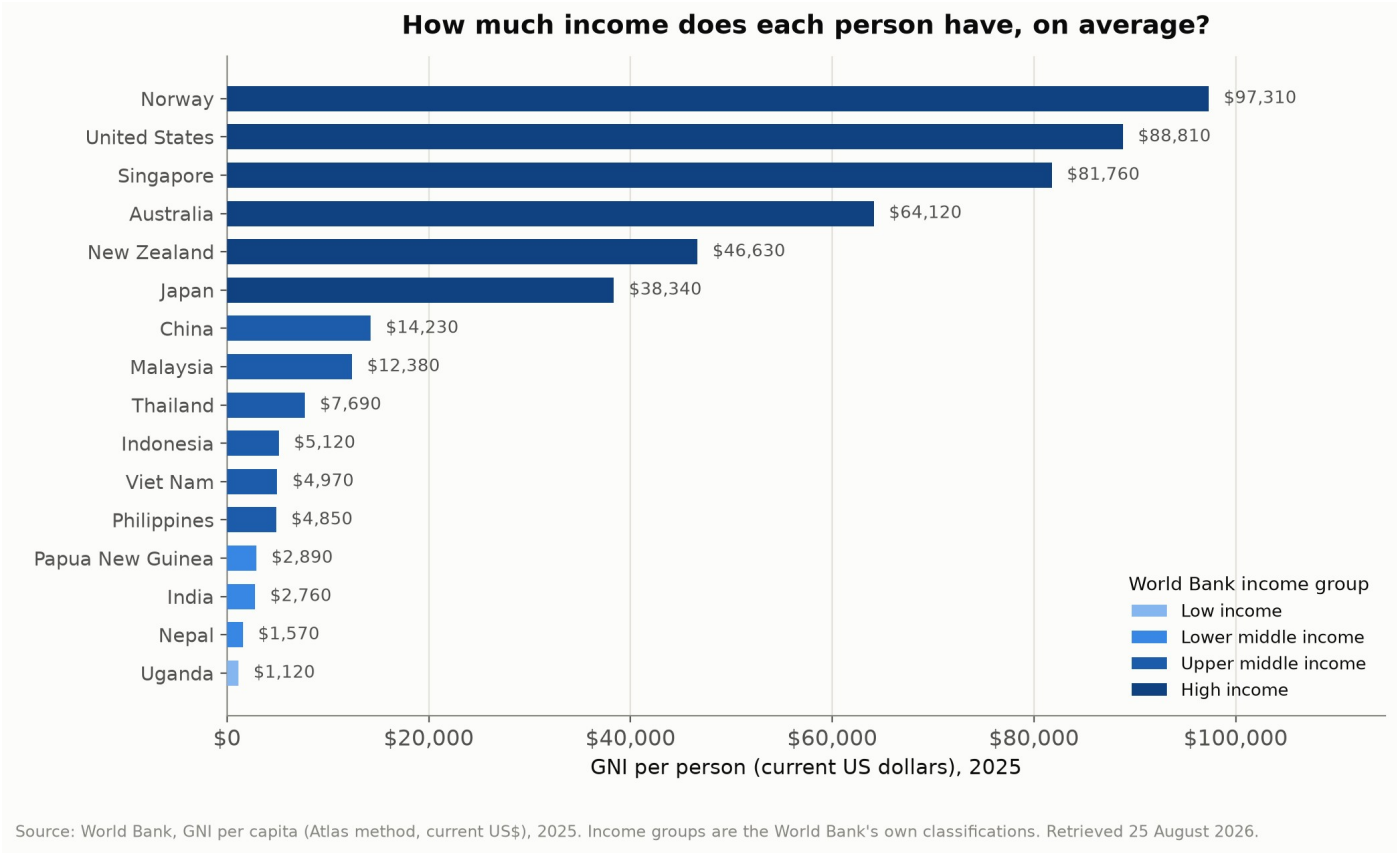


Figure 2C.2 — How much income does each person have, on average? (World Bank, 2025.)

Three things to notice in Figure 2C.2. A person in Norway has, on average, about **87 times** the income of a person in Uganda. Australia sits in the high income group with Norway, Japan and New Zealand. And our nearby countries — Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea — sit in the middle groups, which is one reason Australia’s connections with them matter so much.

Money is not everything, but it buys the things that keep people healthy: good food, clean water, hospitals and schools. Figure 2C.3 puts each country’s per capita income against its **life expectancy** — the number of years a newborn baby is expected to live.

