

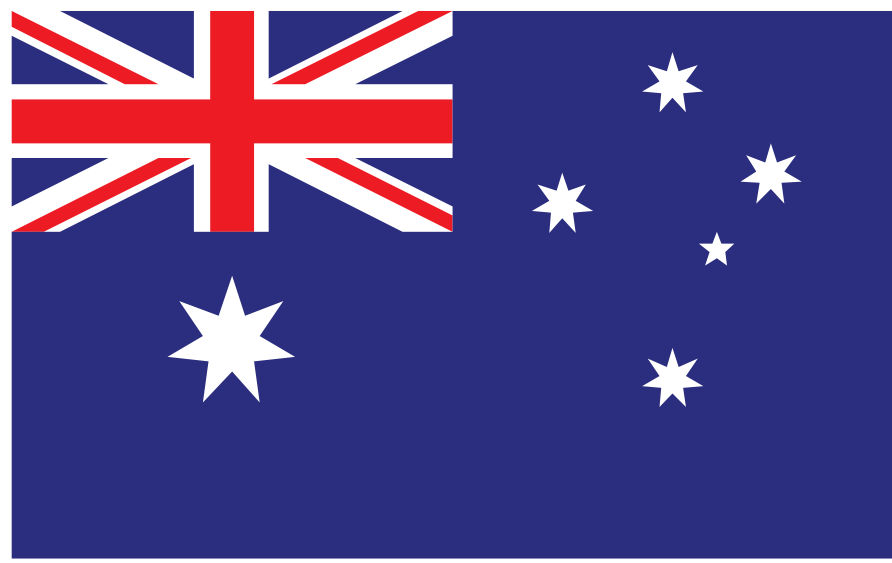
AUSTRALIA



Country Profiles

This profile is a part of our Leading Multiculturalism: Canada's Impact on Global Diversity Policies series

