



# Community Information Summary

## Indonesia-born

### Historical Background

Links between Indonesia and Australia existed before European settlement. From the 1700s, and possibly earlier, to around 1900, expeditions of seamen from Macassar in south-west Sulawesi regularly spent four months each year along Australia's northern coast, trading trepang (edible sea-slugs) with local Indigenous people, for the Chinese market.

Between the 1870s and 1940s Indonesian divers, mainly from Kupang (Timor) were recruited into the pearling industry in Western Australia. From 1885 to 1905 Javanese were recruited as cane cutters in the north Queensland sugar cane fields. 90 per cent of the estimated 1000 Indonesians who lived in Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century were found in Western Australia and Queensland.

Immigration restrictions in 1901 resulted in the majority of Javanese working in the Queensland cane fields returning home. However, the pearlery in Western Australia remained. The Indonesian community in Australia is made up of several diverse groups. Some are of European (mainly Dutch) origin, born to parents posted to the Dutch East Indies during colonial times. The more recent arrivals are of mixed ancestries, reflecting the myriad of groups that make up the modern Indonesian nation.

During World War II, the Dutch East Indies Government-in-exile settled in Australia. It brought with it around 4500 Indonesian refugees, most of whom were repatriated after the Japanese surrender. From the early 1950s Australia also accepted Indonesian students under the Colombo Plan.

From the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, over 100 Indonesians arrived each year. Many were children of Dutch residents posted to the Dutch East Indies in colonial times. As restrictions on the entry of non-Europeans eased in the late 1960s, more Indonesians settled in Australia.

### Today

#### **Geographic Distribution**

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 63 160 Indonesia-born people in Australia, an increase of 23.9 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 26 834 followed by Victoria (15 405), Western Australia (10 140) and Queensland (6560).

Refer to Figure 1.

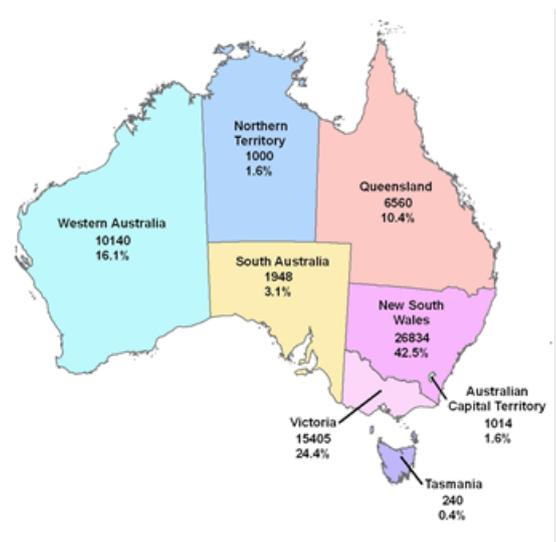


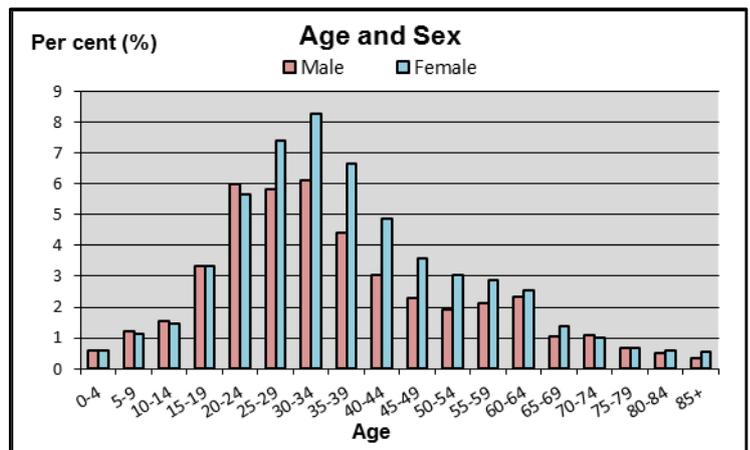
Figure 1

### Age and Sex

The median age of the Indonesia-born in 2011 was 34 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 6.6 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 18.3 per cent were 15-24 years, 46.5 per cent were 25-44 years, 20.7 per cent were 45-64 years and 7.9 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Indonesia-born in Australia, there were 28 039 males (44.4 per cent) and 35 122 females (55.6 per cent). The sex ratio was 79.8 males per 100 females.

