



Afghanistan-born Community Information Summary

Historical Background

Muslim cameleers with their camels made a significant contribution to the opening up and development of inland South Australia and Australia for Europeans. The Afghan camel trains provided transport to the mid-central regions of Australia, supplying the new gold mining communities and the remote sheep and cattle stations.

These men were generally known as 'Afghans' although they came from several different places of origin and a variety of ethnic groups. In 1838, Joseph Bruce brought 18 Afghan cameleers to South Australia. Later, Afghan camel drivers were part of the ill-fated 1860-61 Burke and Wills expedition. More Afghans arrived over the next 40 years and worked in the carting business. The cameleers were predominantly Afghan tribesmen, Durranis, Afridis and Baluchis.

The number of Afghanistan-born in Australia at the time of the 1901 Census had increased to 394 from only 20 recorded at the 1871 Census. Afghan men married local women, as they were not allowed to bring Afghan women to Australia. The development of modern transport and the cessation of Afghan migration following immigration restriction from 1901 led to the gradual decline in the size of Australia's Afghanistan-born population.

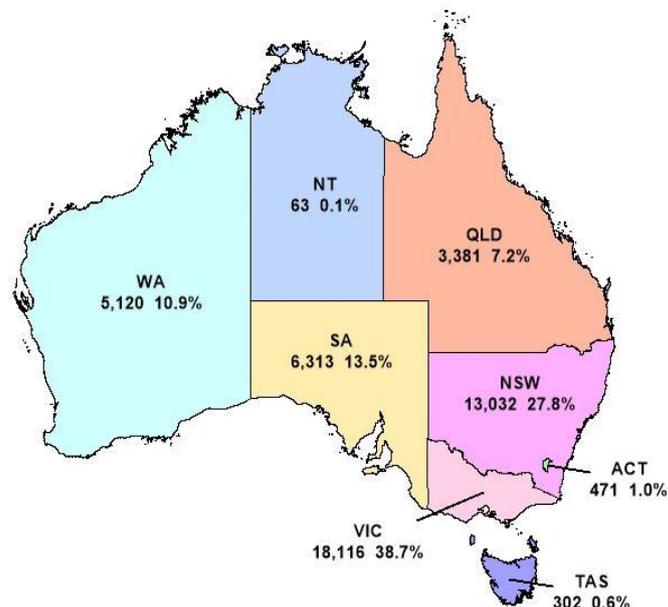
In the ensuing period, to about 1979, Afghan migration was limited to a small number of students who came to study at Australian institutions and chose to stay in Australia after completing their studies. The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan triggered a wave of refugees who sought sanctuary in many countries including Australia. Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, but the on-going civil war and subsequent ascendancy of the Taliban, with its hard-line Islamic laws, resulted in more Afghan refugees arriving in Australia. This trend continued following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and subsequent deployment of Western forces in Afghanistan. As tensions persist, minority ethnic groups from Afghanistan continue to seek protection in Australia.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 46,799 Afghanistan-born people in Australia, an increase of 63.6 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 18,116 followed by New South Wales (13,032), South Australia (6,313) and Western Australia (5,120).

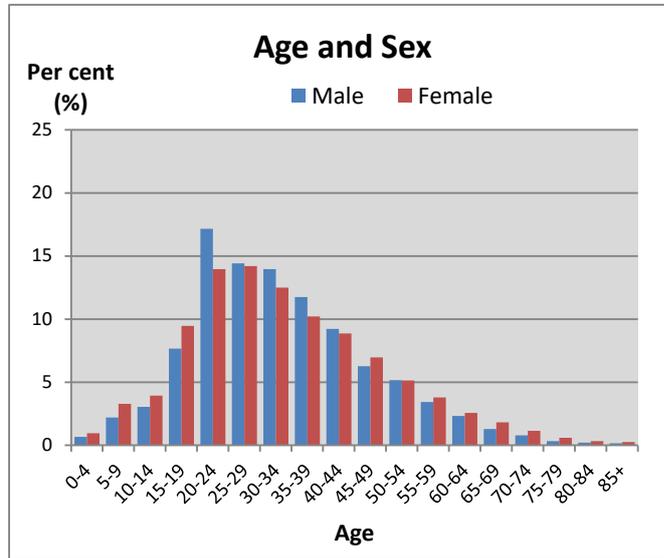


Age and Sex

The median age of the Afghanistan-born in 2016 was 31 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 6.8 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 24.3 per cent were 15-24 years, 48.0 per cent were 25-44 years, 17.7 per cent were 45-64 years and 3.3 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Afghanistan-born in Australia, there were 28,531 males (61.0 per cent) and 18,269 females (39.0 per cent). The sex ratio was 156 males per 100 females.

