

AUSTRALIA



1. Country Brief with reference with its people

Aboriginal settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia about 40,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James COOK took possession in the name of Great Britain. Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The new country took advantage of its natural resources to rapidly develop agricultural and manufacturing industries and to make a major contribution to the British effort in World Wars I and II. In recent decades, Australia has transformed itself into an internationally competitive, advanced market economy. It boasted one of the OECD's fastest growing economies during the 1990s, a performance due in large part to economic reforms adopted in the 1980s. Long-term concerns include pollution, particularly depletion of the

ozone layer, and management and conservation of coastal areas, especially the Great Barrier Reef.

Australia totally has 7,686,850 sq km space with it out of which 7,617,930 sq km is land and 68,920 sq km of water. It has a total population of 20,264,082 out of which 67 percent are in the working age group and 33 percent are dependent population out of which, around 20 percent are in the age group of 0-14. The median age is as high as 36.9 years. The population growth is estimated to be 0.85 percent in 2006. The net migration rate is 3.85 migrants per thousand populations in the year 2006, which proves that the out-migration is higher than the in-migration

The ethnic composition in Australia consists of - Caucasians (92 percent); Asians (7 percent); Aboriginals and other (1 percent). As many as 67.4 percent of population in Australia follows Christianity, which are sub-divided as - Catholic (26.4 percent), Anglican (20.5 percent), other Christian (20.5 percent). Buddhist (1.9 percent), Muslim (1.5 percent), others (1.2 percent), unspecified (12.7 percent), none (15.3 percent) (2001 Census)

2. Nature and Demographic Profile of Indian Diaspora

Historical Background: Indians were brought to Australia between 1800 and 1860 initially to work as labourers and domestics. Between the years 1860 and 1901 more Indians arrived and worked as agricultural labourers and as hawkers in country towns. A number of Indians also worked in the gold fields. The Indians were mainly Sikhs and Muslims from the Punjab region in northwest India and the majority settled in Woolgoolga in New South Wales. Today, the Sikh settlement in Woolgoolga is one of the largest Indian rural communities in Australia.

Migration from India was curtailed after the Australian Government introduced the Immigration Restriction Act 1901. Following India's Independence from Britain in 1947, the number of Anglo-Indians and India-born British citizens immigrating to Australia increased. In 1966, the Australian Government changed

its policies to permit non-European Indians to emigrate to Australia. By 1981, the India-born population numbered 41,657 and the new arrivals included many professionals, such as doctors, teachers, computer programmers and engineers. Unlike the earlier settlers, those arriving after the 1950s came from many parts of India and belonged to various religious linguistic and cultural groups. While the majority of Indians are Hindus, some are followers of other religious faiths, such as Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism.

The Community Today: Geographic Distribution - The latest Census in 2001 recorded 95,460 India-born persons in Australia, an increase of 23 per cent from the 1996 Census. The 2001 distribution by State and Territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 37,930 followed by Victoria (30,690), Western Australia (13,120) and Queensland (7,190).

Australian State and Territory	Number	Percentage
New South Wales	37,930	39.7%
Victoria	30,690	32.1%
Queensland	7,190	7.5%
South Australia	3,690	3.9%
Western Australia	13,120	13.7%
Tasmania	530	0.6%
Northern Territory	480	0.5%
Australian Capital Territory	1,800	1.9%

Age and Sex - The median age of the India-born in 2001 was 40.4 years compared with 46.0 years for all overseas-born and 35.6 years for the total Australian population. The age distribution showed 7.5 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 11.4 per cent were 15-24 years, 40.6 per cent were 25-44 years, 27.8 per cent were 45-64 years and 12.7 per cent were 65 and over. Of the India-born in Australia, there were 50,410 males (52.8 per cent) and 45,050 females (47.2 per cent). The sex ratio was 111.9 males per 100 females.

Qualifications - In 2001, of India-born people aged 15 years and over, 67.1 per cent held some form of educational or occupational qualification compared with 46.2 per cent for all Australians. Among the India-born, 48.1 per cent had

higher qualifications¹ and 9.4 per cent had Certificate level qualifications. Of the India-born with no qualifications, 21.3 per cent were still attending an educational institution.

Employment - Among India-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 67.5 per cent and the unemployment rate was 7.7 per cent. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 63.0 and 7.4 per cent respectively. Of the 54,250 India-born who were employed, 55.4 per cent were employed in a skilled occupation, 29.1 per cent in Semi-Skilled and 15.6 per cent in Unskilled. The corresponding rates in the total Australian population were 52.6, 28.9 and 18.6 per cent respectively.

Citizenship - At the 2001 Census, the rate² of Australian Citizenship for the India-born in Australia was 79.7 per cent. The rate for all overseas-born was 75.1 per cent.

Language - The main languages spoken at home by India-born people in Australia were English (47.7 per cent), Hindi (15.6 per cent), and Punjabi (9.2 per cent). Of the 49,690 India-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 93.4 per cent spoke English very well or well and 5.8 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.

