

Polish migration to Australia has had a long history, beginning with the gold rush of the 1850s, and including political refugees following the unsuccessful revolt against Austria in 1848. Migration peaked in the post-war years (1948-1953) with many arriving as displaced persons and ex-soldiers, some of whom were born outside Poland. Another wave of migration occurred in the mid-1970s, including family reunion, following political and economic unrest in Poland.

At the 2006 Census, there were 18,070 Poland-born persons in Victoria (34.6% of Australia's total), decreasing by 11.5% from 20,414 persons in 2001 due to the ageing of the population and lack of new arrivals. Over two-thirds (69.6%) of Victoria's Poland-born community had arrived in Australia prior to 1986; and 12.6% had arrived between 1986 and 1990. They were well distributed throughout metropolitan Melbourne, with distinct concentrations in Glen Eira (12.0%); Brimbank (8.7%); and Casey (7.2%). There were 52,109 persons who identified with Polish ancestry, including second and later generations.

The Poland-born community are well established and showed an older age profile: 37.0% were aged 45-64 years; and 39.2% were aged 65 years and over. The median age was 57 years, compared to 37 years for the total Victorian population. The sex ratio was unbalanced, with 81 males to 100 females. More than two-thirds (68.3%) spoke Polish at home; 2.5% spoke Yiddish; 1.2% spoke German; and 23.8% spoke English only. A significant percentage (11.9%) assessed themselves as speaking English not well or not at all. Most of the Poland-born were Western Catholic (69.0%); and 11.6% were Jewish. Most (91.1%) held Australian Citizenship, compared to 67.5% for the total overseas-born population in Victoria.

Demographic Background: 2006 Census

1 Persons born in Poland 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	16,439	31.5	18,531	31.9	20,820	32.0	-11.3	-11.0
Rest of Victoria ¹	1,631	3.1	1,883	3.2	2,241	3.4	-13.4	-16.0
Total Victoria	18,070	34.6	20,414	35.1	23,061	35.4	-11.5	-11.5
Total Australia	52,255	100.0	58,108	100.0	65,113	100.0	-10.1	-10.8

¹ Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria"

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

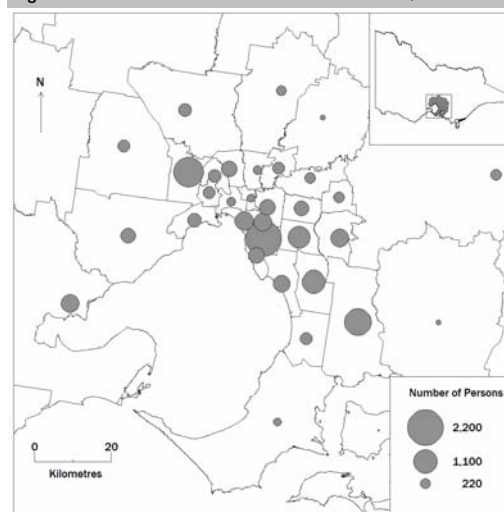
Local Government Area	2006 Census		2001 Census		Rank in 2001
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Glen Eira (C)	2,174	12.0	2,714	13.3	1
Brimbank (C)	1,577	8.7	1,986	9.7	2
Casey (C)	1,310	7.2	1,248	6.1	4
Greater Dandenong (C)	1,038	5.7	1,281	6.3	3
Monash (C)	906	5.0	1,031	5.0	5
Rest of LGAs in Metro Melb	9,440	52.2	10,278	50.3	
Rest of LGAs in Reg. Vic	1,625	9.0	1,891	9.3	
Total Victoria	18,070	100.0	20,429	100.0	

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

Polish ancestry	2006 Census	2001 Census	2001-2006 % change
Total First & Second Responses ¹	52,109	48,934	6.5
Total Poland-born, persons	18,070	20,414	-11.5

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

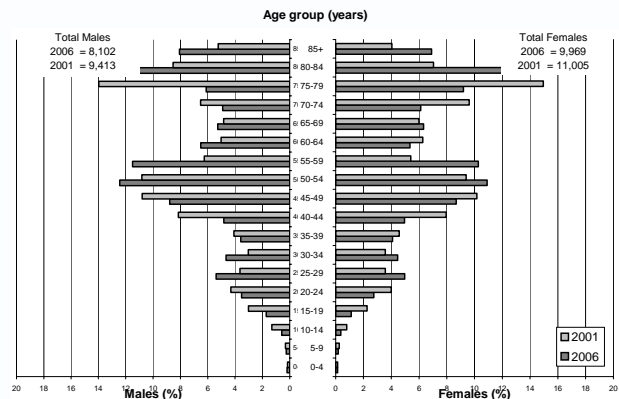
Fig 1: Distribution of Poland-Born in Melbourne, 2006



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

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	28	0.2	29	0.1	-3.4
5-11	63	0.3	118	0.6	-46.6
12-18	241	1.3	569	2.8	-57.6
19-25	778	4.3	1,136	5.6	-31.5
26-44	3,185	17.6	3,766	18.4	-15.4
45-64	6,687	37.0	6,533	32.0	2.4
65-74	2,065	11.4	2,787	13.6	-25.9
75+	5,024	27.8	5,480	26.8	-8.3
Total	18,071	100.0	20,418	100.0	-11.5
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>81</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>		

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



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

Language	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Polish	12,340	68.3	13,923	68.2	-11.4
Yiddish	459	2.5	817	4.0	-43.8
German	209	1.2	245	1.2	-14.7
Hebrew	107	0.6	129	0.6	-17.1
Ukrainian	93	0.5	129	0.6	-27.9
English only	4,301	23.8	4,466	21.9	-3.7
Other languages ¹	377	2.1	444	2.2	-15.1
Not stated	188	1.0	261	1.3	-28.0
Total	18,074	100.0	20,414	100.0	-11.5

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

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

Proficiency in English	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	4,300	23.8	4,447	21.8	-3.3
<i>Speaks other language and speaks English</i>					
Very well	5,956	33.0	6,438	31.6	-7.5
Well	5,382	29.8	6,666	32.7	-19.3
Not well	1,922	10.6	2,340	11.5	-17.9
Not at all	230	1.3	239	1.2	-3.8
Not stated ¹	273	1.5	273	1.3	0.0
Total	18,063	100.0	20,403	100.0	-11.5

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

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

Religion	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Western Catholic	12,463	69.0	13,734	67.3	-9.3
Judaism	2,099	11.6	2,831	13.9	-25.9
7th-day Advent.	358	2.0	363	1.8	-1.4
Lutheran	153	0.8	167	0.8	-8.4
Christian, nfd	149	0.8	119	0.6	25.2
Other religions	703	3.9	784	3.8	-10.3
No religion	1,237	6.8	1,159	5.7	6.7
Not stated ¹	909	5.0	1,256	6.2	-27.6
Total	18,071	100.0	20,413	100.0	-11.5

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

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

Age group (years)	2006 Census		2001 Census		2001-2006 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	10	0.1	17	0.1	-41.2
5-11	24	0.1	93	0.5	-74.2
12-18	191	1.2	481	2.5	-60.3
19-25	612	3.7	1,013	5.4	-39.6
26-44	2,659	16.2	3,369	17.8	-21.1
45-64	6,353	38.6	6,169	32.7	3.0
65-74	1,949	11.8	2,633	13.9	-26.0
75+	4,657	28.3	5,116	27.1	-9.0
Total	16,455	100.0	18,891	100.0	-12.9

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