

Italian migration dates back to the 19th Century when many arrived during the 1850s gold rushes. Others with specialist building skills were employed in the construction of 'Marvellous Melbourne'. Only a relatively small number of the massive emigration from Italy during the inter-war years came to Australia, but by 1939 the Italy-born community numbered 30,000 persons. The most significant intakes of migrants from Italy occurred in the post-war years of rapid development in Australia. The Italy-born are one of the most well established ethnic communities and the largest non-English speaking birthplace group in Australia, particularly in Victoria, where 41.6% of the national total resides.

At the 2006 Census, there were 82,849 Italy-born persons in Victoria, a decrease of 8.7% from 90,788 persons in 2001. The Italy-born community was well distributed throughout metropolitan Melbourne, with concentrations in Moreland (12.1%) and Darebin (9.7%). There was a relatively large percentage (10.9%) of the Italy-born community located in regional Victoria. There were 308,604 persons who identified with Italian ancestry, including second and later generations.

Like other Southern European migrant communities, the Italy-born population showed an older age profile: 40.5% were aged between 45 and 64 years, and over half (51.5%) were aged 65 years or over. The median age was 65 years, compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population. The sex ratio was 102 males per 100 females. There was strong language retention, with 83.6% speaking Italian at home. Almost one quarter (24.0%) assessed themselves as speaking English not well or not at all. Most of the Italy-born persons were Western Catholics (93.3%). Three quarters of the Italy-born community held Australian Citizenship, compared to 67.5% for the total overseas-born population in Victoria.

Demographic Background: 2006 Census

1 Persons born in Italy 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	73,799	37.1	80,740	36.9	88,131	37.0	-8.6	-8.4
Rest of Victoria ¹	9,050	4.5	10,048	4.6	10,992	4.6	-9.9	-8.6
Total Victoria	82,849	41.6	90,788	41.5	99,123	41.6	-8.7	-8.4
Total Australia	199,123	100.0	218,718	100.0	238,246	100.0	-9.0	-8.2

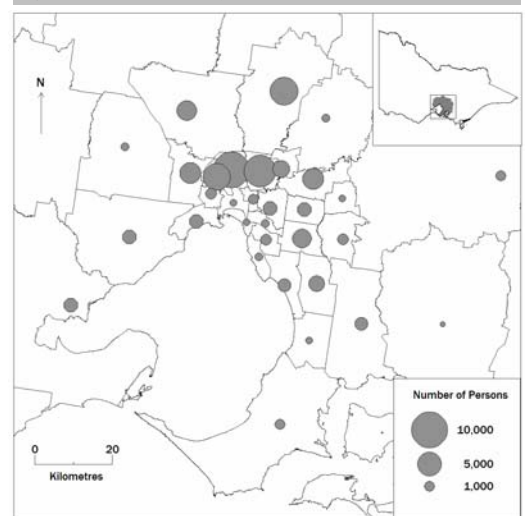
¹ Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria"

2 Distribution of Italy-born, Top 5 Local Govt Areas: 2006, 2001 Census					
Local Government Area	2006 Census		2001 Census		Rank in 2001
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Moreland (C)	9,992	12.1	11,462	12.6	1
Darebin (C)	8,053	9.7	9,171	10.1	2
Whittlesea (C)	6,446	7.8	6,837	7.5	3
Moonee Valley (C)	5,984	7.2	6,628	7.3	4
Brimbank (C)	3,988	4.8	4,450	4.9	5
Rest of LGAs in Metro Melb	39,342	47.5	42,182	46.5	
Rest of LGAs in Reg. Vic	9,040	10.9	10,055	11.1	
Total Victoria	82,845	100.0	90,785	100.0	

3 Persons Identifying with Italian Ancestry, Total Responses, 2006, 2001			
Italian ancestry	2006 Census	2001 Census	2001-2006 % change
Total First & Second Responses ¹	308,604	291,928	5.7
Total Italy-born, persons	82,849	90,788	-8.7

