

The Syria-Born Community in Victoria – 2016 Census (ranked 66)

Demographic characteristics

At the 2016 Census, there were 3,851 Syria-born persons in Victoria (25.1% of Australia's total), ranked 66<sup>th</sup> among the overseas-born communities in Victoria. The Syria-born increased by 70.2% (1,589) from 2,262 persons in 2011. They are distributed throughout Metropolitan Melbourne, with major concentrations in the LGAs of Hume (37.8%) and Whittlesea (13.8%), Moreland (7.5%), Brimbank (6.0%) and Casey (4.7%).

The Syria-born reflected a balanced age profile: 23.2% were aged 25 years and under; 31.3% were aged 26-44 years; 33.5% were aged 45-64; and 12.0% were aged 65 years and over. The median age was 42 years, compared to 37 years for total Victoria. The gender ratio was 94 males to 100 females, compared to 96 males to 100 females for total Victoria.

There were 5,287 persons identified with Syrian ancestry. Most of them were born in Australia (44.3%), Syria (38.2%) and Lebanon (6.8%). One-third (33.7%) of the Syria-born in Victoria had arrived in Australia prior to 1996; 6.1% arrived in 1996-2000; 6.3% arrived in 2001-2005; 8.1% arrived in 2006-2010; and 41.2% arrived in 2011-2016.

Most of the Syria-born speak Arabic (68.6%), Assyrian (19.8%) and Armenian (2.5%); 4.6% speak English only. Of those who speak a language other than English, 31.8% speak English not well/not at all. Almost one-third (29.9%) of the Syria-born are Muslim; 18.9% are Catholic; 12.0% are Assyrian Apostolic; 11.5% are Eastern Orthodox; and 7.6% are Oriental Orthodox; 5.4% have no religion. Over half (55.6%) of the Syria-born have Australian citizenship, compared to 58.3% for overseas-born in Victoria.

(See p.3 on economic characteristics).

Syria-born in Victoria and Australia: 2016, 2011 and 2006 Census

Location	2016 Census		2011 Census		2006 Census		Change 2011-2016		Change 2006-2011	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	% change	Persons	% change
Metro Melbourne <sup>(a)</sup>	3,770	24.6	2,204	26.3	1,824	26.2	1,566	71.1	380	20.8
Rest of Victoria <sup>(b)</sup>	84	0.5	53	0.6	40	0.6	31	58.5	13	32.5
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>1,863</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>21.4</b>
<b>Total Australia</b>	<b>15,321</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,391</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,968</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,930</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>1,423</b>	<b>20.4</b>

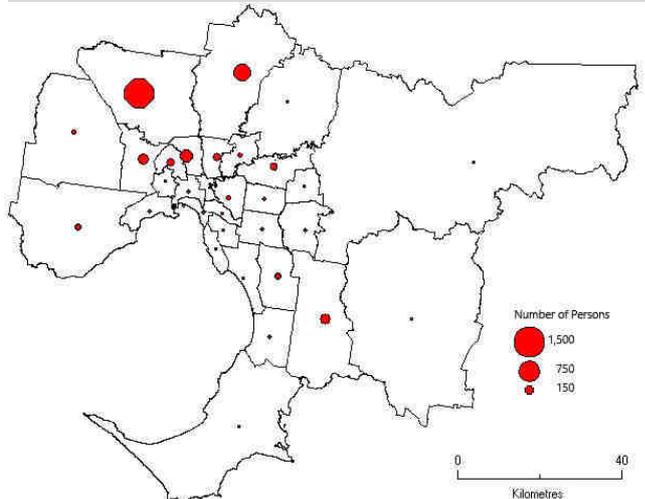
<sup>(a)</sup> Metro Melbourne is equivalent to ABS's Greater Capital Statistical Area.  
<sup>(b)</sup> Includes "No Usual Address, Victoria" and "Offshore Areas and Migratory, Victoria".

Distribution of Syria-born, Top 5 LGAs: 2016 Census

Local Government Area (LGA)	2016 Census		2011 Census		Rank in 2011
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Hume (C)	1,457	37.8	598	26.4	1
Whittlesea (C)	533	13.8	295	13.0	2
Moreland (C)	290	7.5	212	9.4	3
Brimbank (C)	230	6.0	182	8.0	4
Casey (C)	180	4.7	134	5.9	5
Rest of Melbourne	1,057	27.4	790	34.9	-
Rest of Reg Vic <sup>(a)</sup>	85	2.2	41	1.8	-
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	-

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes "Unincorporated Vic" and "No Usual Address Vic".