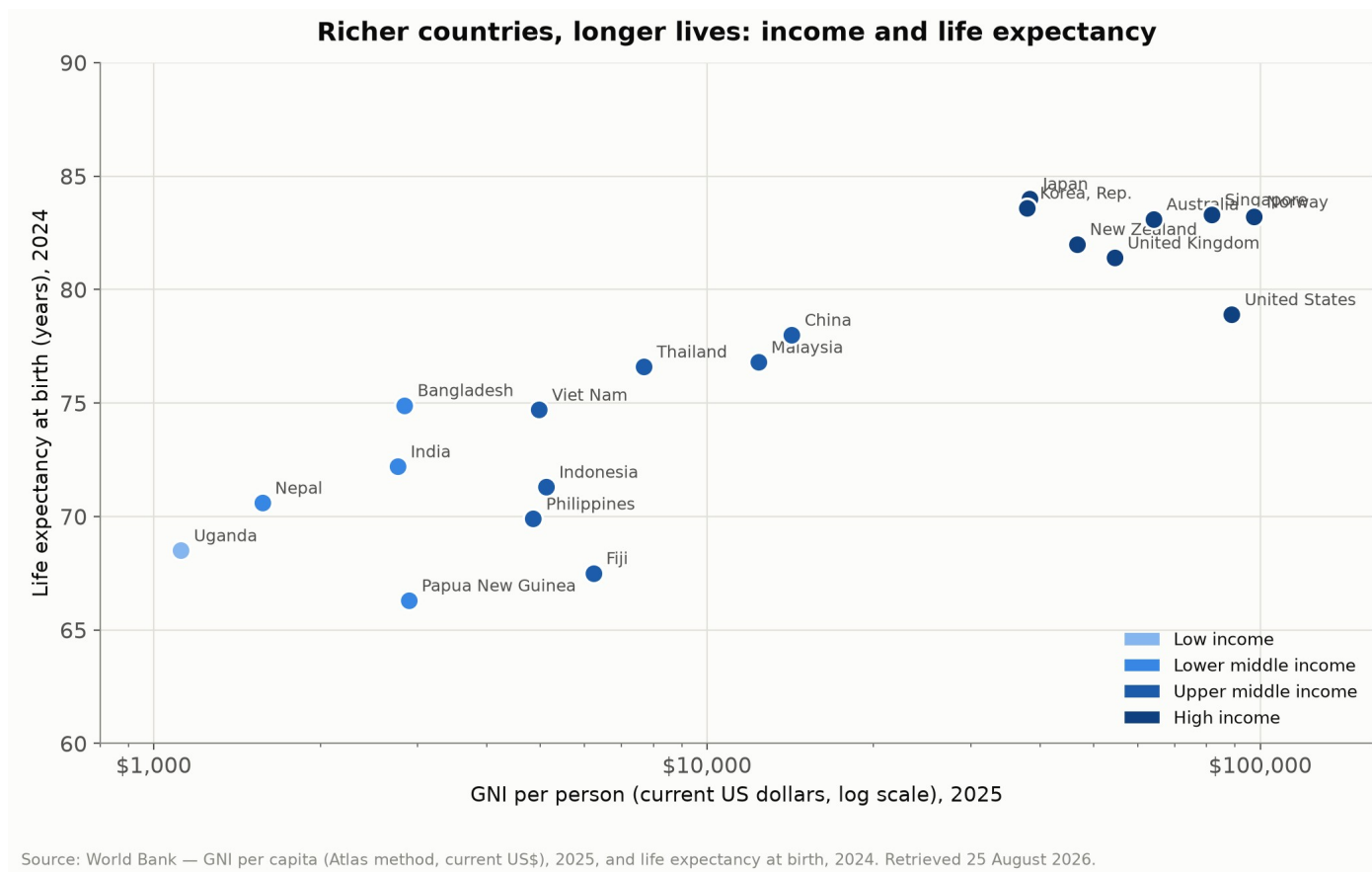


Figure 2C.3 — Richer countries, longer lives: income and life expectancy.

The pattern in Figure 2C.3 is clear: **in general, people in richer countries live longer.** Yet money is not the whole story. The United States is one of the richest countries on the chart, but its life expectancy (79) is below Norway's (83) — five years shorter for a richer country. Clean air, safety, good food and fair access to hospitals all count too.

Part 2 — People: growing, holding steady, shrinking

Now the demographic differences. A country's population grows when more people arrive and are born than leave and die, and it shrinks when the opposite happens. Figure 2C.4 shows the population growth of nineteen countries in 2025, as a per cent of their population.

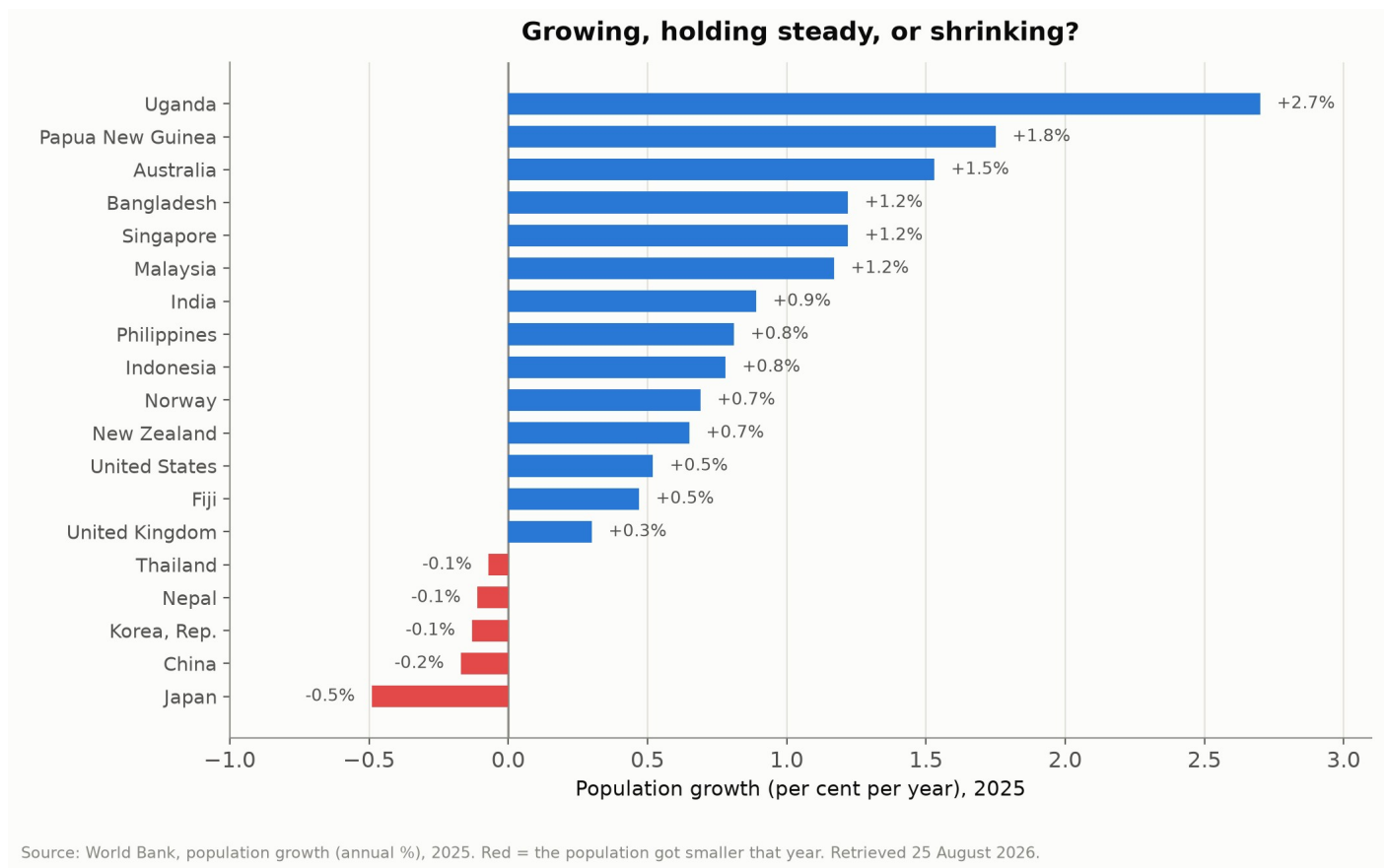
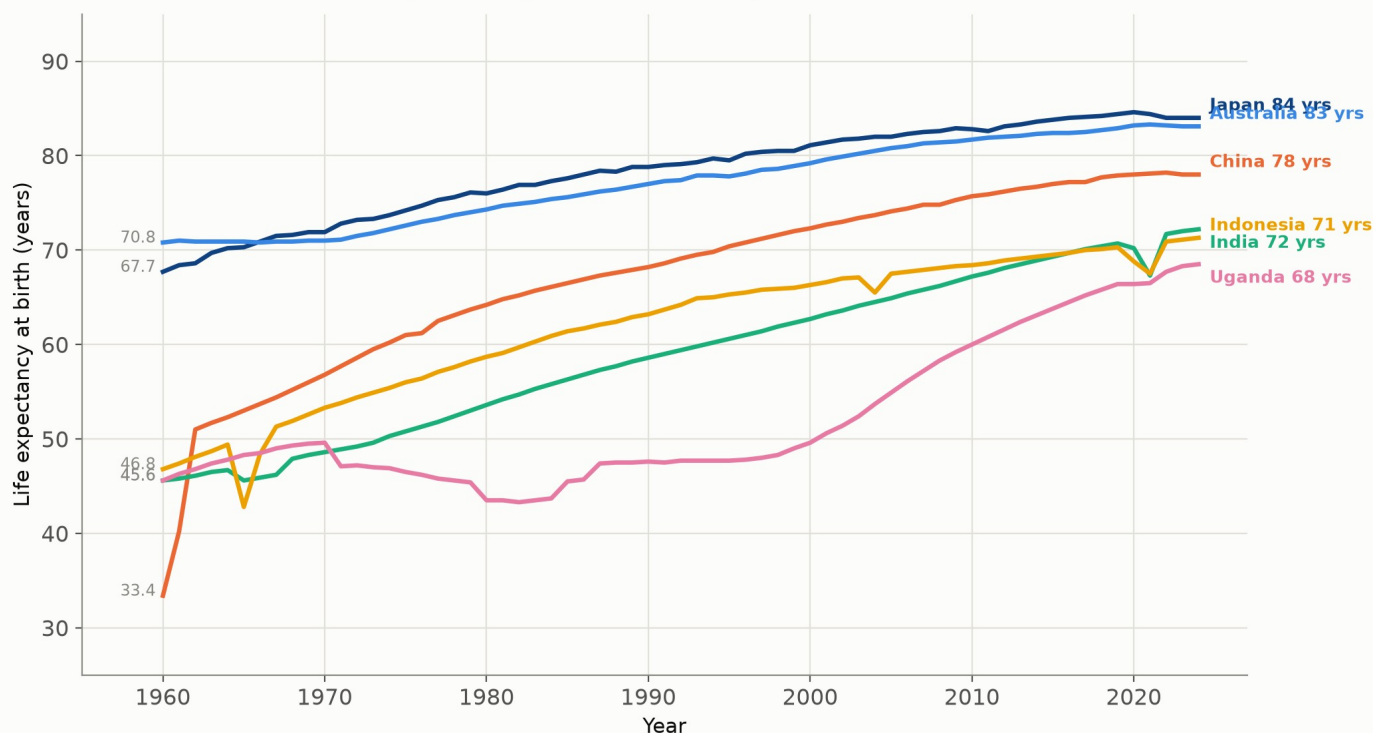


