



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Responding to diversity

Giving everyone a 'fair go' and respect regardless of their background or beliefs is a typical Australian response to our diversity.

For example, information is often translated for new migrants and there are laws against racial discrimination. Australians of all backgrounds are encouraged to share their heritage with others. This helps to promote acceptance, tolerance and a 'fair go' for all.

What unites us is a commitment to Australia and a shared future. More information is available at: www.immi.gov.au/multicultural/

The national profile

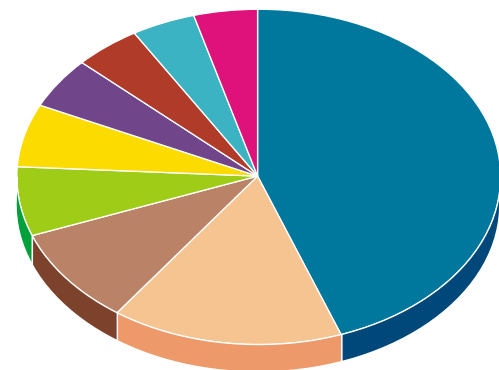
Australia is a culturally diverse nation. The last Census in 2001 showed that about 2.4 per cent of the population were Indigenous Australians and 23 per cent of us were born overseas. Another 20 per cent who were born in Australia have at least one parent born overseas.

People from the United Kingdom are still the largest group of Australians born overseas, followed by New Zealanders.

The fastest growing groups are relatively new communities in Australia, including people from the Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Bangladesh and Iraq.

Top ten countries of birth of Australians born overseas

United Kingdom	1 036 261
New Zealand	355 762
Italy	218 722
Vietnam	154 818
China	142 807
Greece	116 431
Germany	108 214
Philippines	103 915
India	95 445



Classroom activities

I Ask each member of the class to name the country of origin of their father, mother and grandparents. Then answer these questions.

- How many countries are represented in the class?
- How does the diversity of Australia make us a more interesting society?
- What things are important to all Australians?
- What can we learn from people of other cultural backgrounds?
- What impact might this diversity have on our national identity?
- Why are new communities growing so quickly in Australia?

What we speak

More than 15 per cent of our population speak a language other than English at home. Did you know that more than 200 languages (including about 55 Indigenous languages) are spoken in Australian homes?

Besides English, the most common languages are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Spanish.

Top ten languages spoken at home (other than English)

Italian	353 605
Greek	263 717
Cantonese	225 307
Arabic	209 372
Vietnamese	174 236
Mandarin	139 286
Spanish	93 593
Tagalog (Filipino)	78 878
German	76 443

