



# Western Australian Community Profiles 2011 Census

## Afghanistan-born

### Introduction

**This profile provides a range of information on Western Australians who were born in Afghanistan. Using data from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, it details:**

- key social and economic characteristics of the community including population size, age and gender profile, education, income and workforce participation
- migration history and cultural backgrounds including ancestry, language and religious affiliation
- family and wellbeing including marital status, family composition, living arrangements and disability.

The purpose of this profile is to assist all Western Australians to understand the State's cultural diversity and the way it has changed over time. The information can be used for a variety of purposes including policy, program and service development, research and for general interest.

### Afghanistan-born community in Western Australia

Migration from Afghanistan to Australia and Western Australia (WA) began in the mid-19th century, with the arrival of men who became known as 'Afghan cameleers'. These migrants opened up long-distance transport routes through remote and desert regions. Small numbers of Afghanistan-born people arrived throughout the 20th century, as international students in the 1960s and 1970s, and then as humanitarian entrants from the 1980s. Half (50%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians arrived after 2001, mainly as humanitarian entrants.

#### AFGHANISTAN-BORN COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

- There were 3925 Afghanistan-born people in WA in 2011, an increase of 269 per cent since 2006 (from 1460).
- There were 3266 Western Australians with Afghan ancestry.
- Almost half (46%) arrived between 2001 and 2010.
- Almost half (44%) were Australian citizens.
- There were more men (2688) than women (1237) with a sex ratio of 217 men for every 100 women.
- Almost half (48%) of the Afghanistan-born were young adults aged between 25 and 44 years. The smallest group was older people aged 65 years and over (2%).
- The median age for the Afghanistan-born was 30 years.

- ▣ Half (50%) spoke English and spoke a language other than English (LOTE) at home.
- ▣ The main languages spoken by the Afghanistan-born were Dari (54%), Hazaraghi (14%) and Persian (14%).
- ▣ Almost three-quarters (70%) lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area.
- ▣ More than one-quarter (28%) of the Afghanistan-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education, eight per cent had a post-school technical qualification and five per cent had a university qualification (5%).
- ▣ One-quarter (26%) were employed and two-thirds (66%) were not in the labour force.
- ▣ The Afghanistan-born were employed mainly as technicians and trade workers (25%), labourers (17%), and machinery operators and drivers (17%).
- ▣ Almost half (48%) were middle or low income earners with a weekly income between \$300 and \$900 (24%) or less than \$300 (24%).
- ▣ One-third (32%) owned their home and more than one-third (35%) lived in rental accommodation.
- ▣ Two-thirds (67%) of the Afghanistan-born aged over 25 years were married and almost half (47%) lived in a couple family with children.
- ▣ More than half (57%) of the Afghanistan-born aged 65 years and over required assistance with everyday living.

## Migration, culture, ancestry, language and religion

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In 2011, there were 3925 Afghanistan-born Western Australians, representing 0.2 per cent of the State's total population. This group more than doubled (269% from 1460) between 2006 and 2011. Almost half (44%) were Australian citizens.

### ARRIVAL

Almost half (46%) of the Afghanistan-born arrived in WA between 2001 and 2010. This compares with the State's total overseas-born population of which 28 per cent arrived during the same period.

### AGE AND GENDER

The Afghanistan-born population was composed of larger proportions of young adults and young people, and smaller proportions of children, adults and older people, compared with the WA population. In 2011, almost half (48%) of the Afghanistan-born were young adults aged between 25 and 44 years, a larger proportion than in 2001 (41%) and compared with the total WA population (29%).

More than one-quarter (27%) were young people aged between 15 and 24 years; this was a smaller proportion than in 2001 (35%) but larger than the proportion of all Western Australians (14%). The median age for the Afghanistan-born was 30 years, compared with 36 years for the total Western Australian population.

Between 2001 and 2011 there was a decrease in the proportion of Afghanistan-born children aged between 0 and 14 years (from 14% to 9%), and an increase in the proportion of adults aged between 45 and 64 years (from 9% to 15%). Both were smaller compared with the proportions of all Western Australians in these age groups (20% and 25%, respectively). The proportion of



Age and gender profile	Afghanistan-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Age group	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
0–14 years	7.6	11.0	9.3	17.8	13.5	20.1	19.2	19.7
15–24 years	25.1	29.5	27.3	24.1	34.6	14.1	13.3	13.7
25–44 years	51.2	40.4	47.7	39.8	40.5	29.4	28.9	29.1
45–64 years	14.4	15.9	15.2	14.9	9.0	25.1	25.3	25.2
65+ years	1.7	3.2	2.1	3.4	2.4	11.3	13.2	12.3
All (number)	2688	1237	3925	1460	1648	1,126,177	1,112,994	2,239,171
Sex ratio			217.3	116.0	258.3			

Afghanistan-born older people aged 65 years and over was unchanged (2%), but was smaller compared with the total WA population (12%).

