Singapore-born
Community Information Summary

Historical Background

The island of Singapore is located off the southern tip of the Malaysian peninsula. It is linked to the peninsula by a causeway. Because of its geographic location Singapore has long been an important trading centre in the region. Over the years, Singapore's Indigenous Malay population became outnumbered by migrants from China, India and Europe.

For much of its history, Singapore was under colonial rule from the United Kingdom. In 1959, it gained self-government, and in 1962 entered into a short-lived federation with Malaysia before gaining independence and becoming a republic in 1965.

While migration from Singapore to Australia began in the nineteenth century, the intake was not significant until the mid-1960s. The relaxation of immigration restrictions in 1966 allowed the entry of skilled non-Europeans without prior family ties in Australia.

By 1981 the Singapore-born population in Australia had reached 11,960. Between 1981 and 1991 Singaporean migrants arrived in Australia at a constant rate and by 1991 the size of the population had reached 23,990. From 2001 arrivals rates significantly increased again and by 2011 the Singapore-born population in Australia had risen to 48,646.

Australia is also a popular study destination for many Singaporeans, many of whom may also eventually migrate to Australia as skilled migrants.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 54,939 Singapore-born people in Australia, an increase of 12.9 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 16,063 followed by Western Australia (14,987), New South Wales (12,730) and Queensland (6,716).
**Age and Sex**

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

The age distribution showed 11.4 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 17.4 per cent were 15-24 years, 32.9 per cent were 25-44 years, 27.5 per cent were 45-64 years and 10.8 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Singapore-born in Australia, there were 24,923 males (45.4 per cent) and 30,017 females (54.6 per cent). The sex ratio was 83 males per 100 females.

**Ancestry**

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Singapore-born people reported were Chinese (31,295), Indian (5,857) and English (5,446).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 1,213,903 responses were towards Chinese 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 Singapore-born people in Australia were English (26,912), Mandarin (15,848) and Malay (3,311).

Of the 27,930 Singapore-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 96.4 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 3.1 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
**Religion**

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Singapore-born were Catholic (10,358), Buddhism (4,962) and Islam (3,753).

Of the Singapore-born, 25.1 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29.6 per cent), and 4.5 per cent did not state a religion.

**Arrival**

Compared to 61.8 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 60.2 per cent of the Singapore-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total Singapore-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 16.0 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 21.0 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.

**Median Income**

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the Singapore-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $678, 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, 69.4 per cent of the Singapore-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 Singapore-born aged 15 years and over, 13.6 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.

Employment
Among Singapore-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 63.8 per cent and the unemployment rate was 8.9 per cent.

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

Of the 28,197 Singapore-born who were employed, 60.9 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.

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