

Welcome to Perth, the hub of Australia's largest state. Perth may be one of the remotest capital on earth—you're actually now closer to Singapore than Sydney—and the world's third windiest city, but it certainly is the friendliest. And one of the prettiest. With gorgeous sandy beaches just a few kilometres to the west, a mix of contemporary cosmopolitan style and old-fashioned Australian hospitality and a thriving modern business district at its heart, Perth is the lucky city in the lucky country. So sit back, relax and let us introduce you to the sights, sounds and people of the City of Swans—Perth.

Legend has it that when the English ship, Endeavour, arrived at Sydney's Botany Bay back in 1770, Captain James Cook, or one of his crew, asked an Aboriginal person what was the name of that funny looking animal with pointy ears and a long tail hopping along on its hind back legs. The Aborigine replied "kangaroo." In the native tongue, this meant, "I don't know."<sup>1</sup> And so the kangaroo was introduced to Westerners, and has of course become one of Australia's most recognisable symbols.

For Aboriginal people, the kangaroo was, and still is, a main source of food and has been for thousands of years. In fact, Australian Aboriginals are the world's oldest people, and their society dates back at least 50,000 years. Some anthropologists suggest it is closer to 70,000 years.

There is a great deal of speculation as to how those ancient people first came to Australia... Did they walk across some kind of land bridge between Australia and Papua New Guinea? Or did they somehow construct a seaworthy vessel and undertake a dangerous voyage across open water—some 30,000 years before anyone else could? And how many people survived the crossing? It is possible that as few as three to five couples were enough to populate the entire continent!<sup>2</sup>

What we do know is that when they arrived, they found a relatively lush, wet landscape with plenty of fish to eat in the inland lakes, giant three-metre (nine feet) kangaroos and huge reptiles. Few carnivorous predators meant that the early Aborigines not only survived, but thrived, and within several thousand years, had populated much of Australia.<sup>3</sup>

It is likely that those early Australians first arrived in the northwest of Western Australia—the area now known as the Kimberley, xxxx kilometres north of Perth. Archaeological evidence suggests that they migrated south to the Perth area at least 40,000 years ago. Ancient camp sites and stone tools have been unearthed at Swan Bridge and Cape Leeuwin down south.

Known as the Nyoongar people, there were at least 24 tribes occupying the state between Geraldton in the north, the Swan River Valley here in Perth and Esperance on the far south coast.<sup>4</sup>

Early contact was probably made between Dutch and Portuguese seafarers and Aboriginal people here in WA way before Captain Cook claimed Australia for the British Empire. In search of a quick route to the Far East, the Portuguese travelled along the west coast as early as 1602. In fact, there is an Aboriginal rock painting of an old sailing ship at a place in the mid-north called Walga Rock – inland about 500 kilometres! Locals say the picture was painted in the nineteen thirties by a sheep shearer, but its authenticity has never been disproved. If you're heading up that way, it's worth taking a detour off the Great Northern Highway to take a look. Take a left at the little town of Cue, drive about 50 kilometres and you can't miss it. Well, hopefully you won't, because if you do, you'll end up in the middle of the bush!

But it was the Dutch who made the first recorded landfall on Australian soil: in 1616 a captain named Dirk Hartog landed on an island in WA's mid north, just off Shark Bay. That island is now called, you guessed it, Dirk Hartog Island!

This was followed by British and French expeditions in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, but it wasn't until the mid 1820s that British colonists began looking to the west and seriously considering settlement. This was because the British were getting nervous that the French, who were starting to make detailed explorations of the area, were going to colonise the west for themselves. This is why many places are named after French mariners and their vessels, such as Point d'Entrecasteaux, Esperance and Geographe Bay down south.

In 1826, British troops and a party of convicts were sent from Sydney and ordered to establish a military outpost in present-day Albany on the south coast.

As you travel around Perth, you'll see many landmarks bearing the name Stirling: Stirling Highway—which we'll later travel down to Fremantle—the Stirling train station in the northern suburbs and the lovely Stirling Gardens on the corners of St Georges Terrace and Barrack Street in the city. That's because it was Captain James Stirling, an entrepreneur and opportunist, who really took a shine to the region after he visited in 1826 and championed establishing a colony.

He was so enthusiastic about settling the Swan River he returned to Britain and drummed up a lot of support by proposing to give free settlers one acre of land for every shilling and sixpence worth of stock, money and equipment they brought with them. Today, a shilling and sixpence would be the same as about 15 cents, but back then it could buy a great deal more!

Three years later, Captain Fremantle on the HMS Challenger sailed into the mouth of the Swan River, and on May 2 1829, formally declared that all land beyond New South Wales belonged to the British Crown. Colonists began arriving a month later, and Australia's first freely settled place—the Swan River

Colony, as it was known back then—was established with James Stirling the newly appointed lieutenant governor.

But this is one dry place and the land was poor quality. Settlers really struggled during the first ten years: food was scarce and supplies from England took four months to arrive to the fledgling community. Settlers then had to sometimes wait a whole year for another ship to appear on the horizon!<sup>5</sup>

There were other problems too. Stirling had chosen to locate the colony just under Mt Eliza—in King’s Park, where we’ll be visiting later—which unfortunately was along the route Aboriginal people traveled to get to their coastal fishing grounds. Clashes between settlers and Aborigines were frequent and reprisals harsh: in October 1834 Stirling led a posse to track down a particularly resistant warrior named Calyute, resulting in the Battle of Pinjarra, which lasted almost two hours and killed about 50 Aborigines.<sup>6</sup>

After this, Nyoongar leaders pretty much gave in and pledged allegiance to Governor Stirling and the Crown.

By the 1850s, a massive labour shortage led to the transportation of convicts to the colony who began building roads and buildings in the City and Fremantle port. Over 18 years, 43 shipments of convicts—almost 10,000 prisoners—were brought to Perth.<sup>7</sup> Amongst other public works, they built the Fremantle Gaol, Government House and the Perth Town Hall. Convicts had to work a minimum of four years to clear a seven-year sentence (five years for a ten-year sentence) before they were allowed to work for wages almost as free men. However, they were still bound by roaming restrictions and forbidden from returning to Britain.

Eventually, the Swan River Colony was renamed to Perth, after the Scottish city of the same name and declared a city by Queen Victoria in 1856. However, it wasn’t until the 1890s, when gold was discovered, that Perth really flourished.

Actually, it was gold that transformed the entire country. Gold brought such political, social and economic change that the gold rushes really can be credited as one of European Australia’s great defining times. But more on that later.

Throughout the twentieth century, Western Australia—and to a large degree, Perth—suffered from a “cinderella complex”. People felt that their wealthier, more cultured countrymen in the cosmopolitan cities of Sydney and Melbourne saw Perth as an impoverished backwater bereft of refinement and guile.

Coming up on our right/left is the Perth Concert Hall. It was built in 1973, so the architecture is fairly typical of the time - rather square and acres of concrete! But inside is quite magnificent; the main auditorium, which seats over 1700 spectators, features a 3000-pipe organ surrounded by a gallery large enough to support 160 choir members.

The Western Australian Symphony is permanently based at The Perth Concert Hall, but we've been treated to some very special visitors who've played here including the London Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Israel Philharmonic, Harry Connick Junior, Ray Charles, kd lang, BB King. So you see, we get top artists both contemporary and classical.

Despite being so remote, or maybe because of it, Perth enjoys a vibrant arts scene. Okay, not every act that tours Australia makes it across the Nullabor to play here, but we have had a lot of first-class shows and our homegrown companies such as the West Australian Ballet, the West Australian Opera, the Perth Theatre Company are constantly pushing the boundaries in their respective genres.

The Mozart Festival in January, which attracts world-renowned artists to play with the Western Australian Symphony, is just one of the many cultural and music festivals on our busy arts calendar. In fact, Perth could be nicknamed the city of festivals, we have so many. There's Australia Day Skyworks in January where thousands of people line the foreshore to party and watch a spectacular fireworks display. We have dozens of music festivals dotted around the state including a folk festival in April at the historic village of Fairbridge in the southwest; a jazz festival every September in the town of York, xx kms east of Perth; and the WAMI festival which showcases homegrown talent all around the state. Local Perth councils have their own city fairs with free music, barbecues and rides for the kids. And our crowning glory is the International Arts Festival each February which features concerts, plays, literary events, art displays and performance art. Musicians and artists and writers and actors travel here from all over the country—and the world!—to perform. It's a huge cultural feast!

