



Community Information Summary

Eritrea-born

Historical Background

Eritrea in the Horn of Africa was occupied and colonised by Italy in 1890. In 1941 British forces defeated the Italians and governed Eritrea until 1952, when the United Nations formed a federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea was awarded formal independence from Ethiopia after a referendum vote in 1993. However, there have been continual border disputes with Ethiopia.

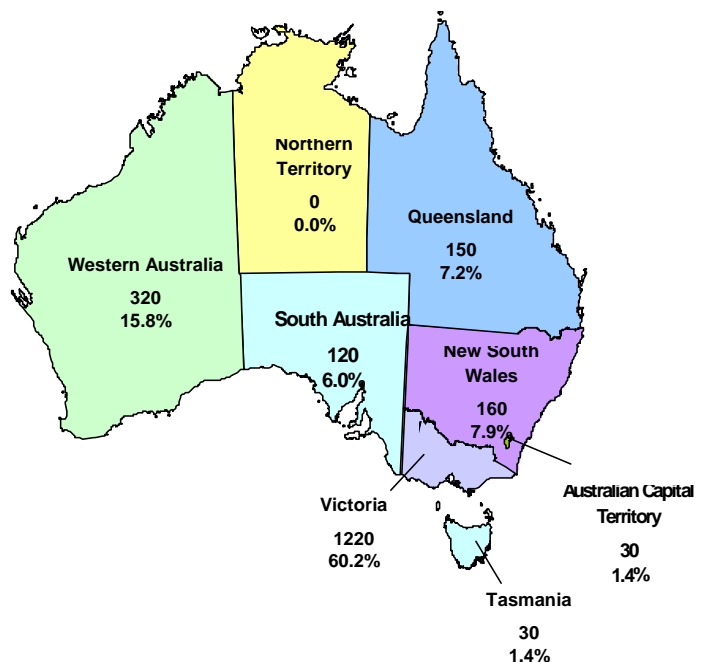
Before 1983, only a few Eritreans arrived in Australia as refugees, students or stowaways. After 1983, Eritreans and Ethiopians were given a special quota under the Humanitarian Program. An average of 100 Eritreans per year were allowed to migrate for the first three years of the program. Many arrivals were young men whose education had been interrupted by war. Most of them settled in Melbourne suburbs of Springvale and Maribyrnong and found work in factories.

The 1996 Census recorded 1160 Eritrea-born living in Australia, most of them living in Victoria. This further increased to 1620 at the 2006 Census. According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Database 796 Eritreans arrived in Australia between 2000 and 2005, predominantly through the Humanitarian Program.

Today

Geographic Distribution

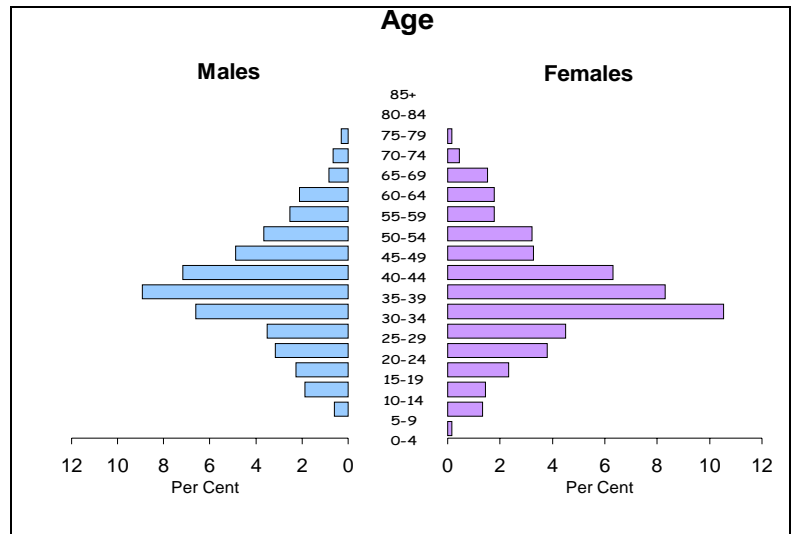
The latest Census in 2006 recorded 2020 Eritrea-born people in Australia, an increase of 24.7 per cent from the 2001 Census. The 2006 distribution by state and territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 1220 followed by Western Australia (320), New South Wales (160) and Queensland (150).



