



Italy-born Community Information Summary

Historical Background

Italians have long played an important role in Australia's history. As early as 1676, a Dominican missionary based in Manila prepared a map that featured the Australian land mass. A Venetian was aboard Captain Cook's ship, the Endeavour.

In the nineteenth century, Italian priests carried out missionary work in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and the Italian linguist Raffaello Carboni, played a significant role in the Eureka Stockade revolt of 1854. Hundreds of Italians were lured to Victoria and Western Australia by the 1850s gold rushes, creating Italian communities that catered to miners on the goldfields.

In 1885 a group of 300 migrants from northern Italy established a traditional Italian community called 'New Italy' in northern New South Wales, in what is now called Woodburn. Italian fishermen also established communities along the south coast of New South Wales, Port Pirie and Fremantle. During this period, Italian labourers arrived in Queensland to work in the cane fields. By the late 1930s, one-third of all Australia's Italian migrants lived in the cane-growing regions of Queensland. Italians also became involved in market gardens, comprising about 40 per cent of Queensland's market gardeners.

After World War II Italian immigration increased dramatically. In 1947 Australia's Italy-born numbered 33,632 and by 1971 this had increased to 289,476. Most Italian migrants came from Sicily, Calabria and Veneto and settled in metropolitan areas. The majority were young single men.

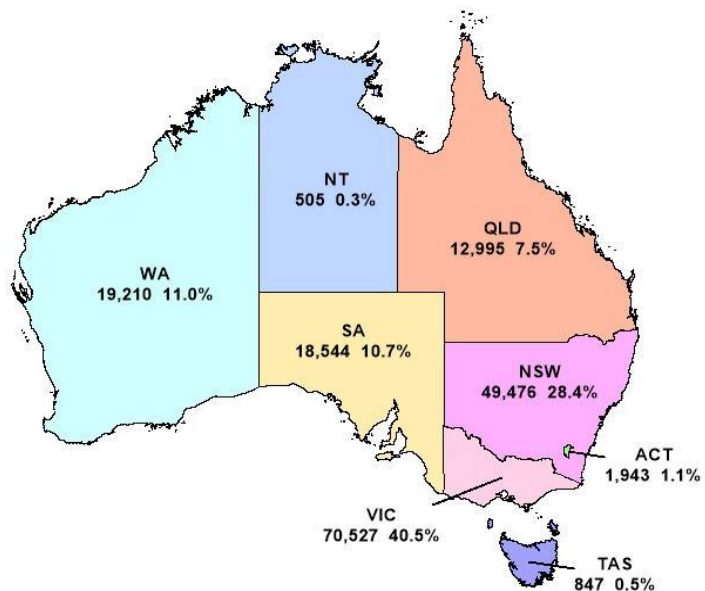
Italy experienced economic buoyancy after 1971, which prompted many Italians to return to Italy. This led to a decline in the size of the Italy-born population in Australia.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 174,042 Italy-born people in Australia, a decrease of 6.1 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 70,527 followed by New South Wales (49,476), Western Australia (19,210) and South Australia (18,544).

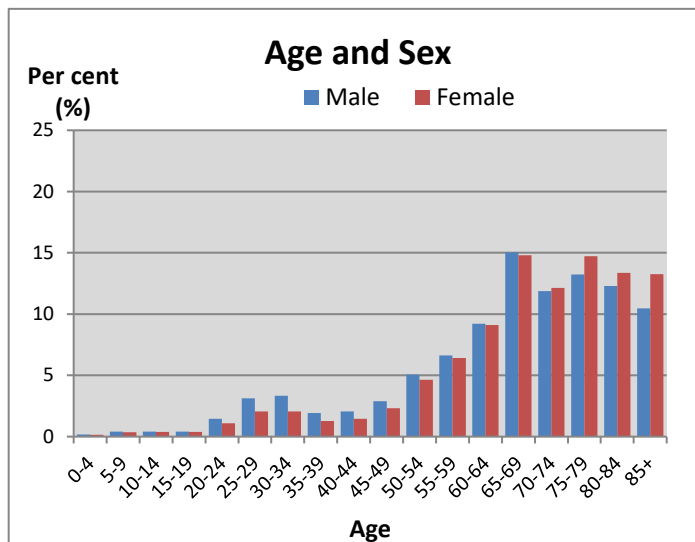


Age and Sex

The median age of the Italy-born in 2016 was 70 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 1.0 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 1.7 per cent were 15-24 years, 8.7 per cent were 25-44 years, 23.1 per cent were 45-64 years and 65.5 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Italy-born in Australia, there were 88,870 males (51.1 per cent) and 85,174 females (48.9 per cent). The sex ratio was 104 males per 100 females.