We don't have that many well-known celebrities who have come from Perth, but you may have heard of one. The Hollywood actor, Heath Ledger, hails from Perth. He went to school in Guildford, just 15 kilometres northeast of the city and began his career in local TV productions. In fact, his family are well known here; the Ledgers ran a foundry in the late 1800s which supplied much of the metal used to construct the pipeline that was built to supply the Kalgoorlie goldfields with water.<sup>2</sup>

Coming up is our first stop, Barrack Street Square where you can get out and wonder around. It's quite an interesting location, built alongside the Old Perth Port. Here you can see the historic jetty and of course the infamous Bell Tower and Swan Bells.

Boats have been landing in this spot ever since Perth was first settled, but it wasn't until 1854 that the first jetty was built to deposit ferry passengers coming up the river from Fremantle. In the mid-nineteenth century, Barrack Street Jetty was called King Cole's Jetty, but it's not really known how the name change

came about. The foreshore was actually a lot further back in those days and ran along where the Esplanade now sits. A market nearby sold fresh produce, which was probably why the road that ran along there was called Bazaar Street.

All of this land was reclaimed, but it began as early as the 1880s, so the current foreshore has been established for some time.<sup>3</sup>

Ferries still dock here these days, but Barrack Street Square and jetty is also a popular tourist spot with some nice restaurants and cafes overlooking the river. If you fancy taking a river cruise, this is the best place to enquire and catch it from.

The Bell Tower is a much more modern construction, and was surrounded in controversy when it was being built in the late nineties. The State premier at the time, Richard Court, wanted to end his term with a flourish, so he fast tracked a controversial plan to build a belltower to house rare royal church bells which had been in storage for ten years. The steel and glass structure ended up costing taxpayers a cool six million dollars!

The 18 bells, 12 of which are the original ones from London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields, were given to Western Australia in 1888 by the City of London as a present for Australia's bicentenary. They are believed to have been made earlier than the 14<sup>th</sup> century and are the only set of royal bells to have left England.<sup>4</sup>

You can climb the tower, and if you're lucky, join in on bell-pulling session!

Welcome back. Take note of this building on the right, the QV.1 Tower. At 43 floors, it is Perth's third highest building and its location of course means that tenants enjoy spectacular views. The tower was actually designed to make the most of those views: there are no columns on the floors, so there's nothing getting in the way of the floor-to-ceiling windows (tinted, of course!) Architects also designed QV.1 Tower so that it wouldn't spoil the view from Parliament House either, which sits up the hill opposite Kings Park.

Work began in 1988 and finished in 1991. The unusual canopy that surrounds the entrance is actually suspended glass. Urban myth has it that the canopy and entrance was actually modeled on the scene in the movie *Seven Year Itch* when Marilyn Monroe's dress blows up. Well, the architects, Harry Seidler and Associates, have never denied it, but it's true that if you view the entrance at night, from a certain distance, at a particular angle and squint just so, you may well see it.

The name actually comes from a 1913 Italian movie, *Quo Vadis*, so perhaps the Monroe reference is true? *Quo Vadis* means "Wither Goest Thou?" in Latin, and because the movie was so successful in America, it is considered to have been a

major reason for revolutionizing the US film industry.

Seidler's analogy to the QV.1 building is 'that just as the movie Quo Vadis challenged the "accepted" method of entertainment at the time, so does the QV.I project challenge [the] traditional in terms of its size, architecture and technology in Perth, Western Australia.'

It's not known if Seidler was planning a QV.2. Seidler, by the way, is quite an acclaimed and controversial Australian architect who also designed Sydney's MLC Centre, Melbourne's Grollo Tower and the Australian Embassy in Paris. He is well known in Australia for his outspoken views on architecture and unusual designs.

That red sculpture out the front by Charles Ferry is called Conical Fugue. It was constructed in the US and assembled here. Its hollow design and bright colour is supposed to offset the harsh lines and greyness of the building. Some locals love it, others hate it. But everyone agrees, it's unusual!

This building with the unusually triangular spire is the BankWest Tower, Perth's second-highest building. From the top you can see uninterrupted 360-degree views of the city extending to the coast, the hills and the river.

The Tower was completed in 1988 by disgraced tycoon, Alan Bond. You may remember Bond's name being bandied about in the early eighties when Australia won the America's Cup with a boat, Australia II, that was largely bankrolled by the Bond Corporation. Winning yachting's most prestigious trophy was something of a giddy triumph for Australia, because even though we pride ourselves as a world-class sporting nation, we had never brought home the America's Cup. In fact, the Cup race had been won by the New York Yacht Club—the place where the race originated—ever since it began in 1851. More than 25 challenges had been mounted to try and secure the Cup, but all had failed.

Bond had already tried three times, so you can imagine what a big deal it was in 1983 for the Perth team—and the nation—to finally beat the Americans and break their 132-year winning streak. The subsequent defense (and loss) in Fremantle three years later, more or less put the port city on the tourist map.

Incidentally, the boat Bond used, Australia II, caused a huge controversy because of its unusual and innovative winged keel. At the time, there was much debate over whether or not the keel was legal within the strict race rules. But the owners prevailed and the success of Australia II actually popularized this type of craft.

But Alan Bond was no stranger to controversy. In 1978 he won the Australian of the Year, putting him alongside the likes of other notable Australians such as swimming legend Dawn Fraser, actor Paul Hogan and soprano Dame Joan

Sutherland. Ten years later, Bondy (as he was known) was facing bankruptcy and a prison sentence.

How did he fall so hard? The stock market crash of 1987 saw the Bond Corporation lose about 152 million dollars. Bond had made his money, firstly in property development, and then brewing, mining and TV. But it was his love of art that cemented Bondy's downfall. In 1987 he bought Van Gogh's *Irises* for a record 54 million Australian dollars, the most ever paid for a painting at that time. It was then discovered that he didn't actually have enough cash to pay for it and it had to be resold.

In 1996, he originally went to jail over a 15 million dollar charge over the Manet painting, *La Promenade*. But it was the 1.2 billion dollar fraud—Australia's biggest corporate crime—that Bond pleaded guilty to in 1997 that sealed his reputation as Australia's most notorious businessman.

He served only four years of his seven-year sentence; approximately one day for every million dollars he stole. His early release was due to a technicality.

In 1995, Bond used money held in offshore trusts to buy himself out of bankruptcy and today he leads a luxurious lifestyle. In 2003, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of winning the America's Cup, Bond and the Australia II crew, were driven around the Melbourne Cricket Ground in a lap of honour before the start of the Australian Rules Football grand final. This act, of course, created another national controversy.

As we head towards Kings Park, we pass Western Australia's parliamentary precinct. Parliament House has been built in phases. The first began in 1902 and included two chambers and several temporary offices. Although the government of the time hoped to complete the next phase of constructing an eastern façade overlooking Perth city by 1907, the plan wasn't actually fully realized until 1964!

Despite many proposals and plans to upgrade and redevelop parliament house, only two additions have actually been made. In 1977, two more levels were added to the southern wing and in 2002, extensions were done to the northern wing.

Of course many buildings and offices have been constructed nearby to add to the parliamentary precinct. The Constitutional Centre is the only one of its kind in the country, and aims to engage the general populace in government and political activity. Housed in one of Perth's lovingly restored historic buildings, the Constitutional Centre is open to visitors where you can learn more about WA's political history and contemporary governance. Nearby is the Electoral Education Centre which teaches school kids about the election process.

Like other Australian states, WA's government consists of a Legislative Assembly (lower house) and the Legislative Council (upper house). The executive body is made up of the premier, currently Alan Carpenter, and the cabinet. Australia's head of state is still Britain's Queen Elizabeth II—and each state has an appointed Governor to represent her—but most executive power lies with the premier and his ministers.

Western Australia has had 31 premiers, the first being John Forrest in 1880 who reigned a self-governing colony with no political party affiliation. Party politics didn't reach Western Australia until after Federation in 1901. In that year, probably demonstrating the political upheaval Federation brought, WA had four different premiers! Up until early 2006, Dr Geoff Gallop was WA's premier, but he suddenly resigned after revealing that he suffered from depression.

Speaking of depression, it was during those years that Western Australia wanted to break away from the rest of the country. In 1933, a referendum to secede from the rest of Australia and become an independent state won a two-to-one majority; such was the dismay with the federal administration in Canberra at the time. It was at the height of the depression; wages were slashed; families were relying on charitable handouts to survive. However, a delegation to London seeking the British Government's sanction of Western Australian independence were told that secession was unconstitutional, and the state remained part of the Federation.