Age and Sex

The median age of the Eritrea-born in 2006 was 37.3 years compared with 46.8 years for all overseas-born and 37.1 years for the total Australian population. The age distribution showed 5.4 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 11.6 per cent were 15-24 years, 55.9 per cent were 25-44 years, 23.2 per cent were 45-64 years and 3.9 per cent were 65 and over.

Of the Eritrea-born in Australia, there were 990 males (49.1 per cent) and 1030 females (50.9 per cent). The sex ratio was 96.6 males per 100 females.

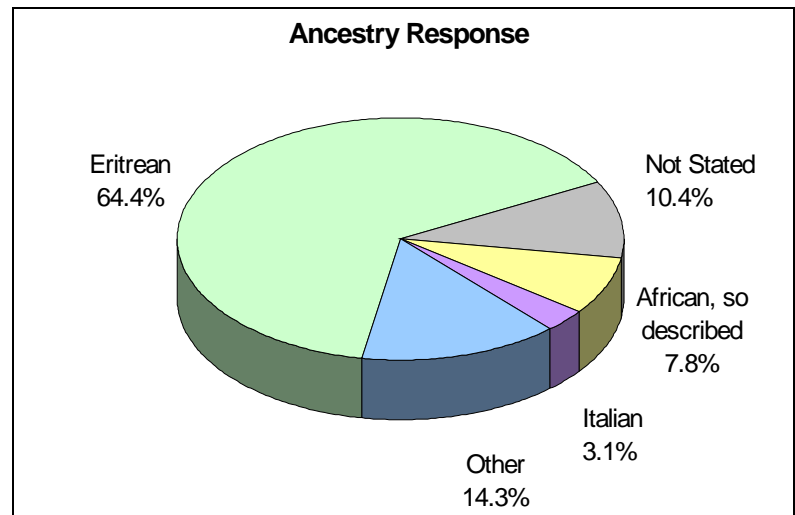


Ancestry

In the 2006 Census, the top three ancestry responses* that Eritrea-born people reported were, Eritrean (1370), Not Stated (220) and African, so described (170).

In the 2006 Census, Australians reported more than 250 different Ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses*, 2650 responses were towards an Eritrean ancestry.

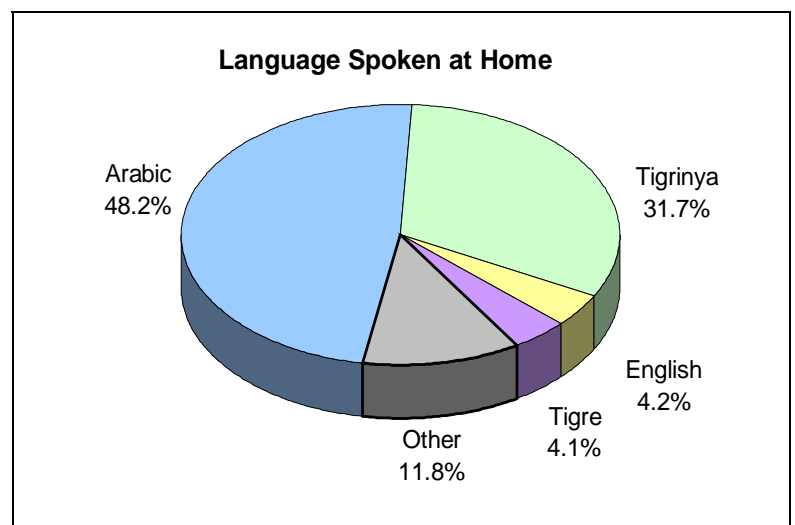
*At the 2006 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count. The total ancestry responses were 25.5 million.



