

Eritrea forms a part of the Horn of Africa. The region was ruled successively by the Ottomans, Tigray Kingdom, Egyptians, Italy, and Britain, and was part of Ethiopia before it gained independence in 1993. As a result of decades of war and continual drought, large numbers of the Eritrea-born, and those born in nearby refugee camps in Sudan and Zaire, arrived in Australia in the last decade or so under a special humanitarian program.

At the 2006 Census, there were 1,215 Eritrea-born persons in Victoria (60.3% of Australia's total), increasing by 22.0% from 996 persons in 2001. Only 14.0% of Victoria's Eritrea-born had arrived in Australia prior to 1991. The Eritrea-born community was distributed throughout metropolitan Melbourne, with distinct concentrations in the local government areas of Moonee Valley (20.7%); Melbourne City (10.7%); Maribyrnong (9.4%); Brimbank (7.6%); and Greater Dandenong (7.5%). There were 1,599 persons who identified with Eritrean ancestry.

The Eritrea-born showed a balanced age profile: 56.2% were aged 26-44 years; 22.8% were aged 45-64 years. The median age was 37 years, similar to that of the total Victorian population. The gender ratio was slightly biased towards females, with 91 males to 100 females, due to a number of arrivals under the Women at Risk humanitarian program. Over half (51.6%) spoke Arabic at home and 28.5% spoke Tigrinya. A significant percentage (19.4%) assessed themselves as speaking English not well or not at all. Two-thirds (67.6%) of the Eritrea-born were Muslim; and 20.5% followed a variety of Orthodox Christian religions. Most (81.7%) held Australian Citizenship, compared to 67.5% for the total overseas-born population in Victoria.

Demographic Background: 2006 Census

1 Persons born in Eritrea 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	1,208	59.9	978	61.2	730	62.8	23.5	34.0
Rest of Victoria ¹	7	0.3	18	1.1	15	1.3	-61.1	20.0
Total Victoria	1,215	60.3	996	62.3	745	64.1	22.0	33.7
Total Australia	2,016	100.0	1,599	100.0	1,163	100.0	26.1	37.5

¹ Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria"

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

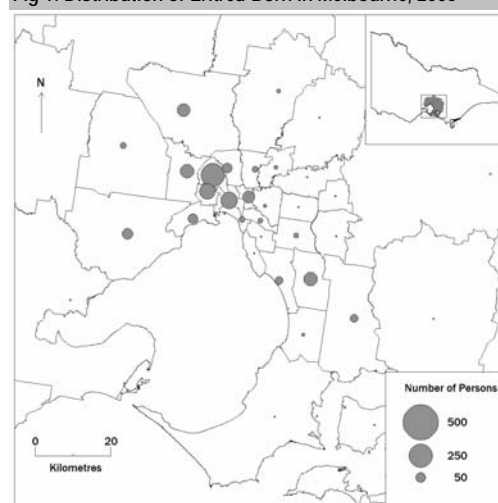
Local Government Area	2006 Census		2001 Census		Rank in 2001
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Moonee Valley (C)	252	20.7	276	27.0	1
Melbourne (C)	131	10.7	180	17.6	2
Maribyrnong (C)	115	9.4	87	8.5	3
Brimbank (C)	93	7.6	29	2.8	9
Greater Dandenong (C)	91	7.5	86	8.4	4
Rest of LGAs in Metro Melb	522	42.8	349	34.1	
Rest of LGAs in Reg. Vic	15	1.2	16	1.6	
Total Victoria	1,219	100.0	1,023	100.0	

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

Eritrean ancestry	2006 Census	2001 Census	2001-2006 % change
Total First & Second Responses ¹	1,599	1,286	24.3
Total Eritrea-born, persons	1,215	996	22.0

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

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



4 Age and Gender Distribution of Eritrea-born: 2006, 2001					
Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	3	0.2	9	0.9	-66.7
5-11	33	2.7	18	1.8	83.3
12-18	71	5.9	72	7.1	-1.4
19-25	103	8.5	140	13.9	-26.4
26-44	682	56.2	547	54.3	24.7
45-64	276	22.8	183	18.2	50.8
65-74	39	3.2	30	3.0	30.0
75+	6	0.5	9	0.9	-33.3
Total	1,213	100.0	1,008	100.0	20.3
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>91</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>		

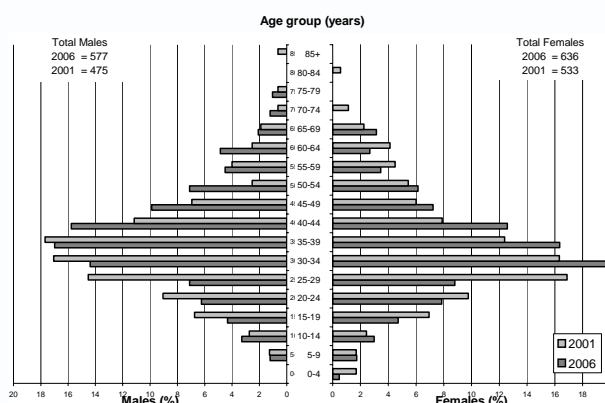
5 Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home by Eritrea-born: 2006, 2001					
Language	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Arabic	631	51.6	627	63.1	0.6
Tigrinya	349	28.5	255	25.7	36.9
African Langs, nfd	28	2.3	-	-	N/A
Italian	27	2.2	21	2.1	28.6
Amharic	15	1.2	15	1.5	0.0
English only	48	3.9	20	2.0	140.0
Other languages ¹	100	8.2	41	4.1	143.9
Not stated	25	2.0	15	1.5	66.7
Total	1,223	100.0	994	100.0	23.0

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

7 Top 5 Religions of Eritrea-born: 2006, 2001					
Religion	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Islam	825	67.6	755	75.7	9.3
Greek Orthodox	118	9.7	64	6.4	84.4
Western Catholic	70	5.7	53	5.3	32.1
Eastern O'dox nfd	44	3.6	46	4.6	-4.3
Coptic Orthodox	18	1.5	9	0.9	100.0
Other religions	73	6.0	33	3.3	121.2
No religion	18	1.5	5	0.5	260.0
Not stated ¹	54	4.4	33	3.3	63.6
Total	1,220	100.0	998	100.0	22.2

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

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



6 Proficiency in English of Eritrea-born: 2006, 2001					
Proficiency in English	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	51	4.2	21	2.3	142.9
<i>Speaks other language and speaks English</i>					
Very well	482	39.4	344	37.3	40.1
Well	426	34.8	363	39.4	17.4
Not well	189	15.5	144	15.6	31.3
Not at all	48	3.9	38	4.1	26.3
Not stated ¹	27	2.2	12	1.3	125.0
Total	1,223	100.0	922	100.0	32.6

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

8 Eritrea-born with Australian Citizenship by Age, 2006, 2001					
Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	-	-	-	-	N/A
5-11	18	1.8	12	1.5	50.0
12-18	49	4.9	47	6.0	4.3
19-25	98	9.9	107	13.7	-8.4
26-44	551	55.5	435	55.8	26.7
45-64	245	24.7	152	19.5	61.2
65-74	26	2.6	23	3.0	13.0
75+	6	0.6	3	0.4	100.0
Total	993	100.0	779	100.0	27.5

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