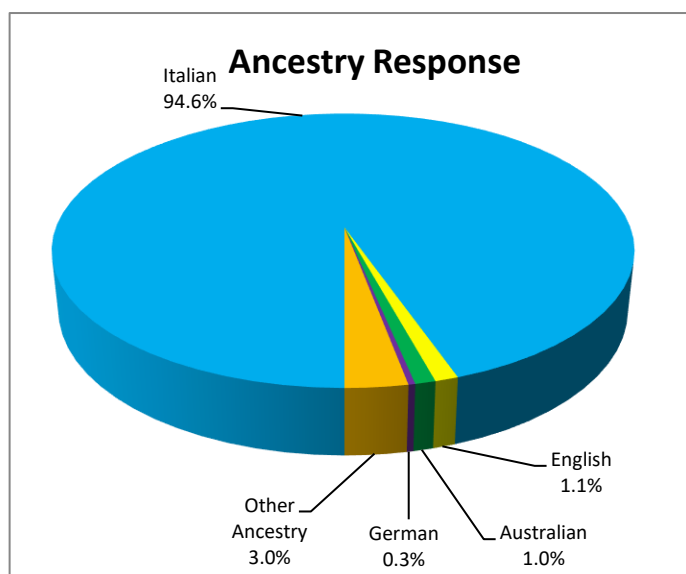


Ancestry

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Italy-born people reported were Italian (168,742), English (1,966) and Australian (1,730).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 1,000,006 responses were towards Italian ancestry.

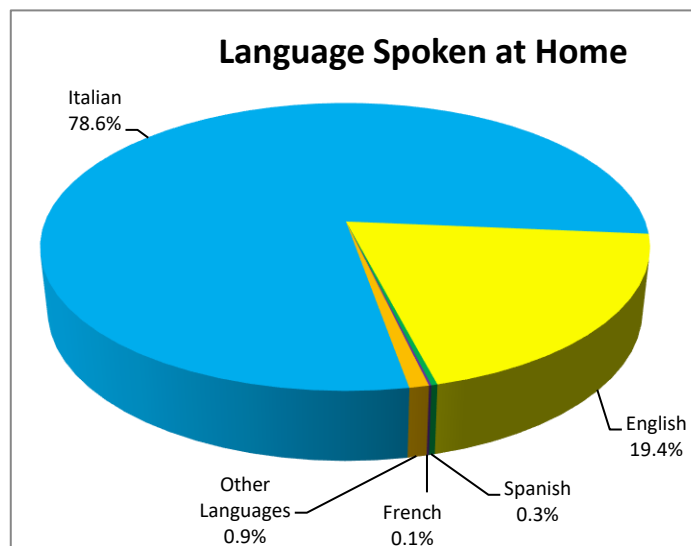
* At the 2016 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question, therefore there can be more responses than total persons.



Language

The main languages spoken at home by Italy-born people in Australia were Italian (136,775), English (33,836) and Spanish (479).

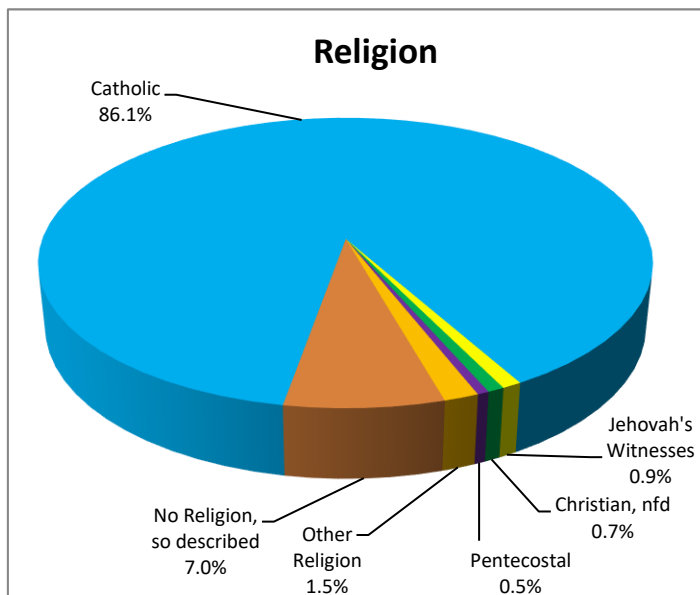
Of the 139,511 Italy-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 77.2 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 21.6 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



Religion

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Italy-born were Catholic (149,899), Jehovah's Witnesses (1,502) and Christian, nfd (1,271).