Language Spoken at Home by the Indians	Percentage
Hindi	15.6
Punjabi	9.2
English	47.7
Others	27.6

Religion - At the 2001 Census the major religions amongst India-born were Hinduism (31,920 persons), Western Catholic (29,540 persons) and Sikhism (9,740 persons). Of the India-born, 2.7 per cent stated 'No Religion'. This was lower than that of the total Australian population (15.5 per cent)

Religion	Percentage
Hinduism	33.5
Western Catholic	31.0
Sikhism	10.2

¹ Higher qualification includes Postgraduate Degree, Graduate Diploma & Graduate Certificate and Bachelor Degree advanced Diploma & Diploma Level.

² It includes adjustments for people not meeting the residential requirement for citizenship, temporary entrants to Australia and under enumeration at the Census.

Others	20.1
No Religion	2.7
Not Stated	2.5

Source: compiled from **Community Information Summary**, Department of Immigration and Multicultural affairs, Australia

The Indian diaspora in Australia, a professional and respected group, with their commitment to Australia and cultural and family links with India, provides an important bridge between our two countries. Visits of Indian cultural troupes, singers, painters, as also of film crews for the shooting of song & dance sequences, television serials and special effects for Indian films have also increased (estimated number 275,000).

Interaction at the people-to-people level is also increasing. The number of tourists visiting each others' countries is increasing. Australia has also become one of the important destinations for Indian students seeking higher education. These students fit in well, by and large, in Australia and take back with them a rich experience.

3. Concerns and problems of Indian Diaspora

Though Australia is a country which has below replacement birth rate and an aging population and its expanding economy demands a high level of skilled workers and many Indians are filling this gap, but Indians do find racial problems at the social level in Australia. The government of Australia needs to educate its population about the implications of racism.

4. Major Diaspora Associations

- ASSOCIATION FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA INC
- AUSTRALIA - INDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL
- AUSTRALIA SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH CENTRE
- AUSTRALIAN HINDI INDIAN ASSOCIATION (AHIA)
- ANGLO-INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF NSW
- AUSTRALIAN RANGERS ANGLO-INDIAN ASSOC
- ANGLO-INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF NSW

- ART OF LIVING - SYDNEY
- AUSTRALIAN ANGLO-INDIAN ASSOCIATION
- BASAVA SAMITHI AUSTRALASIA. INC
- GUJARATI MITRA MANDAL
- GOAN OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION NSW INC
- GOAN OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION VIC
- GOAN OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION
- GUJARATI ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA
- INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR FIJI INDIANS (ICFI)
- INDIAN AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION IOF S A INC
- INDIAN AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERR
- INDIAN AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION OF CANBERIA
- K.G. ENERPRISE
- MELBOURNE KANNADA SANGHA
- QUEENSLAND INDIAN ASSOCIATION INC.
- SHRI SWAMINARAYAN MANDIR
- SAMITHI OF AUSTRALASIA ORGANISATION
- SYDNEY TAMIL MANRAM INC
- THE ACADEMY OF INDIAN MUSIC AUSTRALIA
- THE SYDNEY SINDHI ASSOCIATION
- TELGU ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
- UNITED INDIAN ASSOCIATION
- VEDIC PRATINIDHI SABHA & ARYA SAMAJ OF AUSTRALIA, INC.

5. Bilateral Relations/Agreements

India - Australia relations can be traced back to late 18th Century and early 19th Century with shipments of coal from Sydney to Calcutta. This was followed by export of horses from New South Wales. Later, more diversified trade ties developed between the two countries. Full diplomatic relations between our two countries are much more recent but still date back to more than 50 years. The pre-cursor of Consulate-General of India first opened in Sydney as the Trade Office in 1941. The first Indian High Commissioner reached Canberra in 1946.

India and Australia share much in common. Both countries are members of the Commonwealth, have similar institutions of parliamentary democracy, legal, financial and government institutions, free and vibrant press, speak the same language and are Indian Ocean littoral States. We are active members of

the Indian Ocean Rim - Association for Regional Cooperation, ASEAN Regional Forum and dialogue partners with ASEAN.

Considering the interaction in the past two and a half years bilateral relations between our two countries are poised to be raised to a new level. India and Australia have committed themselves to a co-ordinated international approach in overcoming the challenges posed by terrorism. We have similar approaches to many of the other pressing issues of our times.

India-Australia cooperation has made rapid strides in many areas. There are also official agreements and institutionalised mechanisms to promote bilateral cooperation such as Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement, Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, an MOU for Cooperation in IT, an MOU on Tourism and an MOU on Cultural Heritage Cooperation. India and Australia signed an MOU on Counter-terrorism in August 2003 and an MOU on Science & Technology in October 2003. A new Air Services Agreement was initialled in September 2004 in New Delhi.