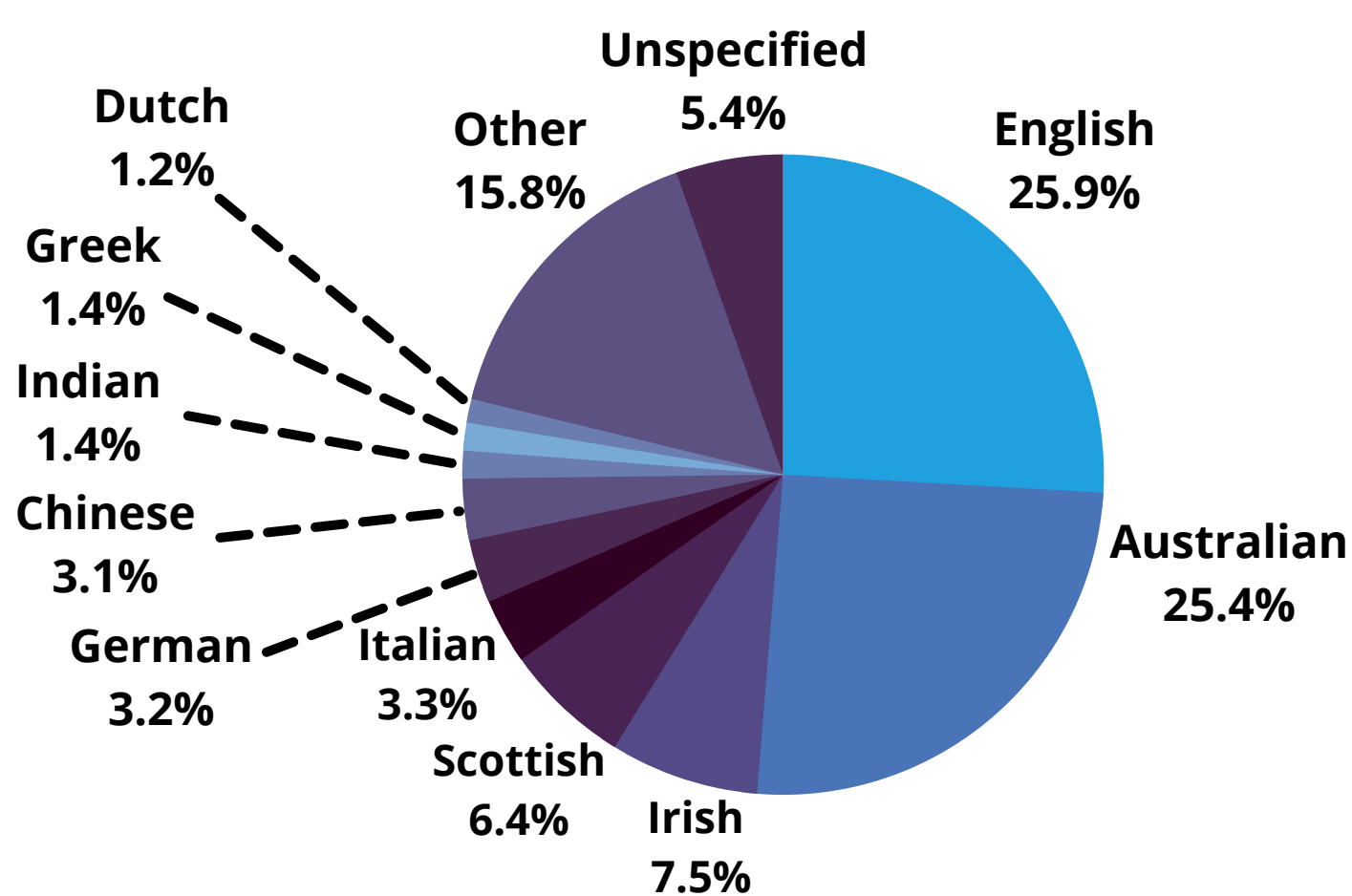
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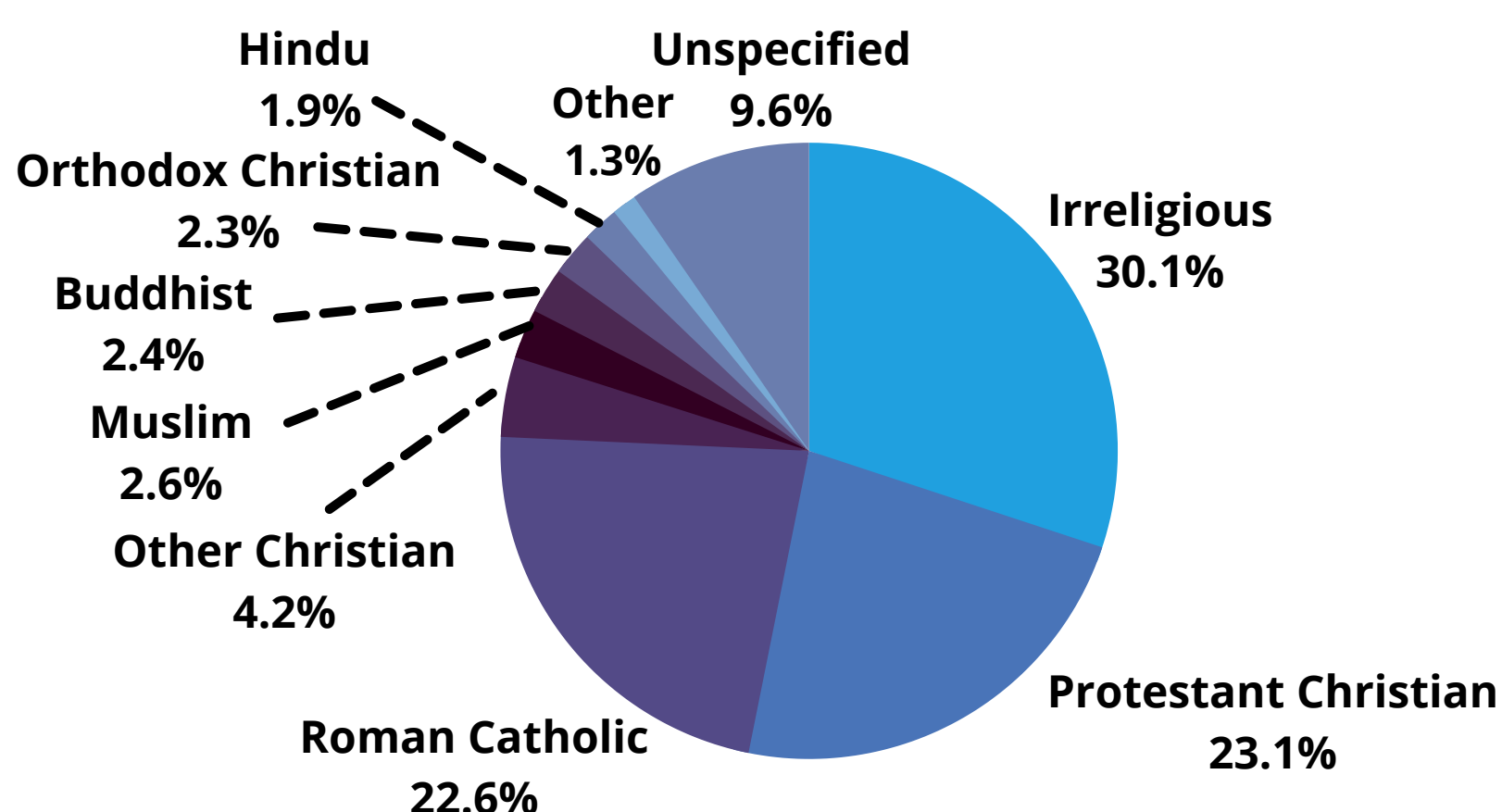
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Australia has a history of British colonialism. Post World War II, Australia witnessed a massive influx of migrants which shifted the British-dominated cultural society to a diverse multicultural one with a majority of them coming from Italy, Germany, Greece and Poland.