Figure 2C.4 — Growing, holding steady, or shrinking? (World Bank, 2025.)

Read Figure 2C.4 across the zero line. **Uganda’s population grew the fastest** (+2.7 per cent in one year), which is a young, growing population. At the other end, **Japan’s population shrank** (−0.5 per cent): Japan has an older population, with more people dying than being born. China — the country with one of the biggest populations on Earth — also shrank that year. Australia grew by +1.5 per cent, and part of that growth came from migration, as Figure 2C.11 will show.

Next, a social difference seen over time. Figure 2C.5 shows life expectancy in six countries from 1960 to 2024. This is geography’s “change over time” idea: differences between countries are not frozen — they move.

Life expectancy has risen everywhere since 1960



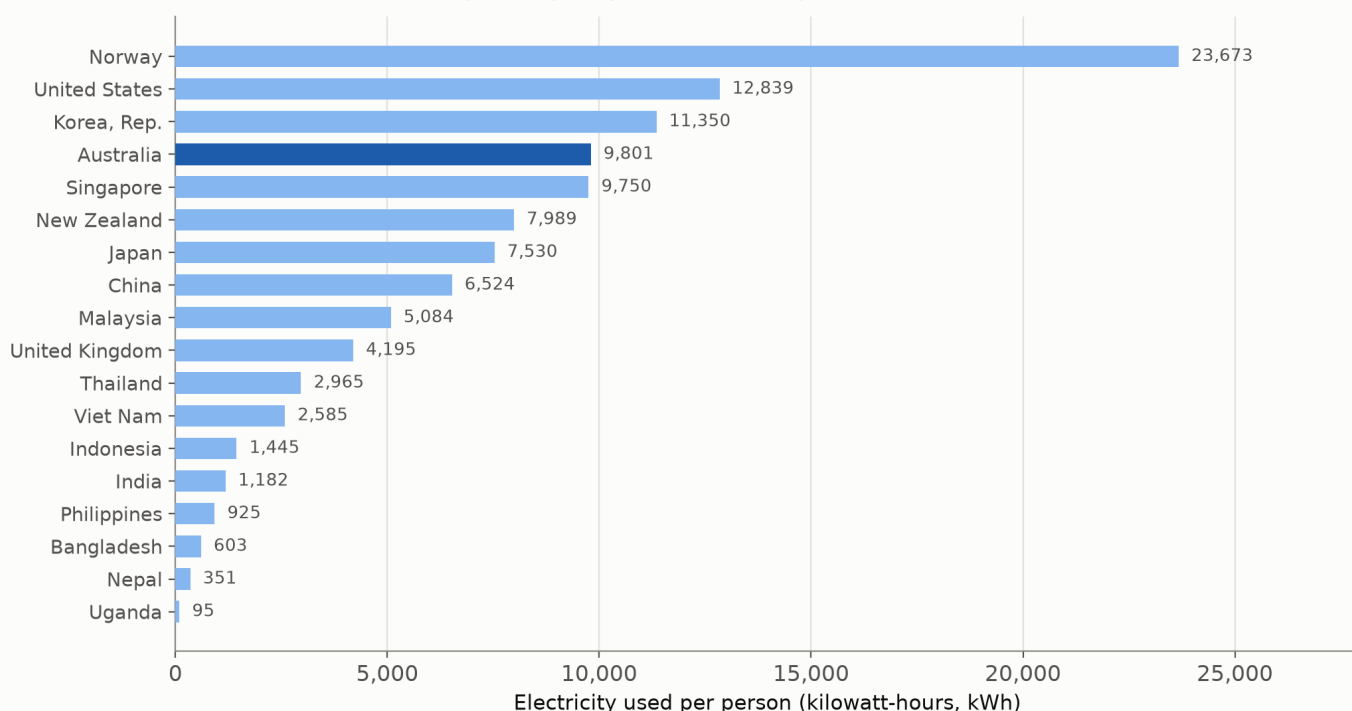
Source: World Bank, life expectancy at birth (years), 1960-2024. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Figure 2C.5 — Life expectancy has risen in all six countries since 1960.

