



FACT SHEET

Sydney Tower height at top of mast – 305 metres (323 metres above Sydney Harbour sea level)
Observation Deck height – 250 metres (268 metres above Sydney Harbour sea level)
Skywalk height – 268 metres (286 metres above Sydney Harbour sea level)

Sydney Tower is the tallest building in Sydney and the 25th tallest inhabitable structure in the world.

It boasts the highest public observation deck in the southern hemisphere, sitting 250m – or a quarter of a kilometre – above land.

Sydney Tower is more than 4 times as high as the Opera House (67m) and more than double the height of the Harbour Bridge (134 metres).

Sydney Tower is the first place in Sydney to greet the dawn each day and the last place to see the sunset. In fact, visitors on the observation deck can see the sun setting three minutes later than people at ground level. Because of its height, Sydney Tower is usually the first part of Sydney that visitors see when approaching the city by road, air or sea.

Sydney Tower is the same height as the Eiffel Tower.

Sydney Tower is as tall as 60 giraffes – the world's tallest animal.

Sydney Tower is almost six times as high as Niagara Falls (53m).

Sydney Tower is more than twice as high as Egypt's Great Pyramid (146m).

The gold turret of Sydney Tower is 25 metres wide but as big as a nine-storey office block.

Sydney Tower is 77m higher than Sydney's next tallest structure, MLC building (228m).

Visitors to the observation deck can see 55km out to sea compared to someone at Bondi Beach who can see just 5km to the horizon. This means a Tower observer can see a ship approaching Sydney two hours before the person at the beach.

When it opened in September 1981, Sydney Tower was the fourth tallest building in the world.

Before the tower was built, the maximum allowable height of a Sydney building was 279m to allow for the harbour's flying boats that were popular before the modern jet era. The maximum allowable height was lifted to 305m with the approval of Sydney Tower. Sydney Tower still sets the height limit for Sydney buildings today.

The cost to build Sydney Tower was A\$36 million (one third the cost of the Sydney Opera House), a huge amount at the time.

Construction of Sydney Tower began in 1975.

As Sydney has grown and ownership of the tower has changed, there are a number of names by which the Tower has been known. When opened in 1981, it was officially called Sydney Tower. However, due to the enormous success of the Centrepoint shopping centre in bringing shoppers back into the city, it soon became known as Centrepoint Tower. Many locals still use this name

today. It was also known as AMP Tower when owned by the AMP Society and you can still see those company letters on top of the structure. With a further change of ownership in 2000, the name has reverted to Sydney Tower, a clear and instantly recognisable name for locals as well as the many overseas tourists who choose to start their Sydney vacation "at the top".

The total weight of the tower (ie shaft and turret) is 4067 tonnes or as heavy as 37 blue whales (the world's biggest animal), 10 jumbo jets or 4 Manly ferries.

The 4067-tonne Tower is constructed on the massive 50,000 tonne Centrepoint shopping centre.

Sydney Tower's shaft consists of 46 separate pre-fabricated barrel units made of high strength weathering steel (called AUSTEN 50), used extensively for the first time in Australia when constructed.

The weathered effect on the structure is caused by special alloying elements which react with the air to form a dense tight oxide film to protect the steel from corrosion. The appearance, texture and maturity of the weathered steel's patina depends upon three primary natural factors - time, the degree of exposure and atmospheric environment. With time, the oxide coating changes from a rusty red-orange to a dark purple-brown.

Sydney Tower's shaft is secured by 56 cables – each 182 metres long and made up of 235 high tensile wires no wider than a fingernail. The cables form a hyperbolic paraboloid around the Tower's steel shaft & weigh 700 tonnes.

If the wires in the Tower's 56 securing cables were laid end to end they would stretch 2395 kilometres. This is the same distance as Melbourne to Cairns, or London to Athens. And it's further than Auckland to Sydney, Los Angeles to Houston, or Tokyo to Beijing.

The Tower's central column is 6.7 metres in diameter, compared to 5.9 metres of the biggest living Australian tree in Tasmania's Styx Forest - a Mountain Ash (*eucalyptus regnans*) named "007". This tree, at 78 metres, is one quarter the height of the Tower.

In a true engineering feat, Sydney Tower's turret was assembled around the bottom of the shaft then lifted hydraulically by 24 100-tonne jacks at the rate of nine metres a week until it reached its final position.

The turret is home to a 162,000 water tank which acts as a stabiliser against wind movement and supports the Tower's fire sprinkler system. If the tank held paint, it would be enough to give the Harbour Bridge two more top coats.

Sydney Tower sports 420 windows which takes an automatic window machine (named "Charlie") two days to clean. (Charlie doesn't work nights.)

Sydney Tower is designed to withstand winds of up to 172kmh, & even at this wind speed it would only sway to a maximum of 1 metre. Testing was done in the aeronautical wind tunnel at Sydney University & then with an aeroelastic model at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

Sydney Tower won a prestigious 1981 award for the multi-purpose use of steel in its construction, including the innovative weathering steel.

Sydney Tower's three high-speed lifts travel at a maximum speed of 420 metres per minute (or seven metres a second) and take just 40 seconds to travel to the top of the tower.

The double-decker lifts can carry 2000 people an hour.

At 305m, Sydney Tower is the second tallest building in Australia after the new 328m-high Q1 skyscraper on the Gold Coast although Q1's observation level will be 240m high, compared to Sydney Tower's 250m-high observation deck. Australia's third highest building is Melbourne's new 300m-high Eureka Tower, due for completion in November 2005.

Climbing the 1504 steps in the Tower's emergency staircase would take an average person 50 exhausting minutes. However, the fastest stair climber on record clocked just 6 minutes 52 seconds for the dash to the top as part of Sydney Tower tower's annual 'Run Up' race.

Sydney Tower is home to Australia's highest post box, with visitors able to post letters and postcards from a postbox on the observation deck.

Sydney Tower won international attention when playing home to three massive Olympic sculptures from 1998 to 2003 to mark Sydney's hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games. These had to be lifted off by helicopter, including the famous heavy duty chopper named "Elvis".

When Sydney Tower opened to the public on September 25, 1981 it instantly became Australia's hottest attraction, drawing more than 1.3 million visitors in its first year – and 100,000 visitors in the first five weeks alone.

More than 16 million people have visited Sydney Tower since its opening – around four times the population of Sydney.

On a clear day, visitors to the Tower can see landforms up to 85km away, embracing the Blue Mountains to the west, the Central Coast to the north and the Illawarra escarpment to the south. Closer to the glittering Harbour city, famous Manly beach & Bondi can be seen.

Of all visitors to Sydney Tower, 70 per cent are overseas tourists and 30 per cent are locals or visitors from regional and interstate areas.

Sydney Tower has been likened from a "golden torch held aloft for the Olympics", to "a burnished Sydney sentinel, daily greeting the dawn & farewelling the dusk."

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