

Fact sheet number 5: Australia

Social Health Atlas series

PHIDU

Aboriginality and ethnicity

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

Volume 1: Australia, page52 –55

- Two percent of the Australian population identified themselves as an Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander on the 1996 census. Their proportions in the Australian population are:

| | Whole of State (%) | Capital cities (%) | Non-metropolitan areas (%) |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| NT | 23.7 | Darwin 8.6 | 35.6 |
| TAS | 3.0 | Hobart 2.5 | 3.4 |
| WA | 2.9 | Perth 1.4 | 7.0 |
| QLD | 2.8 | Brisbane 1.5 | 4.6 |
| NSW | 1.7 | Sydney 0.9 | 3.5 |
| SA | 1.4 | Adelaide 0.9 | 2.9 |
| ACT | 1.0 | Canberra 1.1 | - |
| VIC | 0.5 | Melbourne 0.3 | 0.9 |

- The highest absolute numbers of Indigenous people are in Sydney and New South Wales.
- Indigenous people have a striking distribution under the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). Their numbers increase with increasing remoteness from 1.0% living in the Very Accessible areas to 27.9% in the Very Remote areas (the opposite of the distribution pattern of all other population groups).
- Areas in the capital cities with high proportions of Indigenous people also have high proportions of:
 - women on sole parent pensions ($r=0.71$)
 - people on disability support payments ($r=0.64$)
 - children in families on income support ($r=0.63$)
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.55$). (*page 353-354*)
- Areas in the capital cities with high proportions of Indigenous people were also significantly correlated with people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.58$). (*page 353-354*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of Indigenous people were socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ($r=-0.66$). They also had high proportions of:
 - households without motor vehicles ($r=0.85$)
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.69$)
 - single parent families ($r=0.68$) (*page 353-354*)
- Non-metropolitan areas with high proportions of Indigenous people were also significantly correlated with poor health. These areas have high rates of:
 - years of potential life lost from deaths from ages 15-64 years ($r=0.60$)
 - people reporting their health as fair/poor ($r=0.56$)
 - female deaths ($r=0.51$) (*page 353-354*)

Fact sheet number 5: Australia

Social Health Atlas series

PHIDU

Ethnicity

Volume 1: Australia, page 56 – 59

People born in predominantly non-English speaking countries and living in Australia for more than 5 years

- Melbourne (17.8%) had the highest and Hobart (4.3%) had the lowest proportion of people born in predominantly non-English speaking countries and resident for more than five years in Australia.
- The average across all capital cities increased from 12.7% in 1986 to 14.8% in 1996.
- The highest proportions of this population group in non-metropolitan areas were in Western Australia and Victoria (both 3.9%) and the lowest was in New South Wales (3.1%).
- There was no change in the overall proportion from non-metropolitan areas from 1986 to 1996 (3.5%).
- Significantly more people from non-English speaking backgrounds lived in Very Accessible areas under the Accessibility/ Remoteness Index of Australia.

People born in predominantly non-English speaking countries and living in Australia for less than 5 years

- Recently arriving migrants from non-English speaking countries have a strong preference for the capital cities and the areas that contain older migrant communities ($r=0.67$).
- Sydney (3.7%) had the highest proportion of new migrants while Hobart (0.7 %) had the lowest.
- The average across all capital cities increased slightly, from 2.5% in 1986 to 2.7% in 1996.
- In non-metropolitan areas, Queensland and the Northern Territory had the highest proportion (0.5% each) while South Australia had the lowest (0.2%).
- There was a slight decrease in non-metropolitan areas from 1986 to 1996 (0.5 – 0.4%).
- Significantly more people from non-English speaking backgrounds live in Very Accessible areas under the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia.

Poor proficiency in English

- Melbourne and Sydney, the cities with the highest proportions of recently arrived migrants, have the highest proportions of migrants reporting poor proficiency in English, at 5.0% and 4.9% respectively.
- In most Australian cities there have been increasing numbers of people who report not being fluent in English since 1986.