



Cairns (pronounced /ˈkeɪnz/ or /ˈkɛɪnz/, 16°57′S 145°45′E﻿ / ﻿16°57′S 145°45′E﻿ / -16.95°S 145.75°E) is a regional city and [Local Government Area](#) located in [Queensland](#), [Australia](#). Originally settled in 1876, and named after [William Wellington Cairns](#) (the then [Governor of Queensland](#)) to serve miners heading for the Hodgkinson River goldfield, the settlement declined when an easier route was discovered from Port Douglas.

The future site of Cairns was first sighted by Captain James Cook in 1770 and closer investigation by several official expeditions 100 years later recognised its potential for development into a port. Hastened by the need to export gold discovered on the tablelands to the west of the inlet Cairns was founded in 1876. The land on which the settlement was hewn initially consisted of mangrove swamps which were gradually cleared by labourers and sand ridges which were slowly filled in with ballast from a quarry at Edge Hill, dried mud, sawdust from several local sawmills and debris collected from the construction of a railway to Herberton on the Atherton Tablelands, a project which started in 1886. The railway opened up land that was later used for agriculture on the lowlands (sugar cane, corn, rice, bananas, pineapples) and fruit and dairy on the Tablelands. The success of local agriculture helped Cairns come into its own as a port and the creation of a harbour board in 1906 meant its economic future was assured.

Alice Springs is a town in the [Northern Territory](#) of [Australia](#). Its estimated population of 26,486 (in 2005) ^[1] makes it the second-largest settlement in the Territory (the only other towns of significant size are [Darwin](#), the capital, and [Katherine](#)). It is popularly described as "the Alice" or simply "Alice". Alice Springs is known as Mparntwe to its [traditional](#) inhabitants, the [Arrernte](#). Alice Springs is almost equidistant between Darwin and Adelaide.

Alice Springs is best-known outside the region from the title of the [Nevil Shute](#) novel *A Town Like Alice*, even though little of the story takes place in Alice Springs, and because of its proximity to [Uluru](#) (Ayers Rock), the monolithic rock that is one of Australia's best-known natural landmarks and an important focus of [Aboriginal](#) culture.

Perth is the [capital](#) of the [Australian state](#) of [Western Australia](#). A population of 1,477,800 ^[1] (2005 estimate) makes Perth the largest city in Western Australia and home to three-quarters of the state's residents. The city is also the fourth most populous urban area in Australia.

Perth was founded in [1829](#) by [Captain James Stirling](#) as the political centre of the free settler [Swan River Colony](#), Perth has continued to serve as the seat of Government for Western Australia to the present day.

Adelaide is the [capital](#) and most populous city of the [Australian state](#) of [South Australia](#), and is the fifth largest city in Australia, with a population of over 1.1 million.^[1] It is a coastal city beside the [Southern Ocean](#), and is situated on the [Adelaide Plains](#), north of the [Fleurieu Peninsula](#), between the [Gulf St. Vincent](#) and the low-lying [Mount Lofty Ranges](#). It is roughly a [linear city](#): it is 20 km from the coast to the foothills, but it stretches 90 km from [Gawler](#) at its northern extent to [Sellicks Beach](#) in the south.

Named in honour of [Queen Adelaide](#), the [consort](#) of [King William IV](#), the city was founded in 1836 as the [planned capital](#) for the only freely-settled British [province](#) in Australia. [Colonel William Light](#), one of Adelaide's founding fathers, designed the city and chose its location close to the [River Torrens](#). Inspired by [William Penn](#), Light's design set out Adelaide in a grid layout, interspaced by wide boulevards and large public squares, and entirely surrounded by [parkland](#). Early Adelaide was shaped by religious freedom and a commitment to political [progressivism](#) and civil liberties, which led to world-first reforms. Adelaidean society remained largely [puritan](#) up until the 1970s, when a set of social reforms under the [premiership](#) of [Don Dunstan](#) resulted in a cultural shift. Today Adelaide is known for its many [festivals](#) as well as for its wine, arts and sports.

Darwin is the [territorial capital](#) and the most populous city of [Australia's Northern Territory](#). It has a population of 111,300 (est. 2005) and is located on Australia's far northern [coastline](#). Darwin is the furthest north and least populous of the Australian capitals.

The city is notable amongst the capital cities for its history of major disasters. Its [tropical climate](#) has seen it regularly subjected to heavy [thunderstorms](#). Major [cyclones](#) have historically occurred approximately once every three decades. Much of the city was destroyed by [Cyclone Tracy](#) in 1974. Darwin is also the only Australian capital city to have come under substantial attack during a world war. On [19 February 1942](#), Japanese planes made [two major air raids](#) on Darwin from the aircraft carrier fleet that had attacked Pearl Harbor less than 3 months earlier. These were the first of 64 air attacks experienced by the city during [World War II](#), the last being on [12 November](#), 1943.

Today Darwin is a fast growing regional centre, important to Australian military, tourism and mining.