The biggest climb in Figure 2C.5 belongs to **China**: from 33 years in 1960 to 78 in 2024 — a gain of 45 years within one human lifetime. In 1960 the gap between Australia (71) and China (33) was 38 years; by 2024 it was only 5. Better food, clean water, vaccines and hospitals lifted life expectancy in every country on the chart.

One more social difference: energy. Figure 2C.6 shows how much electricity each person uses in a year in eighteen countries, measured in **kilowatt-hours** (kWh — the unit your power bill uses).

Electricity use per person is very different across the world



Source: World Bank, electric power consumption (kWh per capita), 2023-24 (latest available). Australia shown in dark blue. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Figure 2C.6 — Electricity use per person is very different across the world.

A person in Norway uses about **250 times** as much electricity as a person in Uganda. Fridges, heaters, air conditioners, lights, factories and schools all run on energy, so energy use is one of the sharpest social differences between countries — and a big sustainability question for all of them.

Part 3 — Cultural differences: the world’s major religions

One visible part of culture is **religion** — what people believe and how they worship, shown in festivals, holy days, places of worship and food rules. Figure 2C.7 counts the followers of the world’s major religions in 2010.

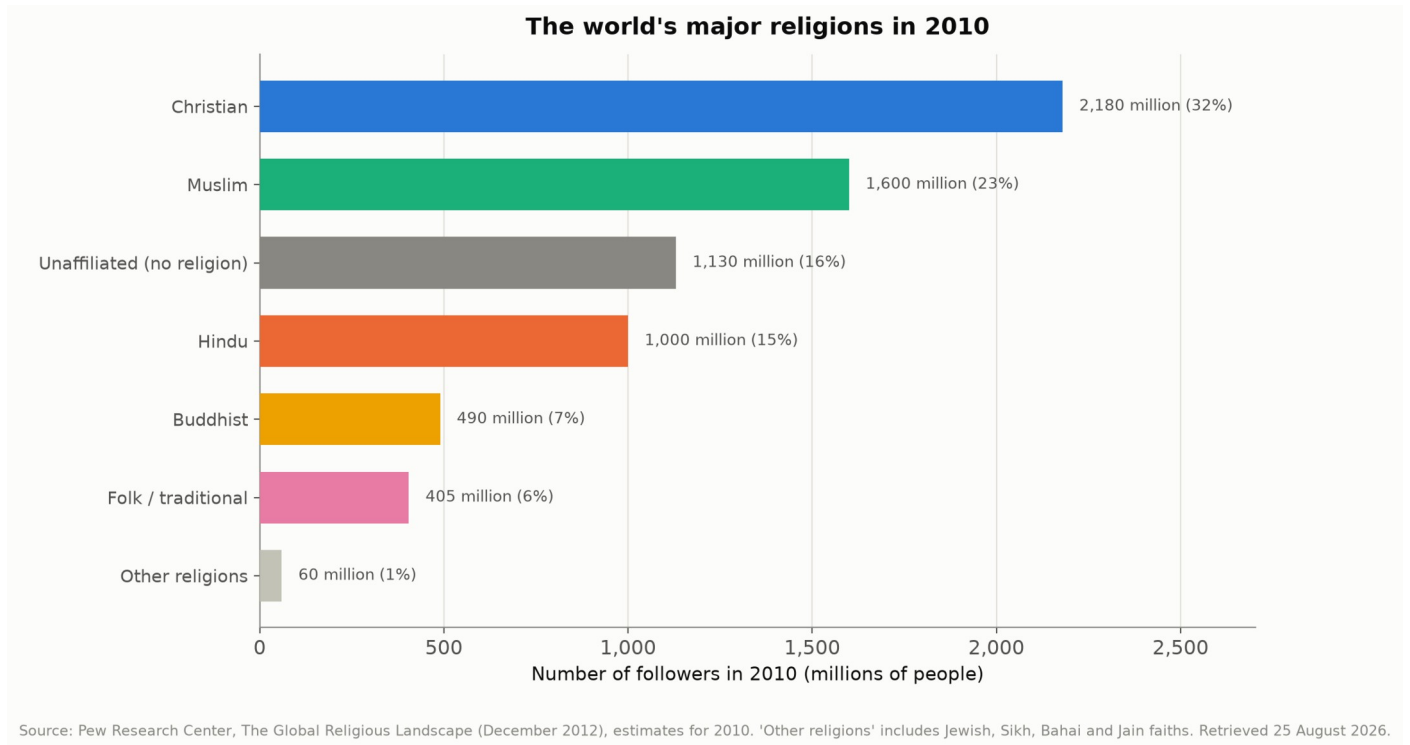
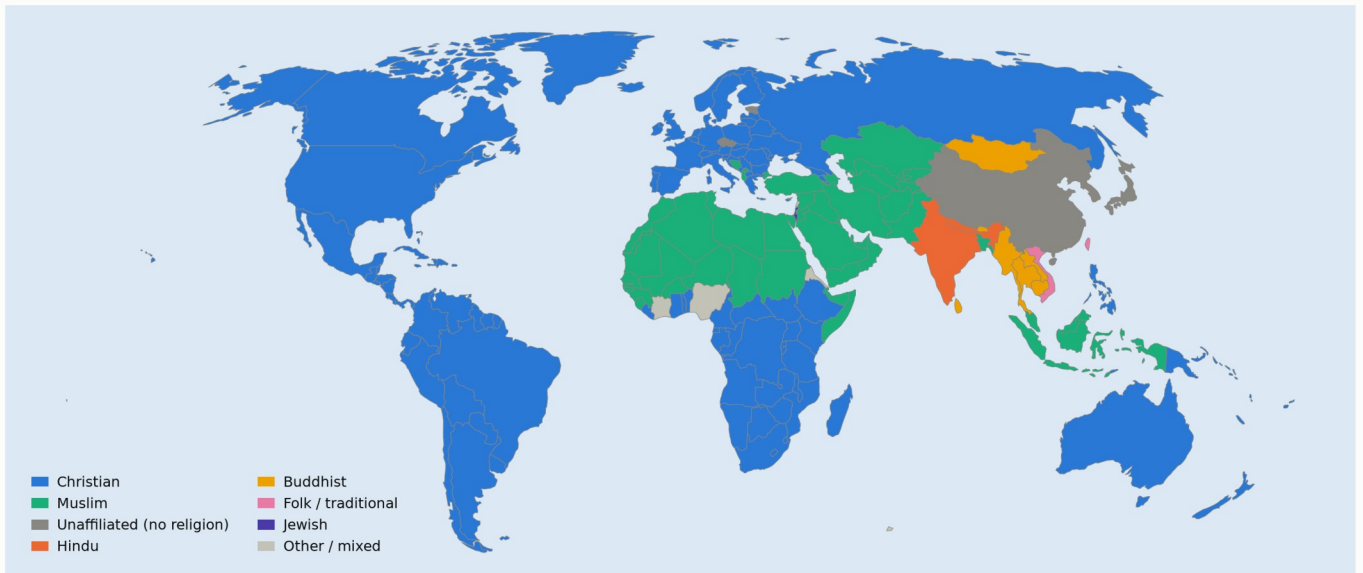