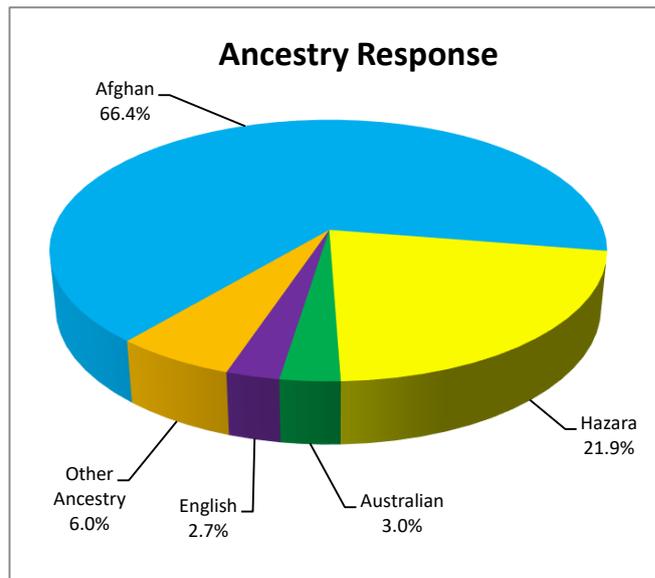


Ancestry

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Afghanistan-born people reported were Afghan (33,849), Hazara (11,146) and Australian (1,527).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 53,082 responses were towards Afghan ancestry.

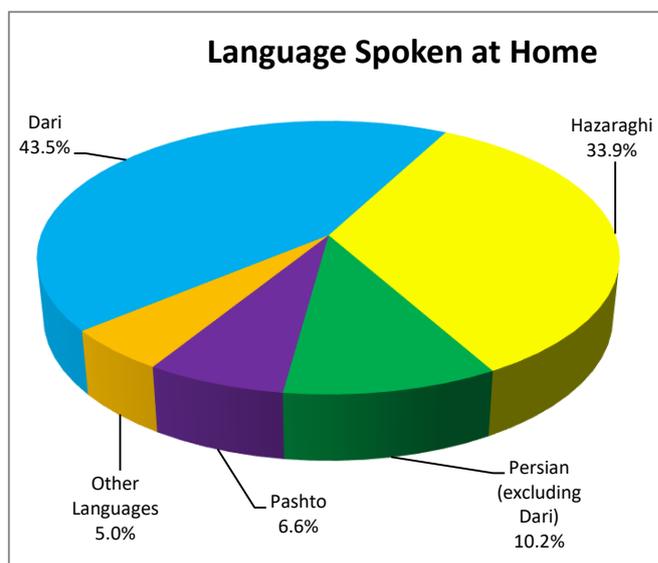
* At the 2016 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question, therefore there can be more responses than total persons.



Language

The main languages spoken at home by Afghanistan-born people in Australia were Dari (20,353), Hazaraghi (15,865) and Persian (excluding Dari) (4,761).

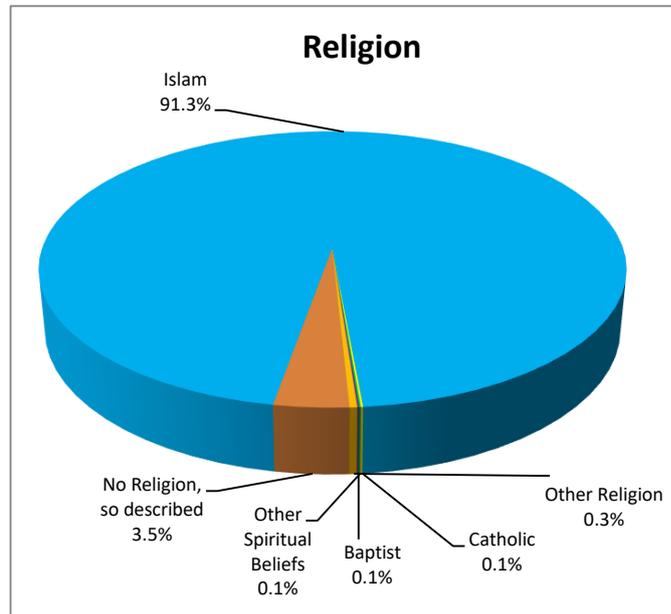
Of the 45,354 Afghanistan-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 65.3 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 33.6 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



Religion

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Afghanistan-born were Islam (42,708), Catholic (47) and Other Spiritual Beliefs (39).