Language

The main languages spoken at home by Eritrea-born people in Australia were Arabic (48.2 per cent), Tigrinya (31.7 per cent) and English (4.2 per cent).

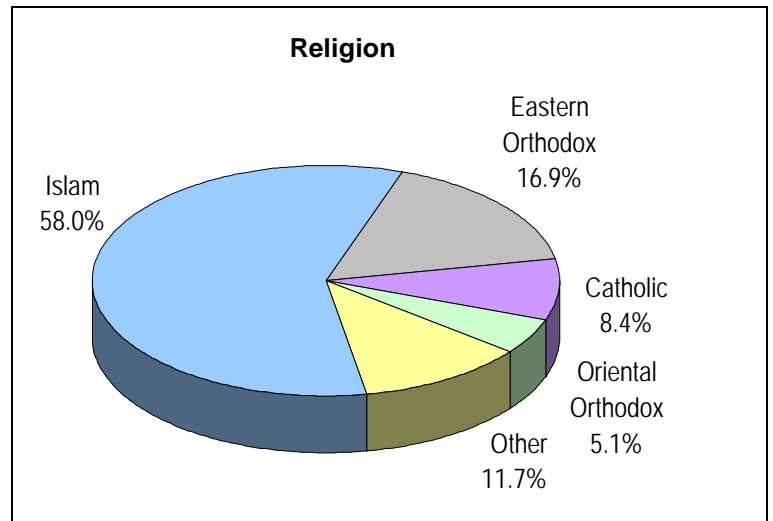
Of the 1910 Eritrea-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 76.4 per cent spoke English very well or well and 21.9 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



Religion

At the 2006 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Eritrea-born were Islam (1170 persons), Eastern Orthodox (340 persons) and Catholic (170 persons).

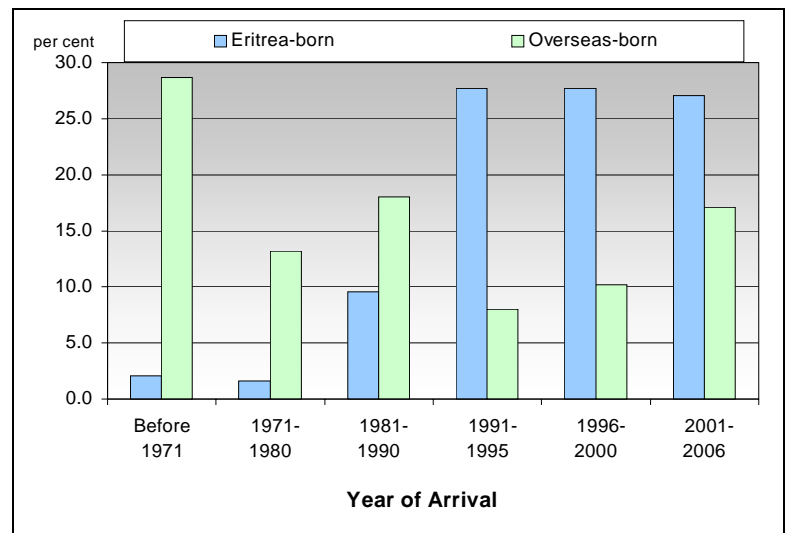
Of the Eritrea-born, 1.5 per cent stated 'No Religion', this was lower than that of the total Australian population (18.7 per cent). 3.2 per cent of the Eritrea-born did not state a religion.



Arrival

Compared to 67.9 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 41.0 per cent of the Eritrea-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 1996.

Among the total Eritrea-born in Australia at the 2006 Census, 27.7 per cent arrived between 1996 and 2000 and 27.0 per cent arrived during 2001 and 2006.



Citizenship

At the 2006 Census, the estimated rate of Australian Citizenship for the Eritrea-born in Australia was 90.7 per cent. The estimated rate for all overseas-born was 75.6 per cent. This rate includes adjustments for people not meeting the residential requirement for citizenship, temporary entrants to Australia and underenumeration at the Census.

