

Understand South Australia & Northern Territory

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Indigenous land rights and self-determination remain incendiary issues in the Northern Territory, interwoven with the problems of alcohol and substance abuse in Aboriginal communities and sky-high Indigenous incarceration rates. Meanwhile in South Australia, the process of brokering a treaty has begun, and old man Murray River keeps on flowing...but for how long?

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Nowhere does the millennia-long history of Australia's landscapes and Indigenous cultures resonate more than in this central Australian heartland.

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Aboriginal history and culture in the centre of this sunburnt continent.

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From ancient rock-art galleries to didgeridoos, beautiful basket weaving and gorgeous contemporary canvases, Australian Indigenous art is unforgettable.

THE OUTBACK ENVIRONMENT247

Welcome to the Australian outback: broad, harsh and desolate, but liberating and staggeringly beautiful.

South Australia & Northern Territory Today

If Australia is agonising over its relationship between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the country, they're old hands at it in outback Australia where questions of self-determination and land rights are anything but abstract issues. The not-unrelated issue of the treatment of prisoners in youth detention centres brought down a government and ushered in a new political landscape, while natural resources and the question of a treaty sit front and centre in South Australia.

Best on Film

Samson & Delilah (2009) A devastating portrait of life in a remote outback Indigenous community.

Storm Boy (1976) A young boy, his dad and a pelican living in the Coorong.

Crocodile Dundee I & II (1986/88) Outback Australia hits the cinematic jackpot.

Utopia (2013) John Pilger documentary tracing life in the remote central Australian community of Utopia.

Another Country (2015) Renowned actor David Gulpilil takes you on an arresting visit to his remote Arnhem Land community.

Best in Print

Adelaide (Kerryn Goldsworthy; 2011) Eccentric, personal biography of Adelaide that brings the city alive.

The Dog Fence (James Woodford; 2004) A modern-day crossing of the outback from SA's north.

An Intruder's Guide to East Arnhem Land (Andrew McMillan; 2001) Arguably the NT's best history book.

The Red Highway (Nicolas Rothwell; 2009) A lyrical exploration of Australia's interior.

King Brown Country (Russell Skelton; 2010) Searing exposé of the mismanagement of a remote Aboriginal community.

Dark Emu (Bruce Pascoe; 2014) A rewriting of the history of Aboriginal Australia.

The Northern Territory's Shame

In July 2016 Australia's national broadcaster, the ABC, aired an investigative report into the treatment of youth detainees in the Northern Territory's prisons on its *Four Corners* program. The appalling footage prompted outrage across the country and shone an uncomfortably bright spotlight upon issues – including that of Indigenous people making up a disproportionate number of prisoners in the NT's jails – that never seem to be resolved. In the fallout from the program, Australia's federal government launched a royal commission of inquiry into youth detention practices in the NT. The revelations also led to a stunning electoral turnaround a month after the program was aired, a turnaround that saw the ruling conservative Country Liberal Party reduced to a rump of just two seats in the 25-seat NT parliament. The Labor Party was swept to power with 18 seats (five seats were won by independents) and its leader Michael Gunner became chief minister.

Questions of Governance

Nowhere in Australia does policy towards Aboriginal Australians mean quite so much as it does here. Indigenous communities are now recognised as the owners of roughly half of the NT, and some communities have negotiated lucrative royalty deals with mining companies working on their traditional lands. But many Aboriginal communities remain in crisis – poorly governed and beset with problems of alcohol and substance abuse, high crime levels and the concomitant high levels of incarceration.

This is by no means universal – many Aboriginal communities are winning the struggle to balance the demands of the modern and traditional world views. Governments trying to 'solve the problem' have not