If you'd like to stroll through some authentic Australian bush, but don't feel like traveling very far to do it, then you're in luck with our next stop, Kings Park. Set high above the Swan River, Kings Park is aptly named (after King Edward the Seventh in 1901) as it really is Perth's crown jewel.

Prior to the initial 175 hectares on Mount Eliza being preserved as a public park in 1872, the area was used as a rifle range of all things. Today, at 400 hectares, the Park is the southern hemisphere's largest urban parkland. Seventeen hectares have been set aside as a Botanic Garden containing over 2000 species of native Western Australian flora. There are plenty of paths to stroll along and enjoy the towering trees and beautifully fragrant bush. In spring, the park is abundant with wildflowers.

If you're extra lucky, you may also see native Australian fauna such as echidnas, possums, lizards, snakes (be wary!) and about eighty species of birds.

Many of the trails take a bit longer than we have time for today, so make sure you come and spend more time here at Kings Park. One walk you must do is the recently completed Lotterywest Federation Walkway. This partly elevated walkway extends 620 metres. The unusual glass and deliberately rusted steel bridge portion of the walk takes you through the tree canopies, offering you a

birds-eye view of the Park. Two well-placed lookouts give you the chance to stop and enjoy gorgeous views of the river and hills. Several artworks enhance the Walkway including Nyoongar Aboriginal art, metal drawings on the pylons and unique interpretative signage.

Kings Park is bursting with memorials – at least fourteen, and more than any other park in the country! The Pioneer Women’s Memorial Fountain is the centerpiece of the Botanic Garden. The Lord Forrest Memorial statue commemorates Kings Park founder and most ardent supporter, John Forrest. The premier first opened the Park in August 1895, naming it Perth Park. He planted the first tree, a Norfolk Island Pine. The Memorial Statue of Queen Victoria on Fraser Avenue dates back to 1903.

One of the Park’s most poignant memorials is the Avenue of Honour along May Drive. Honour trees—towering eucalypts—line the verges and at the base of each one is a small plaque bearing the name of a fallen soldier from World War One.

Out of all the nations that participated in The Great War, Australia lost the most soldiers in proportion to our population: out of just under five million citizens, we suffered 60,000 dead and 150,000 injured.

You can also honour fallen soldiers from other wars at the State War Memorial Court of Contemplation. Dedicated in 1954 by Queen Elizabeth the Second, the memorial features the names of major battlefields. Pay tribute at the Flame of Remembrance which burns continuously within the Pool of Reflection. The Cenotaph—a granite obelisk—was designed to remember all Western Australians who died in the line of duty and lists the names of 7000 Western Australians from World War One and 4000 from World War Two.

The most recent memorial to be added which remembers Australia’s fallen is the Bali Memorial. This commemorates those who were killed in the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002.

If you have about an hour to spare, take the self-guided Memorial Walk which covers many of the Park’s memorials. A brochure detailing the walk is available from the Kings Park Visitor Centre.

As well as enjoying the vast vistas from atop the Park—Mt Eliza sits on a limestone escarpment that rises to 65 metres—there are plenty of other activities in Kings Park.

The DNA Tower—named for its resemblance to the DNA double-helix molecule—is Kings Park’s highest point. Climb the 101 steps to a viewing platform for an unparalleled view.

The Western Power Parkland features a playground of dinosaurs, dinosaur

footprints and ancient fossils. Kids can play on the island fort, follow the elevated walk, or cool off in the misted forest. You can also make use of one of the free barbecues, enjoy a picnic or have coffee at the Zamia Café. In summer an outdoor cinema plays the latest movies.

Enjoy your visit. On the way to the memorials, you'll find a kiosk to buy snacks and drinks and toilet facilities.

Welcome back.

Australians love their beaches, but they're also mad about rivers. Sweeping before you is the Swan River, named by Dutch Commander, Willem de Vlamingh in 1697 for its black swans, which have since become the city's emblem.

At about 67 kilometres in length, the river is a major source of water – and fun! On any sunny day you'll see people water skiing, sailing, fishing, kayaking, windsurfing, even SCUBA diving. Yes, divers love the river: there are over 40 boat wrecks in the Swan, mostly barges, and there's plenty of marine life: cuttlefish, dolphins, starfish and seahorses. Diving is also a good way to bag dinner. The river is full of prawns, mussels and large blue Mana crabs, which divers collect at night.

However, there's some debate about the river's water quality and whether or not you should eat shellfish caught in it: sewage spills sometimes contaminate the river so you might think twice about eating river-caught mussels or oysters. It's probably best to stick to eating your seafood at a restaurant.

But generally the water is pretty good, so if you fancy a swim, there are plenty of beaches along the banks. If you're lucky enough to get onto one of the thousands of boats moored on the river, you can cruise up to the Swan Valley and stop off at a winery or head downstream to Fremantle where you'll pass the very posh Royal Perth Yacht Club and see some of Perth's million-dollar homes.

Or you could tie up at the Old Swan Brewery, that imposing brick building on the northern shore.

It was built here in 1880 when Perth was still a new colony. Back then it was Perth's largest industrial building, but not a bad place to work. Workers were given ten beer rations every day - two of which were in the morning before work had even started! Eventually, the buildings fell into disrepair and it became part of failed-millionaire Alan Bond's empire, who we talked about earlier.

In the early nineties, plans to renovate the brewery caused quite a stir because the local Noongar people said it was an ancient Aboriginal sacred site and they wanted the buildings to be completely destroyed. At one point, they set up a

protest camp there, but it didn't help. The brewery was renovated into luxury apartments, office space and several bars and restaurants.

Beer is no longer brewed there, but if you're thirsty you can enjoy a nice cold pint on the terrace overlooking the lovely Swan River.

As we leave the river and drive west along Stirling Highway towards our next stop Cottesloe Beach, you may be interested to learn along the way about some of Perth's institutions and their history.

Winthrop Hall, named after founder John Winthrop Hackett, with its stately clock tower and shady colonnades, is a fitting centerpiece to the University of Western Australia, or UWA as its known locally. You can see the Hall and the Uni on the left. With its ornate Romanesque architecture, manicured gardens and lovely riverside setting, the University has all the grandeur of a nineteenth century European campus.

Established in 1911 with just 184 students, UWA was WA's first university. It was housed in a motley collection of city buildings called Tin Pan Alley. The roofs were made of tin.

The Uni moved to its present location in the 1930s. If you get the chance to visit UWA, you'll be amazed that in 1912, when Hackett was championing that 1,600 hectares be set aside for a university, local Members of Parliament and doctors considered the riverside location a health hazard. Students will graduate "in rheumatics, not mathematics," complained one MP.

Hackett battled other negative opinions about the value of education, especially for the poor. But as UWA's first chancellor, he cast the deciding vote in 1912 against introducing fees. Thus, UWA became the first university in the British Empire to offer free education, and was the only one in Australia to continue to do so until World War Two.

Hackett's legacy also included a hefty endowment after he died in 1916, enabling the first University buildings at this riverside location to be erected.

Today, UWA has over 17,000 students; more than 3000 of which are international students from over 80 different countries. UWA employs almost 3000 staff. Its original three faculties—arts, engineering and science—have expanded to nine faculties which include law, medicine and computing.

Although UWA isn't the State's largest university—Curtin University of Technology has that honour—it's the most prestigious. In 2005, two UWA professors, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their groundbreaking research in the causes of peptic ulcers.

As we continue our short journey to the coast, here's a little information about Australia's system of government. As you know, we started as a penal colony, nothing more than a far-flung jail for British criminals.

But in 1901, after the country had grown in independence, wealth and size, the colonies were brought together under one over-arching government. Australia became a Federation with its own constitution and each colony formally became a State. Because the constitution was passed as a British Act of Parliament, it has been described as Australia's "birth certificate". But the architects of the constitution, particularly its chief author, Sir Samuel Griffith, felt that the Constitution was uniquely written by and for Australians.

However, the Constitution did define the role of the federal government and enabled the creation of a federal parliament based on the British Westminster System. This was made up of the Senate (or upper house), the House of Representatives (lower house), with the Queen as Head of State. Her presence in Australian politics is overseen by her appointed representative, the Governor General.

Several referendums to overturn the Queen's sovereignty over Australia have been held throughout the years; the last one was in 1999. Those who wanted to move to a more American-style republic with a president as head of state instead of a queen, argued that Australia had finally grown up as a nation and was well past its due date to cut the apron strings of the "mother country". It was time, they said, for us to go it alone.

