



# Community Information Summary

## Italy-born

### Historical Background

Italians have long played an important role in Australia's history. As early as 1676, a Dominican missionary based in Manila prepared a map that featured the Australian land mass. A Venetian was aboard Captain Cook's ship, the *Endeavour*.

In the nineteenth century, Italian priests carried out missionary work in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and the Italian linguist Raffaello Carboni, played a significant role in the Eureka Stockade revolt of 1854. Hundreds of Italians were lured to Victoria and Western Australia by the 1850s gold rushes, creating Italian communities that catered to miners on the goldfields.

In 1885 a group of 300 migrants from northern Italy established a traditional Italian community called 'New Italy' in northern New South Wales, in what is now called Woodburn. Italian fishermen also established communities along the south coast of New South Wales, Port Pirie and Fremantle. During this period, Italian labourers arrived in Queensland to work in the cane fields. By the late 1930s, one-third of all Australia's Italian migrants lived in the cane-growing regions of Queensland. Italians also became involved in market gardens, comprising about 40 per cent of Queensland's market gardeners.

After World War II Italian immigration increased dramatically. In 1947 Australia's Italy-born numbered 33 632 and by 1971 this had increased to 289 476. Most Italian migrants came from Sicily, Calabria and Veneto and settled in metropolitan areas. The majority were young single men.

Italy experienced economic buoyancy after 1971, which prompted many Italians to return to Italy. This led to a decline in the size of the Italy-born population in Australia.

### Today

#### Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 185 402 Italy-born people in Australia, a fall of 6.9 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed Victoria had the largest number with 76 909 followed by New South Wales (51 626), South Australia (20 708) and Western Australia (19 477).

Refer to Figure 1.

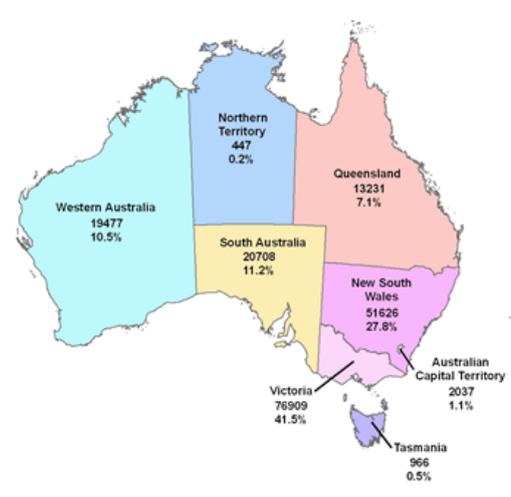


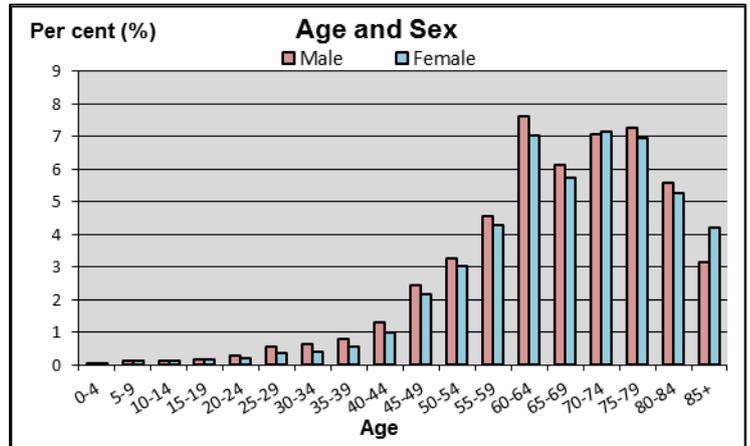
Figure 1

### Age and Sex

The median age of the Italy-born in 2011 was 68 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 0.6 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 0.8 per cent were 15-24 years, 5.6 per cent were 25-44 years, 34.4 per cent were 45-64 years and 58.6 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Italy-born in Australia, there were 94 812 males (51.1 per cent) and 90 591 females (48.9 per cent). The sex ratio was 104.7 males per 100 females.