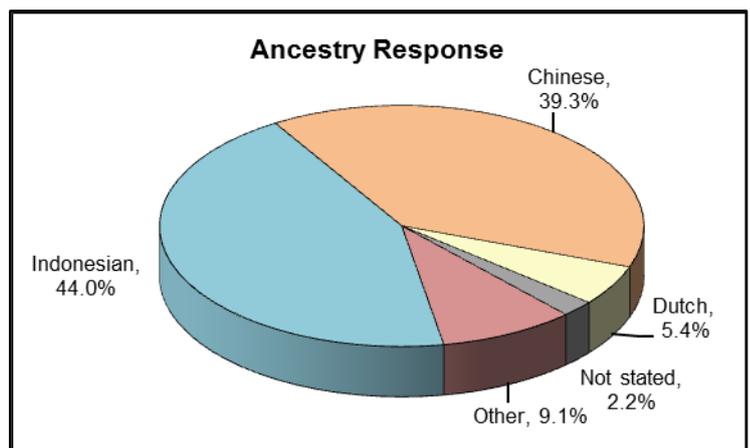


### Ancestry

In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses\* that Indonesia-born people reported were Indonesian (31 619), Chinese (28 222) and Dutch (3891).

In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses\*, 48 836 responses were towards Indonesian ancestry.

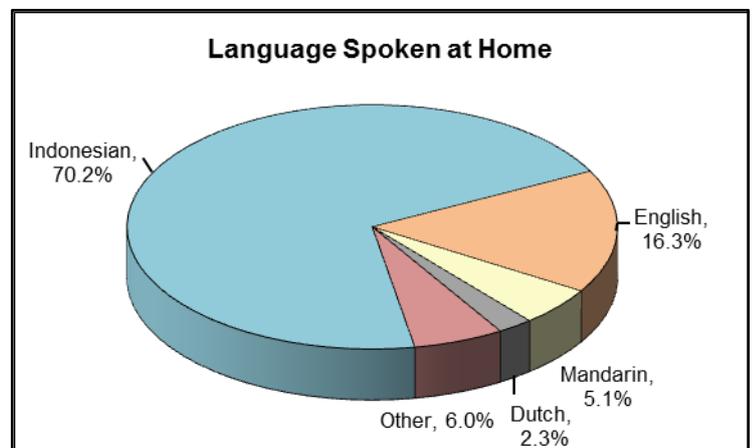
\*At the 2011 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count.



### Language

The main languages spoken at home by Indonesia-born people in Australia were Indonesian (44 358), English (10 319) and Mandarin (3250).

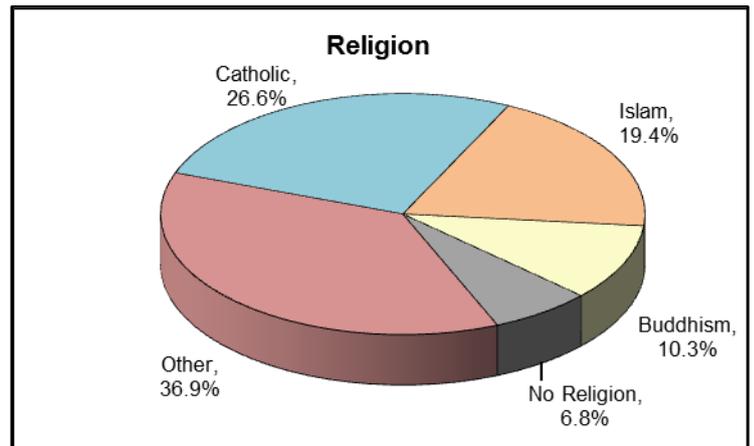
Of the 52 842 Indonesia-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 89.2 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 8.8 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



## Religion

At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Indonesia-born were Catholic (16 825), Islam (12 241) and Buddhism (6480).