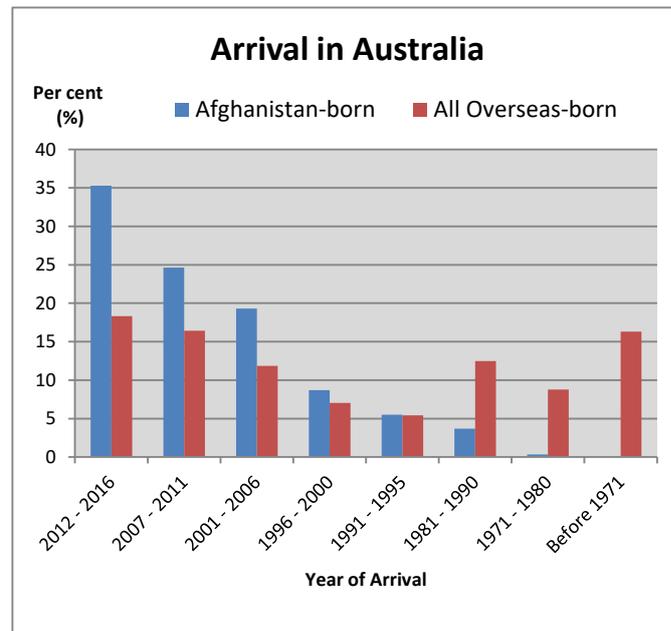
Of the Afghanistan-born, 3.5 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29.6 per cent), and 4.4 per cent did not state a religion.



Arrival

Compared to 61.8 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 37.6 per cent of the Afghanistan-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total Afghanistan-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 24.6 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 35.3 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.



Median Income

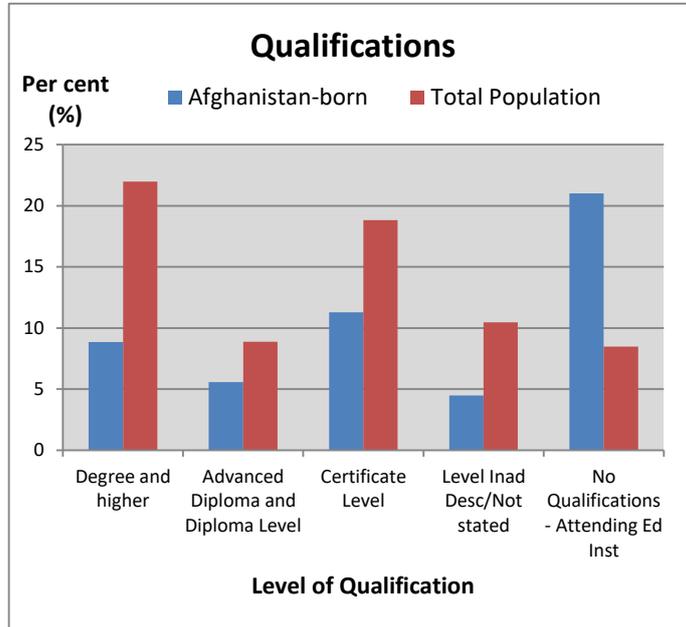
At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the Afghanistan-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$371, compared with \$615 for all overseas-born and \$688 for all Australian-born.

The total Australian population aged 15 and over had a median Individual Weekly Income of \$662.

Qualifications

At the 2016 Census, 30.2 per cent of the Afghanistan-born aged 15 years and over had some form of higher non-school qualification compared to 60.1 per cent of the Australian population.

Of the Afghanistan-born aged 15 years and over, 21.0 per cent had no qualifications and were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.5 per cent.

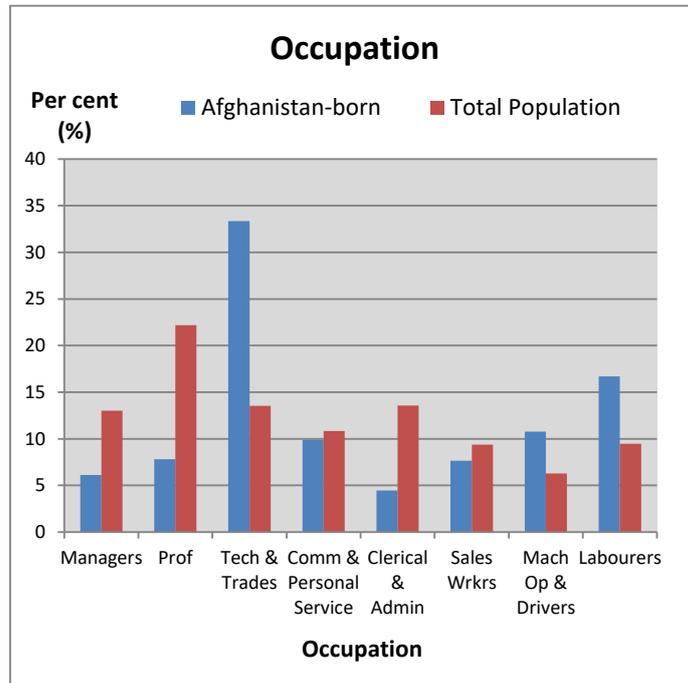


Employment

Among Afghanistan-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 52.2 per cent and the unemployment rate was 17.8 per cent.

The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 64.6 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively.

Of the 18,481 Afghanistan-born who were employed, 47.3 per cent were employed in either a skilled managerial, professional or trade occupation. The corresponding rate in the total Australian population was 48.8 per cent.



Produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Department of Home Affairs

All data used in this summary is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.