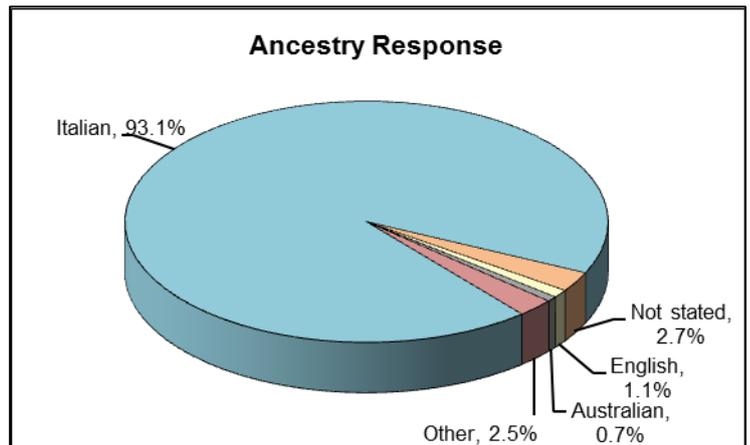


### Ancestry

In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses\* that Italy-born people reported were Italian (177 345), English (2018) and Australian (1359).

In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses\*, 916 121 responses were towards Italian ancestry.

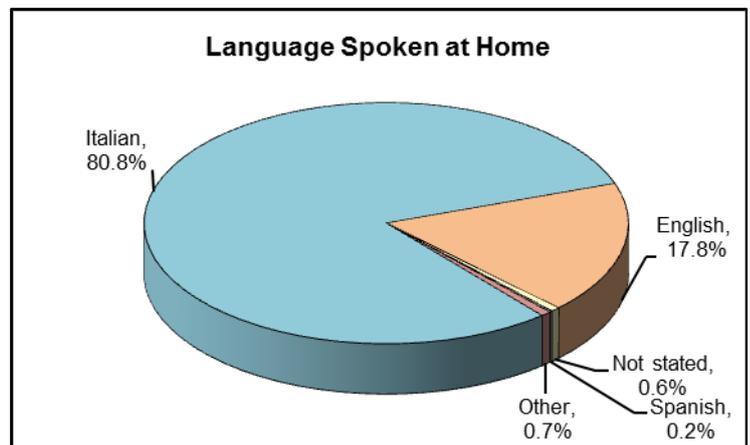
\*At the 2011 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count.



### Language

The main languages spoken at home by Italy-born people in Australia were Italian (149 728) and English (32 949).

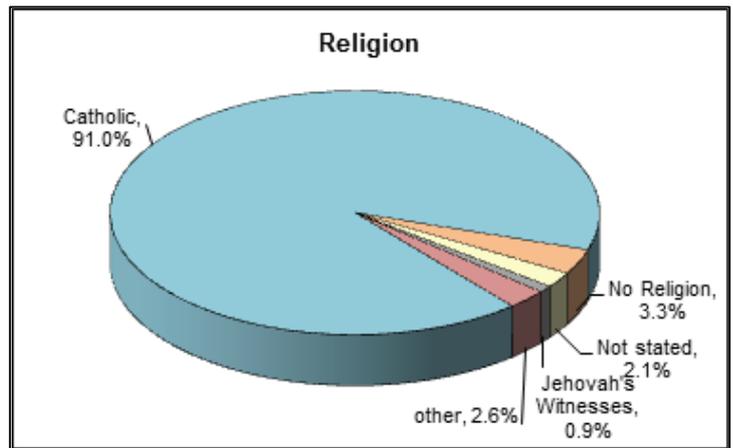
Of the 152 453 Italy-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 74.3 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 24.2 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



### Religion

At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Italy-born were Catholic (168 801) and Jehovah's Witnesses (1718).