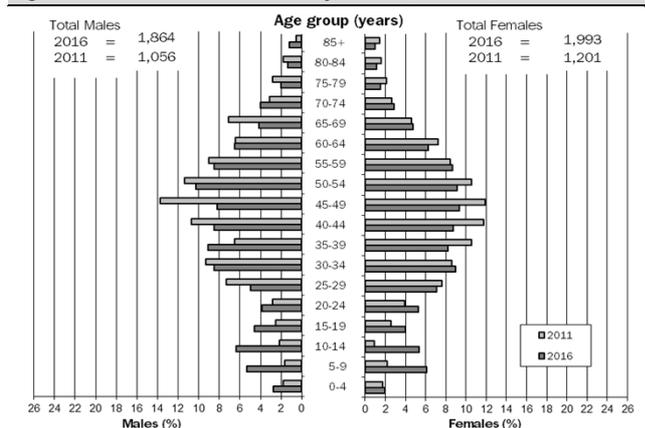
Distribution of Syria-born in Metro Melbourne, 2016



Age Distribution of Syria-born: 2016, 2011 Census

Age group (years)	2016 Census		2011 Census		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	91	2.4	45	2.0	102.2
5-11	313	8.1	61	2.7	413.1
12-18	254	6.6	56	2.5	353.6
19-25	235	6.1	119	5.3	97.5
26-44	1,205	31.3	778	34.4	54.9
45-54	712	18.5	532	23.5	33.8
55-64	579	15.0	354	15.6	63.6
65-74	301	7.8	196	8.7	53.6
75+	160	4.2	111	4.9	44.1
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70.2</b>
<i>Median Age</i>	<i>42</i>		<i>45</i>		
<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>94</i>		<i>88</i>		<i>males per 100 females</i>

Age and Gender Distribution of Syria-born, Victoria, 2016



**Top 5 Countries of Birth of Persons with Syrian Ancestry: 2016, 2011**

Country of birth	2016		2011		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Syria	2,022	38.2	1,233	34.0	64.0
Lebanon	359	6.8	224	6.2	60.3
Egypt	98	1.9	85	2.3	15.3
Iraq	79	1.5	59	1.6	33.9
Saudi Arabia	27	0.5	21	0.6	28.6
Australia	2,340	44.3	1,802	49.7	29.9
Other <sup>(a)</sup>	338	6.4	204	5.6	65.7
<b>Total responses<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>5,287</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,628</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>45.7</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes all other countries, and birthplace not stated.

<sup>(b)</sup> Respondents have option of nominating several ancestries; only the 1st two responses were coded. This is the total of both 1st & 2nd responses.

This table is based on the ancestry with the most responses for Syria-born persons.

**Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home, Syria-born: 2016, 2011**

Language other than English	2016		2011		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Arabic	2,640	68.6	1,652	73.0	59.8
Assyrian	761	19.8	306	13.5	148.7
Armenian	96	2.5	75	3.3	28.0
Chaldean	49	1.3	14	0.6	250.0
Kurdish	46	1.2	18	0.8	155.6
Other languages <sup>(a)</sup>	60	1.6	45	2.0	33.3
English only	176	4.6	128	5.7	37.5
Not stated	24	0.6	24	1.1	-
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70.2</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes "Inadequately described" and "Non-verbal, so described".

**Top 5 Religious affiliation, Syria-born: 2016, 2011**

Religious affiliation <sup>(a)</sup>	2016		2011		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Islam	1,151	29.9	789	34.9	45.9
Catholic	728	18.9	475	21.0	53.3
Assyrian Apostolic	462	12.0	99	4.4	366.7
Eastern Orthodox	442	11.5	371	16.4	19.1
Oriental Orthodox	294	7.6	253	11.2	16.2
Other religions	397	10.3	121	5.3	228.1
No religion <sup>(b)</sup>	207	5.4	60	2.7	245.0
Not stated	167	4.3	94	4.2	77.7
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70.2</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Religion based on 3 digit level of classification.

<sup>(b)</sup> No Religion, so described.