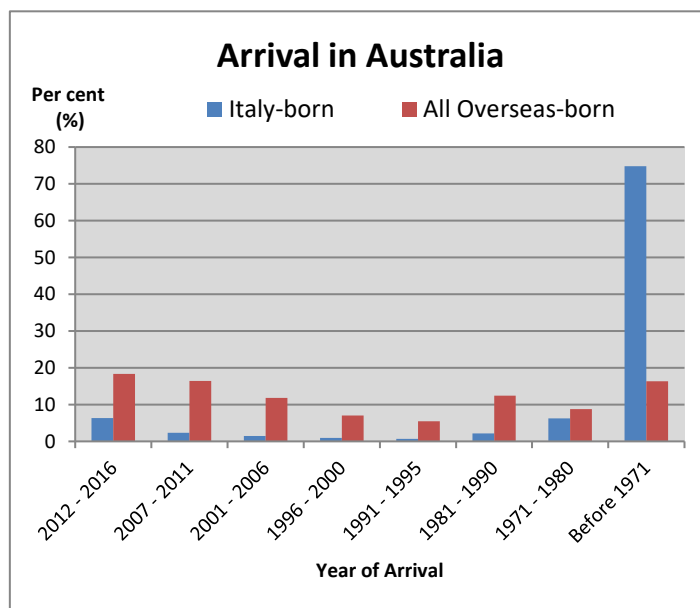
Of the Italy-born, 7.0 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29.6 per cent), and 3.1 per cent did not state a religion.



Arrival

Compared to 61.8 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 86.3 per cent of the Italy-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total Italy-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 2.3 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 6.3 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.



Median Income

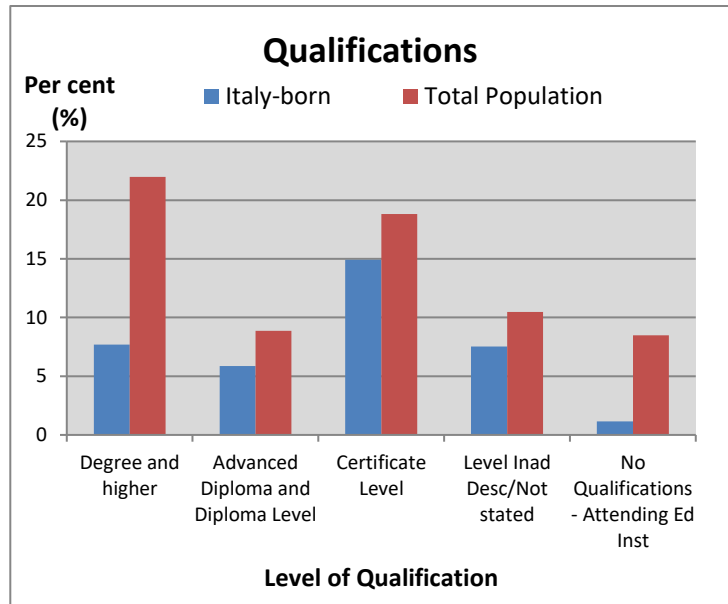
At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the Italy-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$435, compared with \$615 for all overseas-born and \$688 for all Australian-born.

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

Qualifications

At the 2016 Census, 36.0 per cent of the Italy-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 Italy-born aged 15 years and over, 1.2 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.

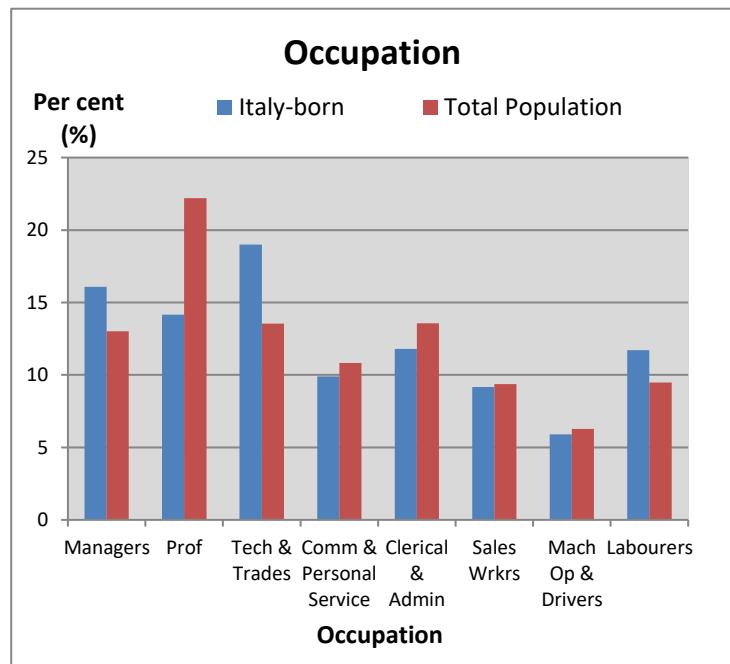


Employment

Among Italy-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 31.7 per cent and the unemployment rate was 4.3 per cent.

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

Of the 51,137 Italy-born who were employed, 49.2 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.