CHRISTMAS ISLAND

INTRODUCTION
Although Europeans sighted the island in 1615, it was named for the day of its rediscovery in 1643. The discovery of phosphate deposits lead to the UK annexing the island in 1888, and in 1958, the UK transferred sovereignty to Australia.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
Queen ELIZABETH II; represented by Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia General David HURLEY

Head of Government
Administrator Natasha GRIGGS

Government Type
non-self-governing overseas territory of Australia

Capital
The Settlement (Flying Fish Cove)

Legislature
unicameral Christmas Island Shire Council (9 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 135 sq km
Land: 135 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate
tropical with a wet season (December to April) and dry season; heat and humidity moderated by trade winds

Natural Resources
phosphate, beaches

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
high-income Australian territorial economy; development through government services and phosphate mining; operates Australia’s Immigration Detention Centre; increasing tourism and government investments; sustained environmental protections

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) NA
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) NA
Industries - tourism, phosphate extraction (near depletion)
Agricultural products - NA
Exports NA
calcium phosphates, fertilizers, valves, air pumps, industrial printers
partners: Malaysia 36%, New Zealand 21%, Indonesia 20%, Australia 10%
Imports NA
refined petroleum, cars, iron structures, aircraft, crustaceans
partners: Australia 80%, United States 7%, Canada 5%

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
2,205 (2016 est.)

Population Growth
1.11% (2014 est.)

Ethnicity
Chinese 70%, European 20%, Malay 10% (2001 est.)

Language
English (official) 27.6%, Mandarin 17.2%, Malay 17.1%, Cantonese 3.9%, Min Nan 1.6%, Tagalog 1%, other 4.5%, unspecified 27.1% (2016 est.)

Religion
Muslim 19.4%, Buddhist 18.3%, Roman Catholic 8.8%, Protestant 6.5% (includes Anglican 3.6%, Uniting Church 1.2%, other 1.7%), other Christian 3.3%, other 0.6%, none 15.3%, unspecified 27.7% (2016 est.)

as of April 2022