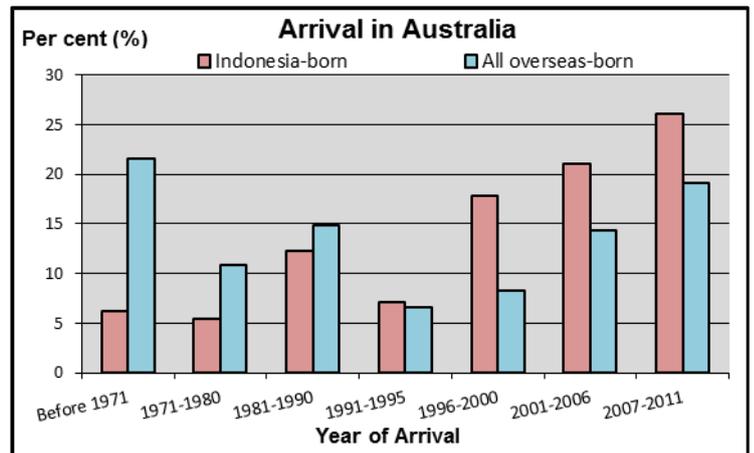
Of the Indonesia-born, 6.8 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (22.3 per cent), and 3.5 per cent did not state a religion.



## Arrival

Compared to 62 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 48.7 per cent of the Indonesia-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001.

Among the total Indonesia-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 21 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 26.1 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.



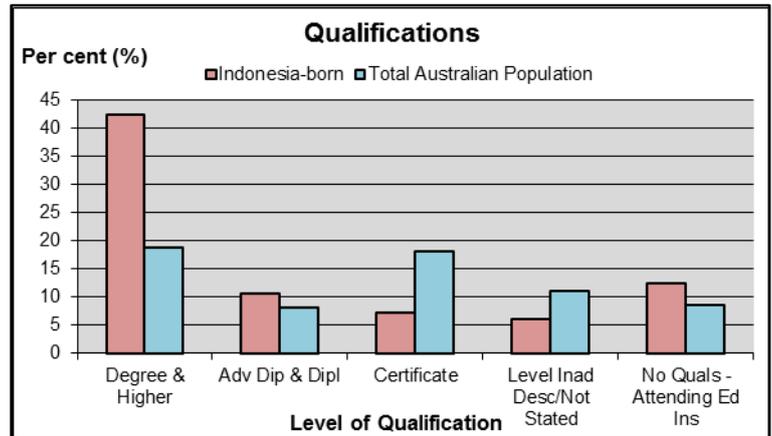
## Median Income

At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Indonesia-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$505, 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, 66.3 per cent of the Indonesia-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 Indonesia-born aged 15 years and over, 12.4 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

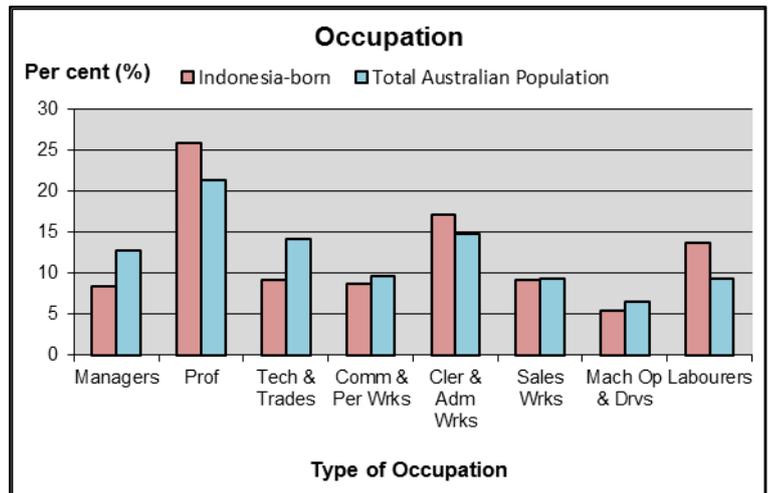


*Level Inad Desc/Not Stated* = Education level inadequately described or not stated  
*No Quals - Attending Ed Ins* = No qualifications and still attending educational institution

## Employment

Among Indonesia-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 64.9 per cent and the unemployment rate was 8.6 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Of the 34 637 Indonesia-born who were employed, 43.6 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.



*Comm & Per Wrks* = Community & Personal Service Workers

Produced by Community Relations Section of DIAC

All data used in this summary is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing. Sources for the Historical Background available at <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/source.htm>