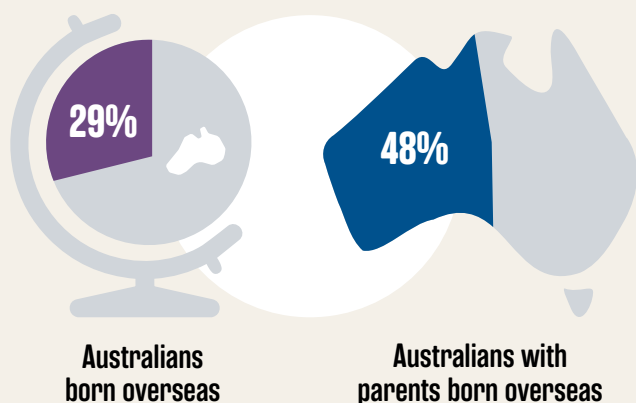


Cultural and Racial Diversity

Australia is home to the world's oldest continuous culture as well as non-Indigenous Australians who identify with over **300 different ancestries**. Migration to Australia is not a new phenomenon. In fact, Australia has a rich history of migration and trade pre-dating British colonisation.¹

Over 29% of Australia's population was born overseas and 48% of Australians have a parent born overseas.²



Before British colonisation, over 250 First Nations languages and 800 dialects were in use.³

250
LANGUAGES

800
DIALECTS

1 in 5

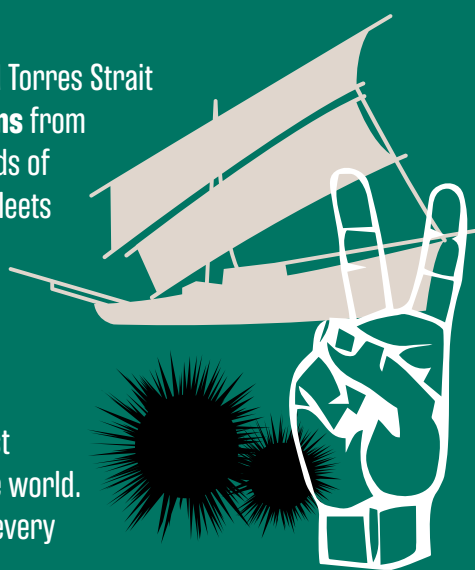
Australians speak a language other than English at home.⁴

Between 2016 and 2021 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population increased by 25%.⁵



Did you know?

- Long before colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people **traded with Macassans** from the Indonesian archipelago. For hundreds of years, Macassan fishermen arrived in fleets of **wooden praus** with goods to trade in exchange for access to **sea urchin harvests**.⁶
- Maningrida, located on Australia's **north-central coast**, is one of the most linguistically diverse communities in the world. **15 languages are spoken or signed** every day among only a few thousand people.⁷



Maningrida



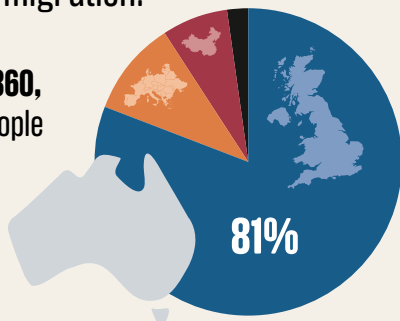
Cultural and Racial Diversity



The discovery of gold in Australia in **the mid-1800s** led to a significant rise in migration.

Between 1852 and 1860, more than 600,000 people arrived in Australia.⁸

- 81% from UK
- 10% from Europe
- 7% from China



After Federation in 1901, the laws that formed the basis of **the White Australia Policy** were used to prevent non-Europeans from settling in Australia. **Resulting in a rapid decrease in overseas-born residents:**⁹

1894

↓ 30%

1911

↓ 17%

1947 ↓ 10%



Australian South Sea Islanders

Between 1863 and 1901:

Over 62,000 people

from the Pacific Islands were kidnapped from their home countries and forced to work on privately owned sugar plantations in Queensland. Referred to as 'blackbirding', this process involved working conditions that amounted to slavery.¹⁰

In 2021:

3 in 4 of all Australian South Sea Islanders were Queenslanders.



2 in 3 South Sea Islanders also identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.¹¹



It is important to celebrate cultural diversity in Australia, but we also need to understand the role of race in shaping society in order to challenge systemic racism. Often racism is hidden by narratives that emphasise multiculturalism and social harmony. Learn more about racism on the Commission's [anti-racism campaign website](#).

60%

of people believe that racism is a significant problem in Australia.¹²

In a 2020-21 Women of Colour Australia Workplace Survey Report, participants reported on their organisation's leadership:

26% said they were led by a person of colour

Only 7% said they were led by a woman of colour¹³



Cultural and Racial Diversity

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