The Capital of Australia

In general when you ask someone to name a famous city in the United States, a popular response is New York City. If you ask someone to name a city in Australia, this time the popular response would be Sydney. But neither New York City nor Sydney is the capital of its country. The capital of Australia is Canberra. The other major cities of Australia, like Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin, all lie along Australia’s extensive coastline. Canberra, on the other hand, is located about 100 miles inland and between Melbourne and Sydney.

Canberra is a planned city, designed to be the capital in 1908 as an alternative to the rivalry between two existing cities, Melbourne and Sydney, to become the capital of Australia. Around that time the colonies in Australia were gaining their independence from Great Britain and establishing a capital. The layout of the city contains geometric patterns, including triangles, circles and hexagons and a man-made lake. The capital sits in its own territory, simply called Australian Capital Territory, which is separate from any Australian state. This is similar to Washington, District of Columbia, the capital of the United States. Washington is in its own district which is also separate from any state.

Canberra has a population of about 350,000 people with about an equal number living in nearby surrounding areas. Since it is Australia’s capital and the University of Canberra is located there, many people live in the capital for a number of years to work for the government or study and then return to their original home. As part of the city plan, Canberra has centrally located museums and gardens near to the parliament buildings of the government.