Spain-born Community Information Summary

Historical Background

Spain's first significant contribution to Australia predates the arrival of the first Spanish settlers with the introduction in 1797 of Spanish sheep to New South Wales. These sheep were the beginning of the Australian Merino breed.

The first recorded Spanish free settler to Australia was J.B.L. De Arrieta, who arrived in 1821. The New South Wales colonial government granted him 2000 acres of land at Morton Park. He died in 1838 and is remembered through the naming of Spaniard's Hill near Camden.

A few Spanish fortune-seekers were recorded in the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s. A group of Catalan and Basque Spaniards migrated to Victoria in 1880 and a number of Spanish families settled in White Hills in central Victoria in 1885 in search of gold.

Others settled near Echuca in northern Victoria on the Murray River working as tomato growers, while others settled in Queensland and worked in the sugar cane industry. By 1891, the Spain-born population numbered 503 persons. It slowly increased to 992 in 1947.

At the end of the Spanish Civil War, from 1939, over 600,000 Spaniards left Spain moving to countries such as Latin America and Australia. Spanish rural workers were considered to be suited to cane cutting and were offered assisted passages.

In 1961-62, 1808 Spain-born settlers arrived in Australia. In the following year, 4585 arrived. However, in March 1963, following unemployment problems in Australia, the Spanish Government suspended assisted migration. Later, the movement of Spanish workers to Australia was resumed on a limited scale.

2016 Census

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2016 recorded 15,391 Spain-born people in Australia, an increase of 17.9 per cent from the 2011 Census.

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 6,387 followed by Victoria (3,522), Queensland (2,554) and Western Australia (1,369).
**Age and Sex**

The median age of the Spain-born in 2016 was 52 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 5.9 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 4.2 per cent were 15-24 years, 28.7 per cent were 25-44 years, 30.0 per cent were 45-64 years and 31.2 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Spain-born in Australia, there were 7,674 males (49.9 per cent) and 7,722 females (50.2 per cent). The sex ratio was 99 males per 100 females.

**Ancestry**

In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Spain-born people reported were Spanish (13,923), English (497) and Australian (428).

In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 119,956 responses were towards Spanish 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 Spain-born people in Australia were Spanish (10,612), English (3,798) and Catalan (310).

Of the 11,533 Spain-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 83.6 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 15.6 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
Religion

At the 2016 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Spain-born were Catholic (9,179), Christian, nfd (225) and Jehovah's Witnesses (144).

Of the Spain-born, 27.8 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, 66.1 per cent of the Spain-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2007.

Among the total Spain-born in Australia at the 2016 Census, 7.6 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011 and 22.4 per cent arrived between 2012 and 2016.

Median Income

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median Individual Weekly Income for the Spain-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $557, 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, 61.6 per cent of the Spain-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 Spain-born aged 15 years and over, 3.4 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 Spain-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 54.9 per cent and the unemployment rate was 6.7 per cent.

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

Of the 7,303 Spain-born who were employed, 54.3 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.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2018