But much of the population disagreed and the referendum was defeated. The system established back in 1901 largely remains in place; however the Queen's representative is little more than a figurehead.

Today, the country is run by three levels of government: federal, state and local. The Federal government oversees areas that affect the entire country such as trade, immigration, defense and foreign policy, while the states take care of such needs as education, transport, infrastructure and law enforcement. Local governments ensure their districts have adequate facilities such as libraries, child care and recycling.

But our system wasn't always so structured and the country not so affluent. Like we said before, it was the gold rushes of the 1850s and onwards that really transformed Australia from a collection of struggling colonies into a major western country with its own identity.

The first discovery of gold in Australia was officially credited to Edward Hammond Hargraves who was paid ten thousand pounds and appointed Crown Commissioner of the Goldfield after he announced there was gold in Summer Hill Creek in New South Wales in 1851.

Gold had unofficially been found before then, but the government was worried that if word got out, New South Wales would suffer the same chaos and lawlessness experienced in California's gold fields. "Put it away Mr Clarke, or we shall all have our throats cut," is Sir George Phillips's famous quote in 1844 after an amateur prospector, Reverend WB Clarke, produced a pocketful of gold. Prospectors quietly disposed of their finds in Sydney and then instantly disappeared.

But Hargraves, fresh from the California gold experience, was determined to find gold in Australia, and only after one week in the country proved himself right. He was only too eager to share his discovery with the rest of the colony. His announcement sparked the greatest human migration the world had ever seen. Within twenty years, Australia's population trebled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871.

Diggers with gold fever poured into the country to hopefully find fortune in the newly discovered gold fields in New South Wales and then six months later, in the towns of Ballarat and Bendigo in neighbouring Victoria. Men walked off their jobs and joined the rush. "A complete mental madness appears to have seized almost every member of the community," declared the Bathurst Free Press.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1850s, more than one third of the world's gold came from Victoria. Tent towns, housing tens of thousands of hopefuls, sprung up. The economy boomed and merchants thrived as inflation drove the cost of supplies through the roof. Life on the digs was harsh and mired in squalor.

"The trees had been all cut down," wrote Ellen Clacy in 1854, one of the few women to visit a dig. "It looked like a sandy plain, or one vast unbroken succession of countless gravel pits – the earth was everywhere turned up – men's heads in every direction were popping up and down from their holes ..."

Western Australia's turn didn't come until 1885 when gold was discovered in the far north's Kimberly region. As diggers negotiated the toughest terrain they'd experienced yet, more strikes were unearthed in the Pilbara, the Murchison and around Southern Cross. Towns went from zero population to 10,000 and back to zero in just ten years. If you head into the outback you can still see remnants of some of these ghost towns, all but blown away except for a few foundations and perhaps a building or two.

However, it was in 1892 when Arthur Bayley struck gold in Coolgardie some 500 kilometres east of Perth and more famously, Paddy Hannan's find the following year at Kalgoorlie, 45 kilometres further inland, that WA's wealth potential was realized. Coolgardie immediately flourished, swelling at one point to a population of 15,000. At its peak, the town contained two stock exchanges, six newspapers, three breweries and more than 20 pubs. Flush with money from mining licences,

town planners built huge public buildings including an enormous town hall, imposing post office and grand courthouse.

Many diggers never found riches, however. Most newly arrived immigrants had to walk the hundreds of kilometres to the goldfields in the hot desert sun, often pushing barrows filled with mining tools or carrying swags. Thousands died from thirst, hunger, disease and despair. Only a few found instant fortunes. Some drank or gambled away the entire lot!

In a matter of only 13 years, Coolgardie's entire gold resource was depleted and the town quickly declined. Nowadays, the town has about a thousand inhabitants and survives mainly on tourists.<sup>8</sup>

But in 1903, Australia's gold production was an incredible 3.8 million ounces, mostly because of the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie strike. This output was not rivalled again until 1988. In fact, today, Kalgoorlie, or Kal as it's known to the locals, is still at the core of Australia's gold production. Kal's "super pit"—a conglomeration of all the old mines—is still expanding. When they eventually stop digging, this massive hole in the ground will stretch 3.8 kilometres, be 1.35 kilometres wide and go down deeper than 500 metres.<sup>9</sup>

In the early days, water—or chronic lack of it—was a real problem. The government realized quite quickly that to sustain gold mining in the arid and inhospitable terrain, a long-term constant supply of water needed to be found. It was CY O'Connor, the State's chief engineer, who proposed a radical answer: dig a giant reservoir in the Perth hills and construct a 557-kilometre pipeline to get the water to Kal. O'Connor had already proved himself by sorting out WA's rail network and overcoming the impossible and constructing Fremantle port. So it was no surprise that his superiors readily approved his idea and work commenced on the pipeline at lightning speed. But his plan came under such ridicule from the public and media—especially when it was discovered that Kalgoorlie is 400 metres higher than Perth and the entire pipeline would have to travel uphill—that in 1902, just a few months before the first pump was switched on and the liquid gold began to flow, O'Connor rode his horse into the surf off South Fremantle and shot and killed himself.

O'Connor would have been proud of his achievement, however. Every day, five million gallons were pumped through eight stages to Kalgoorlie. Today, the pipeline is still the region's primary water supply. When we get to Fremantle later in the tour, you can take a look at a bronze statue of O'Connor in front of the Fremantle Port Authority Buildings.

So if you're after a taste of gold fever, then Kalgoorlie is the place to head. With many of the original buildings still intact such as the aptly named Palace Hotel, the elaborately ornate York Hotel, the turreted City Markets and the lavish Kalgoorlie Miner building—built to publish the town newspaper—you get a real

sense of a “Wild West” frontier town. The streets are abnormally wide – designed so that traders could turn around camel trains. And the town is still full of miners, some seeking their fortune, but most of them just making a living.

If Kalgoorlie is a bit far, then stop in at the Perth Mint on Hay Street, the country’s oldest mint still in operation. You’ll be able to watch a gold pour, try and lift a 400-ounce gold bar, and feast your eyes on the “Golden Beauty”, one of the largest nuggets in the world.

Today, Western Australia’s wealth comes from more than just gold. In fact, the state is currently enjoying a mineral resources boom, bringing new waves of migration as companies struggle to find qualified personnel for their mines.

Gold is still our biggest mineral export with 5.5 billion dollars shipped out of the state in 2005, but iron ore is a close second at 5.2 billion dollars. We also mine, smelt and export nickel, alumina, bauxite, copper, natural gas, talc and a whole host of mineral sands.<sup>10</sup>

Conditions for workers are very different today than they were one hundred years ago. Most minesites are still in remote locations many miles from Perth, but instead of building towns, companies have built small camps and fly the workers in to do extended shifts and then fly them out again for time off. A common stint involves a worker doing seven twelve-hour day shifts, then seven twelve-hour night shifts followed by seven days off when the worker is flown back to Perth. This particular roster is referred to as a “two and one”. This fly-in, fly-out system, as it’s called, is good for some, but wreaks havoc for others. Bachelors who like to earn top dollar for two weeks and then spend it all on their week off in town thrive on fly-in, fly-out rosters, but couples, especially those with children, suffer immensely from the extended periods apart.

A 2002 study by Perth’s Edith Cowan University showed that partners experience a great deal of domestic stress when one of them works fly-in, fly-out shifts.<sup>11</sup>

Wives are more likely to suffer from depression and relationships often fail from the strain of constantly saying goodbye. In addition, mining towns that did support larger residential populations such as Meekatharra, Leinster and Wiluna are dying as workers no longer stay to raise their families or contribute to the towns’ economies.

It is estimated that about 26,000 WA employees work fly-in, fly-out, a staggering proportion of our workforce when you consider there are only two million people in the entire state.

Western Australia has other industries of course. Wine production has really taken off in the last few years since the Swan Valley and Margaret River wine growing regions expanded production to compete with other states. Despite

irregular rainfall, the wheatbelt in the east still grows xxx amount of wheat per year. Vast stations up north—some bigger than 400,000 hectares—graze enough livestock to sustain healthy wool and cattle industries. And with 12,000 kilometres of coastline, WA enjoys a multi-million dollar seafood industry.

Our next stop, Cottesloe Beach, is one of Perth's most popular coastal suburbs. As you'll see, its very pretty foreshore is lined with shaded lawn and plenty of facilities: showers, toilets, snack bars and pubs.