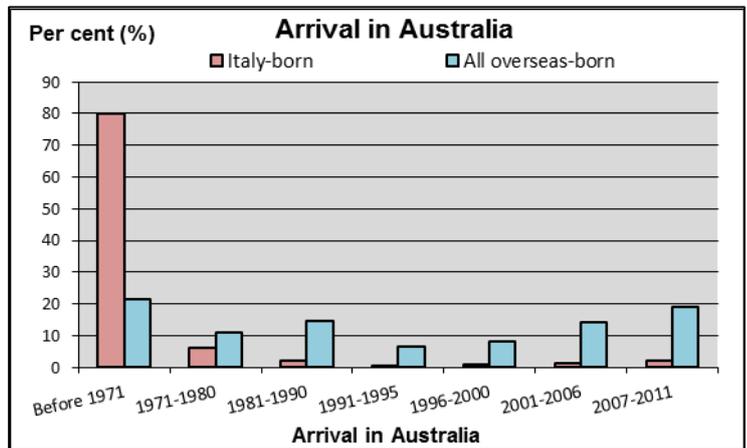
Of the Italy-born, 3.3 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower than that of the total Australian population (22.3 per cent), and 2.1 per cent did not state a religion.



### Arrival

Compared to 62 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 89.7 per cent of the Italy-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001.

Among the total Italy-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 1.4 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 2 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.



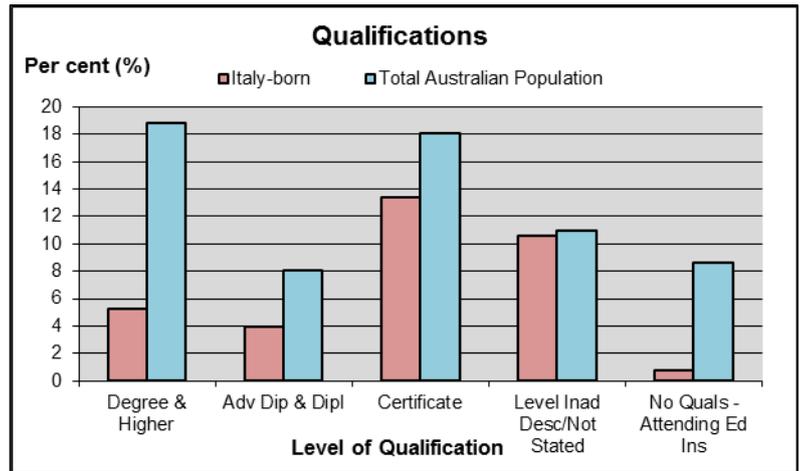
### Median Income

At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Italy-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$353, 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, 33.2 per cent of the Italy-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 Italy-born aged 15 years and over, 0.7 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

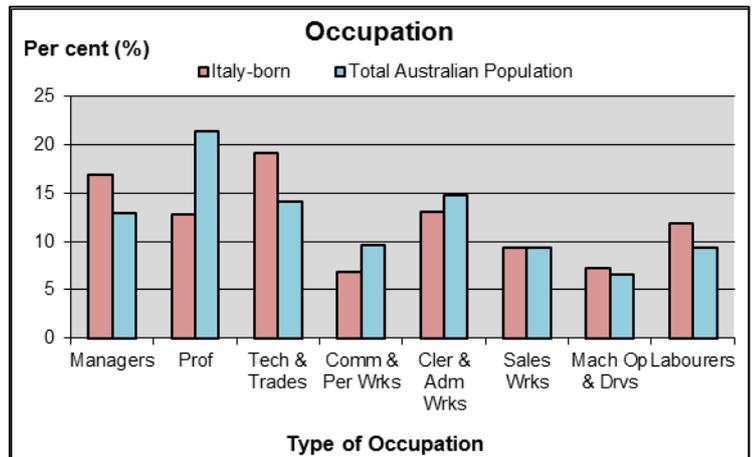


*Level Inad Desc/Not Stated* = Education level inadequately described or not stated  
*No Quals - Attending Ed Ins* = No qualifications and still attending educational institution

## Employment

Among Italy-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 32.6 per cent and the unemployment rate was 3.3 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Of the 55 841 Italy-born who were employed, 48.7 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.



*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>