

Australian Bureau of Statistics
2011 Census of Population and Housing Multicultural Media Address

Welcome

- Distinguished guests. Ladies and gentleman. Welcome to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' multicultural media event.
- We're here today to celebrate the release of the first results of the 2011 Census of Population and Housing – Australia's richest source of statistical data.
- Long since people filled out their Census forms on 9 August last year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has been hard at work turning 6.1 million Census forms and 2.8 million eCensus submissions into the data that will shape our nation's future over the next five years.

Census

- The Census is much more than a form we complete every five years. It's much more than just a head count of our nation at a given point in time.
- Census data supports planning, decision-making and funding at all levels of government, and is behind many of the services and facilities you use in your area every day.
- It helps define who we are and what our communities look like now and into the future.
- Importantly, the Census allows us to capture a full and accurate picture of Australia's cultural diversity.

Census centenary

- The 16th Census of Population and Housing marked a significant milestone – 100 years of national Census taking in Australia.
- The information provided by Australians over the past century has become an invaluable statistical record of our nation that charts the growth and development of Australia's population, society and economy.
- It is evidence of the changing face of modern Australia.

2011 Census results – multicultural Australia

- Throughout the 100 years since the first national Census in 1911, Australia's cultural fabric has changed remarkably.
- With around a quarter of Australians now born overseas, and a further one fifth having at least one overseas-born parent, cultural diversity has touched every corner of our country.
- Our population has grown, from a little less than 4.5 million people in 1911, by nearly five times, to 21,507,719 in 2011 – an 8.3 per cent increase since the 2006 Census.
- We know historically, the majority of migration to Australia has come from European countries. However, the 2011 Census has revealed that increasingly

more and more people born in Asia and other parts of the world are now calling Australia home.

Country of birth

- A Census can tell us many things about ourselves and the place we call home.
- Country of birth figures have shown Australia's Indian born population is the fastest growing of Australia's top 20 overseas-born, with more than 295,000 (295,362) people in 2011, up from 147,000 (147,106) people in 2006, or an increase of more than 100 per cent (100.8 per cent).
- China showed the second largest increase from 206,000 (206,587) people in 2006 to almost 320,000 (318,969) people in 2011, an increase of more than 100,000 (112,379) people.
- New and emerging population groups have also been captured in the Census – some for the first time. Countries like, South Sudan, Nepal, Bhutan, Congo, Uganda and Burma have all reported increases in Census population counts.

Language spoken at home

- We now know that more than 300 different languages are spoken in Australian households.
- Not surprisingly, English is still the most commonly spoken language, with 76.8 per cent of the population (aged five years and over) reporting they only speak English at home.
- The most commonly spoken languages other than English include Mandarin (1.6 per cent), Italian (1.4 per cent), Arabic (1.3 per cent), Cantonese (1.2 per cent) and Greek (1.2 per cent).
- Mandarin has shown the largest increase of non-English languages spoken at home, which grew to 336,410 in 2011 from 220,604 in 2006 – an increase of 52.5 per cent.
- Punjabi is the fastest growing of Australia's top 20 languages spoken at home, showing a 207.5 per cent increase to 71,229 people in 2011 from 23,164 people in 2006.
- Of recent migrants who arrived since 2006, 33.5 per cent speak only English at home and another 54.1 per cent speak another language and English either very well or well. Eleven and a half per cent do not speak English well or at all.

Religion

- Religion plays a major part in the lives of many people living on our shores.
- Christianity is still the most commonly reported religious affiliation in Australia. In 2011, 61 per cent of the population reported affiliation with a Christian religion.
- Hinduism experienced the fastest growth of all religions, increasing to 275,500 followers, followed by Islam (increased by 40 per cent to 476,300) and Buddhism (increased by 26 per cent to 529,000 people).
- The most common non-Christian religions in 2011 were Buddhism (accounting for 2.5 per cent of the population), Islam (2.2 per cent) and Hinduism (1.3 per cent).

- More people than ever, are also identifying themselves as having no religious affiliation with an increase from 18.7 per cent in 2006, to 22.3 per cent in 2011.

Ancestry

- The Census tells us the Australian population has reported identifying with more than 300 different ancestries.
- The most commonly reported ancestries are English (36.1 per cent) and Australian (35.4 per cent).
- The next four most common ancestries reflect European heritage in Australia with Ireland (10.4 per cent), Scotland (8.9 per cent), Italy (4.6 per cent) and Germany (4.5 per cent) making up the top six.
- Chinese (4.3 per cent) and Indian (2.0 per cent) are the only two non-European nations to feature in the top ten.

Census data

- It must be said however, Census data is for all Australians and can be used for a wide range of purposes. Most importantly, it is available freely from the ABS website, at abs.gov.au/census 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The ABS has developed a range of new easy-to-use tools, like QuickStats, to help make searching Census data quick and easy.
- I encourage you all to go online and see what Census data says about your community, the place you call home and Australia as a whole.

Closing

- Australia is a world leader in Census taking, and the 2011 results show that 98.3 per cent of population participated in the Census.
- The Census is about all of us and all of our lives, and is the cornerstone for good decision making that has the power to affect every person in Australia.
- I would like to personally thank everyone here today for the overwhelming support you, and all communities across the country, have provided for the Census.
- Together, we've achieved outstanding results, we've shed some light on Census night and the results will help light the way forward for a brighter future, for all Australian's.