

Australia's relationship with

Rhode Island

KEY FACTS

- **Official state name:** Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
- **Population:** 1 million (2017 estimate) – 8th least populous state
- **Major Cities:** Providence (2016)
- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** In 2016, Rhode Island GDP was \$57.5 billion and ranked 44th in the United States.
- **GDP Growth:** In 2016, Rhode Island real GDP grew 0.5 per cent; the 2015-16 national change was 1.5 per cent.
- **Key Industries:** In 2016, the largest industry in Rhode Island was finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing. This industry accounted for 24.9 per cent of Rhode Island GDP and had a 0.1 per cent real growth.
- **Known for:** Being the smallest state in size in the United States (1,214 square miles), being the first of the original 13 colonies to renounce its allegiance to the British crown but the last to become a state, home to the Tennis Hall of Fame, making silverware and jewellery, boating, Rhode Island Reds (a breed of chicken), the birthplace of polo, coffee milk.

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

- **Two-way trade (goods only):** \$US 21.2 million in 2017
- **Australia's exports to Rhode Island (goods only):** \$US 11.2 million in 2017
 - Opiates, wine
- **Rhode Island exports to Australia (goods only):** \$US 10.0 million in 2017
 - Textiles, water filtering equipment

Exports from Rhode Island to Australia increased 27 per cent between the signing of the AUSFTA in 2005 and 2013.



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE LINKS

- **Sister Cities:** Warwick, Rhode Island – Warwick, Queensland
- **Representation:** Australia's relationship with Massachusetts is managed by the Australian Consulate in New York
- **Consul General New York:** Mr Alistair Walton
- **Defence Personnel:** 5

Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo played rugby in college.

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

There are no known Australian community groups or Australian industry groups based in Rhode Island.

The Walkabout Trail Loop is George Washington Memorial Camping Area's #1 hiking trail. It was built by Australian naval members stationed near Chepachet.

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS

Four Australian firms operate out of Rhode Island, in sectors including pathology and diagnostic imaging, travel services and management services.

- **East Side Clinical Laboratory:** A full service laboratory with over 50 locations throughout Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts
- **Liberty Travel:** A travel company owned by Flight Centre Limited.
- **SmartBus Live:** A school bus service in Providence, Rhode Island.

- **VPI Inc:** A leader in the third party logistics industry, VPI designs, implements and manages a client's supply chain logistics needs.

Australian firms employ over 750 people in Rhode Island.

GLOBAL BUSINESS

Four of the largest companies headquartered in Rhode Island made the 2017 Fortune 500 list, including:

- **CVS Health:** Coming in at seventh on the list, CVS Health has almost 10,000 locations across 49 states. Its headquarters are in Woonsocket, Rhode Island.
- **Textron** (200): Textron serves clients across the following industries: aerospace and defence, specialised vehicles, turf car, fuels systems and tools and test equipment.
- **United Natural Foods** (325): A distributor of natural and organic foods.
- **Citizens Financial Group** (451): Provides commercial banking services. Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island.



On the menu at Meg's Aussie Milk Bar in Newport, Rhode Island: ANZAC biscuits, avocado smash, tim tam slam, meat pies and a burger with beetroot.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Academic institutions and associations with Australian partnerships:

- The University of New South Wales has a study abroad program with Brown University
- The Rhode Island School of Design has student exchanges with RMIT University,

Australian National University and University of Sydney.

Nationally Ranked Universities:

- Brown University
- University of Rhode Island
- Rhode Island School of Design

THE SEARCH FOR THE HMS ENDEAVOUR

In 2016, it was announced that historic documents showed that Captain Cook's *HMS Endeavour* (renamed the *Lord Sandwich*) was scuttled in Newport Harbour in 1778 by the British navy in order to blockade a channel during the American Revolution.

US archaeologists from the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project (RIMAP), together with marine researchers from the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) in Sydney, are excavating and mapping a number of the wreckages in Newport Harbour in an attempt to confirm which wreckage is the *Lord Sandwich ex Endeavour*.

Work on the project has been slow as it is conducted by volunteers with limited financial support. As of early 2018, further excavations have been delayed until RIMAP can develop an artefact management and storage facility.

The relationship between RIMAP and the ANMM was formalised in 2014 when the Director of the ANMM, Kevin Sumption, and Dr Kathy Abbass from RIMAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the Australian Embassy. Former Australian Ambassador to the US Kim Beazley witnessed the signing.

MAJOR EVENTS

- **Newport Winter Festival:** New England's largest winter extravaganza – food, music and entertainment.
- **Newport Jazz Festival:** the first ever jazz festival in the United States and one of the most popular in the country.
- **Newport Folk Festival:** annual folk festival held at the end of July at Fort Adams. Aussie Courtney Barnett is on the 2018 line-up.