It's popular beach can be a bit rough, so swimmers are advised to stay within the yellow and red surf living saving flags. This means there's a lifeguard on duty who can help you out if you get into trouble. The Cottesloe Life Saving Club has been around since 1908.

You're probably familiar with the jokey image of the bronzed Aussie male wearing tight Speedos and splashing in the surf, but surf life saving is taken very seriously here. It began in the early 1800s when bans on daylight bathing were lifted and surf swimmers begun getting into trouble.

Today there are over 300 clubs around the country with about 113,000 members. They've saved over 500,000 lives since 1907. Clubs meet and compete in various competitions, the most prestigious of which is the national Australian Surf Life Saving Championships. 2006 had more than 7500 competitors.

If you're ready for a quick cuppa, stop in at the Indiana Tea House right on the beachfront. It was originally built in 1910 but was replaced by a bathing pavilion with restaurants and then a kiosk. In 1996, the tea house was rebuilt, using recycled wood. Its turreted roof, arched windows and large verandahs give it the feel of an airy historical structure. The views over the Indian Ocean are stunning.

You will also be able to see Rottnest Island, 19 kilometres offshore. It was the place that the Dutch Commander Flamingh—who you may remember named the Swan River—first sighted when he came to the area. He mistook the small marsupials we call quokkas to be rats, hence the Dutch name, "rats' nest".

Aboriginals have probably inhabited the island for 7000 years; they called it Wadjemup. Unfortunately, after European settlement, they again lived on Rottnest, but as prisoners. This continued until 1903.

A trip to Rotto, as we like to call it, is worthwhile. There are no cars on the island but you can rent bicycles or take a free bus to look at the lovely bays and rocky headlands. There's plenty to do there: snorkeling, SCUBA diving, whale watching, browsing through the museum or having an icy beer at the Quokka Arms that overlooks the main harbour.

Rottneest is also the destination for the famous Rottneest Channel Swim, the longest open water swim in the world. Every year, thousands of swimmers leave from Cottesloe and swim to the island, often in treacherous conditions.

In 2006—the fiftieth anniversary of the swim—many of the 2300 swimmers dropped out because of high winds and big swell. Not all swimmers do the entire 19 kilometres, though. Some work in teams of two or four with breaks in between stints. In 2005, the Roaring 40s were the oldest female team to complete the crossing. They had a combined age of 240 years.

Enjoy your visit to Cottesloe.

Welcome back. Did you enjoy our lovely coastal town?

This stretch of coast we're driving along as we head towards Fremantle—or Freo as you'll probably hear it called—is one of the most dangerous passages of water in the world. Running parallel to the mainland are two reef systems that are remnants of old coastlines. They were submerged after the seas rose due to ice ages.

In addition, two sandbanks across Cockburn Sound make getting into the harbour very difficult. In the past, big sailing ships had to navigate a narrow deep water gap between the reefs in order to get to the safe haven of the Sound.

Sailing ships entering this stretch of water in the nineteenth century were particularly vulnerable because the prevailing north westerly winds are so strong. In Freo, the soothing summer sea breeze that cools us down after a particularly hot day is known as the Fremantle Doctor.

There are almost forty shipwrecks in the Perth area; some of them dating back as far as the 1650s. In fact, Dutch explorers came to the region in search of lost ships, and often got into trouble themselves.

In 1829, Captain James Stirling (remember, Perth's first governor) ran aground his ship, The *Parmelia*, trying to navigate the reefs and sandbanks.

Large ships, however, could take refuge in a deep channel of water between the mainland and Rottneest Island, called Gage Roads (after Admiral Gage). (Incidentally, there's a local brewing company called Gage Roads. Don't pass up an opportunity to try one of their beers, they're very good!)

If you're interested in shipwrecks, then a visit to the Western Australia Maritime Museum is well worth the time. There you can find out all about the many wrecks off the WA coast, view artefacts and learn about the treacherous conditions sailors navigated in our waters. The most famous wreck is the Dutch merchant

ship, the *Batavia*, which ran aground on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, just off Geraldton in the north.

The *Batavia* is considered Australia's first shipwreck—it sunk in 1629—but the chilling story of what followed the sinking is possibly what gives this wreck the most notoriety. Its location wasn't finally verified until 1963.

After the ship sank, 268 survivors were left to set up camp on one of the waterless islands, while the Commander (Francisco Palsaert), senior officers and crew took a smaller boat to Jakarta (called *Batavia* in those days), where the ship had been originally headed. In the three months that the rescue party were away, several people mutinied and more than 120 men, women and children were murdered. Imagine three months on a dusty deserted island with no water!

When Commander Palsaert returned, he hanged some of the ringleaders, took others back to Jakarta for execution and for some reason, left two men on the mainland, just south of Kalbarri. As this part of the mainland is extremely dry, it is not surprising they didn't last very long.

If you visit that area up north, you can walk along the cliffs and will see a plaque where the men were dumped.

With such hazardous shipping conditions off the Perth coast, you may be wondering how Fremantle managed to become one of Australia's busiest ports. More than 4000 merchant vessels are handled through the port every year.

Gigantic freighters and luxury liners all owe their ability to navigate Cockburn Sound and Gage Roads to CY O'Connor, the engineer who designed the Perth to Kalgoorlie water pipeline.

As you know, Fremantle sits at the mouth of the Swan River, so it was always going to be a valuable site for the early settlers. Aboriginal people used the area for hunting and fishing—and were often seen in groups of 80 or more—but there is actually no evidence of indigenous settlement in the immediate vicinity.

Still, it must have been an interesting sight for anyone catching a crab or two when Captain Charles Fremantle, who the city is obviously named after, took possession of the area one month before Captain Stirling arrived in 1829 to establish the colony.

As settlers and supplies arrived, a township sprang up to service the incoming ships. By 1833, a town plan was drawn up for Freo. By this time though, the commanders had already built the colony's first permanent building: a jail of course, incarceration being the order of the day! This building is known as the Round House, because of its peculiar shape. The structure has eight cells and jailer's quarters which all open up onto a circular courtyard.

On the beach below the Round House were whaling operations. A tunnel was constructed underneath the Round House to give the whalers access to town. All of this is still standing which you'll be able to visit when we get to Freo.

Before constructing the Round House, the commanders purposely drove ashore an old ship, *The Marquis of Anglesea*, to use as a jail. Later it became the colony's first post office.

Despite being the only entry point into Perth, Fremantle really didn't begin to take off in earnest until convict labour arrived in 1850. Roads made from jarrah timber were laid and permanent structures erected such as the Fremantle Prison (which, ironically, they had to build for themselves!) and the lunatic asylum (and who wouldn't be going nutty out here at that time?), which is now the Fremantle Museum and Arts Centre.

Even though Fremantle Prison stopped functioning as a jail in 1991, the buildings have been preserved and transformed into a museum. Known as the Imperial Convict Establishment until 1867, the prison housed both men and women after the 1880s, many for petty theft. Capital punishment was legal in Western Australia right up until 1984 and in the early days, murderers were frequently hanged right where they had committed the crime. Gallows were built at Fremantle Prison in 1888, taking over from Perth Gaol, which up until then had been the state's main place of execution. Until abolition, 43 men and one woman were hanged at Fremantle Prison.

The last person to be legally executed was notorious serial killer, Eric Edgar Cooke, in 1964. For four years, Cooke terrorised Perth's quiet, leafy suburbs which began in 1959 when he stabbed a woman to death while trying to rob her home. Despite being known to police and serving time for a series of thefts and "peeping tom" offences, the quiet, small man was not linked to murder and regarded by police as harmless. In 1963 he upped the ante by randomly shooting five people in one night. Then intermittent shootings, stabbings and hit and runs prompted Perth residents to start locking their doors, buying dogs and keeping their children home. His range of crimes were so disconnected and different from each other, police suspected a gang of several members, not just one man. He was finally caught after he left his gun at a murder scene and police waited for him when he returned to collect it.

Although Cooke was only ever charged with one murder, it was eventually determined that he'd committed eight murders and fourteen attempted murders. He also confessed to the hundreds of break-ins, robberies and crimes of abuse that had plagued the city for years. Two other men were convicted for two of Cooke's murders, including deaf-mute Daryl Beamish, who stayed in jail for fifteen years until 1974, despite Cooke's confession to the crime in 1963! You

can tour the prison and learn about its chilling, yet colourful history and the many characters who served time there.

