

People from Afghanistan first settled in Australia when camel drivers participated in the land explorations of the 1860s, the first of whom joined the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition. In all, approximately 3,000 Afghans, mainly men, migrated to Australia during the latter half of the 19th Century. From the 1920s, when motor vehicles began to replace camel transportation, many returned to Afghanistan while others stayed on and found employment in other areas or became small property owners. This first wave of Afghanistan-born migrants also introduced Islam to Australia. Most of the Afghanistan-born in Australia had arrived in the last decade or so, as refugees under the Humanitarian Program.

At the 2006 Census there were 5,242 Afghanistan-born persons in Victoria (31.3% of Australia's total), increasing by 61.5% from 3,245 persons in 2001. Only 2.4% of the Afghanistan-born in Victoria had arrived in Australia prior to 1986; 24.0% arrived between 1996 and 2001; and 41.5% arrived between 2001 and 2006. The Afghanistan-born mainly resided in Casey (32.6%) and Greater Dandenong (32.0%). There were 5,978 persons who identified with Afghan ancestry.

The Afghanistan-born community showed a younger age profile because of their recent arrival mainly as young adults: 18.6% were aged 19-25 years; 40.3% were aged 26-44 years. The median age was 29 years, compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population. The sex ratio was 120 males to 100 females. Over three-quarters (77.6%) spoke Persian/Dari at home and 12.8% spoke Pashto. Over a quarter (28.4%) assessed themselves as speaking English not well or not at all. Most (95.9%) were Muslims. Just over half (56.9%) held Australian Citizenship, compared to 67.5% for the total overseas-born population in Victoria.

Demographic Background: 2006 Census

1 Persons born in Afghanistan in Victoria and Australia: 2006, 2001 and 1996 Census

	2006 Census		2001 Census		1996 Census		2001-2006 % change	1996-2001 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%		
Melbourne	4,972	29.7	3,200	28.3	1,886	32.4	55.4	69.7
Rest of Victoria ¹	270	1.6	45	0.4	11	0.2	500.0	309.1
Total Victoria	5,242	31.3	3,245	28.7	1,897	32.6	61.5	71.1
Total Australia	16,751	100.0	11,296	100.0	5,826	100.0	48.3	93.9

¹ Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria"

2 Distribution of Afghanistan-born, Top 5 Local Govt Areas: 2006, 2001 Census

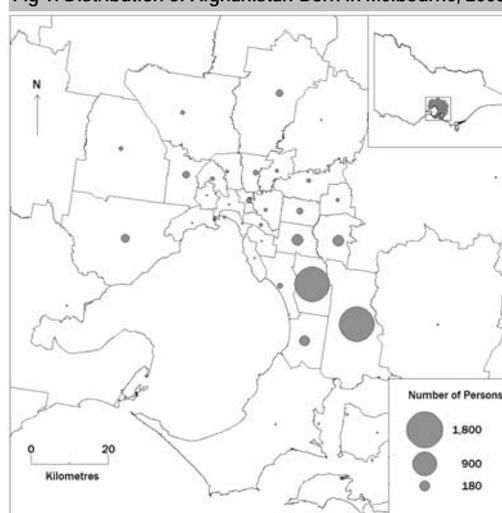
Local Government Area	2006 Census		2001 Census		Rank in 2001
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Casey (C)	1,713	32.6	773	23.8	2
Greater Dandenong (C)	1,680	32.0	914	28.1	1
Monash (C)	240	4.6	307	9.4	3
Knox (C)	218	4.2	135	4.2	5
Frankston (C)	184	3.5	212	6.5	4
Rest of LGAs in Metro Melb	951	18.1	865	26.6	
Rest of LGAs in Reg. Vic	263	5.0	45	1.4	
Total Victoria	5,249	100.0	3,251	100.0	

3 Persons Identifying with Afghan Ancestry, Total Responses, 2006, 2001

Afghan ancestry	2006 Census	2001 Census	2001-2006 % change
Total First & Second Responses ¹	5,978	3,882	54.0
Total Afghanistan-born, persons	5,242	3,245	61.5

¹ Respondents had the option of nominating several ancestries, but only the first two responses were processed in the Census.