Figure 2C.7 — The world’s major religions in 2010 (Pew Research Center).

About one in three people in the world in 2010 was Christian, and about one in four was Muslim — together, more than half of all people. Notice the grey bar too: 1,130 million people (16 per cent) were unaffiliated - the people who follow no religion at all.

Figure 2C.8 maps the same facts. It is a **thematic map** — a map that shows one idea rather than just land and sea. Each country is coloured by the religion with the most followers there in 2010.

The largest religion in each country, 2010



Source: Pew Research Center, The Global Religious Landscape (2012), estimates for 2010. Each country is coloured by the religion with the most followers there. Grey countries (for example Nigeria) were so evenly split that no single religion held a clear majority. Map outlines: Natural Earth. Retrieved 25 August 2026.

Figure 2C.8 — The largest religion in each country, 2010 (Pew Research Center; map outlines Natural Earth).

Three readings of Figure 2C.8. Christianity and Islam each spread across whole regions of the world — Christianity through the Americas and Europe, Islam in a belt from North Africa through the Middle East to Indonesia, the country with more Muslim people than any other. Hinduism and Buddhism cluster in Asia, where they began thousands of years ago. And a country's colour tells you the *largest* group there, not everyone in it — most countries hold people of many religions, and of no religion, living side by side.

Part 4 — Interconnections: trade, migration and aid

Different as they are, countries are joined to each other. Start with **trade** — selling and buying between countries. What a country sells to other countries is its **exports**; what it buys is its **imports**. Figure 2C.9 shows Australia's goods trade with its ten biggest partners in the financial year 2025-26.

