Samoa-born
Community Information Summary

Historical Background

Polynesians settled in the Samoan archipelago of three islands around 1000 BC.

Germany, Britain and the United States of America all competed for control of the archipelago until 1899, when the western part of Samoa passed to Germany and the eastern islands became American Samoa. Following World War II, New Zealand administered Western Samoa as a League of Nations Mandate and then as a United Nations trusteeship until its independence in 1962. In 1997, Western Samoa changed its name to Samoa.

During the early part of the twentieth century, Australia established trading companies in Samoa that led to a small intake of Samoan migrants to Australia. The migrants came to Australia for commerce, education and missionary purposes. The 1921 Census recorded 110 Samoa-born people in Australia.

During the 1970s the number of Samoans coming to Australia increased as a result of educational programs sponsored by Australia. By 1981 there were 780 Samoans in Australia and this number rose to 2,200 people in 1986. By 1996 there were around 10,000 Samoa-born in Australia, which has more than doubled in the next twenty years.

Samoan migration is complex with many first migrating to New Zealand before they and/or their New Zealand-born children further relocating to Australia.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 24,017 Samoa-born people in Australia, an increase of 25.8 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 9,025 followed by Queensland (7,811), Victoria (6,199) and Western Australia (538).
**Age and Sex**

The median age of the Samoa-born in 2016 was 45 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 5.7 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 9.8 per cent were 15-24 years, 33.1 per cent were 25-44 years, 41.8 per cent were 45-64 years and 9.7 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Samoa-born in Australia, there were 11,882 males (49.5 per cent) and 12,133 females (50.5 per cent). The sex ratio was 98 males per 100 females.

**Ancestry**

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Samoa-born people reported were Samoan (19,629), German (2,020) and English (1,860).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 75,755 responses were towards Samoan 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 Samoa-born people in Australia were Samoan (20,397), English (3,125) and Tokelauan (27).

Of the 20,683 Samoa-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 86.9 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 11.5 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
Religion

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Samoa-born were Catholic (5,128), Christian, nfd (3,938) and Latter-day Saints (3,260).

Of the Samoa-born, 4.7 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29.6 per cent), and 5.1 per cent did not state a religion.

Arrival

Compared to 61.8 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 57.5 per cent of the Samoa-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total Samoa-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 15.2 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 22.6 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.

Median Income

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the Samoa-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $659, 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, 39.5 per cent of the Samoa-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 Samoa-born aged 15 years and over, 4.6 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.

![Qualifications Chart](chart1.png)

**Employment**

Among Samoa-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 64.2 per cent and the unemployment rate was 10.3 per cent.

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

Of the 12,737 Samoa-born who were employed, 18.1 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.

![Occupation Chart](chart2.png)

**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.

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