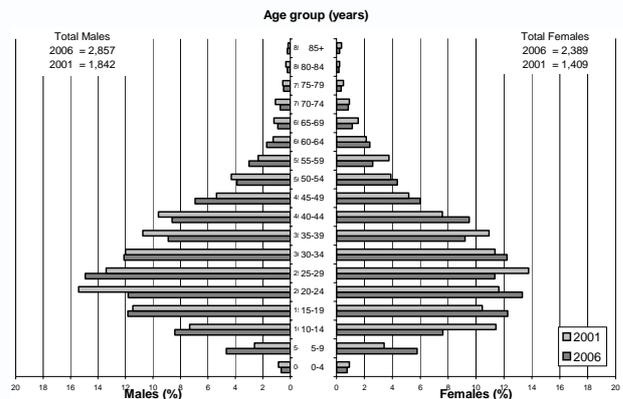
Fig 1: Distribution of Afghanistan-Born in Melbourne, 2006



4 Age and Gender Distribution of Afghanistan-born: 2006, 2001

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	37	0.7	29	0.9	27.6
5-11	425	8.1	179	5.5	137.4
12-18	748	14.3	481	14.8	55.5
19-25	974	18.6	624	19.2	56.1
26-44	2,115	40.3	1,372	42.2	54.2
45-64	810	15.4	455	14.0	78.0
65-74	94	1.8	77	2.4	22.1
75+	43	0.8	34	1.0	26.5
Total	5,246	100.0	3,251	100.0	61.4
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>120</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>		

Fig 2: Age and Gender Distribution of Afghanistan-Born, 2006



5 Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home by Afghanistan-born: 2006, 2001

Language	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Persian/Dari	4,071	77.6	2,435	75.0	67.2
Pashto	673	12.8	524	16.1	28.4
Arabic	26	0.5	30	0.9	-13.3
Mandarin	17	0.3	-	-	N/A
German	9	0.2	3	0.1	200.0
English only	145	2.8	55	1.7	163.6
Other languages ¹	251	4.8	158	4.9	58.9
Not stated	57	1.1	40	1.2	42.5
Total	5,249	100.0	3,245	100.0	61.8

¹ Includes 'Inadequately described' and 'Non-verbal so described'.

6 Proficiency in English of Afghanistan-born: 2006, 2001

Proficiency in English	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	142	2.7	63	1.9	125.4
<i>Speaks other language and speaks English</i>					
Very well	1,741	33.2	1,204	37.0	44.6
Well	1,762	33.6	1,102	33.8	59.9
Not well	1,155	22.0	642	19.7	79.9
Not at all	336	6.4	182	5.6	84.6
Not stated ¹	107	2.0	63	1.9	69.8
Total	5,243	100.0	3,256	100.0	61.0

¹ Includes those who did not state a language or proficiency in English.

7 Top 5 Religions of Afghanistan-born: 2006, 2001

Religion	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Islam	5,030	95.9	3,153	97.0	59.5
Sikhism	18	0.3	21	0.6	-14.3
Baha'i	13	0.2	8	0.2	62.5
Baptist	10	0.2	-	-	N/A
Western Catholic	3	0.1	3	0.1	0.0
Other religions	6	0.1	9	0.3	-33.3
No religion	40	0.8	17	0.5	135.3
Not stated ¹	124	2.4	39	1.2	217.9
Total	5,244	100.0	3,250	100.0	61.4

¹ Includes 'Religious Belief, nfd and 'Not Defined'.

8 Afghanistan-born with Australian Citizenship by Age, 2006, 2001

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	7	0.2	9	0.4	-22.2
5-11	78	2.6	109	4.9	-28.4
12-18	381	12.8	349	15.7	9.2
19-25	518	17.4	339	15.3	52.8
26-44	1,216	40.8	958	43.1	26.9
45-64	666	22.3	377	17.0	76.7
65-74	82	2.7	55	2.5	49.1
75+	36	1.2	25	1.1	44.0
Total	2,984	100.0	2,221	100.0	34.4

Source of data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Population and Housing Census, Persons counted at Place of Usual Residence.

Some country background information is sourced from Jupp, J ed. (2001) *The Australian People*, Cambridge University Press, UK; and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Country Information Summary* series, 2004.

For more detailed tables on a wider range of demographic and socio-economic variables from the 2006 Census, refer to *Community Profiles Series: 2006 Census* available on the Victorian Multicultural Commission website: www.multicultural.vic.gov.au