South Africa-born
Community Information Summary

Historical Background

Links between South Africa and Australia date back to the earliest days of European settlement, when food and livestock were supplied from the Cape of Good Hope to the British penal colony in Australia. Australia's first vine stock also came from South Africa.

The discovery of gold in Australia in the 1850s attracted British and European settlers from the southern regions of Africa. The 1901 Census recorded 1500 people in Australia had been born in one of the territories that subsequently formed the South African Union. By 1933 the Census recorded 6179 South Africa-born people in Australia.

During the 1960s, increasing tensions in South Africa prompted a number of English-speaking members of the white South African community to emigrate to Australia.

In the 1970s, after the easing of immigration restrictions, some non-European South Africans began migrating to Australia. The 1986 Census recorded 37,070 South Africa-born people in Australia.

Following the end of the apartheid system in South Africa, thousands of South Africans migrated to Australia. They included farmers, entrepreneurs and people with technological and engineering skills. Most of the South Africans now living in Australia are of Afrikaner, British or other European backgrounds.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 162,449 South Africa-born people in Australia, an increase of 11.5 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 43,058 followed by Western Australia (41,008), Queensland (40,131) and Victoria (27,184).
**Age and Sex**

The median age of the South Africa-born in 2016 was 42 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 7.9 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 13.3 per cent were 15-24 years, 34.4 per cent were 25-44 years, 32.5 per cent were 45-64 years and 11.9 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the South Africa-born in Australia, there were 79,965 males (49.2 per cent) and 82,483 females (50.8 per cent). The sex ratio was 97 males per 100 females.

**Ancestry**

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that South Africa-born people reported were South African (71,273), English (53,161) and Dutch (14,827).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 118,960 responses were towards South African 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 South Africa-born people in Australia were English (118,147), Afrikaans (38,415) and German (742).

Of the 44,017 South Africa-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 98.7 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 0.7 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
Religion

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst South Africa-born were Anglican (20,465), Catholic (19,797) and Christian, nfd (17,246).

Of the South Africa-born, 19.9 per cent stated ‘No Religion’ which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29.6 per cent), and 4.0 per cent did not state a religion.

Arrival

Compared to 61.8 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 59.7 per cent of the South Africa-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total South Africa-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 24.7 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 13.9 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.

Median Income

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the South Africa-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $984, 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, 73.3 per cent of the South Africa-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 South Africa-born aged 15 years and over, 9.3 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]

**Employment**

Among South Africa-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 76.6 per cent and the unemployment rate was 6.2 per cent.

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

Of the 106,989 South Africa-born who were employed, 62.4 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]

**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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