



Western Australian Community Profiles 2011 Census

Burma-born

Introduction

This profile provides a range of information on Western Australians who were born in Burma. 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.

Burma-born community in Western Australia

There have been two significant waves of migration from Burma to Western Australia (WA). Large numbers of Anglo-Burmese people migrated following Burma's independence in 1948. More than one-third (39%) of Burma-born Western Australians arrived before 1981. Migration from Burma continued steadily between 1981 and 2000, but has increased since 2001. A further third (35%) of WA's Burma-born community arrived after 2001, mainly as humanitarian entrants.

BURMA-BORN COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

- There were 7454 Burma-born people in WA in 2011, an increase from 5563 in 2006.
- There were 8725 Western Australians with Burmese ancestry.
- Similar proportions arrived before 1981 (39%) and between 2001 and 2010 (34%).
- There were more women (3924) than men (3530) with a sex ratio of 90 men for every 100 women.
- More than one-third (38%) of Burma-born people were adults aged between 45 and 64 years, and the smallest group was children aged between 0 to 14 years (4%).
- The median age of the Burma-born was 48 years.

- ▣ Almost half (47%) of the Burma-born spoke English well and spoke a language other than English (LOTE) at home.
- ▣ The main languages spoken by the Burma-born were Burmese (50%) and Karen (10%).
- ▣ Most (95%) of the Burma-born lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area.
- ▣ Half (49%) of the Burma-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education, and more than one-third (39%) had a technical (22%) or tertiary (17%) qualification.
- ▣ More than half (53%) were employed and 42 per cent were not in the labour force.
- ▣ The Burma-born were employed mainly as labourers (22%), professionals (14%), technicians and trade workers (14%), and clerical and administrative workers (13%).
- ▣ Almost half (44%) were middle income earners with a weekly income of between \$300 and \$999. Less than one-tenth (8%) had no weekly income.
- ▣ Almost two-thirds (61%) of Burma-born people owned their home.
- ▣ Almost two-thirds (65%) of the Burma-born aged 25 years and over were married and almost half (48%) lived in couple families with children.
- ▣ More than one-fifth (21%) of the Burma-born aged 65 years and over required assistance with everyday living.

Migration, culture, ancestry, language and religion

In 2011, there were 7454 Burma-born Western Australians, representing 0.03 per cent of the State's total population. This group increased by 34 per cent (from 5563) between 2006 and 2011. Almost three-quarters (71%) were Australian citizens.

ARRIVAL

More than one-third (39%) of the Burma-born arrived in WA before 1981. A further third (34%) arrived between 2001 and 2010, mainly as humanitarian entrants.

This compares to the arrival pattern of the State's total overseas-born population, of which 24 per cent arrived before 1981, and 28 per cent arrived between 2001 and 2010.

AGE AND GENDER

The Burma-born population is composed of a larger proportion of adults and older people and a smaller proportion of children and young people than the total WA population. In 2011, more than one-third (38%) of the Burma-born were adults aged between 45 and 64 years; this was comparable to 2001 (35%), but larger compared with the proportion of the total WA population (25%). The proportion of older people aged 65 years and over remained stable (around 19%) but was larger compared with all Western Australians (12%). The median age of the Burma-born was 48 years compared with 36 years for the total WA population.

In 2011, 10 per cent of the Burma-born were young people aged between 15 and 24 years, a larger proportion than in 2001 (7%) but smaller compared with the total WA population (14%). A small proportion (4%) of the Burma-born were children aged between 0 and 14 years, similar to 2001 (3%), but lower compared with the proportion of the total WA population (20%).



Age and gender profile	Burma-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Age group	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
0–14 years	3.6	3.6	3.6	2.2	2.9	20.1	19.2	19.7
15–24 years	10.8	9.0	9.9	6.5	6.6	14.1	13.3	13.7
25–44 years	30.9	29.2	30.0	29.4	35.6	29.4	28.9	29.1
45–64 years	37.6	38.4	38.0	39.2	35.3	25.1	25.3	25.2
65+ years	17.1	19.8	18.5	22.6	19.7	11.3	13.2	12.3
All (number)	3530	3924	7454	5563	5494	1,126,177	1,112,994	2,239,171
Sex ratio	90.0			87.8	90.0	101.2		

In 2011, there were more Burma-born women than men. The sex ratio (number of men per 100 women) was 90. This was similar to 2006 (88) and 2001 (90) but lower compared with the total WA population (101).

ANCESTRY

People born in Burma, who have one or more parents born there, or who were born elsewhere but have Burmese ancestors, may identify that they have Burmese ancestry.

In 2011, 60 per cent of the Burma-born identified that they had Burmese ancestry, a similar proportion to 2006 (64%). Burma-born Western Australians also reported that they had English (15%), Karen (11%), Chinese (6%) and Anglo-Burmese (5%) ancestry. Most (98%) had one or both parents born overseas.

Small numbers and proportions of the WA population (8725 or 0.4%) and of the Australia-born (3703 or 0.3%) identified as having Burmese ancestry.

