Community Information Summary

Lebanon-born

Historical Background

There have been three main waves of Lebanese migration to Australia: from around 1880 to 1947; from 1947 to 1975; and after 1975.

The first Lebanese migrant landed in Australia in 1876. At that time the area now known as Lebanon was a province of the Ottoman Empire. The Australian colonial governments of the time classified them as Turks.

By 1947, the Lebanon-born and Syria-born populations in Australia numbered 1886. The great majority were Maronite, Melkite and Orthodox Christians. A small number of Druze settled in South Australia.

The years 1947-1961 accounted for a net increase in the Lebanon-born in Australia of about 400 per year, followed by about 800 per year during 1961-1966. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War and general uncertainty in the region caused the net intake to increase to 3000 per year during 1966-1971 before dropping down to 2200 per year until 1976.

As a result of the sharp rise in Lebanese migration, the Lebanon-born community in Australia increased from 10,688 persons in 1966 to 33,424 in 1976.

The outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in late 1975 resulted in the third wave of Lebanese migration to Australia, with the Australian Government easing entry restrictions to allow Lebanese already in Australia to sponsor their family members.

Today

Geographic Distribution

The latest Census in 2011 recorded 76,451 Lebanon-born people in Australia, an increase of 2.1 per cent from the 2006 Census. The 2011 distribution by state and territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 56,294 followed by Victoria (15,871), South Australia (14,571) and Queensland (12,941).

Refer to Figure 1.
**Age and Sex**

The median age of the Lebanon-born in 2011 was 48 years compared with 45 years for all overseas-born and 37 years for the total Australian population.

The age distribution showed 2.2 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 4.6 per cent were 15-24 years, 34.6 per cent were 25-44 years, 42.8 per cent were 45-64 years and 15.7 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Lebanon-born in Australia, there were 39,538 males (51.7 per cent) and 36,912 females (48.3 per cent). The sex ratio was 107.1 males per 100 females.

**Ancestry**

In the 2011 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Lebanon-born people reported were Lebanese (65,901), Arab, nfd (3022) and Australian (1913).

In the 2011 Census, Australians reported around 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses*, 203,139 responses were towards Lebanese 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 Lebanon-born people in Australia were Arabic (68,300) English (5667) and Armenian (992).

Of the 70,784 Lebanon-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 76.8 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 22 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.
Religion

At the 2011 Census the major religious affiliations amongst Lebanon-born were Islam (33 560), Catholic (28 009), and Eastern Orthodox (7164).

Of the Lebanon-born, 1.7 per cent stated 'No Religion' which was lower 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, 79.9 per cent of the Lebanon-born people in Australia arrived in Australia prior to 2001.

Among the total Lebanon-born in Australia at the 2011 Census, 8.9 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 5.7 per cent arrived between 2007 and 2011.

Median Income

At the time of the 2011 Census, the median individual weekly income for the Lebanon-born in Australia aged 15 years and over was $333, 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, 34.2 per cent of the Lebanon-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 Lebanon-born aged 15 years and over, 3.3 per cent were still attending an educational institution. The corresponding rate for the total Australian population was 8.6 per cent.

**Employment**

Among Lebanon-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 43.6 per cent and the unemployment rate was 9.1 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 65 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Of the 28,968 Lebanon-born who were employed, 49 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.

---

**Qualifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree &amp; Higher</td>
<td>Education level inadequately described or not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv Dip &amp; Dipl</td>
<td>No qualifications and still attending educational institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech &amp; Trades</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm &amp; Per Wks</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cler &amp; Adm Wks</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Wks</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mach Op &amp; Drivs</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comm & Per Wks = Community & Personal Service Workers