Community Information Summary

Fiji-born

Historical Background

Fiji-born have been in Australia since the late 1800s. By the early 1900s, there were 585 Fiji-born people in Australia, the majority of whom were of European ancestry. By the mid-1950s there were over 2000 Fiji-born persons in Australia, mostly offspring of missionary families originally from Australia or Europe.

Migration from Fiji to Australia became significant in the late 1960s but began to increase even more after Fiji gained independence from Great Britain in 1970. Attracted by Australia’s employment and economic opportunities and the higher wages and improved welfare services the Fiji-born population in Australia increased to 14 749.

In 1987, military coups designed to secure indigenous Fijian control over the government caused concern amongst the Fijian Indians. In 1990, a new constitution which guaranteed indigenous Fijian control led to considerable emigration by Fijian Indians seeking asylum. In 1987-88 the number of settler arrivals reached a peak of 2980 and by 2001 the Fiji-born population in Australia had increased to 44 040.

The Fiji-born population in Australia comprise people of indigenous Fijian, Chinese, Indian, European, Rotuman and other ancestries.

Today

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 56 979 Fiji-born people in Australia, an increase of 18.4 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 32 304 followed by Queensland (11 401), Victoria (9714) and South Australia (1157).

Refer to Figure 1.
Age and Sex

The median age of the Fiji-born in 2011 was 41 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 4.3 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 8.7 per cent were 15-24 years, 43.6 per cent were 25-44 years, 34.5 per cent were 45-64 years and 8.9 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Fiji-born in Australia, there were 26 377 males (46.3 per cent) and 30 603 females (53.7 per cent). The sex ratio was 86.2 males per 100 females.

Ancestry

In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Fiji-born people reported were Indian (24 469), Fijian (12 485) and Fijian Indian (10 942).

In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses*, 23 770 responses were towards Fijian ancestry and 16 211 towards Fijian Indian ancestry.

*At the 2011 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count.

Language

The main languages spoken at home by Fiji-born people in Australia were Hindi (32 448), English (13 210) and Fijian (5501).

Of the 43 771 Fiji-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 94.9 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 3.5 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
Religion

At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Fiji-born were Hinduism (26,470), Islam (7,191) and Catholic (5,163).

Of the Fiji-born, 5 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (22.3 per cent), and 2.7 per cent did not state a religion.

Arrival

Compared to 62 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 66.3 per cent of the Fiji-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001.

Among the total Fiji-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 16.6 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 13.4 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.

Median Income

At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Fiji-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $699, compared with $538 for all overseas-born and $597 for all Australia-born. The total Australian population had a median individual weekly income of $577.
**Qualifications**

At the 2011 Census, 60.8 per cent of the Fiji-born aged 15 years and over had some form of higher non-school qualifications compared to 55.9 per cent of the Australian population.

Of the Fiji-born aged 15 years and over, 5.7 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

**Employment**

Among Fiji-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 72.9 per cent and the unemployment rate was 6.8 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Of the 36 395 Fiji-born who were employed, 46.7 per cent were employed in either a skilled managerial, professional or trade occupation. The corresponding rate in the total Australian population was 48.4 per cent.