**Year of Arrival of Syria-born: 2016**

Year of arrival <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born		Total OSB, Vic <sup>(c)</sup>	
	Persons	%	Persons	%
Before 1996	1,299	33.7	716,865	42.7
1996 - 2000	233	6.1	104,975	6.2
2001 - 2005	243	6.3	149,043	8.9
2006 - 2010	313	8.1	269,729	16.1
2011 - 2016 <sup>(b)</sup>	1,586	41.2	381,130	22.7
Not stated	178	4.6	58,517	3.5
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,680,256</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Records the year of arrival in Australia for people born overseas

who intend staying in Australia for at least one year.

<sup>(b)</sup> Arrivals up to 9 Aug 2016.

<sup>(c)</sup> OSB stands for Overseas-born.

**Proficiency in English of Syria-born: 2016, 2011**

Proficiency in English	2016		2011		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
Speaks English only	176	4.6	128	5.7	37.5
<i>Speaks other languages and speaks English</i>					
Very well	1,141	29.6	725	32.1	57.4
Well	1,278	33.2	829	36.6	54.2
Not well	864	22.4	453	20.0	90.7
Not at all	363	9.4	100	4.4	263.0
Not stated <sup>(a)</sup>	32	0.8	22	1.0	45.5
<b>Total Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70.2</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes those who did not state a language and/or proficiency in English.

**Syria-born with Australian Citizenship by Age: 2016, 2011**

Age group (years)	2016		2011		2011-16 % change
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
0-4	10	0.5	9	0.5	11.1
5-11	76	3.6	40	2.1	90.0
12-18	85	4.0	43	2.3	97.7
19-25	83	3.9	77	4.1	7.8
26-44	570	26.6	582	31.0	-2.1
45-64	941	44.0	840	44.7	12.0
65-74	251	11.7	189	10.1	32.8
75+	120	5.6	103	5.5	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,880</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.8</b>

% of Syria-born with Australian citizenship, 2016: 55.6%

% of Overseas-born with Australian citizenship, 2016: 58.3%

## Economic characteristics

The education levels of the Syria-born are lower than those for total Victoria. Less of them (3.2%) have a postgraduate degree; 12.3% have a bachelor degree; and 7.2% have an advanced diploma or diploma, compared to 5.4%, 16.5% and 9.2% for Victoria. More of them (55.9%) have school education only or no educational attainment (6.5%), compared to 38.7% and 1.0% for Victoria.

The labour force participation rate of the Syria-born at 37.3% is lower than that of total Victoria at 60.5%. The unemployment rate for the Syria-born at 17.4% is higher than total Victoria at 6.6%.

The occupational patterns of the Syria-born are different from those for total Victoria. Less of the Syria-born are managers (10.4%), professionals (17.7%) and clerical & administrative workers (7.6%), compared to 13.5%, 23.3% and 13.3% for Victoria. More of them are community & personal service workers (13.0%), machinery operators & drivers (8.6%) and labourers (14.2%), compared to 10.6%, 5.8% and 9.0% for Victoria.

The employment patterns of the Syria-born are different from those for total Victoria. Less of them are employed in finance & insurance (1.2%) and professional, scientific, technical & administrative (9.3%), compared to 3.9% and 11.4% for Victoria. More of them are employed in manufacturing (9.5%) and accommodation & food services (11.1%), compared to 7.8% and 6.6% for Victoria.

The weekly personal income distribution pattern for the Syria-born is lower than for total Victoria. More of the Syria-born receive nil income (11.8%) and \$1-\$399 (44.1%), compared to 9.7% and 20.1% for Victoria. Less of them receive \$400-\$799 (21.6%), \$800-\$1,249 (9.4%), \$1,250-\$1,999 (5.5%) and \$2,000 or more (2.8%), compared to 23.1%, 16.7%, 13.6% and 7.5% for Victoria.

