

## Podcast 96 - 'Big Things' in Australia

by Rob McCormack - Friday, November 24, 2017

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Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

*Podcast Number 96 – 'Big Things' in Australia*

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Hi,

Australians don't take themselves too seriously. This means we are quite comfortable having a laugh at ourselves. For example, we like to build big statues or monuments of the things which are important to a town or a region. We call them the 'big things' of Australia. I'm not talking about normal statues of famous people which you find in parks and squares all around the world. I'm talking about big versions of, say, a fruit such as an orange or a pineapple, or a big version of an animal such as a crocodile or a sheep, or indeed a big version of some other item important to a town or region, such as a guitar or an axe. Whether you call them structures or statues or monuments or whatever, the key points are that they are big and they are important to the town or region. People are really having a bit of fun when they build these things. They know it will attract attention, make people smile and, importantly, it will help put their town or region on the map. It's actually a form of advertising but it is also just another example of Australians having a laugh at themselves. In this podcast I would like to tell you a little about a few of the best known 'big things' in Australia.

It is estimated there are more than 150 'big things' all around Australia. To check out a full list, the article in the Wikipedia is a great place to start. Just do a Google search and you are sure to find it.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia%27s\\_big\\_things](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia%27s_big_things)

The Big Merino is a giant sheep located in the New South Wales town of Goulburn. This is one of my personal favourites because it is located close to Canberra where I once lived with my family for 3 years. I can still remember seeing the Big Merino for the first time. It is indeed impressive. It is a likeness of a male Merino sheep with a full fleece of wool. It is 15.2 metres high and 18 metres long and is made of steel and concrete. It weighs around 100 tons. Attached to it is a large gift shop and if you venture inside the actual sheep you will find an exhibition about the wool industry in Australia. The Big Merino was first built in 1985 as a monument to the town of Goulburn and to the wool industry in the district around Goulburn. It was moved 800 metres down the road in 2007 to be closer to a new highway bypass. The gift shop sells a large range of gifts and clothing. Of course, it also sells a full range of products made from Australian wool. If you go up the stairs inside the Big Merino to look at the wool exhibition, you can learn about the wool industry in Australia and also see how wool is processed so that it can be made into fine wool products. It is also fun to go to the top of the stairs and look out through the sheep's eyes to see the view over the countryside.



The Big Merino in

Goulburn NSW

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Another famous 'big thing' is the Big Pineapple which can be found on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, in a town called Nambour. Queensland is famous for its pineapples and the Big Pineapple reminds everyone of that fact. The Big Pineapple is 16 metres high and has two levels inside. It has a viewing platform on the second level. The Big Pineapple is surrounded by a 165 hectare site and was first opened in 1971. It has become quite a tourist attraction over the years and in 2009 was listed as a heritage site in Queensland. Along with four other 'big things', it's been featured on a postage

stamp produced by Australia Post. The site around the Big Pineapple includes a Wildlife Zoo, a café and a heritage train which goes around the Big Pineapple site. The Big Pineapple site is in the process of being redeveloped by new owners and this will no doubt make it even more popular than before. It's definitely worth a visit.

Another 'big thing' of note is the Big Banana. This can be found in a town called Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. The Big Banana is an amusement park with a toboggan ride, a skating rink, a water park, mini golf, café and more. Of course it also has a Big Banana. It was one of Australia's first 'big things' and was built in 1964. It is 13m long, 5m high and 2.4m wide. But it is really the amusement park where all the fun is to be had. You can also learn everything about bananas at the Big Banana. I haven't been there yet, but it sounds like a lot of fun.

There are two more I will mention. The first is the Big Lobster, a 17 metre tall lobster found in Kingston SE in South Australia, which is famous for its fishing and seafood. The second is the Big Guitar, located in Tamworth in New South Wales, which holds Australia's famous country music festival each year. But there are so many more 'big things' to see. A trip around Australia will soon have any tourist looking out for the next 'big thing'.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at [rob@slowenglish.info](mailto:rob@slowenglish.info). I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 84]

### Vocabulary

advertising = when you tell people that something is good

amusement park = a place where you can have fun, with rides

attached = next to and joined to

attract attention = when people look at something

Australia Post = the organization in Australia which carries the letters

axe = a tool that is used to cut wood and to chop down trees

check out = to go and have a look at something

comfortable = (here) to be happy with, to feel okay about...

concrete = a hard material used in buildings or structures, hard like a rock

country music festival = a few days when everyone plays only country music

countryside = the land outside of a town or city

crocodile = a large and dangerous animal, lives in northern Australia

district = an area or region of a country

estimated = guessed

exhibition = a collection of things which people can look at, in order to learn something

featured = shown

fleece = the wool on a sheep

guitar = a musical instrument with 6 strings

hectare = 10,000 square metres

heritage = from the past

heritage site = a place which is so important that it must not be lost or changed

highway bypass = a highway which goes past, but not through, a town

impressive = when you find something is very, very good

industry = a group of people and businesses which make a product or service

item = object, thing

key = important

levels = things which are at different heights

likeness = a copy of

lobster = a sea animal which can eat

located = found at

mention = to speak about

Merino = a type of sheep bred in Australia for their wool

monument = something that is built to remind people of a person or thing

on the map = (here) when a place is made famous or becomes well known

parks = outdoor places where you go to sit and relax, with grass and trees

pineapple = a large fruit that is sweet to eat

postage stamp = a small square of paper you put on a letter so that it can be posted

processed = changed

products = the things sold in shops and businesses

redeveloped = rebuilt, made better

region = a part of a country

reminds = when something makes you remember

seriously = (here) without joking

site = place

skating rink = a place covered in ice where people can move with skates on their feet

squares = a place in a city without cars and buildings

statue = a copy of a person or animal or other object

structures = things that are built, can be a building or something else

surrounded = on all sides

toboggan = a type of fun ride

tourist attraction = a place where tourists like to visit

venture = to go somewhere usually exciting or unusual

version = a copy of something

Wikipedia = a free encyclopedia on the internet [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

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