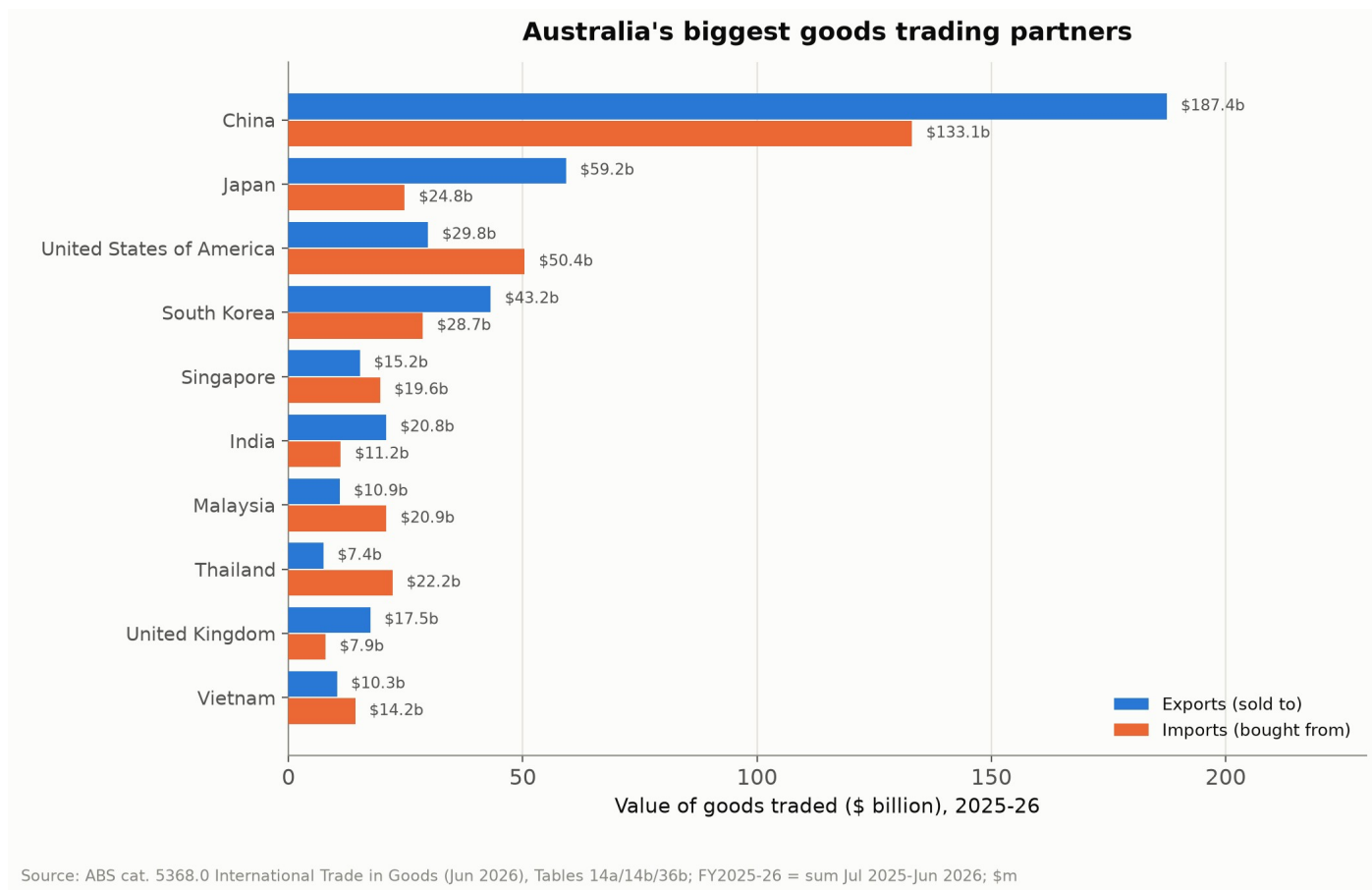


Figure 2C.9 — Australia's biggest goods trading partners, 2025-26 (ABS).

China is by far Australia's biggest two-way partner: Australia sold \$187.4 billion of goods to China (one billion is 1,000 million) — above all iron ore, coal and natural gas — and bought \$133.1 billion back, above all machines, phones and computers. Eight of the ten partners in Figure 2C.9 sit in the Asia-Pacific region, which is exactly the region 2B mapped.

Connections look different from different Australian places. Figure 2C.10 shows the same kind of data for **Victoria**.

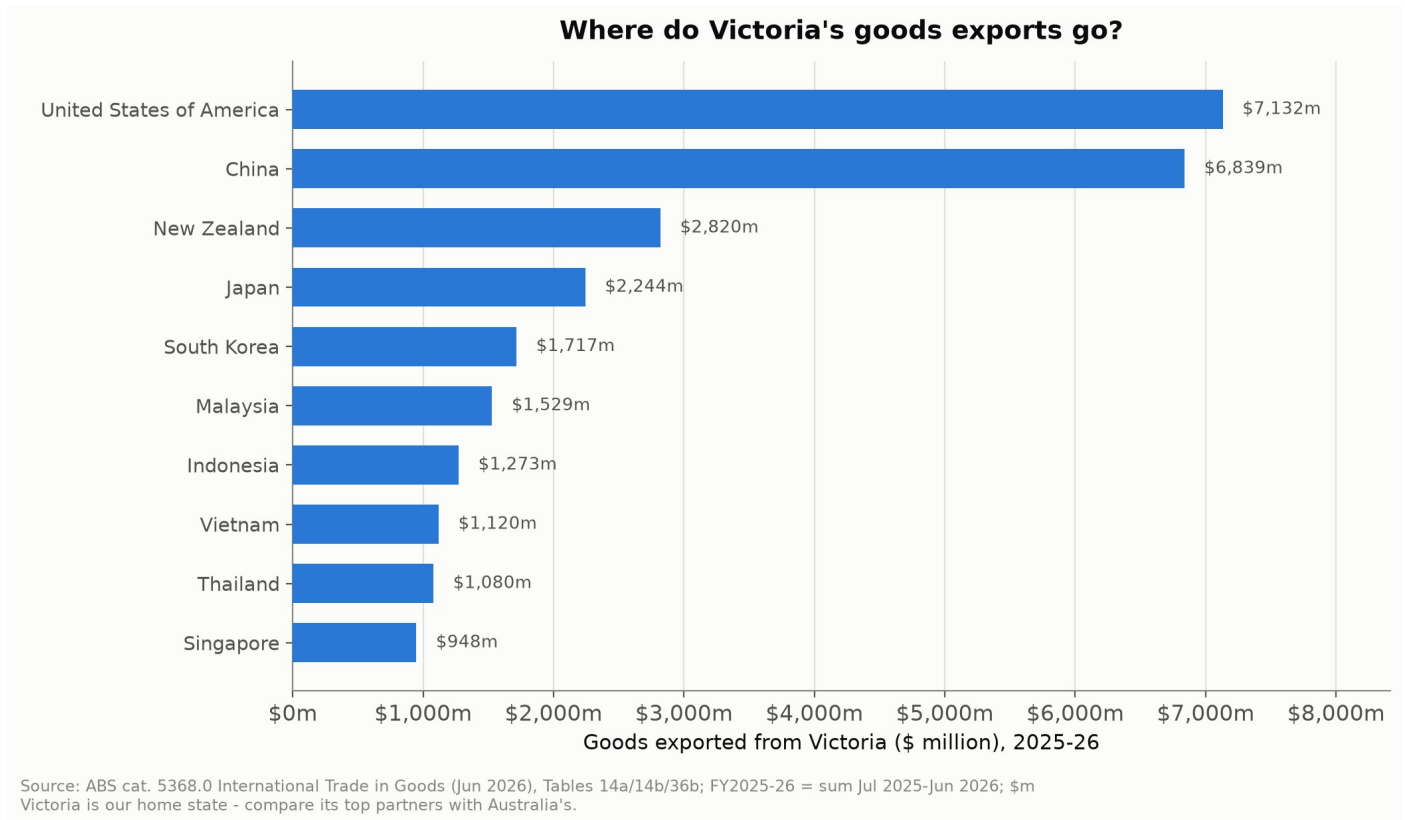


Figure 2C.10 — Where do Victoria's goods exports go? (ABS, 2025-26.)

Victoria's biggest goods customer is the **United States**, narrowly ahead of China — a different answer from Australia's. Victoria sells the United States gold, beef and machinery, and sells China gold, meat and wool. Different Australian places are connected to the world in different ways.

The second connection is **migration** — people moving to live in another country. Figure 2C.11 shows **net overseas migration** in 2024-25 - the people who arrived to live, with those who left taken away - counted by country of birth.