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

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



4 Age and Gender Distribution of Italy-born: 2006, 2001					
Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	62	0.1	51	0.1	21.6
5-11	154	0.2	177	0.2	-13.0
12-18	243	0.3	233	0.3	4.3
19-25	319	0.4	436	0.5	-26.8
26-44	5,862	7.1	10,696	11.8	-45.2
45-64	33,539	40.5	41,828	46.1	-19.8
65-74	23,749	28.7	24,154	26.6	-1.7
75+	18,924	22.8	13,214	14.6	43.2
Total	82,852	100.0	90,789	100.0	-8.7
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>102</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>		

5 Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home by Italy-born: 2006, 2001					
Language	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Italian	69,236	83.6	77,209	85.0	-10.3
Spanish	125	0.2	137	0.2	-8.8
Greek	51	0.1	43	0.0	18.6
Slovene	43	0.1	35	0.0	22.9
Croatian	36	0.0	47	0.1	-23.4
English only	12,638	15.3	12,513	13.8	1.0
Other languages ¹	255	0.3	301	0.3	-15.3
Not stated	458	0.6	507	0.6	-9.7
Total	82,842	100.0	90,792	100.0	-8.8

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

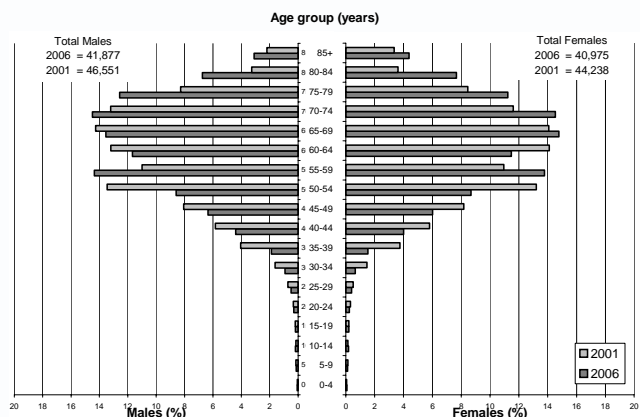
7 Top 5 Religions of Italy-born: 2006, 2001					
Religion	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Western Catholic	77,290	93.3	85,041	93.7	-9.1
Jeh. Witness	633	0.8	688	0.8	-8.0
Christian, nfd	323	0.4	287	0.3	12.5
Pentecostal, nfd	152	0.2	299	0.3	-49.2
Assemb. God	138	0.2	31	0.0	345.2
Other religions	853	1.0	801	0.9	6.5
No religion	1,572	1.9	1,471	1.6	6.9
Not stated ¹	1,890	2.3	2,161	2.4	-12.5
Total	82,851	100.0	90,779	100.0	-8.7

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

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.

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



6 Proficiency in English of Italy-born: 2006, 2001					
Proficiency in English	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	12,638	15.3	12,489	13.8	1.2
<i>Speaks other language and speaks English</i>					
Very well	23,145	27.9	25,003	27.5	-7.4
Well	26,225	31.7	29,460	32.4	-11.0
Not well	17,989	21.7	19,678	21.7	-8.6
Not at all	1,879	2.3	2,507	2.8	-25.0
Not stated ¹	974	1.2	1,651	1.8	-41.0
Total	82,850	100.0	90,788	100.0	-8.7

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

8 Italy-born with Australian Citizenship by Age, 2006, 2001					
Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	50	0.1	32	0.0	56.3
5-11	82	0.1	130	0.2	-36.9
12-18	191	0.3	156	0.2	22.4
19-25	202	0.3	271	0.4	-25.5
26-44	3,870	6.2	7,356	10.8	-47.4
45-64	25,923	41.2	31,243	46.1	-17.0
65-74	17,966	28.6	18,412	27.1	-2.4
75+	14,597	23.2	10,223	15.1	42.8
Total	62,881	100.0	67,823	100.0	-7.3

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