

Fact Sheet No. A-31 The Iraq-Born Community in Victoria

The Iraq-born were first counted as a separate birthplace group at the 1976 Australian Census. Large numbers arrived in Australia as refugees after the Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988. Numbers continued to increase after the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991, often via refugee camps in neighbouring countries. More recent arrivals have also been accepted as skilled migrants and through family reunion. The Iraq-born community in Australia is culturally diverse, with settlers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Arabs, Kurds, Tourkomans, Chaldeans and Assyrians.

At the 2006 Census, there were 8,615 Iraq-born persons in Victoria (26.5% of Australia's total), increasing by 41.4% from 6,093 persons in 2001. Only 5.6% of the Iraq-born in Victoria had arrived in Australia prior to 1986; most (89.5%) had arrived between 1991 and 2006. The Iraq-born community were mainly concentrated in the northern suburbs in Hume (52.0%); Whittlesea (10.8%); and Moreland (8.7%). There was a small but significant Iraqi-born community in the rural centre of Shepparton. There were only 4,806 persons who identified with Iraqi ancestry, due to there only being a relatively small number of second generation and also because many Iraq-born had identified with other ethnic origins such as Assyrian, Kurdish, Armenian and Arabic ancestries.

The Iraq-born showed a younger age profile: 13.3% were aged 19-25 years; 44.8% were aged 26-44 years; and 18.2% were aged 45-64 years. The median age was 34 years, compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population. The sex ratio was 110 males to 100 females. The main languages spoken at home were Assyrian (45.7%) and Arabic (44.8%). A significant proportion (28.1%) assessed themselves as speaking English not well or not at all. The main religion was Western Catholicism (40.1%); 27.2% were Muslim; and 15.4% were Chaldean Catholic. Almost three-quarters (73.4%) held Australian Citizenship, compared to 67.5% for the total overseas-born population in Victoria.

Demographic Background: 2006 Census

	2006 Census		2001 Census		1996 Census		2001-2006 % change	1996-2001 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%		
Melbourne	7,966	24.5	5,598	22.5	3,456	24.7	42.3	62.0
Rest of Victoria ¹	649	2.0	495	2.0	44	0.3	31.1	1025.0
Total Victoria	8,615	26.5	6,093	24.5	3,500	25.0	41.4	74.1
Total Australia	32,520	100.0	24,832	100.0	14,004	100.0	31.0	77.3

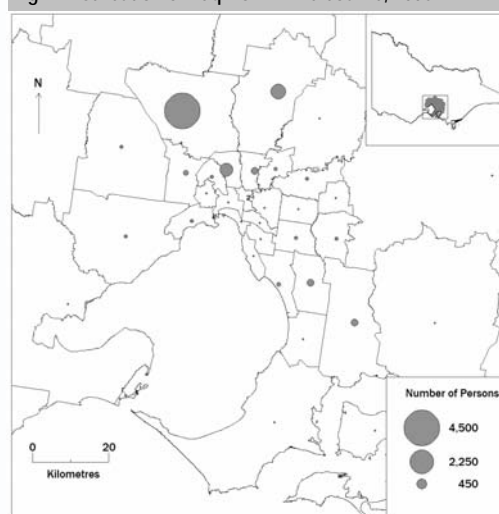
¹ Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria"

Local Government Area	2006 Census		2001 Census		Rank in 2001
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Hume (C)	4,480	52.0	2,179	35.7	1
Whittlesea (C)	931	10.8	502	8.2	4
Moreland (C)	748	8.7	1,061	17.4	2
Greater Shepparton (C)	340	3.9	268	4.4	6
Darebin (C)	285	3.3	519	8.5	3
Rest of LGAs in Metro Melb	1,512	17.6	1,332	21.8	
Rest of LGAs in Reg. Vic	317	3.7	244	4.0	
Total Victoria	8,613	100.0	6,105	100.0	

	2006 Census	2001 Census	2001-2006 % change
Iraqi ancestry			
Total First & Second Responses ¹	4,806	3,533	36.0
Total Iraq-born, persons	8,615	6,093	41.4

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

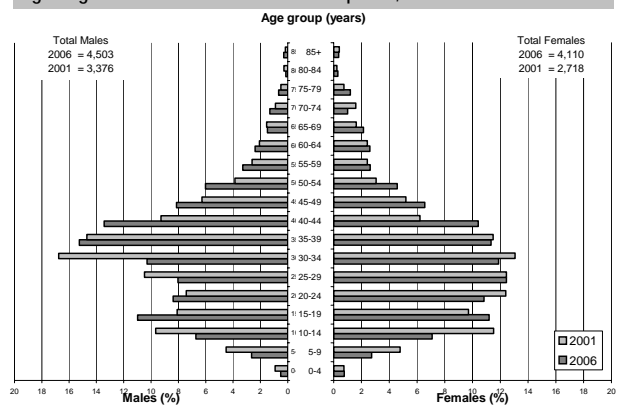
Fig 1: Distribution of Iraq-Born in Melbourne, 2006



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

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	54	0.6	51	0.8	5.9
5-11	429	5.0	549	9.0	-21.9
12-18	1,186	13.8	797	13.1	48.8
19-25	1,144	13.3	813	13.3	40.7
26-44	3,855	44.8	2,790	45.8	38.2
45-64	1,565	18.2	856	14.0	82.8
65-74	255	3.0	169	2.8	50.9
75+	125	1.5	69	1.1	81.2
Total	8,613	100.0	6,094	100.0	41.3
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>110</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>		

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



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

Language	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Assyrian	3,941	45.7	2,663	43.7	48.0
Arabic	3,860	44.8	2,795	45.9	38.1
Kurdish	190	2.2	126	2.1	50.8
Armenian	61	0.7	56	0.9	8.9
Turkish	40	0.5	23	0.4	73.9
English only	288	3.3	187	3.1	54.0
Other languages ¹	163	1.9	194	3.2	-16.0
Not stated	73	0.8	51	0.8	43.1
Total	8,616	100.0	6,095	100.0	41.4

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

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

Proficiency in English	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	285	3.3	170	2.8	67.6
<i>Speaks other language and speaks English</i>					
Very well	2,696	31.3	1,903	31.4	41.7
Well	3,080	35.7	2,246	37.1	37.1
Not well	1,811	21.0	1,285	21.2	40.9
Not at all	614	7.1	350	5.8	75.4
Not stated ¹	132	1.5	99	1.6	33.3
Total	8,618	100.0	6,053	100.0	42.4

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

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

Religion	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Western Catholic	3,454	40.1	3,116	51.2	10.8
Islam	2,345	27.2	1,737	28.5	35.0
Chaldean Cath.	1,327	15.4	158	2.6	739.9
Assyrian Church	403	4.7	262	4.3	53.8
Eastern O'dox nfd	205	2.4	103	1.7	99.0
Other religions	597	6.9	523	8.6	14.1
No religion	66	0.8	37	0.6	78.4
Not stated ¹	211	2.5	154	2.5	37.0
Total	8,608	100.0	6,090	100.0	41.3

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

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

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	18	0.3	18	0.4	0.0
5-11	247	3.9	357	8.2	-30.8
12-18	885	14.0	570	13.2	55.3
19-25	751	11.9	490	11.3	53.3
26-44	2,877	45.5	2,029	46.8	41.8
45-64	1,248	19.7	684	15.8	82.5
65-74	190	3.0	138	3.2	37.7
75+	109	1.7	45	1.0	142.2
Total	6,325	100.0	4,331	100.0	46.0

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