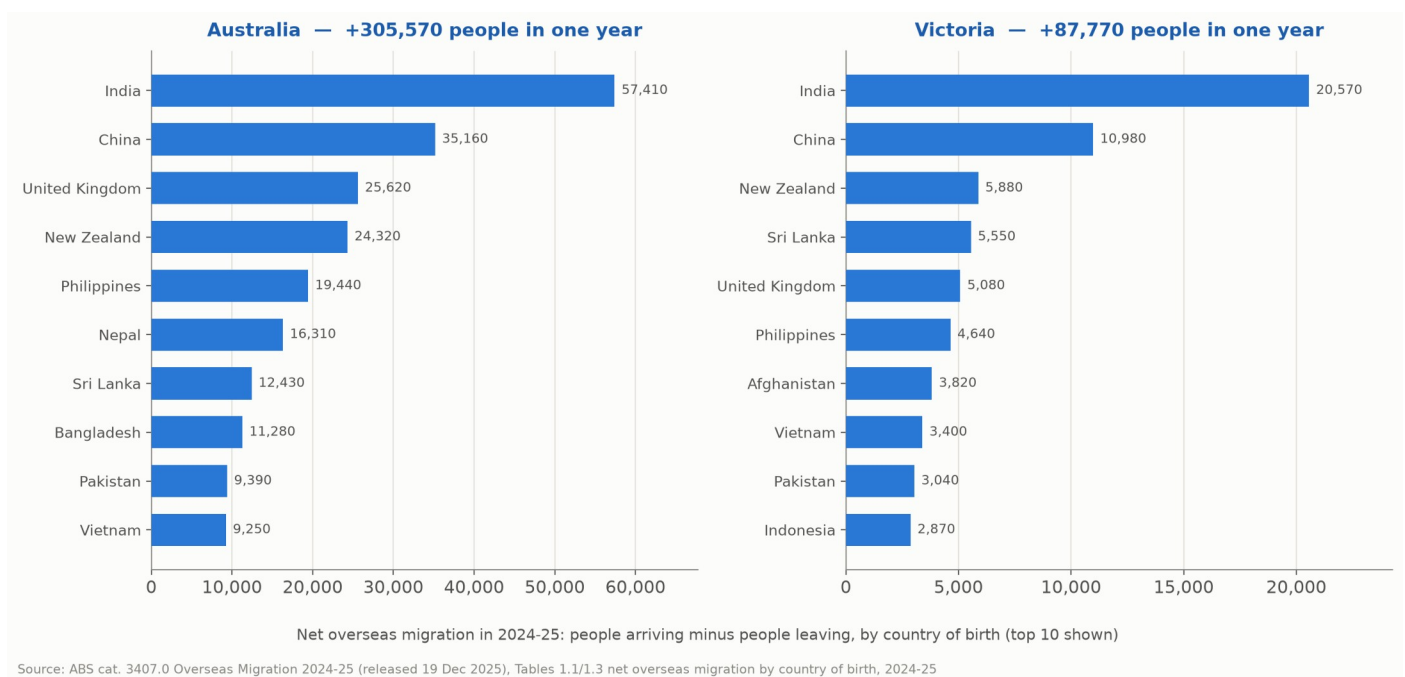


Figure 2C.11 — Net overseas migration in 2024-25, Australia and Victoria (ABS).

India and China top both panels — the same two countries that top the trade chart in a different colour. That is interconnection: the same pairs of countries joined by trade, migration, students and sport. **Impacts on your own place:** new classmates and new languages at school; Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Sri Lankan grocery shops and

restaurants in Victorian suburbs; Diwali and Lunar New Year festivals in Melbourne each year. **Another Australian place:** in Cairns, in Queensland, visitors from Japan and China fill reef tours and hotels — tourism is an interconnection too, and when Asian countries grow richer, Cairns feels it.

The third connection is **aid** — help given by one country to another. The Australian Government gives aid to Asia-Pacific countries, and so do Australian non-government organisations (NGOs — charities that are not run by the government), such as the Australian Red Cross and World Vision Australia. In Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries like Fiji, Australian aid has helped pay for schools, clinics, roads and cyclone clean-up after storms. The impacts run both ways: children go to school and clinics vaccinate babies in the villages of nearby countries, and Australia gains stronger friendships and safer friends close by. Aid is a small share of the money on the trade charts, but it is one of the connections this section asks you to know.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with steps: sorting countries into income groups and comparing lives

Question: Use Figures 2C.2 and 2C.3. Put Norway and Nepal into their World Bank income groups, then compare the lives of their people using one health fact.

Step	What to do	What we find
1	Find both countries in Figure 2C.2 and read their colours.	Norway is in the high income group (\$97,310 per person); Nepal is in the lower middle income group (\$1,570 per person).
2	Find both countries in Figure 2C.3 and read their life expectancy.	Norway 83 years; Nepal 71 years.
3	Compare the two numbers.	A Norwegian baby is expected to live 12 years longer than a Nepalese baby.
4	Say the answer in a full sentence.	Norway is a high income country and Nepal a lower middle income country, and the difference shows in health: life expectancy is 83 in Norway but 71 in Nepal.

Example 2 — with steps: reading change over time

Question: Use Figures 2C.4 and 2C.5. (a) Which country gained the most years of life expectancy between 1960 and 2024? (b) Name two countries whose populations shrank in 2025. (c) What do the two answers tell us about differences between countries?

Step	What to do	What we find
1	In Figure 2C.5, subtract each country’s 1960 number from its 2024 number.	China: $78 - 33 = 45$ years — the biggest gain on the chart.
2	In Figure 2C.4, find the red bars (below zero).	Japan (−0.5), China (−0.2), South Korea (−0.1), Thailand (−0.1), Nepal (−0.1). Any two of these.
3	Put the two readings together.	China’s health caught up a long way, yet its population has started to shrink.
4	Say the answer in a full sentence.	Differences between countries change over time: health gaps narrowed a lot from 1960 to 2024, while some countries that got

Step	What to do	What we find
		healthier now have shrinking populations.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Use Figure 2C.1. (a) Name the four kinds of differences between countries. (b) Sort these facts into them: (i) Japan's population is shrinking; (ii) Norway has a high per capita income; (iii) people in Melbourne celebrate Diwali; (iv) people in Uganda live, on average, to 69.

Q2. Use Figure 2C.2. (a) Which income group is Australia in? (b) Name the only low income country on the chart. (c) About how many times bigger is Norway's per capita income than Uganda's?

Q3. Use Figure 2C.3. (a) Describe the pattern the dots make, in one sentence. (b) Name a high income country whose life expectancy is below 80. (c) Which two countries on the chart have the longest life expectancy?

Q4. Use Figure 2C.4. (a) Which country's population grew fastest in 2025, and by how much? (b) Name two countries whose populations shrank. (c) In your own words, what does a red bar mean?