In 2011, there were more Afghanistan-born men than women. The sex ratio (number of men per 100 women) was 217. This was lower than in 2001 (258), but was higher than in 2006 (116) and compared with total WA population (101).

### ANCESTRY

People born in Afghanistan, who have one or both parents born there, or who were born elsewhere but have Afghan ancestors, may identify that they have

Afghan ancestry. In 2011, more than three-quarters (81%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians identified as having Afghan ancestry, a smaller proportion than in 2006 (90%).

Afghanistan-born Western Australians also reported that they had Hazara (15%), Australian (2%), English (2%) and Iranian (2%) ancestry. Almost three-quarters (72%) had one or both parents born overseas.

Small numbers and proportions of the WA population (3266 or 0.1%) and the Australia-born (667 or 0.05%) identified that they had Afghan ancestry.

Ancestry	Afghanistan-born		WA population 2011	Australia-born 2011
	2011	2006		
Self-identified ancestry	Total %	Total %	Total %	Total %
Afghan	81.4	90.1	0.1	0.0
Hazara	14.6	2.3	0.0	0.0
Australian	2.4	2.4	32.3	49.6
English	2.2	2.5	37.9	41.3
Iranian	2.1	1.9	0.2	0.1
One or both parents born overseas	72.4	97.8	56.2	35.2
Both parents born in Australia	0.2	N/A	43.8	64.8
One parent born in Australia	0.2	0.5	51.3	75.3

Language	Afghanistan-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
English proficiency	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
English only	1.4	1.7	1.5	2.3	1.2	78.8	79.8	79.3
Other language and English; very well or well	45.6	58.0	49.5	67.7	39.1	12.4	12.7	12.5
Other language and English; not well or not at all	14.8	39.0	22.4	27.3	23.5	1.8	2.4	2.1
<b>Main language spoken at home other than English (top two responses)*</b>								
Dari	31.1	57.5	39.5	64.4	N/A**	0.1	0.1	0.1
Hazaraghi	14.9	12.2	14.1	N/A**	N/A**	0.0	0.0	0.0

\* The first three columns show the top two responses for the Afghanistan-born. Data for the WA population are not the top responses and are presented for comparative purposes.

\*\* N/A = Not applicable as Hazaraghi was not included in the 2006 and 2001 Census and Dari was not included in the 2001 Census.

## LANGUAGES

In 2011, almost three-quarters (72%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians reported speaking a language other than English (LOTE) at home, mainly Dari (40%), Hazaraghi (14%) and Persian (excluding Dari) (14%). A larger proportion of women (58%) than men (31%) reported speaking Dari.

In 2011, half (50%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians reported speaking a LOTE and speaking English well or very well, a larger proportion than in 2001 (39%). Less than two per cent of the Afghanistan-born reported speaking only English at home, almost unchanged since 2001.

Almost one-quarter of the Afghanistan-born (22%) reported speaking a LOTE and English not well or not at all, which was comparable to 2001 (24%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born women (39%) than men (15%) reported low levels of English proficiency.

## RELIGION

In 2011, almost three-quarters (72%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians reported that they identified with Islam. This had increased since 2001 (62%) but decreased since 2006 (95%). Less than one per cent reported that they identified with Christianity or that they identified as having no religion. More than one-quarter (27%) of the Afghanistan-born did not respond to the Census question on religion.



## Geographic distribution

Between 2006 and 2011, the settlement pattern for the Afghanistan-born changed. There was a decrease in the proportion living in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area (from 91% to 70%) and an increase in the proportion living in non-metropolitan areas (from 9% to 30%). This settlement pattern was similar to the total Western Australian population of which 77 per cent lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area and 22 per cent in non-metropolitan areas.

Within the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area, the Afghanistan-born lived mainly in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Gosnells (15%), Wanneroo (11%) and Stirling (10%).