But back to Fremantle's earlier history. To try and alleviate the problem of wrong signals being sent to ships via unreliable signal fires, (causing some of which to falter on the reef and sink!) Fremantle's first lighthouse was built just west of the Round House in 1851. Another lighthouse was built nearby, but both were demolished in the early 1900s to make way for the newly created federal government's defence fortifications.

Two jetties were constructed: South or Short Jetty in 1870 and then Long Jetty in 1873. As the economic lifeline for Western Australia, the Long Jetty was extended twice to cope with the increasing flow of goods and passengers. Passengers were considered cargo just like everything else, but a passenger terminal wasn't built in Fremantle harbour until 1960, when the golden age of seafaring immigration had long passed.

By the late 1890s, after gold was discovered and immigrants began flooding the colony, it was evident that the port needed to be upgraded. The Long Jetty jutted into the ocean for more than a kilometre but the heavy traffic made it increasingly difficult for captains to get berths and unload their cargo. Not to mention the prevailing winds which made securing their tall-masted sailing ships precarious at best.

Discussions for a new inner harbour were long and rowdy and many plans were put forth. Many naysayers said it was impossible to turn the river entrance into a safe and suitable harbour and lobbied for the port to be built further south.

But CY O'Connor hatched an ambitious plan that required removing a limestone bar from the mouth of the river, dredging channels through the sandbars and constructing artificial barriers—called moles—north and south of the entrance.

Work commenced on 7 November 1892 with the presiding Governor, Sir Frederick Broome propelling a boulder into the ocean from the back of a truck. One onlooker told the *West Australian* newspaper, "The sea was furious at such an invasion and gave some of the onlookers more than a sprinkle, the Governor among the number."

Work was completed an astonishingly short five years later in 1897. Ships that were previously docking in Albany in the south (and their cargo being transported overland) immediately headed towards Fremantle instead. On the day Victoria Quay was opened—named in honour of Queen Victoria who was celebrating her diamond jubilee that year—the first passenger ship from overseas pulled up on the dock.

River reclamation began and quayside structures were extended as thousands upon thousands of gold diggers poured into the new docks to seek their fortune. The railway line between Fremantle and Guildford that was built in 1881 to carry goods to Perth was extended; in fact it was the construction of bridges necessary to transfer goods across the river that stopped the port being moved closer to Perth city, something the government at the time was keen to do.

Ongoing works continued, overseen by a newly established Fremantle Harbour Trust, made up of three shipping agents, a hardware merchant and the port's principal stevedore, all seen by the eastern states as out to make a tidy profit.

Critics in the increasingly upmarket city of Sydney—and home of the new Federal government—were quick to point out the appalling quayside conditions: parts of Victoria Quay were sinking as Seaworms devoured the wooden wharves; passengers couldn't get from one side of the river to the other because there was no ferry service; and at least one sailor was killed each week because of the lack of lighting. *The Fremantle Mail* was quick to respond to such stinging criticism with a quip that perhaps the Trust should give sailors “a free life assurance policy and a few life belts.”

However, the port town of Fremantle flourished and it's testament to CY's farsighted vision that more than one hundred years on, and with much modernisation, the original harbour plan is still largely intact. Sure, there were some early hiccups, not least being the disaster in 1918 when the SS Polgowan caught fire at North Quay when it was full of explosives!

Fremantle forged ahead, and as the town's population grew, so did its wealth. Exactly one hundred years after the colony was settled, Fremantle was declared a city in 1929. Boarding houses were busting at the seams and the march of urban sprawl began. East Fremantle, which had already pushed to become its own municipality in 1897, was booming. A tram system was set up to shuttle citizens back and forth to Fremantle along Canning Road. Two areas sprang up: the posh district of Richmond which overlooked the river and Plympton, the poorer cousin to the south. Large tracts of land had been purchased by budding entrepreneurs in the 1860s, but the orchards, vineyards and grazing area for livestock soon gave way to subdivisions and housing.

Like other gold-fed regions, Fremantle prospered until the Great Depression of the 1930s when poverty and economic failure plagued the city. After a period of union busting, which saw the introduction of casual labour, working men found it increasingly difficult to find steady, well-paid employment. Employers would troll around several “pick-up spots” to recruit day labourers for 12-hour shifts moving 200-pound wheat sacks on the docks. One such pick-up location was outside the Esplanade Hotel on Marine Terrace, where the wooden benches the men waited upon still line the Hotel's verandah.

When World War II effectively ended the depression and bolstered the country's economic infrastructures, Fremantle's capacity to export primary produce grew significantly, cementing the port-town's reputation as a solid working class city. It also became known as a destination for much "free-wheeling fun" by the many sailors who passed through Freo when the port was transformed into a major naval base during the last part of the second world war. Huge luxury liners pressed into war service that were too large to actually dock and had to moor at Gage Roads included the Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary and Aquitania. From 1942 onwards, Fremantle hosted the southern hemisphere's largest submarine base with more than 170 Dutch, American and British submarines operating from the harbour.

This was probably prompted by Australia's worst naval disaster which occurred off the Western Australian coast southwest of Carnarvon. In November 1941, a light naval cruiser, the HMAS Sydney disappeared without trace and lost its entire crew of 645 after engaging with German raider, HSK Kormoran, which also sank. (However, most of Kormoran's crew were rescued and subsequently became prisoners of war.) The Sydney's only remains were a lifebelt and life raft. To this day, the whereabouts of both ships remains a mystery, with much speculation about their demise and location.

In the fifties, a new wave of immigration brought people from all over the world to Fremantle, many of whom stayed. Italians and Greeks settled the area in vast numbers, bringing with them a bustling Mediterranean culture and cuisine that still thrives today. The landmark cappuccino strip on South Terrace—where you can stop for a leisurely coffee and watch the people of Freo go about their business—sprang up from these enterprising immigrants. One such place, Gino's was started by an Italian tailor who was sick of drinking bad coffee. One day in the early eighties Gino told his stunned wife he was turning his tailor shop (which had already been operating on that corner for twenty-one years!) into a coffee shop and it's been a Freo institution ever since.

During the sixties and seventies, Australia's economy slumped again and so did the export industry. Many Fremantle businesses shut up shop, exports declined, unemployment was high. But the city's housing was cheap and plentiful which attracted many young, poor artists and bohemians. Plenty of empty warehouse space allowed budding painters, musicians, writers, photographers, performers, filmmakers and sculptors the facility to work on their art. A vibrant arts scene with various venues emerged. In 1972, the old lunatic asylum was transformed into the Fremantle Arts Centre which is still thriving today with classes, exhibitions, music, a resident publishing house and more. If you get to visit, look out for one of the resident ghosts; the Centre is considered one of WA's most haunted houses with at least three different ghosts being sighted.

Today, Fremantle is booming again—and has become more of a Perth suburb than a city in its own right—but the centre has still retained its artistic and working

class roots. Many nineteenth-century buildings survived the twentieth-century demolition and modernisation eras and have been lovingly restored. Arts, music and cultural festivals abound throughout the year, the most notable being the Fremantle Festival in November. But it doesn't matter if you miss it; just about any time of the year you can see a variety of activity such as buskers swallowing swords, dancing or playing music on Freo's street corners. Cafes often host poetry readings and art exhibits. You'll find a colourful array of new-age shops selling secret potions and magical mysteries nestled amongst the laneways and arcades. Indeed, many of the local characters are works of art themselves!

A stroll around Fremantle Markets located at the Western end of South Street is a good place to start if you're in search of Freo's bohemian culture. If you're lucky you may see some of our more famous residents such as Australian author, Tim Winton or British comedian, Ben Elton.

The market boasts more than 150 stalls selling everything from fresh fruit and vegetables to fish to all-Aussie products such as sheepskin water bottle covers, boomerangs, handcrafted jewellery and fragrant sandalwood soaps.

The market is quite a landmark in Fremantle with a colourful history. The heritage-listed building was built in 1897 and is typical of the Victorian architecture of the time with its wide verandah, ornamental façade and pitched roof. The façade is largely unchanged since 1904 except perhaps the merchant signs outside, which back then offered millinery, mercers, hosiers and hatters. Market gardeners from outlying rural areas such as Spearwood and Hamilton Hill (now residential suburbs) would drive old wooden trucks laden with fresh produce down punishing rutted dirt roads to sell for just a few cents.

If you're partial to seafood, another market to explore are the fish markets down by Fishing Boat Harbour. Western Australia's fishing industry is worth 1.2 billion dollars each year and it the state's third largest industry after mining and agriculture. Not surprising with over 12000 kilometres of coastline!

