



Community Information Summary

The Republic of (South) Korea-born

Historical Background

There is some evidence of the presence of a small number of Koreans in Australia as early as 1920. While it is unclear what prompted their arrival they may have been the children of Australian Protestant missionaries who began work in Korea around 1885. A few also came to Australia between 1921 and 1941 for education.

After the Korean War (1950-53), some Korean women came to Australia as war brides and children as orphans, adopted by Australian families. The relaxation of immigration restrictions in the late 1960s provided the first opportunity for larger numbers of Koreans to enter Australia. In 1969, the first Korean immigrants arrived in Sydney under the Skilled Migration Program. However, there were only 468 Korea-born recorded as living in Australia at the time of the 1971 Census.

In the early 1970s, about 1000 Koreans arrived each year for short-term stays (mostly as students) and around 100 arrived for permanent residence. Some of these new arrivals subsequently sponsored family members for migration. Between 1976 and 1985, around 500 Korea-born immigrants arrived each year resulting in the number of Korea-born living in Australia increasing more than sixfold between the 1976 Census (1460) and the 1986 Census (9290).

From 1986 to 1991, there was a further increase in settler arrivals, with an average of about 1400 each year, many coming under the Skilled and Business migration categories. More than half of the Korea-born in Australia have arrived in the last ten years, including as students.

Today

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 74 538 Republic of (South) Korea-born people in Australia, an increase of 41.3 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 41 819 followed by Queensland (12 552), Victoria (10 192) and Western Australia (4098).

Refer to Figure 1.

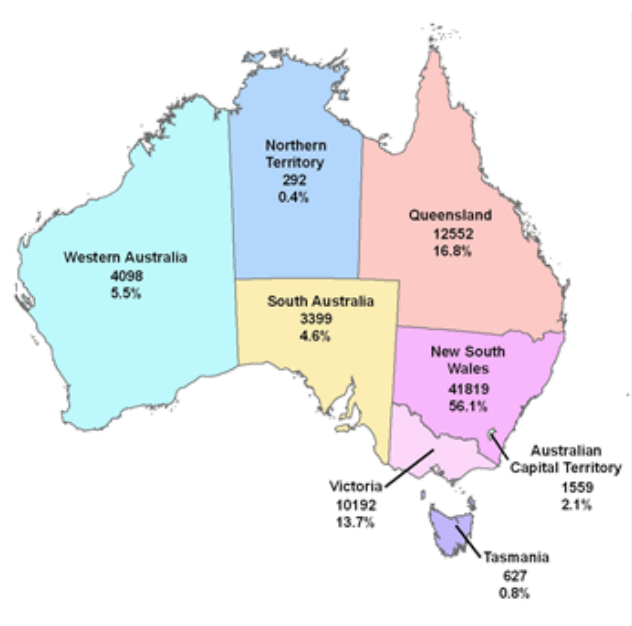


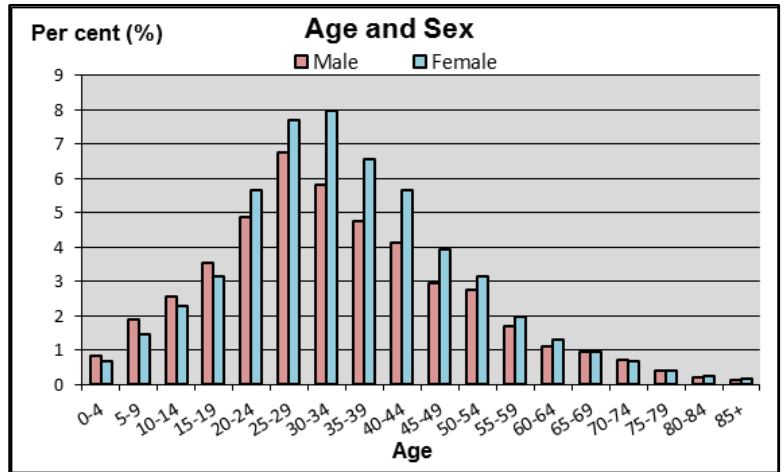
Figure 1

Age and Sex

The median age of the Republic of (South) Korea-born in 2011 was 32 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 9.7 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 17.2 per cent were 15-24 years, 49.4 per cent were 25-44 years, 18.8 per cent were 45-64 years and 4.8 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Republic of (South) Korea-born in Australia, there were 34 384 males (46.1 per cent) and 40 153 females (53.9 per cent). The sex ratio was 85.6 males per 100 females.