DEMOGRAPHICS



RELIGION



MULTICULTURALISM POLICY

- **Term:** "multiculturalism"
- **Approach:** Top-down constitutionally derived protections and legislations

DOMESTIC

- No explicit recognition of multiculturalism in the Constitution although it exists in government legislation.
- The Racial Discrimination Act (1975) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.
- The Galby Report (1978) guides multiculturalism and immigration policy to encourage people to "understand and embrace other cultures".
- Multiculturalism has been incorporated in school curriculums.
- Harmony Week - last week of March to celebrate the country's multiculturalism.
- All Australian state territories have multiculturalism policies.
- The Australia as a Multi-Cultural Society report (1977) multiculturalism in the Australian context as being based on the "principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity, and cultural identity.
- Affirmative Action policies exist in government positions.

INTERNATIONAL Treaties

- ✓ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- ✓ International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

Promotion on international scale

- Not Explicitly

Australia

Backgroundⁱ

- Population: 25,466,459 (2020 est.)
- Demographics: English, 25.9%; Australian, 25.4%; Irish, 7.5%; Scottish, 6.4%; Italian, 3.3%; German, 3.2%; Chinese, 3.1%; Indian, 1.4%; Greek, 1.4%; Dutch, 1.2%; Other, 15.8% (inc. Australian Aboriginal, 0.5%); Unspecified, 5.4%
- Languages: English, 72.7%; Mandarin, 2.5%; Arabic, 1.4%; Cantonese, 1.2%; Vietnamese, 1.2%; Italian, 1.2%; Greek, 1%; Other, 14.8%; Unspecified, 6.5%
- Religion: Irreligious, 30.1%; Protestant Christian, 23.1%; Roman Catholic, 22.6%; other Christian, 4.2%; Muslim, 2.6%; Buddhist, 2.4%; Orthodox Christian, 2.3%; Hindu, 1.9%; Other, 1.3%; Unspecified, 9.6%.
- Term: Multiculturalism.ⁱⁱ
- Top Down or Bottom Up: Top-Down

Australia is a midsize country with a population of approximately 25 million. Located in Oceania, Australia shares much with Canada, including a common British colonial past, parliamentary democracy, and being a nation shaped by immigrants. As in Canada, Australia's multiculturalism emerged after the abandonment formerly restrictive immigration policies based on race (the White Australia Policy).

