

MEDIA RELEASE

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2011 Census highlights Victoria's growing diversity

The Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), Mr Chin Tan has welcomed the release of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census data saying it provided insight into the growth and diversity of multicultural Victoria.

Mr Tan said "The 2011 Census data highlights Victoria's increasing cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, which brings benefits to all Victorians and emphasises the importance of our ongoing commitment to multiculturalism."

The 2011 Census shows a fundamental shift in Victoria's cultural make-up, with strong growth in the number of Victorians born in India and China as well as significant increases in Victoria's new and emerging communities. In total, 26.2 per cent of Victorians were born overseas, compared to 23.8 per cent at the time of the 2006 Census.

The data showed that 23.1 per cent of Victorians now speak 260 languages other than English at home, compared to 20.4 per cent with 240 languages in the 2006 Census. In addition, 67.7 per cent of Victorians followed 135 religions, compared to 68.7 per cent with 130 religions at the time of the last Census.

Mr Tan said: "This new Census data highlights the need for government and community services to continue to be culturally responsive, ensuring existing, new and emerging communities can fully participate as citizens in the social, economic and political life of Victoria."

"As the VMC has long advocated, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity brings many benefits to Victoria, with migrants and refugees making significant contributions to Victoria's prosperity and vibrancy, and fostering important connections with the rest of the world."

The new Census data demonstrates the important work of the VMC in promoting the benefits of cultural and religious diversity; the full participation of Victoria's diverse communities in Victorian life; and unity, understanding and harmony across society. This includes the recent establishment of eight Regional Advisory Councils to provide advice on settlement and multicultural affairs at the local level across the state.

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