Q5. Use Figure 2C.5. (a) What was China's life expectancy in 1960 and in 2024? (b) Which country was highest in 1960, and which was highest in 2024? (c) Did the gap between the richest and poorest countries on the chart get bigger or smaller?

Q6. Use Figure 2C.6. (a) Which country uses the most electricity per person? (b) About how many times more is that than Uganda's number? (c) Give one sensible reason why richer countries use more electricity.

Q7. Use Figures 2C.7 and 2C.8. (a) Which religion had the most followers in 2010, and how many? (b) Use the map: which religion is the largest in Indonesia, in India and in Thailand? (c) A few countries, such as Nigeria, are grey on the map. What does grey mean?

Q8. Use Figures 2C.9 and 2C.11. (a) Which country is Australia's biggest export market and biggest source of imports? (b) Which two countries of birth added the most people to Australia in 2024-25? (c) Name one way these connections show up in a Victorian suburb.

On your own

Q9. Choose one high income country and one low or lower middle income country from Figure 2C.2. Using Figures 2C.3, 2C.4 and 2C.6, write three comparison sentences about them: one about health, one about population change and one about energy.

Q10. Look at Figure 2C.5. Choose one country and tell its story in two or three sentences: where it started in 1960, where it ended in 2024, and one reason why life expectancy can rise.

Q11. Figure 2C.8 is a thematic map of culture. (a) Name two continents where most countries are coloured Christian. (b) Name two countries where Buddhism is the largest religion. (c) Explain in one sentence why this map shows culture, not governments or borders.

Q12. "Australia is part of the Asia-Pacific." Use Figures 2C.9, 2C.10 and 2C.11 to list three connections between Australia and Asia-Pacific countries, and say which one touches your own life.

Big task — evidence first

Two countries, one story. Write a short evidence report (8–10 sentences) comparing two countries of your choice from Figure 2C.2 — one from the high income group and one from a lower group. Your report must include: at least three real numbers, each with its figure number; at least one fact from each of the four kinds of differences (economic, demographic, social, cultural — for cultural, you may use Figure 2C.8); one sentence of interconnection with Australia (trade, migration, tourism or aid); and one sentence about how the difference between your two countries has changed over time, using Figure 2C.5. End with a one-sentence conclusion that begins "The data shows...".

Answers

Q1. (a) Economic, demographic, social, cultural. (b) (i) demographic; (ii) economic; (iii) cultural; (iv) social.

Q2. (a) High income. (b) Uganda. (c) About 87 times.

Q3. (a) In general, the richer the country, the longer its people live. (b) The United States (79). (c) Japan and South Korea (both 84).

Q4. (a) Uganda, +2.7 per cent. (b) Any two of Japan, China, South Korea, Thailand, Nepal. (c) More people died or left than were born or arrived — the population got smaller.

Q5. (a) 33 years in 1960; 78 in 2024. (b) Australia in 1960; Japan in 2024. (c) Smaller — the lines moved closer together.

Q6. (a) Norway. (b) About 250 times. (c) Any sensible reason: more machines, heating and cooling, factories, and reliable power in every home.

Q7. (a) Christian, 2,180 million (about 2.2 billion). (b) Indonesia: Muslim; India: Hindu; Thailand: Buddhist. (c) No single religion held a clear majority there.

Q8. (a) China, in both directions. (b) India and China. (c) Any sensible one: festivals, shops and restaurants, classmates, languages heard.

Q9–Q12. See the step-by-step solutions for what a good answer includes.

Big task. See the step-by-step solutions for the checklist.

Solutions shown step by step

Q9. A good answer names the two countries and their income groups, then gives one correct comparison per sentence, for example: Norway (high income) and Uganda (low income) — people in Norway live to 83 on average while Ugandans live to 69; Uganda’s population is growing fast (+2.7 per cent) while Norway’s grows slowly (+0.7 per cent); a Norwegian uses about 250 times as much electricity as a Ugandan.

Q10. A good answer reads both end numbers off the chart and gives a real reason for the rise, for example: India began at 46 years in 1960 and reached 72 by 2024; the rise came with better food, clean water, vaccines and more hospitals.

Q11. (a) The Americas (South and North America) and Europe; Australia too. (b) Any two of Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Laos. (c) A good sentence says the map colours countries by what their people believe — a way of life — not by who governs them or where their borders run.

Q12. A good answer lists three connections with figure support, for example: trade — eight of Australia’s ten biggest goods partners are in the Asia-Pacific (Figure 2C.9); migration — India, China, the Philippines and Vietnam top Australia’s migration chart (Figure 2C.11); tourism or aid — visitors and aid join Australia to countries such as Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The personal sentence must name one connection the student actually meets (food, festival, language, family, sport, school).

Big task. A strong report names two countries from different income groups; uses at least three real numbers each tagged with its figure number (for example “Uganda +2.7% a year, Figure 2C.4”); touches all four kinds of differences, using Figure 2C.8 for the cultural one (for example “most people in India follow Hinduism”); includes one interconnection with Australia; notes one change over time from Figure 2C.5 (for example “India’s life expectancy rose from 46 to 72”); and ends with a conclusion that the numbers actually support, beginning “The data shows...”.

Sources

- World Bank Open Data (api.worldbank.org) — GNI per capita, Atlas method, current US\$ (2025); life expectancy at birth (1960–2024); population growth, annual % (2025); electric power consumption, kWh per capita (2023–24, latest available). Income groups are the World Bank’s own classifications. Retrieved 25 August 2026. Figures 2C.2–2C.6.
- Pew Research Center, *The Global Religious Landscape* (December 2012), estimates for 2010. Retrieved 25 August 2026. Figures 2C.7 and 2C.8.
- Natural Earth, admin-0 countries (1:110m) — map outlines for Figure 2C.8 only; the religion data is Pew’s.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *International Trade in Goods, June 2026* (cat. 5368.0), Tables 14a, 14b and 36b — financial year 2025–26 totals are the sum of July 2025 to June 2026 monthly figures, in millions of dollars. Retrieved 25 August 2026. Figures 2C.9 and 2C.10.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Overseas Migration, 2024–25* (cat. 3407.0, released 19 December 2025), Tables 1.1 and 1.3 — net overseas migration by country of birth. Retrieved 25 August 2026. Figure 2C.11.
- The aid paragraph in Part 4 is the author’s explanatory voice (names of real programs and organisations, no invented numbers): DFAT aid numbers could not be retrieved on 25 August 2026, so no aid figure is presented as data.