



Australian 'Prince' steps down

Prince Leonard, the 91-year-old self-proclaimed "prince" of a micronation in Western Australia has stepped down due to ill-health. He presided over Hutt River Province, a private estate near Perth, after is separated from Australia in 1970 in a row over wheat quotas.

His position has now passed to his son, Prince Graeme.

Referred to as a "principality" on its website, Hutt River Province covers 75 sq km of farmland and has its own flag and currency. It isn't recognised by the Australian government and is still subject to Australian law.

It welcomes visitors from tourists, even promising that a member of the royal family will greet tourists and show them around. Anyone hoping to visit requires a visa, currently costing around £2.50.

What is a 'Micronation'?

Micronations, also known as fantasy countries, cybernations or model countries, are designed to replace or resemble independent countries or states. Some micronations are created very seriously as they disagree with current laws or they are unhappy with their government though most others exist as a hobby or for publicity.

Interesting Micronations:

 Principality of Sealand, UK - A floating British base was abandoned until a music DJ moved there. He declared the floating fortress the Principality of Sealand. He raised a flag, named himself Prince and his wife Princess. Sealand withstood court challenges, and remains an independent nation to this day.

 Felettino, Italy - This small Italian village was told that it would have to merge with a nearby village to cut administrative costs, however the villagers instead decided on independence. So far it has printed its own currency, established a coat of arms, and applied to set up its own laws!



Molossia: Founded by Kevin Baugh in 1977 Molossia can be found in the middle of Nevada in the United States and has been described as a popular tourist destination.



Bear helps earthquake recovery!



Picture: Wiennat Mongkulmann

Two girls wearing Kumamon backpacks in Japan.

Kumamon, a cuddly black bear is helping reconstruction efforts in an earthquake-affected region of Japan by earning a record amount through sales of different Kumamon items.

Kumamon is a mascot of southern Kumamoto in Japan. Last April, several earthquakes struck the area, causing huge damage to the local area. Many items, including soft toys, bags and hats aimed at raising funds for the reconstruction are Kumamon-related.

Regional mascots are common in Japan and are often used to attract tourists.

Council apologise over trees planted on children's football pitch.

The trees appeared at the pitch at Logie Durno in Aberdeenshire, Scotland causing local upset. A spokeswoman for the council commented, "It was rarely used. However, it is clear now that the community were not engaged with this plan. As such, we are going back to first principles with them so they can help us decide what this area should be used for."

Trees on the pitch!



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