



Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Western Australia (WA) 2016 Census

According to the 2016 Census, 2,474,410 people lived in Western Australia (WA), a 10.5 per cent increase in the population since 2011 and higher than the national average increase of 8.8 per cent.

Since 2011 there has been a 16.5 per cent increase in the number of people in WA born overseas and their share in the total population increased from 30.7 per cent to 32.2 per cent.

The top 10 birthplaces were England, New Zealand, India, South Africa, the Philippines, Malaysia, China, Scotland, Italy and Ireland. For the first time in history, the number of people born in non-main English speaking countries (NMESC) was larger (410,383) than those from main English speaking countries (MESC) (387,331).

England and New Zealand remain the top two birthplaces for the overseas-born; however:

- India replaced South Africa in third place
- the Philippines replaced Scotland in fifth place, with Scotland no longer in the top 10
- China replaced Italy in seventh place.

Between 2011 and 2016 the population of the Philippines-born experienced the highest growth (78.9 per cent), followed by India (65.1 per cent) and China (62.2 per cent), while the number of people born in Scotland declined by 4.1 per cent

The number and proportion of people with one or both parents born overseas increased from 1,159,523 (51.7 per cent of the population) to 1,330,357 (53.8 per cent).

The top 10 ancestries were largely unchanged—English, Australian, Irish, Scottish, Italian, Chinese, German, Dutch and Indian were among the top 10 in both 2011 and 2016. However, in 2016 Filipino replaced New Zealander, occupying tenth position.

The 2016 Census highlights the growth in the number of people who identify their ancestry as Chinese or Indian. The number of people who identify with Chinese ancestry increased from 75,936 in 2011 to 103,683 in 2016 while the number of people born in India or with Indian ancestry increased from 40,305 in 2011 to 68,799 in 2016.

There has been an increase in the number and proportion of people speaking a language other than English (LOTE) at home from 325,054 (14.5 per cent) in 2011 to 437,869 (17.7 per cent) in 2016. In relation to the languages spoken:

- Mandarin replaced Italian as the most common LOTE spoken at home
- Vietnamese replaced Cantonese as the third most common language
- Tagalog replaced Arabic as the fifth most common language
- Punjabi and Hindi featured in the top 10, replacing German and Spanish.

The majority of LOTE speakers (86 per cent) were proficient in English while 14 per cent had low proficiency or did not speak English at all, the same proportions as in 2011.

There was a decrease in the number and proportion of people affiliated with Christianity from 1,300,375 (58 per cent) to 1,123,605 (49.8 per cent). While the ranking of non-Christian religions remained unchanged, the numbers and proportions increased for all groups except for Judaism which declined by 7.3 per cent from 5,825 to 5,425.

Those identifying with no religion or secular beliefs increased in number and proportion from 571,949 (25.5 per cent) to 816,145 (33 per cent).