Ancestry	Burma-born		WA population 2011	Australia-born 2011
	2011	2006		
Self-identified ancestry	Total %	Total %	Total %	Total %
Burmese	59.6	63.9	0.4	0.3
English	14.7	19.7	37.9	41.4
Karen	11.1	2.8	0.1	0.0*
Chinese	5.6	6.0	3.4	1.2
Anglo-Burmese	4.7	6.6	0.0*	0.0*
One or both parents born overseas	97.7	N/A	56.2	35.2
Both parents born in Australia	0.1	N/A	43.8	64.8
One parent born in Australia	0.4	N/A	51.3	75.3

* The proportions are listed as zero because of the small numbers identifying with these ancestries.

Language	Burma-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
English proficiency	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
English only	31.7	32.6	32.2	44.1	47.9	78.8	79.8	79.3
Other language and English; very well or well	48.8	45.9	47.2	45.8	44.6	12.4	12.7	12.5
Other language and English; not well or not at all	18.3	20.7	19.5	9.2	7.0	1.8	2.4	2.1
Main language spoken at home other than English (top two responses)*								
Burmese	49.6	51.0	50.3	49.3	45.0	0.2	0.2	0.2
Karen	10.6	9.5	10.0	1.6	N/A**	0.1	0.1	0.1

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

** In 2001, three per cent of Burma-born people spoke other languages including Lisu, Pho, Rawang and Burman not further defined.

LANGUAGES

In 2011, two-thirds (67%) of Burma-born Western Australians reported speaking a language other than English (LOTE) at home, mainly Burmese (50%) and Karen (10%).

Almost half (47%) of the Burma-born spoke a LOTE and English very well or well, which was comparable to 2006 and 2001 (around 46%). Almost one-third (32%) reported speaking only English at home, a smaller proportion than in 2001 (48%).

Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportion of Burma-born people who spoke a LOTE and English not well or not at all (from 7% to 20%).

RELIGION

The religious affiliation of Burma-born Western Australians changed between 2001 and 2011. There was a decrease in identification with Christianity (from 80% to 73%), while affiliation with Buddhism increased (from 13% to 21%). Small proportions of the Burma-born identified with Islam (2%) or as having no religion (2%). This reflects the general trend for the total WA population for which identification with Christianity has decreased and identification with non-Christian religions, or as having no religion, has increased.



Geographic distribution

Between 2001 and 2011, the settlement pattern for Burma-born Western Australians remained stable. In 2011, most (95%) lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area and five per cent lived in non-metropolitan areas. Compared with the Burma-born, a smaller proportion of the total WA population lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area (77%) and a larger proportion lived in non-metropolitan areas (22%).

Within the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area, the Burma-born mainly lived in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Stirling (17%), Gosnells (16%) and Wanneroo (12%).

Education

In 2011, half (49%) of the Burma-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education. This was similar to 2006 (53%), 2001 (49%) and the total WA population (48%).

Between 2001 and 2011, there were increases in the proportions of the Burma-born with qualifications at degree/tertiary level (from 13% to 17%), and at advanced diploma, diploma and certificate level (from 19% to 22%). A smaller proportion of the Burma-born held post-school qualifications compared with the total WA population (38% and 45%, respectively). A larger proportion of Burma-born men (43%) than women (35%) had a post-school qualification.

A small proportion (4%) of Burma-born Western Australians reported that they had not attended school.

Educational attainment	Burma-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Degree/tertiary level	16.4	16.9	16.6	15.2	12.9	15.9	19.2	17.5
Advanced diploma/ diploma/ certificate	26.1	17.6	21.6	20.4	19.4	32.8	22.4	27.6
Completed Year 12/ equivalent	50.4	47.9	49.1	52.9	49.0	46.2	49.4	47.8
Did not attend school	3.7	4.9	4.3	2.0	2.1	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, more than half (56%) of Burma-born Western Australians were in the labour force; this was comparable to 2006 (58%) and 2001 (57%), but lower compared with the total State population (64%).

The proportion not in the labour force was stable between 2001 and 2011 (around 41%), but was larger compared with all Western Australians (29%). The rates of employment and unemployment for the Burma-born were also stable (at around 53% and 3%, respectively). The proportion of people unemployed was comparable to the total WA population (3%) while the proportion employed was higher in the total WA population (61%).

Labour force	Burma-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Employed	61.2	45.3	52.8	55.8	53.1	66.7	55.3	61.0
Unemployed	3.8	2.7	3.2	2.1	4.0	3.2	2.9	3.0
Not in the labour force	33.3	49.7	41.9	39.9	41.2	22.7	36.1	29.4

A larger proportion of Burma-born men (61%) were employed than women (45%). A larger proportion of women (50%) than men (33%) were not in the labour force. These gender-based trends reflect those for the total Western Australian population, of which 67 per cent of men and 55 per cent of women were employed, while more than one-third of women (36%) and less than a quarter of men (23%) were not in the labour force.