Post World War II, Australia witnessed a massive influx of immigrants primarily from Italy, Germany, Greece and Poland which shifted the British-dominated cultural society to a more diverse one.ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'multicultural' first entered into Australian national discourse in 1973 with a speech by Minister of Immigration Al Grassby, and subsequently led to the drafting of Australia's first multiculturalism policy report, Australia as a Multicultural Society, in 1977. The most recent report, Multicultural Australia: Strong, United, Successful, was published in 2018.

Notably, Australia is the only major democracy without a formal Bill of Rights, making court rulings and other legislation particularly important to the protection of fundamental freedoms in the country. One particularly important milestone for Australia was its signing and ratification of the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The ratification of this treaty served as an impetus to bring Australian law into accordance with it (Racial Discrimination Act [1975])^{iv} and Australia celebrates Harmony Week annually to mark its signing and celebrate multiculturalism.

In recent years, Australian politicians have called their country the "most successful multicultural society in the world."^v Yet, at the same time, Australia has also moved to a narrower interpretation of multiculturalism in recent years, placing greater stress on social cohesion and integration than in the past and as compared to Canadian multiculturalism efforts.

Comparative Analysis: Domestic Legal

Approach

Government-led; Top-Down, through legislation.

- No regular commitment to evaluate success/failure of multiculturalism policies, akin to Canada's reports.

Constitutional Protections

Section 116 of the Australian Constitution (1900) prohibits the establishment of a state religion and guarantees the right to "free exercise" of religion.^{vi}

The Constitution does not, however, contain explicit protection for other fundamental freedoms, like speech or association, although Australian courts have ruled that these are implied.^{vii}

Australia is unique among Western democracies in having no formal human rights act. Like Britain, Australia's common law system relies upon "'judge-made' law" and historical laws like the Magna Carta.^{viii}

Like Canada, pressures from immigrant communities led to a reassessment and ultimate abandonment of restrictive immigration and assimilationist policies in the 1960s. Multiculturalism subsequently entered the Australian discourse with a speech entitled "A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future," given in 1973 by then-Minister of Immigration Al Grassby.^{ix}

The Racial Discrimination Act (1975), passed to bring Australian law in accordance with the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.^x

In 1986,^{xi} the Australian Human Rights Commission was created, which is tasked with investigating and resolving human rights complaints, as well as conducting research and advising the government on discrimination issues in Australia.^{xii}

Explicit Recognition of Multiculturalism

Not in the Constitution.

In other government legislation? Yes.

Comparative Analysis: Domestic Practical

Valuing and Active Promotion of Diversity

The Australia as a Multi-cultural Society report (1977) defined multiculturalism in the Australian context as being based on the "principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity, and cultural identity."^{xiii}

Later, the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1989), slightly modified these principles into the "right to a cultural identity," social justice (equality of opportunity and removal of discriminatory barriers), "economic efficiency" (the need to "utilize talents of all Australians."

The 1989 National Agenda also expanded the 1982 report's principle of participation in society, adding that citizens had an obligation to have "overriding and unifying commitment to Australia" first and foremost, to "accept the "basic structures and principles of Australia," and to accept that the right to express one's own culture entails a "reciprocal responsibility" to accept the culture of others.^{xiv}

The subsequent Galby Report (1978) set out principles to guide Australian multiculturalism and immigration policy, including encouraging people to “understand and embrace other cultures” and calling for immigrants to be able to access special services to ensure “equality of access and provision.”^{xv}

Acting on the Galby Report, the Australian government began funding multicultural language programs in schools and grants for ethnic organizations.^{xvi}

- Multiculturalism as an idea has also been incorporated in school curriculums in Australia.^{xvii}
- However, unlike Canada, multiculturalism in Australia was “always premised on the supremacy

Australia celebrates Harmony Week in the last week of March to celebrate the country’s multiculturalism.^{xviii}

The Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (2003), reaffirmed Australia’s commitment to diversity but placed a greater stress on social cohesion than past policies. In accordance with such a shift, it outlined new principles of “responsibilities of all; respect for each person, fairness for each person, and benefits for all.”^{xix}

This general shift from broader multiculturalism to a greater emphasis on social cohesion has continued to the present day. However, the language of multiculturalism is still regularly invoked by Australian politicians.^{xx}