### Highest level of educational attainment, Syria-born and Total Victoria: 2016, 2011

Highest level of educational attainment <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born						Total Victoria					
	2016		2011		Change 2011-2016		2016		2011		Change 2011-2016	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	% change	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	% change
Postgraduate Degree	107	3.2	70	3.3	37	52.9	260,039	5.4	170,382	3.9	89,657	52.6
Grad Dip & Grad Cert	31	0.9	26	1.2	5	19.2	119,226	2.5	95,352	2.2	23,874	25.0
Bachelor Degree	410	12.3	246	11.5	164	66.7	798,270	16.5	641,219	14.7	157,051	24.5
Advanced Dip & Diploma	240	7.2	136	6.4	104	76.5	447,023	9.2	364,758	8.4	82,265	22.6
Certificate	211	6.3	131	6.1	80	61.1	698,036	14.4	614,689	14.1	83,347	13.6
School Education only <sup>(b)</sup>	1,859	55.9	1,139	53.2	720	63.2	1,877,183	38.7	1,876,620	43.1	563	0.0
No Educ Attainment <sup>(c)</sup>	216	6.5	149	7.0	67	45.0	48,920	1.0	41,809	1.0	7,111	17.0
Not stated etc <sup>(d)</sup>	244	7.3	236	11.0	8	3.4	597,010	12.3	550,419	12.6	46,591	8.5
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>3,327</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>4,845,710</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,355,243</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>490,467</b>	<b>11.3</b>

<sup>(a)</sup>This variable is applicable to persons aged 15 years and over.

<sup>(b)</sup>Includes persons who completed school to between Year 8 or below, and Year 12 level.

<sup>(c)</sup>Includes persons whose qualification is out of scope of this variable.

<sup>(d)</sup>Includes "Inadequately described".

### Labour force participation, Syria-born and Total Victoria: 2016, 2011

Labour force participation <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born						Total Victoria					
	2016		2011		Change 2011-2016		2016		2011		Change 2011-2016	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	% change	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	% change
<i>In the labour force</i>	1,240	32.2	900	39.8	340	37.8	2,929,590	49.4	2,675,478	50.0	254,112	9.5
Employed	1,024	26.6	797	35.2	227	28.5	2,736,125	46.2	2,530,635	47.3	205,490	8.1
Unemployed	216	5.6	103	4.6	113	109.7	193,465	3.3	144,843	2.7	48,622	33.6
<i>Not in the labour force</i>	2,048	53.2	1,185	52.4	863	72.8	1,610,130	27.2	1,451,593	27.1	158,537	10.9
Not stated	34	0.9	53	2.3	-19	-35.8	305,978	5.2	228,176	4.3	77,802	34.1
Not applicable <sup>(b)</sup>	525	13.6	120	5.3	405	337.5	1,080,919	18.2	998,793	18.7	82,126	8.2
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>5,926,624</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,354,039</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>572,585</b>	<b>10.7</b>
<i>Participation rate</i> <sup>(c)</sup>	37.3%		42.0%				60.5%		61.4%			
<i>Unemployment rate</i> <sup>(d)</sup>	17.4%		11.4%				6.6%		5.4%			

<sup>(a)</sup>This variable is applicable to persons 15 years and over.

<sup>(b)</sup>Persons aged under 15 years.

<sup>(c)</sup>The participation rate represents the labour force (total employed and unemployed who are actively looking for work) expressed as a % of the civilian population aged 15 years and over, in the same age group.

<sup>(d)</sup>The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons expressed as a % of the labour force.

**Occupation, Syria-born and Total Victoria: 2016, 2011**

Occupation <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born						Total Victoria					
	2016		2011		Change 2011-2016		2016		2011		Change 2011-2016	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Managers	107	10.4	105	13.2	2	1.9	369,921	13.5	332,931	13.2	36,990	11.1
Professionals	181	17.7	138	17.3	43	31.2	636,220	23.3	564,779	22.3	71,441	12.6
Technicians and trades workers	158	15.4	146	18.3	12	8.2	358,749	13.1	350,757	13.9	7,992	2.3
Community&personal serv. wkrs	133	13.0	64	8.0	69	107.8	289,348	10.6	234,380	9.3	54,968	23.5
Clerical & administrative workers	78	7.6	64	8.0	14	21.9	363,216	13.3	364,497	14.4	-1,281	-0.4
Sales workers	94	9.2	54	6.8	40	74.1	265,142	9.7	245,335	9.7	19,807	8.1
Machinery operators & drivers	88	8.6	62	7.8	26	41.9	159,193	5.8	154,542	6.1	4,651	3.0
Labourers	145	14.2	132	16.6	13	9.8	247,428	9.0	227,184	9.0	20,244	8.9
Not stated <sup>(b)</sup>	35	3.4	25	3.1	10	40.0	46,924	1.7	56,224	2.2	-9,300	-16.5
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>2,736,125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,530,635</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>205,490</b>	<b>8.1</b>

<sup>(a)</sup>This variable is applicable to employed persons aged 15 years and over.