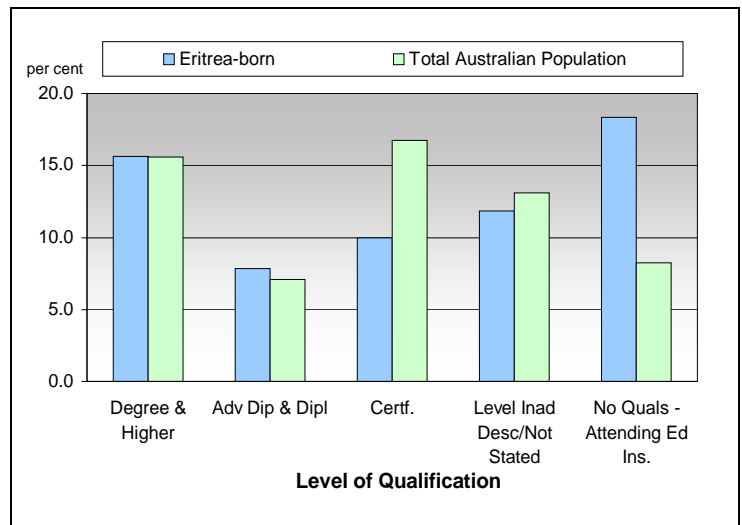
Median Income

At the time of the 2006 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Eritrea-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$317, compared with \$431 for all overseas-born and \$488 for all Australia-born. The total Australian population had a median individual weekly income of \$466.

Qualifications

At the 2006 Census, 45.3 per cent of the Eritrea-born aged 15 years and over had some form of higher non school qualifications compared to 52.5 per cent of the Australian population. Among the Eritrea-born, 23.4 per cent had Diploma level or higher* qualifications and 10.0 per cent had Certificate level qualifications. From the Eritrea-born, 1000 had no higher non school qualification, of which 34.8 per cent were still attending an educational institution.

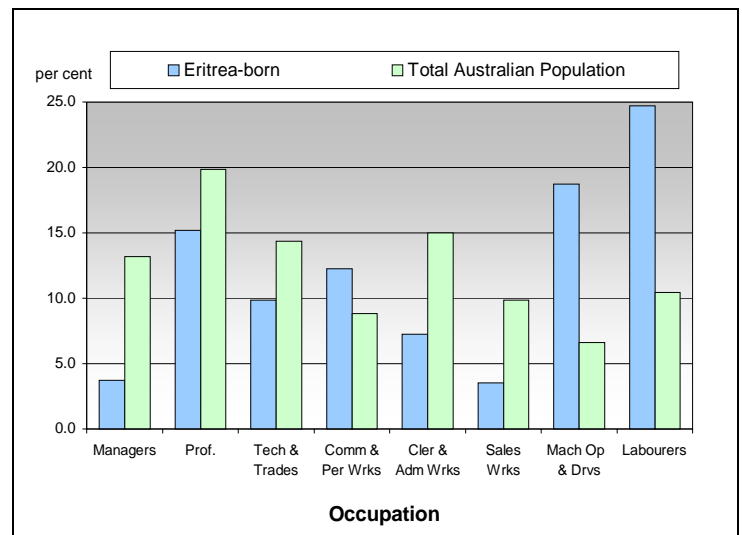
* Diploma level or higher qualification includes Degree level or higher, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level.



Employment

Among Eritrea-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 57.9 per cent and the unemployment rate was 17.3 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 64.6 and 5.2 per cent respectively.

Of the 880 Eritrea-born who were employed, 17.7 per cent were employed in a Skill Level 1 occupation, 4.9 per cent in Skill Level 2 and 9.3 per cent in Skill Level 3. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 28.7, 10.7 and 15.1 per cent respectively.



Jointly produced by Multicultural Affairs Branch and the Program Statistics and Monitoring Section of DIAC
 All data used in this summary is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.
 Sources for the Historical Background available at <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/source.htm>

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