As recently as the fifties, fishermen used to go out for fourteen days at a time in wooden sailing boats stacked with iceboxes. Navigating by compass, barometer and stars, they'd often return with two thousand pounds of fish.

Oftentimes, a fisherman's son would hawk herring or sardines on Fremantle's street corners, selling them by the dozen for a shilling (about 10 cents) and rolling them up in paper. Big catches were neatly stacked in lots of 18 and sold at the market by auction. Restaurants and fish shops bought their produce fresh daily.

You can still buy fish pretty much straight out of the ocean. Kailis Brothers, Greek fishmongers since 1928 operate Kailis' Fish Market Café where you can buy the freshest fish and chips in Perth. They also sell freshly caught seafood including

crayfish (lobster), oysters and prawns and are one of WA's largest fish distributors. Next door, overlooking the harbour is Cicerello's Restaurant which has been selling fresh seafood since 1903, when the market was just a shed at the end of a rickety wooden jetty!

Cicerello's have seen a lot of changes in their time; in 1979, one dozen fresh oysters would cost you a mere \$1.70. Today they're ten times that! But well worth the price. If you can't get there today during our break, be sure to come back and have a leisurely look around. Fremantle really is one of WA's loveliest cities.

Welcome back. Isn't Fremantle a beautiful town? As you probably gathered, Fremantle is deeply entrenched in its port culture. To celebrate this and share it with the wider community, particularly visitors like yourselves, the city of Fremantle recently built the Maritime Museum which opened in December 2002. Located on the very end of Victoria Quay on the site of the first landing by settlers in 1829, the modern glass and aluminium-clad structure was designed to resemble a boat beached on a sandy promontory, an apt metaphor for all those ships that didn't quite make it to their destinations! The "bow" section deliberately faces west and juts out over the Indian Ocean to signify the town's strong connections with the region and the importance maritime endeavours have on our identity.

Designing the building on the idea of an upturned boat also represents journeys and adventures, both of which are key to the inhabitants of this coast.

But most importantly, the modern design provides excellent gallery space for visitors to explore the various exhibits. Learn more about Fremantle's harbour history and its early whaling industry at the Fremantle and Cargoes galleries. Or, discover more about Fremantle's strategic position during World War II and just how close this coast came to being invaded by the Japanese at the Naval Defence gallery. On the historic slipway outside, you can also climb through the Oberon-class submarine, Ovens, and experience the confines of a submarine for yourself. Galleries dedicated to fishing, the Indian Ocean, the Swan River and great watery pastimes from surfing to solo yachting (such as Jon Sanders' circumnavigation of the globe three times by himself on his boat, the Parry Endeavour) give you an insight into the importance our waterways play in our lives, history and culture.

Of course the museum is built amongst a working port, where trading sheds, storage facilities and boat builders such as those housed in the C-shed (where you catch the ferry to Rottnest Island) still operate today. Many, however, have given over to more tourist functions such as the 100-year old wharf house, the E-Shed which has been transformed into the E-Shed markets. This fine example of an old warehouse has been converted into an eclectic market selling everything from tourist kitsch to numerology readings to SCUBA gear.

Major redevelopment of the whole Victoria Quay area is well underway, with a number of reconstructions in the precinct. The old woolstores building which was built in 1927 and one of Fremantle's most recognisable landmarks has been converted into luxury apartments, office space and the Goldsbrough Hotel.

In days gone by, when the massive warehouse space functioned as a busy woolshed and market, wool bales were winched to the third floor where the natural light from the saw-toothed roof allowed buyers to readily see the fleeces and bid on them. Directly after the auction, the bales were sent to ground level through giant wooden chutes and packed onto ships and trains, bound for their destinations. This process continued right up until 1982, when the building was closed and operations moved to a more modern structure. However, the woolstores still stored wool bales for another 17 years until developers moved in to capitalise on its premium size and location.

In early 2006, the details of the much-debated redevelopment plan for Victoria Quay were finally released and the whole waterfront will be reconstructed to include shops, offices, accommodation, ferry landing facilities, pedestrian precincts and public space. With any luck (and much public input!) the town planners will get it right and find the right blend of modern convenience and heritage conservation to preserve this unique part of town. You'll just have to return to Fremantle in ten years time to see how we fared!

As we head back to Perth, you might be interested to hear about places of interest outside of the city. As the country's largest state – we have approximately the same landmass as India! – there are plenty of magnificent sites to see if you get the chance to travel.

Many trips you can do are only a day away from Perth, so if you've got limited time, you'll still be able to get out of the city and enjoy our unique landscape.

If you're a wine buff, a must visit is the Swan Valley wine district, only 20 minutes east of the city. Over 30 wineries offer world-class wines and many of them have gorgeous restaurants with lovely views overlooking the vineyards or the Swan River which meanders through the district. Larger wineries that are well worth a visit include Sandalford and Houghton's which is famous for its white burgundy. There are many boutique wineries growing classic varieties such as shiraz, chardonnay and chenin blanc. The Swan Valley is one of the world's few areas that produces the rich, honied dessert wine, Liqueured Verdelho.

Thy Swan Valley also has art galleries, an equestrian centre, picnic spots, golf courses, breweries, a cheese factory, a chocolate factory and olive producers!

If you're itching to experience some of Australia's wildlife (the furry and feathered variety!) then stop off at Caversham Wildlife Park which is next to Swan Valley.

Situated in Whiteman Park—a 4300-hectare expanse of natural bushland—Caversham Wildlife Park houses over 200 species of Australian and exotic wildlife. Because Australia broke away from other landmasses so many thousands of years ago, our animals are unique, and strange! Yes, you'll be able to cuddle a koala or feed the kangaroos, but you'll also get to meet some of our lesser-known creatures such as wombats, echidnas, Tasmanian devils and camels.

Camels, which came to Australia with the Afghans in the 1800s to help build the overland telegraph from Adelaide to Darwin and escaped or were let go into the desert, are now an integral part of Australia's fauna. If you get the chance, take a ride on one and you'll understand why they're dubbed "ships of the desert".

You've probably noticed the Perth Hills in the east; no, they're not very high, but they still offer some fantastic spots to take in our ocean and city views. One such road, the "Zig Zag" Scenic Drive winds up the hill in a series of switchbacks and ends in the pretty forest town of Kalamunda. Here you'll find tracts of tall timber, a large national park, nice cafes and rustic shops. Nearby is the Mundaring Weir, which holds the reservoir CY O'Connor built for the goldfield's pipeline. It's a lovely spot with a lively old pub that does great food and holds concerts and festivals.

Further southward, but still only 40 minutes from the city, is Araluen Botanic Park near the hillside town of Roleystone. "Araluen", which is an aboriginal word meaning "singing waters", "running waters" or "place of lilies" is an apt name for this shady, lush valley filled with creeks, waterfalls, tall native trees, terraced gardens, ornamental pools and a stunning variety of native flora. The Botanic Garden was first established in 1929 as a holiday camp for the Young Australia League who built stone and timber walkways, planted flowers and created memorials such as the "Grove of the Unforgotten", dedicated to the 88 League members who died in World War I. In spring the gardens are a riot of colour as thousands of tulips burst into bloom. The State Government purchased the park in 1990 and established a Foundation to oversee its management and ensure this beautiful spot is always available to the public.

If you're heading north, make sure you pass through the picturesque Avon Valley, home to tracts of farmland and orchards, extensive national parks with plenty of hiking trails and charming historical towns. York, which was founded in 1831 and is WA's oldest inland town, has been classified by the National Trust. Its classic Federation and Victorian architecture has been well preserved with hotels, houses and churches retaining their grand old-world charm. Visitors strolling along the pleasant main street can view old-style shops and traditional cafes and really get a sense of how life was lived in this fledgling country 150 years ago. York also enjoys more modern-day pursuits such as the annual Jazz Festival which attracts musicians from around the globe.

The Avon Valley is also the site of the world-famous Avon Descent – one of the

world's longest white-water rafting races. The course winds along 134 kilometres of grueling waterways and stunning scenery and attracts over 500 power dinghies and paddle craft. Every August more than 700 competitors brave freezing winter conditions to tackle the two-day race. More than 25,000 spectators line the course which begins in the town of Northam and goes through Toodyay, the Avon Valley National Park, the Walyunga National Park and finally culminates at Bayswater in east Perth. Another 4500 crew and volunteers support the competitors.

