

AUTHENTICALLY AUSTRALIAN

CD Tracks 5–10

Listen to information about several typically Australian things and fill in the missing words (1–2 words) or numbers.

The Big Banana

Australia's big things are giant outdoor objects (mostly sculptures, but also some unusually shaped **1** _____). The first big thing was a banana built in Coffs Harbour in 1964, created by a business owner who wanted to attract customers to his banana **2** _____. It became a tourist attraction, and accidentally started a trend as people all over the country started building their own local versions. Now there are about **3** _____ big things, including the Big Prawn, the Big Rubbish Bin, the Big **4** _____ and the Big Funnel Web Spider (surely the real spider is already big enough!). Many are considered works of folk art and are protected by law. Aussies sometimes plan **5** _____ linking big things, and in 2011, one family managed to visit over 100 of them on a single trip. It took them 94 days and they drove almost **6** _____ kilometres. It's a big country!

The Sydney Opera House

The Sydney Opera House is the most iconic building in Australia, but it wasn't always as universally loved as it is today. In 1957 a **1** _____ architect, Jorn Utzon, won a competition to design the building. When work began, though, a lot of **2** _____ were made, and several times work had to be redone. There was a lot of conflict as delays grew longer and costs increased. Some people in the **3** _____ (and among the public) became increasingly angry about the whole project. Utzon even resigned before it was finished, left Australia and never returned to see the completed building. The opera house was eventually completed **4** _____ late and more than 1,000% over budget, but it is now recognised as one of the world's greatest architectural achievements.

The Devils Marbles

The Devils Marbles, known as Karlu Karlu to the aboriginal Australians, are a **1** _____ of the outback. Most people have seen the iconic image of two **2** _____ rounded stones, but the Devils Marbles Conservation Area actually covers 18 km² of the dry outback and includes hundreds of the rounded rocks, some balanced in ways that look almost **3** _____. Some of the rocks are over six metres in diameter, while others are smaller than **4** _____. Although the stones may seem like some kind of ancient monument similar to

Celtic standing stones, they are in fact natural, shaped by the **5** _____ and sand. But although they were not placed there by **6** _____, they are sacred to the indigenous Australian people, and many creation stories take place in the area.

The Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef, located in the ocean off the coast of Queensland, is the **1** _____ coral reef system in the world, stretching over 2,300 kilometres. It is an enormously popular destination for tourists, who come to snorkel, **2** _____ and sail. It contains a huge variety of sea life, with more than **3** _____ species of fish alone. It is also home to the dugong, also known as the sea cow. Unfortunately, the reef has been badly affected by **4** _____ from agriculture and industry. Now it is under an even greater threat from climate change, as both higher water temperatures and higher acidity kill the **5** _____ that form the corals.

The Platypus

The platypus is one of the **1** _____ looking animals you can imagine. It looks like a combination of a duck and an otter. And while it is a mammal, it lays eggs instead of live young. It is also one of the few venomous mammals, having a poisonous spur (= a bone-like spike) on its **2** _____. The venom can't kill a human (though it can cause a great deal of pain), but platypuses have been known to kill smaller animals like **3** _____ and cats that tried to attack them. Its unusual combination of features meant the first time a sample of a platypus was sent to **4** _____ in Britain, they thought it was a hoax – the result of several different animal parts being sewn together.

The Tasmanian Devil

Tasmanian devils are carnivorous (= meat-eating) marsupials. They smell **1** _____ and scream and screech. They also have an incredibly powerful bite. They can chew through meat and bone and even **2** _____. They are scavengers, which means they mostly eat weak or dead animals. Their excrement is **3** _____-coloured due to the bones they eat. Eww! But although these creatures don't sound particularly lovable, they are pretty cute when they aren't screaming. Now many people are trying to save them as they are **4** _____.

NOTE These texts (with different tasks and with YouTube videos) are also available as an online quiz, linked from the magazine.