Victoria's current position as the most multicultural state in Australia was forged on successive waves of migration. As time progressed, new arrivals changed the makeup of our society, introducing new cultures, languages, religions and faiths.

The discovery of gold in Victoria in the 1850s sparked a rush of migration which saw half a million people from China, Germany, the United Kingdom and America arrive in Victoria in just a decade. The advent of war in 1938 in Europe saw thousands of displaced persons arrive on Australian shores seeking a better life.

The change in Federal Government in 1972 saw the last discriminatory references in the Immigration Policy removed and the first refugees from Vietnam, Lebanon, Cyprus and Chile arrived in Victoria, fleeing civil war and political conflict.

By the 1980s the main focus of immigration turned to Africa, with most refugees coming from famine-struck Ethiopia. By the 1990s, nearly one in four Australians were born overseas, representing about 100 countries. Over the last three censuses, the overseas-born from all other regions in the world show a steady increase in numbers.

Those arriving from South-East and North-East Asia (such as India, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and People's Republic of China) are mainly skilled migrants, students and family reunion members. Those from the Middle East and Southern and Central Asia (eg Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan), and the Sub-Sahara region (Horn of Africa) arrive mainly as humanitarian entrants.

The Immigration Museum is a great place discover more about Victoria's history and multiculturalism. Take a journey through Victoria's rich development from the 1800s to the present day.

Visit the Immigration Museum website to find out more >