## Education

In 2011, more than one-quarter (28%) of the Afghanistan-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education. This was almost unchanged since 2001 (30%), but was smaller than the proportion of the total WA population (48%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born women (40%) than men (22%) had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education.

Between 2001 and 2011, the proportions of the Afghanistan-born with qualifications at degree/tertiary level or at advanced diploma, diploma and certificate level were unchanged (5% and 8%, respectively). A smaller proportion of the Afghanistan-born held a post-school qualification (14%) compared with the total WA population (45%).

More than one-tenth (15%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians reported that they had not attended school. This compared with less than one per cent of the total WA population (0.6%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born women (25%) than men (11%) had not attended school.

Educational attainment	Afghanistan-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Degree/tertiary level	4.8	6.4	5.3	10.7	6.0	15.9	19.2	17.5
Advanced diploma/diploma/certificate	6.8	11.3	8.2	9.9	6.8	32.8	22.4	27.6
Completed Year 12/equivalent	22.2	39.6	27.5	46.7	30.0	46.2	49.4	47.8
Did not attend school	11.1	24.7	15.3	15.8	7.6	0.5	0.7	0.6

## Labour force

### PARTICIPATION

The labour force participation rate is the proportion of the total population, aged 15 years and over, who are employed or unemployed and able to work. In 2011, one-third (32%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians were in the labour force. This proportion was smaller than in 2006 (45%) and compared with the total WA population (64%).

In 2011, one-quarter (26%) of Afghanistan-born people were employed and two-thirds (66%) were not in the labour force. The proportion employed had decreased since 2006 (from 40%) while the proportion not in the labour force had increased (from 52%). The comparative proportions for the total WA population were 61 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively.

The rate of unemployment for the Afghanistan-born was consistent (around 6%). This compared with three per cent for all Western Australians.

Labour force	Afghanistan-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Employed	30.0	18.2	26.4	40.2	18.9	66.7	55.3	61.0
Unemployed	5.7	5.2	5.6	5.0	9.0	3.2	2.9	3.0
Not in the labour force	62.5	74.3	66.1	52.0	69.8	22.7	36.1	29.4

The proportion of Afghanistan-born men employed (30%) was almost double the proportion of women (18%). A larger proportion of women (74%) than men (63%) were not in the labour force. These gender-based trends reflect those for the total Western Australian population, although the proportion of Western Australian women in the labour force (58%) was larger, and women not in the labour force was smaller (36%) compared with the Afghanistan-born.

### OCCUPATION

In 2011, the Afghanistan-born were mainly employed as technicians and trade workers (25%), labourers<sup>1</sup> (17%), and machinery operators and drivers (17%).

Afghanistan-born men were mainly employed as technicians and trade workers (31%), machinery operators and drivers (21%), and labourers (18%). Afghanistan-born women were mainly employed as community and personal service workers (26%), professionals (18%) and sales workers (17%).

### BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

In 2011, 20 per cent of Afghanistan-born Western Australians were working in their own small or medium-sized business. This proportion was almost unchanged since 2006 (18%) but smaller compared with the proportion of the total WA population (15%).

More than half (57%) of the businesses owned by the Afghanistan-born were self-managed, more than one-third (40%) employed between one and 19 people and the remainder employed 20 or more people (3%). The proportion of Afghanistan-born men (24%) working in their own business was four times larger compared with women (6%).

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2011 Census Dictionary, 'labourers' include cleaners and laundry workers, construction and mining labourers, factory process workers, farm, forestry and garden workers, food preparation assistants and a miscellaneous category such as handypersons, recycling and rubbish collectors and vending machine attendants.



Weekly income	Afghanistan-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006*	2001**	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
None	7.5	23.8	12.5	8.7	2.9	5.6	9.8	7.7
<\$300	16.8	39.8	23.9	37.5	36.4	11.7	19.8	15.7
\$300—999	23.0	26.1	24.0	38.4	19.3	29.3	41.9	35.6
\$1000 or more	7.7	1.9	5.9	4.2	1.0	43.0	20.2	31.6

Note: \* Unlike 2011 and 2001, the threshold for the 2006 Census was less than \$250. The next income bracket was \$250—999.

\*\* For the 2001 Census 'no income' also included negative income.

## INCOME

Almost one-quarter (24%) of the Afghanistan-born were middle income earners with a weekly income between \$300 and \$999; this was slightly larger than in 2001 (19%) but smaller compared with the proportion of all Western Australians (36%).

Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportion of the Afghanistan-born earning a weekly income of \$1000 or more (from 1% to 6%), but this was smaller compared with all Western Australians (32%). There was a decrease in the proportion of people earning a weekly income of less than \$300 (from 36% to 24%), but this was larger compared with the total WA population (16%).

The proportion of the Afghanistan-born without a weekly income increased between 2001 and 2011 (from 3% to 13%), and was larger compared with that of the total WA population (8%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born women (40%) than men (17%) were low income earners.

## HOUSING

In 2011, one-third (32%) of the Afghanistan-born owned their home, compared with almost two-thirds (63%) of all Western Australians.

A small proportion of the Afghanistan-born (5%) lived in a home they fully owned, compared with almost one-quarter (24%) of the total WA population. The proportion of people living in a home they were purchasing (28%) was smaller than the proportion of the total WA population (39%). Both proportions for the Afghanistan-born were comparable to 2006.

More than one-third (35%) of Afghanistan-born Western Australians were living in rental accommodation. This proportion was smaller compared with 2006 (56%), but larger compared with the total WA population (27%).

## Family

### MARITAL STATUS

In 2011, two-thirds (67%) of the Afghanistan-born aged 25 years and over were married; a smaller proportion than in 2006 (84%) but larger compared with the proportion of the total WA population (58%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born women (73%) than men (63%) were married.

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of the Afghanistan-born who were divorced or separated (6%) was almost unchanged (5%), but was smaller compared with all Western Australians (14%). During the same period there was a decrease in the proportion of the Afghanistan-born who were widowed (from 8% to 4%); the majority were women. The proportion of the Afghanistan-born widowed was similar to the total WA population (6%).

The proportion of the Afghanistan-born who had never married was almost unchanged between 2006 and 2011 (around 24%) and was comparable to the total WA population (23%). A larger proportion of Afghanistan-born men (31%) than women (6%) had never married.

### FAMILY COMPOSITION

In 2011, almost half (47%) of the Afghanistan-born lived in couple families with children; a smaller proportion than in 2006 (65%), but comparable to the total WA population (45%).

A smaller proportion (6%) of the Afghanistan-born lived in couple families without children, which was comparable to 2006 (5%) but smaller compared with all Western Australians (20%).

In 2011, 10 per cent of the Afghanistan-born lived in one-parent families, comparable to 2006 (13%) and the same as the proportion for the total WA population (10%).

### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Between 2006 and 2011, there was a decrease in the proportion of the Afghanistan-born who lived with a spouse or partner (from 43% to 32%). This proportion was smaller compared with all Western Australians (42%). A larger proportion of women (48%) than men (24%) were living with a spouse.

Registered marital status (25+ years)	Afghanistan-born				WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	Male %	Female %	Total %
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %			
Married	62.8	73.1	67.3	83.7	59.0	57.1	58.1
Widowed	0.5	13.4	4.3	8.1	2.3	8.8	5.6
Divorced/separated	5.8	7.3	6.4	5.0	12.3	14.9	13.6
Never married	30.9	6.4	24.3	26.2	26.3	19.2	22.7

### Family composition (all ages)

Couple family with children	36.8	69.7	47.1	64.8	45.0	44.7	44.8
Couple family without children	5.0	8.2	6.0	5.3	19.4	20.3	19.8
One-parent family	6.0	16.8	9.5	13.2	7.8	12.0	9.9



One-third (32%) of the Afghanistan-born were living with other family or non-family members, a smaller proportion than in 2006 (43%) and compared with the WA population (38%). A similar proportion of the Afghanistan-born (almost all males; 31%) were not living at home, which was larger compared with the total WA population (8%).

### **DISABILITY/SICKNESS**

Disability refers to the level of assistance a person requires in day-to-day activities such as eating, dressing and bathing. In 2011, more than half (57%) of the Afghanistan-born aged 65 years and over, and a small proportion (3%) of people aged between 15 and 64 years, required such assistance. This compared with the WA figures of 16 per cent and two per cent, respectively, for the same age-groups.

One-tenth of the Afghanistan-born aged 15 years and over (10%) was providing unpaid care and/or assistance to a family member consistent with the total WA population (9%).

## **More information**

For more information and assistance, please contact:

### **OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

Department of Local Government and  
Communities

GPO Box R1250 PERTH WA 6844

Phone: (08) 6551 8700

Fax: (08) 6552 1555

Email: [harmony@omi.wa.gov.au](mailto:harmony@omi.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au)