OCCUPATION

The Burma-born were mainly employed as labourers¹ (22%), professionals (14%) and technicians and trade workers (14%). A similar proportion of the WA population were technicians and trade workers (17%).

Burma-born men were mainly employed as labourers (22%), technicians and trade workers (21%), and machinery operators and drivers (16%). Burma-born women were mainly employed as labourers (21%), clerical and administrative workers (20%), and community and personal service workers (19%).

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

In 2011, nine per cent of the Burma-born were small or medium business owners. This proportion was comparable to 2006 (11%) but smaller compared with the total WA population (15%).

More than half (52%) of the businesses owned by the Burma-born employed between one and 19 people, 42 per cent were self-managed, and the remainder (4%) employed 20 or more people. A larger proportion of Burma-born men (11%) than women (7%) were business owners.

¹ 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	Burma-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006*	2001**	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
None	5.3	10.0	7.7	6.0	5.3	5.6	9.8	7.7
<\$300	22.0	27.8	25.0	25.9	40.3	11.7	19.8	15.7
\$300–999	42.0	44.9	43.5	51.5	44.7	29.3	41.9	35.6
\$1000 or more	27.0	12.2	19.2	12.3	6.2	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

In 2011, almost half (44%) of the Burma-born were middle income earners with a weekly income of between \$300 and \$999. This was similar to 2001 (45%) but larger compared with the proportion of all Western Australians (36%).

Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of Burma-born Western Australians earning a high income of \$1000 or more per week tripled (from 6% to 19%), but was smaller compared with all Western Australians (32%). The proportion of people earning a weekly income of less than \$300 decreased during the same period (from 40% to 25%), but was larger compared with the total WA population (16%).

The proportion (8%) of the Burma-born without a weekly income was the same as for all Western Australians (8%).

Almost equal proportions of Burma-born women (45%) and men (42%) were middle income earners. A larger proportion of men (27%) than women (12%) were high income earners, while a larger proportion of women (10%) than men (5%) had no weekly income.

HOUSING

In 2011, almost two-thirds (61%) of the Burma-born owned their home, which was comparable to the proportion of all Western Australians (63%).

One-quarter (26%) of the Burma-born lived in a home they fully owned and more than one-third (35%) lived in a home they were purchasing. The comparative figures for the total WA population were 24 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively.

A larger proportion of the Burma-born (33%) than the total WA population (26%) were living in rental accommodation.

Family

MARITAL STATUS

In 2011, almost two-thirds (65%) of the Burma-born aged 25 years and over were married. This proportion was comparable to 2006 (64%) but larger than the total WA population (58%).

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportions of the Burma-born who were divorced or separated, widowed, or who had never married, were unchanged (at around 12%, 8% and 15%, respectively). The rates of divorce and widowhood were comparable to those for all Western Australians (14% and 6%, respectively), while the proportion who had never married was smaller (23%).

FAMILY COMPOSITION

In 2011, almost half (48%) of the Burma-born were living in couple families with children, which was comparable to 2006 (44%) and to the total WA population (45%).

Almost one-quarter (22%) of the Burma-born were living in couple families without children, which was also comparable to 2006 (19%) and to all Western Australians (20%).

A smaller proportion (11%) of Burma-born Western Australians were living in one-parent families, which was almost unchanged since 2006 (10%) and was comparable to the proportion of the total WA population (10%). A larger proportion of Burma-born women (14%) than men (7%) lived in one-parent families.

Registered marital status	Burma-born				WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (25+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Married	68.6	61.4	64.8	63.9	59.0	57.1	58.1
Widowed	2.2	13.4	8.2	9.0	2.3	8.8	5.6
Divorced/separated	11.5	12.2	11.9	12.7	12.3	14.9	13.6
Never married	17.7	12.9	15.2	14.4	26.3	19.2	22.7

Family composition

Couple family with children	50.0	45.4	47.6	44.3	45.0	44.7	44.8
Couple family without children	21.7	22.6	22.1	25.4	19.4	20.3	19.8
One-parent family	7.4	13.5	10.6	10.4	7.8	12.0	9.9



LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

In 2011, more than half (57%) of the Burma-born were living with a spouse or partner; this proportion was comparable to 2006 (60%) but larger compared with the proportion of all Western Australians (42%).

Between 2006 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportion of the Burma-born living with other family or non-family members (from 18% to 23%). This was smaller compared with the proportion of all Western Australians (34%) with the same living arrangements.

Comparable proportions of the Burma-born (14%) and all Western Australians (12%) were living alone. A larger proportion of Burma-born women (19%) were living alone than men (11%).

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 one in five (21%) of the Burma-born aged 65 years and over required such assistance. A larger proportion of older women (27%) than men (14%) required such assistance. The comparative proportions for the total WA population were 18 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. For all other age groups the proportions were less than two per cent.

More than one-tenth (12%) of Burma-born people aged 15 years and over were providing unpaid care and/or assistance to a family member, which was comparable to the total WA population (9%).

More information

For more information and assistance, please contact:

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