

Muslims in Australia – a snapshot

Muslims in Australia

Muslims in Australia are ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse. More than 36 per cent of the 281,590 Muslims in Australia were born in Australia.

Muslims have come to Australia from more than 120 countries. Major birthplaces are:

BIRTHPLACE	%	BIRTHPLACE	%
Australia	36.4	Pakistan	3.3
Lebanon	10.4	Indonesia	2.9
Turkey	8.3	Iraq	2.8
Afghanistan	3.5	Bangladesh	2.7
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3.5	Iran	2.3

Source: 2001 Census

Geographic distribution

The 2001 Census shows **New South Wales** (50.1 per cent of Australian Muslims) has the largest Muslim population, followed by **Victoria** (33.0 per cent). **Western Australia** has the third highest population of Australian Muslims, at 6.9 per cent.

STATE/TERRITORY OF RESIDENCE	MUSLIM POPULATION	% OF STATE /TERRITORY POPULATION
New South Wales	140,100	2.2%
Victoria	92,740	2.0%
Western Australia	19,460	1.1%
Queensland	14,990	0.4%
South Australia	7,480	0.5%
Australian Capital Territory	3,490	1.1%
Northern Territory	950	0.5%
Tasmania	870	0.2%

Source: 2001 Census

Languages

- Over three-quarters of Muslims in Australia speak English only or have good English proficiency.
- 86.5 per cent of Australian Muslims speak a language other than English at home.
- Just over a third of Muslims in Australia speak Arabic (including Lebanese).
- Other than Arabic the next most commonly spoken languages are Turkish (16.3 per cent), English (11.3 per cent) and Persian (5.8 per cent).

LANGUAGE	NUMBER
Arabic (incl Lebanese)	94,200
Turkish	45,930
English	31,690
Persian	16,330
Bosnian	12,160
Urdu	11,910

Source: 2001 Census

Muslims in Australia – by age/gender

The Muslim population in Australia is a relatively young group with almost half aged under 25 years (34.5 per cent for the total Australian population).

This is largely due to the Australian-born Muslims, mostly second generation Australians, where 85.7 per cent are under 25 years.

Overseas-born Muslims tend to be in the 25-44 year age group (47.5 per cent) which is consistent with their recent arrival in Australia.

AGE GROUP	MALES	FEMALES
0-14 years	44,640	42,110
15-24 years	27,490	25,200
25-44 years	49,490	44,780
45-64 years	22,700	17,440
65+ years	4,100	3,590

Source: 2001 Census

Muslims by generation

At the 2001 Census, the Muslim population in Australia was made up of 168,578 people who were born overseas, 91,682 second generation¹ Australians and 7,387 third or more generation² Australians.

¹ Aust-born with one or both parents born o/s

² Aust-born with both parents born in Australia

BIRTHPLACE OF INDIVIDUAL/BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS		
	No.	%
Born overseas (1 st generation)	168,578	59.9
<i>Born in Australia and:</i>		
• One or both parents born overseas (2 nd generation)	91,682	32.6
• Both parents born in Aust.	7,387	2.6
• Aust. Born/not stated or both not stated	3,501	1.2
<i>Total Born in Australia</i>	<i>102,570</i>	<i>36.4</i>
Not stated	10,442	3.7
Total Muslims in Aust.	281,590	100

Events and Festivals

Muslim events and festivals are based on the Islamic lunar calendar and specific dates can therefore change from year to year. Main events are:

Dhu Al-Hijja: The month of pilgrimage (the *Hajj*) to Mecca. (December/January)

Eid-ul-Adha: The Festival of Sacrifice that occurs at the end of the *Hajj* and commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for God. (December/January)

Muharram/Al-Hijra: The Islamic New Year. (December/January)

Eid Milad al-Nabi: The birthday of the Prophet. (April)

Ramadan: Muslims must begin fasting between sunrise and sunset. (September)

Eid-ul-Fitr: The end of Ramadan. (October)

Source: DIMA 2006 *Diary of Australia and Media Guide: Islam & Muslims in Australia 2006*

Relevant websites and further sources of information

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs – Australia
www.immi.gov.au
www.citizenship.gov.au
www.harmony.gov.au

Australian Bureau of Statistics

www.abs.gov.au

Australian, state, territory and local governments

www.gov.au

Australian Government Information

www.australia.gov.au