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| Indicator | 2016 ¹ | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Total WA Population | 2,474,410 | | % of WA population | 2,239,170 | | % of WA population |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | 75,997 | | 3.1% | 69,664 | | 3.1% |
| Australia born | 1,492,842 | | 60.3% | 1,407,807 | | 62.9% |
| Overseas born | 797,714 | | 32.2 | 684,510 | | 30.6% |
| MES countries | 387,331 | | 15.6% | 364,785 | | 16.3% |
| NMES countries | 410,383 | | 16.6% | 319,725 | | 14.3% |
| Top 10 birthplaces | | | | | | |
| | England | 194,164 | 7.8% | England | 191,933 | 8.6% |
| | New Zealand | 79,222 | 2.4% | New Zealand | 70,737 | 3.2% |
| | India | 49,384 | 2.0% | South Africa | 35,326 | 1.6% |
| | South Africa | 41,008 | 1.7% | India | 29,915 | 1.3% |
| | Philippines | 30,835 | 1.2% | Scotland | 27,186 | 1.2% |
| | Malaysia | 29,124 | 1.2% | Malaysia | 24,970 | 1.1% |
| | China | 27,077 | 1.1% | Italy | 19,477 | 0.9% |
| | Scotland | 29,059 | 1.1% | Philippines | 17,234 | 0.8% |
| | Italy | 19,204 | 0.8% | China | 16,690 | 0.7% |
| | Ireland | 18,034 | 0.7% | Ireland | 14,293 | 0.6% |
| Top 10 languages spoken at home | 2016 | | % of WA population | 2011 | | % of WA population |
| | English | 1,861,036 | 75.2% | English | 1,775,951 | 79.3% |
| | Mandarin | 47,846 | 1.9% | Italian | 31,449 | 1.4% |
| | Italian | 29,397 | 1.2% | Mandarin | 28,033 | 1.3% |
| | Vietnamese | 20,242 | 0.8% | Cantonese | 18,005 | 0.8% |
| | Cantonese | 19,340 | 0.8% | Vietnamese | 16,522 | 0.7% |
| | Tagalog | 15,265 | 0.6% | Arabic | 11,958 | 0.5% |
| | Afrikaans | 14,207 | 0.6% | Afrikaans | 10,928 | 0.5% |
| | Arabic | 14,129 | 0.6% | Indonesian | 9,085 | 0.4% |
| | Punjabi | 12,228 | 0.5% | German | 8,716 | 0.4% |
| | Indonesian | 10,938 | 0.4% | Tagalog | 8,288 | 0.4 |
| Parents born overseas | 2016 | | % of WA population | 2011 | | % of WA population |
| Both parents born overseas | 1,001,150 | | 40.5% | 854,107 | | 38.1% |
| Father only born overseas | 184,890 | | 7.5% | 175,317 | | 7.8% |
| Mother only born overseas | 144,217 | | 5.8% | 130,099 | | 5.8% |
| Both parents born in Australia | 947,977 | | 38.3% | 903,105 | | 40.3% |

¹ Data was compiled and computed from the Australian Bureau of Statistics TableBuilder program.

Top 10 Ancestries

| | 2016 | | % of WA population | 2011 | | % of WA population |
|------------|----------|--------|--------------------|----------|--------|--------------------|
| | Ancestry | Number | | Ancestry | Number | |
| English | 931,147 | 37.6% | English | 848,230 | 38.8% | |
| Australian | 760,035 | 30.7% | Australian | 724,360 | 32.0% | |
| Irish | 224,372 | 9.1% | Irish | 187,038 | 8.3% | |
| Scottish | 214,153 | 8.7% | Scottish | 186,475 | 8.3% | |
| Italian | 122,944 | 5.0% | Italian | 111,894 | 5.0% | |
| Chinese | 103,683 | 4.2% | Chinese | 75,935 | 3.4% | |
| German | 73,062 | 3.0% | German | 63,020 | 2.8% | |
| Indian | 68,799 | 2.8% | Dutch | 45,317 | 2.0% | |
| Dutch | 47,039 | 1.9% | Indian | 40,305 | 1.8% | |
| Filipino | 35,454 | 1.4% | New Zealander | 27,619 | 1.2% | |

There has been an increase in the proportion of Western Australians with one or both parents born overseas (53.8 per cent), since 2011 (51.7 per cent). The top ten most common ancestry responses were almost unchanged except for Indian and Filipino ancestry which replaced Dutch and New Zealander ancestry, respectively.

| Religious Affiliation | 2016 | | % of WA population | 2011 | | % of WA population |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------------|
| | Religion | Number | | Religion | Number | |
| Top Religions | Christianity ² | 1,231,605 | 49.8% | Christianity | 1,300,375 | 58% |
| | No Religion | 814,145 | 33.0% | No religion | 571,949 | 25.5% |
| | Buddhism | 52,833 | 2.1% | Buddhism | 47,395 | 2.1% |
| | Islam | 50,650 | 2.0% | Islam | 39,118 | 1.8% |
| | Hinduism | 38,741 | 1.6% | Hinduism | 21,025 | 0.9% |
| | Judaism | 5,425 | 0.2% | Judaism | 5,853 | 0.3% |

The number and proportion of Western Australians identifying with Christianity (49.8 per cent) decreased by 5.3 per cent since the 2011 Census (58 per cent). While the ranking for other religions remained unchanged, the numbers and proportions increased except for Judaism which experienced a decline. There was a significant increase in the number and proportion of those who identified with no religion or secular beliefs.