The most recent multiculturalism policy was published in 2018, the first in fifteen years, titled Multicultural Australia: Strong, United, Successful. It identifies three “shared values” (respect, equality, and freedom) and “shared responsibilities” such as loyalty to Australia, mutual responsibility, and an expectation to respect Australian law and democracy.^{xxi}

In addition to federal policies, all Australian state territories have multiculturalism policies.^{xxii}

Multiculturalism as a Means to Integration

Yes. The Australia as a Multi-Cultural Society report (1977) multiculturalism in the Australian context as being based on the “principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity, and cultural identity.”^{xxiii}

In 1982, the Multiculturalism for all Australians report added an additional principle to the 1977 definition: “equal responsibility for, commit to and participation in society.”

The most recent multiculturalism policy, Multicultural in Australia: Strong, United, Successful, likewise places importance on “shared responsibilities” including upholding democracy, loyalty to Australia, and upholding individual rights.^{xxiv}

Affirmative Action Policies

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1987) requires that the Australian government, and all entities in which the government holds controlling interest, collect data on hiring policies to identify any that may disadvantage women or other designated groups. Government agencies are required to create a plan to address any identified shortcomings,^{xxv} however they are not required to compensate for past disadvantage.^{xxvi}

Some state governments, such as South Australia, have more extensive affirmative action policies.^{xxvii}

Comparative Analysis: International

International Treaties

Australia signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1972 and ratified the treaty in 1980.^{xxviii}

Australia signed the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1967 and ratified the treaty in 1968.^{xxix}

- Interestingly, the Covenant provided the impetus for the Racial Discrimination Act (1975).^{xxx}
- Harmony Week also aligns with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.^{xxxi}

International Promotion of Multiculturalism

Not explicitly.

ⁱ "Australia," The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html/>.

ⁱⁱ Elsa Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," Research Paper no. 6, Parliament of Australia, 2010-2011, 6,

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1011/11rp06

ⁱⁱⁱ "Australia", Britannica.com, accessed April 02, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/The-advent-of-multicultural-society>.

^{iv} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 4

^v "Multicultural Australia: Australia's multicultural statement," Home Affairs, Government of Australia, accessed on November 26, 2020, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/Statements/english-multicultural-statement.pdf>

^{vi} "Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act," Federal Registry of Legislation, Government of Australia, accessed on November 26, 2020, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2013Q00005>

^{vii} "How are human rights protected in Australian law?" Australian Human Rights Commission, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/how-are-human-rights-protected-australian-law>

^{viii} Australian Human Rights Commission, "How are human rights protected in Australian law?"

^{ix} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 4.

^x "Racial Discrimination Act 1975," Federal Register of Legislation, Government of Australia, accessed November, 26 2020, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00089>

^{xi} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 9

^{xii} "About," Australian Human Rights Commission, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://humanrights.gov.au/about>

^{xiii} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 6.

^{xiv} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 10.

^{xv} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 7-8.

^{xvi} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 8.

^{xvii} "Australia," Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies, Queen's University, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/mcp/immigrant-minorities/evidence/australia>

^{xviii} "About - Harmony Week," Home Affairs, Government of Australia, accessed November 26, 2020,

<https://www.harmony.gov.au/about>

^{xix} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 15.

^{xx} "Australia," Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies, Queen's University.

^{xxi} Government of Australia, "Multicultural Australia: Australia's multicultural statement."

^{xxii} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 20.

^{xxiii} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 6.

^{xxiv} Government of Australia, "Multicultural Australia: Australia's multicultural statement."

^{xxv} "Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act," Federal Registry of Legislation, Government of Australia, accessed on November 26, 2020, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00220>

^{xxvi} "Australia," Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies, Queen's University

^{xxvii} "Australia," Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies, Queen's University

^{xxviii} "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," United Nations Treaty Collection, United Nations, accessed November 26, 2020, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&clang=_en

^{xxix} "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," United Nations Treaty Collection, United Nations, accessed November 26, 2020, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en

^{xxx} Koleth, "Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas," 4

^{xxxi} Government of Australia, "About - Harmony Week."