

Australia third happiest place on earth

Costa Rica is the happiest place on earth, and one of the most environmentally friendly, according to a new survey by a British non-governmental group, which puts Australia in third place.

The New Economics Foundation looked at 143 countries that are home to 99 per cent of the world's population and devised an equation that weighs life expectancy and people's happiness against their environmental impact.

By that formula, Costa Rica is the happiest, greenest country in the world, just ahead of the Dominican Republic.

Latin American countries did well in the survey, occupying nine of the top 10 spots.

Australia scored third place, but other major Western nations did poorly, with Britain coming in at 74th place and the United States at 114th.

The New Economics Foundation's measurements found Costa Ricans have a life expectancy of 78.5 years, and 85 per cent of the country's residents say they are happy and satisfied with their lives.

Those figures, taken along with the fact that Costa Rica has a small "ecological footprint", combined to push the small nation to the top of the list.

A 2006 New Economics Foundation study designated Vanuatu the world's happiest nation, with Costa Rica at second place. Sociologist Andrea Fonseca said Costa Rica gives its citizens the "tools" to be happy, but cautioned that happiness cannot be calculated just by looking at life expectancy and environmental practices.

She added that the country's rise to the top of the Happy Planet Index "has a lot to do with social imagination".

Costa Rica has a peaceful reputation because it does not have an army, and is also known for its protected ecological zones and national slogan "pure life", she said.

Brochures in Greek for Senior Citizens in South Australia

The Senior Information Services in Australia officially presented a few days ago in Adelaide 10 Informative Brochures/Pamphlets in the Greek language in cooperation with the Office of Social Welfare of the Greek Orthodox Community in South Australia.

The informative brochures/pamphlets include information on the following: retirement accommodations, aged care facilities, care at home, complaints, legal counseling, wills, powers of attorney, care and support after hospitalization etc.

New dinosaurs found in Australia

Australian palaeontologists say they have discovered three new dinosaur species after examining fossils dug up in Queensland.

Writing in the journal PLoS One, they describe one of the creatures as a fearsome predator with three large slashing claws on each hand.

The other two were herbivores: one a tall giraffe-like creature, the other of stocky build like a hippopotamus.

The fossils date back nearly 100 million years.

They were found in rocks known as the Winton Formation.

The dinosaurs have been named after characters in Australia's famous song Waltzing Matilda.

The carnivore, which has the scientific

classification *Australovenator wintonensis*, has therefore been dubbed "Banjo" after Banjo Patterson, who composed the song in Winton in 1885.

Queensland Museum palaeontologist Scott Hucknell said the creature would have been a terrifying prospect.

"The cheetah of his time, Banjo was light and agile. He could run down most prey with ease over open ground," he told reporters.

The findings have been published in the public access journal Public Library of Science One (PLoS One), and were announced by Queensland Premier Anna Bligh at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History in Winton. She said the discoveries were a major breakthrough in the sci-

entific understanding of prehistoric life in Australia.

Museum Victoria palaeontologist John Long described the fossils as "amazing".

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper quoted him as saying that the creatures put Australia back on the international map of big dinosaur discoveries for the first time since 1981, when the unearthing of *Muttaborrasaurus*, a large four-legged herbivore that could rear up on two legs, was announced.

The new species will be part of the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History under construction in Winton. It should be completed in 2015.

British-Greek reporter held for weeks freed

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) —

Iran said Sunday it has released a British-Greek journalist held for more than two weeks following its disputed presidential elections as dissent continued in Iran with the son of a prominent Iranian revolutionary icon making a rare public push for President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's removal from office.



Foreign Ministry spokesman Hasan Qashqavi said that Iason Athanasiadis, believed to be the only journalist held in the widespread crackdown who does not hold Iranian citizenship, had been released in the framework of "Tehran-Athens ties."

The Greek Foreign Ministry said Athanasiadis "will depart Teheran within the day."

"I am deeply satisfied over the release of Iason Athanasiadis... (we were) in constant, close contact with the Iranian Foreign Ministry," Greek

Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis said Sunday.

There were no details on Athanasiadis' current location.

The news comes amid increasingly strident rhetoric by both pro-government and opposition forces in the aftermath of the June 12 presidential elections that provoked weeks of demonstrations in the streets that were later crushed by security forces.

Athanasiadis, a freelance reporter who had been working for The Washington Times, was covering the election and its aftermath when he was detained on or around June 19. A dual national with both Greek and British citizenship, he is believed to be the only journalist held in the widespread crackdown who does not hold Iranian citizenship. A Newsweek correspondent, Maziar Bahari, a dual Iranian-Canadian citizen, is also in custody.

Qashqavi said that in the past Athanasiadis had traveled to Iran as a journalist using a British passport, and had been banned from entering the country for "violating the law."

Qashqavi said when Athanasiadis returned on his Greek passport he got involved in "illegal activities" during the post-election unrest and was detained because of "activities contrary to the profession of journalism."

Athanasiadis' parents appealed for his release, calling him a reporter, photographer and filmmaker with a love and respect for Iran.

Aussie icons vying for world status

Famous Australian landmarks Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef are edging closer to officially becoming one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. The icons of nature are currently riding high in the global competition against 261 other nominated sites, with Uluru ranking in seventh place in its category while the reef is third in the "seascapes" section.

The top eleven nominees from each of the seven categories will progress to the final stage on Tuesday.

The final list will be announced in mid-2011 and is expected to receive over a billion votes.