<sup>(b)</sup>Includes "Inadequately described".

**Industry of Employment, Syria-born and Total Victoria: 2016, 2011**

Industry of employment <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born						Total Victoria					
	2016		2011		Change 2011-2016		2016		2011		Change 2011-2016	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Agri, forestry, fishing & mining	4	0.4	3	0.4	1	33.3	70,052	2.6	66,176	2.6	3,876	5.9
Manufacturing	97	9.5	108	13.6	-11	-10.2	212,723	7.8	271,051	10.7	-58,328	-21.5
Electr, gas, water & waste	3	0.3	-	-	3	-	30,808	1.1	27,630	1.1	3,178	11.5
Construction	82	8.0	67	8.4	15	22.4	228,149	8.3	210,972	8.3	17,177	8.1
Wholesale & retail trade	136	13.3	124	15.6	12	9.7	367,953	13.4	387,813	15.3	-19,860	-5.1
Accommod & Food services	114	11.1	105	13.2	9	8.6	180,825	6.6	153,898	6.1	26,927	17.5
Transp, postal & warehousing	58	5.7	41	5.1	17	41.5	130,069	4.8	118,214	4.7	11,855	10.0
Information, Media & Telecomm	18	1.8	9	1.1	9	100.0	52,200	1.9	50,091	2.0	2,109	4.2
Finance & Insurance	12	1.2	13	1.6	-1	-7.7	106,669	3.9	104,701	4.1	1,968	1.9
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate	18	1.8	4	0.5	14	350.0	43,013	1.6	35,046	1.4	7,967	22.7
Prof, Scientific, Tech & Admin	95	9.3	84	10.5	11	13.1	310,711	11.4	279,422	11.0	31,289	11.2
Public Admin & Safety	36	3.5	20	2.5	16	80.0	144,321	5.3	134,949	5.3	9,372	6.9
Education & Training	79	7.7	51	6.4	28	54.9	236,276	8.6	202,317	8.0	33,959	16.8
Health Care & Soc Assistance	136	13.3	80	10.0	56	70.0	341,999	12.5	292,417	11.6	49,582	17.0
Arts, Recreation & Other serv	65	6.3	54	6.8	11	20.4	151,019	5.5	134,750	5.3	16,269	12.1
Inadeq Described/Not Stated	77	7.5	37	4.6	40	108.1	129,326	4.7	61,173	2.4	68,153	111.4
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>2,736,125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,530,635</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>205,490</b>	<b>8.1</b>

<sup>(a)</sup>This variable is applicable to employed persons aged 15 and over.

**Total Personal Income (Weekly), Syria-born and Total Victoria: 2016, 2011**

Total personal income, weekly <sup>(a)</sup>	Syria-born						Total Victoria					
	2016		2011		Change 2011-2016		2016		2011		Change 2011-2016	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Negative income	42	1.3	31	1.4	11	35.5	27,122	0.6	26,342	0.6	780	3.0
Nil income	391	11.8	236	11.0	155	65.7	467,934	9.7	351,430	8.1	116,504	33.2
\$1-399	1,466	44.1	998	46.6	468	46.9	975,345	20.1	1,224,693	28.1	-249,348	-20.4
\$400-\$799	719	21.6	414	19.3	305	73.7	1,118,244	23.1	964,124	22.1	154,120	16.0
\$800-\$1,249	312	9.4	200	9.3	112	56.0	811,256	16.7	715,662	16.4	95,594	13.4
\$1,250-\$1,999	182	5.5	92	4.3	90	97.8	658,020	13.6	491,972	11.3	166,048	33.8
\$2,000 or more	92	2.8	51	2.4	41	80.4	364,675	7.5	246,379	5.7	118,296	48.0
Not stated	131	3.9	112	5.2	19	17.0	423,108	8.7	334,649	7.7	88,459	26.4
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>3,327</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>4,845,710</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,355,243</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>490,467</b>	<b>11.3</b>

<sup>(a)</sup>Applicable to persons aged 15 years and over.

This fact sheet is available for free download at [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au), which also contains the Community Profiles series for birthplace groups, with more detailed tables on a wider range of demographic and socio-economic data.

Source of data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2011, 2006*.