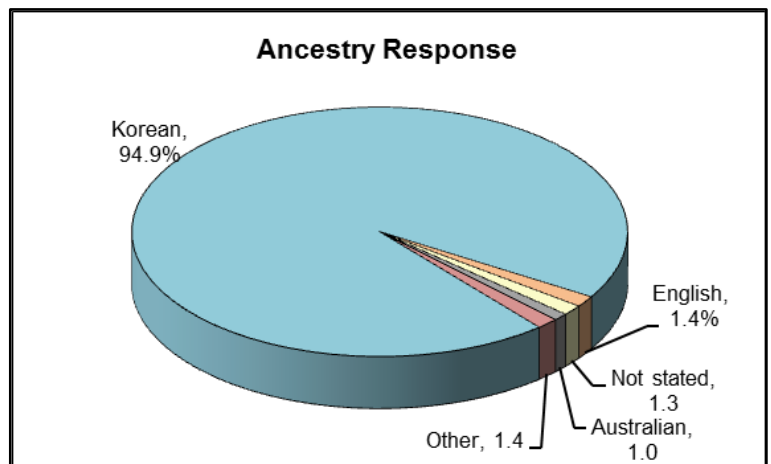


Ancestry

In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses* that the Republic of (South) Korea-born people reported were Korean (71 883), English (1088) and Australian (727).

In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses*, 88 973 responses were towards Korean ancestry.

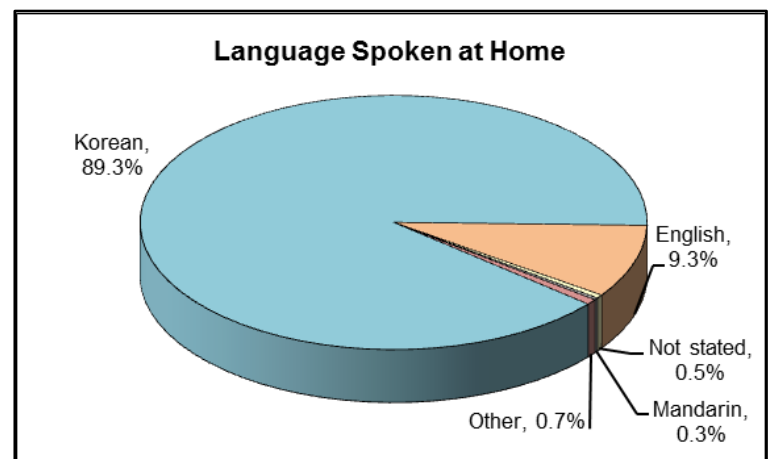
*At the 2011 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question; therefore providing the total responses and not persons count.



Language

The main languages spoken at home by the Republic of (South) Korea-born people in Australia were Korean (66 536), English (6947) and Mandarin (204).

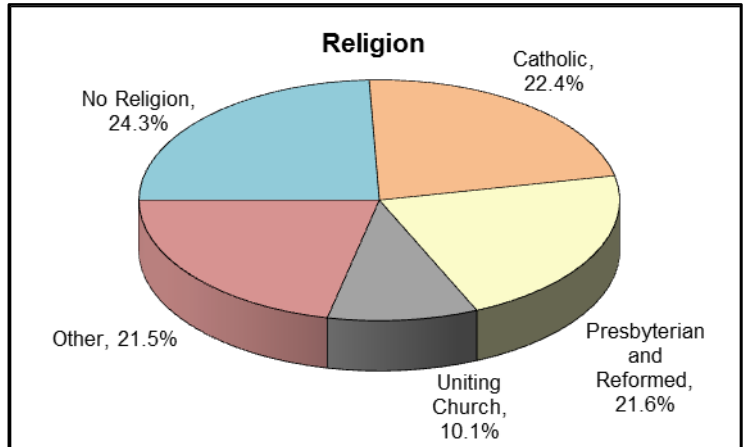
Of the 67 589 the Republic of (South) Korea-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 65.1 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 33.5 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.



Religion

At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliations amongst the Republic of (South) Korea-born were Catholic (16 712), Presbyterian and Reformed (16 113) and Uniting Church (7531).