A national park that really is a must visit is Nambung National Park, situated about three hours north of Perth. It's quite a lonely, windswept place, but the main feature, unique limestone formations called The Pinnacles, really need to be seen to be believed. Eroded by the constant battering of harsh winds, these 30,000-year-old pillars dot the yellow sandy desert like ancient city ruins. While some structures are taller than five metres, others rise just several centimetres. A non-paved, six kilometre track winds through the eerie, constantly changing landscape. The site is only 17 kilometres from the seaside town of Cervantes which is a relaxing spot to spend the night.

If you're heading north inland up the Great Northern Highway, then you'll pass through the truly medieval town of New Norcia. More than 27 imposing Spanish-style buildings were built in the mid 1800s by exiled Benedictine monks. As Australia's only monastic town, the buildings are well-kept and heritage-listed. The monks still make traditional delicious bread, olive oil and nut cake which can all be sampled at the local store. Visitors can follow The New Norcia Heritage Trail which includes many of the buildings and museums and learn about the harsh conditions settlers endured whilst turning the unforgiving landscape into today's thriving community.

The monks first came to Western Australia to establish a mission for the local Aboriginal people which later grew to house and educate the many Aboriginal children from around the state who were separated from their families through Australia's Aborigines Protection Act. Right up until the sixties this government decree served to demolish many Aboriginal family structures and indigenous culture by insisting that lighter-skinned Aboriginal children grow up in European families or orphanage-style institutions. Many kids were little more than indentured servants and some didn't even realise they were of Aboriginal descent! As their stories of separation, grief and cultural ignorance emerged, these children became known as the "Stolen Generation".

The 2002-film, "Rabbit Proof Fence" tells the story of three of these "stolen girls" who, in the 1930s, walked more than 1500 kilometres along Western Australia's rabbit proof fence in the harsh outback to return to their families. The 1800-kilometre fence was constructed in the early 1900s to try and contain the voracious spread of rabbits which, as an introduced species, had no natural predators and were destroying wheat crops. The fence is still in existence today and can be seen via various turn-offs from the highway.

If you are in the northern regions – or even the south -- between August and November then you'll most likely be treated to one of Western Australia's most colourful displays: carpets and carpets of wildflowers. WA's wildflowers are world famous and no wonder! We can boast up to 12,000 species found in eleven different regions.

The northern towns of Wubin, Perenjori, Morawa and Mullewa are known as Wildflower Way and for good reason: acres of white, gold, purple and pink everlastings often stretch into the distance as far as the eye can see. Several rare species can be found in designated spots such as the much-loved wreath flower.

The forests of the southwest also burst with colour during winter as dozens of wildflowers thrive after the winter rains. You can also see unique species in the northern desert areas of Kalbarri, Sharkbay and the Pilbara region.

You can also see wildflowers in the peaceful Serpentine National Park, only fifty kilometres southeast of Perth. With lovely walking trails, picnic spots and the tumbling Serpentine Falls which crashes over a sheer granite escarpment, this is a perfect place to escape Perth's hustle and relax. Nearby, the Jarrahdale Railway Heritage Trail is a seven kilometre trail which follows the old railway line and timber mills and gives visitors a glimpse into WA's timber heritage.

If rocks are more your thing, then a drive out to the wheatbelt town of Hyden is for you. Four hours from Perth, this town is the closest community to one of WA's most photographed natural landmarks, Wave Rock. This ancient granite structure is 15 metres high and 100 metres long and undulates like a massive ocean wave crashing onto a beach. Western Australia features some of the world's oldest rock and Wave Rock is among them. It is thought to have taken 2,700 million years to form.

You've probably heard of one of the state's favourite regions: Margaret River and the Southwest. Again, if you're partial to wine, this premier wine district offers you more than 60 wineries to try a variety of wines including chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and shiraz. Don't miss some of the more gorgeous establishments such as Leeuwin Estate, Voyager Estate, Xanadu Winery and Evans and Tate. All feature individual architecture, lush gardens and sumptuous restaurants. Their wines are good too! The area is lovely to meander through with pretty farmland, karri forests and ocean views.

The southwest is famous for its forests of some of Australia's tallest trees. With some of the state's only old-growth forests, the region is one of the few places you can marvel at the towering karri trees, a type of eucalypt, which grow up to 90 metres. Forests of jarrah trees, which grow up to 40 metres, were decimated over the last century, as settlers realised the hard, very pretty red wood was ideal for building and export. In Walpole, you can stroll amongst the canopies of these trees at the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk. A 600-metre walkway elevated

to 40 metres winds around the tree tops and gives visitors a birds-eye view of the lovely native bush.

Situated on the most southwestern tip of Australia, the southwest is of course renowned for its coastline. Strong prevailing winds and weather systems straight from Antarctica make this part of our coastline some of the most treacherous – and stunning! Dramatic cliffs give way to sandy coves and lush forest. Much of the coastline has been preserved as national forest and you can actually walk between the Naturaliste and Leeuwin Capes along the Cape to Cape Track. Located within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park the 135 kilometre track is an unusual—and somewhat long!—route to get between the pretty coastal towns of Augusta and Dunsborough. But if you don't have several days up your sleeve, you can always see some of the coastal dunes, empty beaches, craggy cliffs, heathlands and karri forest from the many access points along the way.

You will also see some of the world's best surf beaches nestled between the cliffs which feature colourful names such as Three Bears, Bone Yards and the Farm. Each year, thousands of champion surfers descend on the town of Dunsborough to take part in the WA Masters Surf Championships, which is a major event on the professional surfing circuit. If you're up for learning how to surf, several companies in the area conduct lessons.

Or, if you like to stay above sea level but still enjoy the wonders of the ocean, then you may be lucky enough to see Humpback and Southern Right whales migrating both north and south between June and November. In winter (June to August), these whales head north from freezing Antarctic waters to their tropical breeding grounds off northern Western Australia. From September to November, the whales return south again to their summer feeding grounds.

In June, the whales come very close to land, particularly the most southwestern town of Augusta. This is because this is their first contact with land after leaving Antarctica. Unfortunately, the town is also known for some of the country's worst whale strandings; two of the most infamous incidents were during the eighties where in one stranding alone, more than 180 whales beached themselves in the town's bay. Locals came from all over and managed to save all but twenty, which is pretty amazing considering that after getting the whales onto a trailer, taking them to a release point out of Flinders Bay and then swimming them out to sea, the whales turned right around again and re-beached themselves!

Now if sea creatures don't float your boat, but caves do, then you're still in luck down south. Between the two Capes we mentioned earlier – Naturaliste and Leeuwin – is a network of more than 350 limestone caves. Several of the more impressive ones are open to the public and offer an insight into the ancient geological history of the area. Each cave has a different feature, such as Lake Cave which boasts a spectacular underground lake more than 300 steps underground.

To view underwater marine life without actually getting wet, then get yourself to the Underwater Observatory at Busselton jetty in the fun little town of Busselton, about three hours south of Perth. Descend eight metres underwater -- but stay perfectly dry! -- and see the incredible marine life that has made its home in this artificial habitat.

The observatory sits at the end of the longest wooden jetty in the southern hemisphere, and at two kilometers, it's quite a walk, so you might want to catch the train! The observatory has various levels for visitors to view the coral, native fish and 300 different species of marine life that congregate around the end of this historic, 140 year-old jetty that has gallantly survived all manner of oceanic mayhem.

Well, back to Perth. As we come into Northbridge, you'll notice the scenery has changed somewhat with more pubs, restaurants and clubs. In fact, this is Perth's largest concentration of these kinds of establishments. This is the part of Perth where people come to party.

However, if all-night raving is not your thing, you can still enjoy the many Northbridge restaurants that offer cuisine from all corners of the globe. An array of Chinese restaurants offer traditional dim sum (steamed dumplings) especially for breakfast. Great way to start the day! Then top off with lunch or dinner at one of the many excellent seafood, Italian, Indian, Greek, Thai or Vietnamese restaurants.

Pub culture is at its best in Northbridge; here you can enjoy our local brews and meet like-minded people at some of the city's most celebrated ale houses including the Brass Monkey, the Deen or the Elephant and Wheelbarrow. There are plenty of clubs to take you into the wee hours, if you're so inclined. Check out Geisha, Rise and the Metropolis Concert Club amongst others.

As you can now appreciate, there's more to Perth than the constant blue skies, pretty beaches, dazzling sunshine and modern façades. We hope you've enjoyed learning a little about our wonderful city and state and can now jump into exploring it for yourself with both feet firmly heading in the right direction!

Enjoy and thanks for joining us.

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