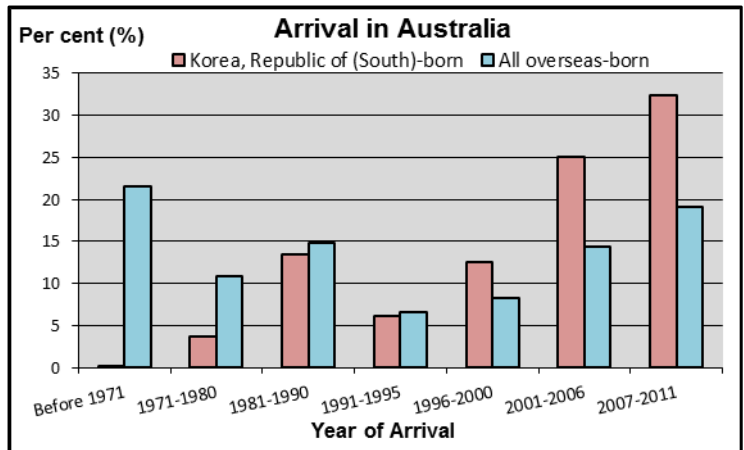
Of the Republic of (South) Korea-born, 24.3 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was higher than that of the total Australian population (22.3 per cent), and 2.5 per cent did not state a religion.



Arrival

Compared to 62 per cent of the total overseas-born population, 36.1 per cent of the Republic of (South) Korea-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001.

Among the total Republic of (South) Korea-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 25 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 32.3 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.



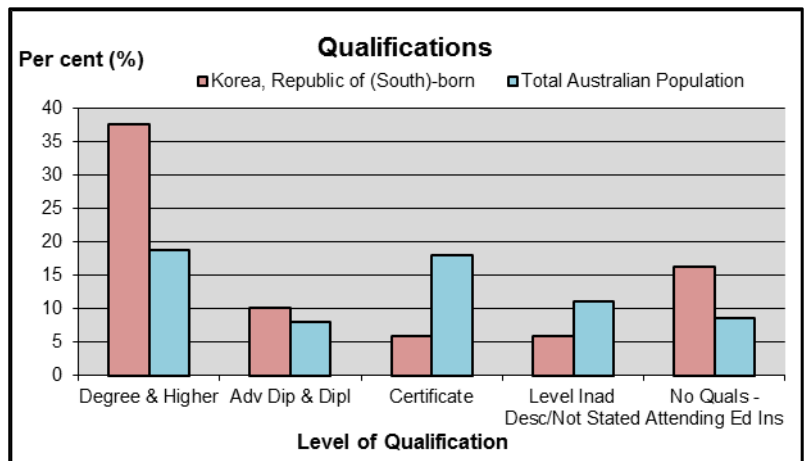
Median Income

At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Republic of (South) Korea-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was \$352, 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, 59.6 per cent of the Republic of (South) Korea-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 South Korea-born aged 15 years and over, 16.2 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

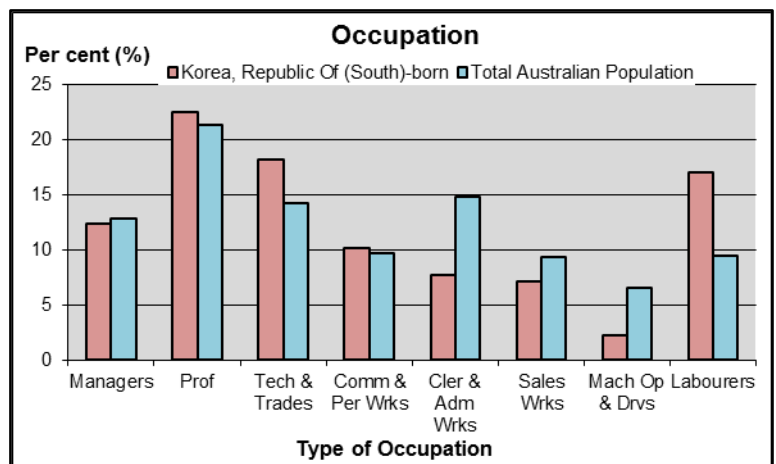


Level Inad Desc/Not Stated = Education level inadequately described or not stated
No Quals - Attending Ed Ins = No qualifications and still attending educational institution

Employment

Among Republic of (South) Korea-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 58.4 per cent and the unemployment rate was 9.3 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Of the 35 224 Republic of (South) Korea-born who were employed, 53.1 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>