



# Western Australian Community Profiles 2011 Census Iraq-born

## Introduction

**This profile provides a range of information on Western Australians who were born in Iraq. Using 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.

## Iraq-born community in Western Australia

The Iraq-born community is one of Western Australia's new and emerging communities. New and emerging communities have relatively small populations of which the majority of members arrived after 1991. Although a small community established itself in Western Australia (WA) before 1990, beginning with small-scale migration during the 1980s, the majority of the Iraq-born community has arrived in the past 20 years.

### IRAQ-BORN COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

- There were 2599 Iraq-born in WA, 55% more than in 2006 (from 1675).
- There were 2036 Western Australians with Iraqi ancestry.
- Half (49%) arrived in WA between 2001 and 2010.
- There were more men (1424) than women (1175) with a sex ratio of 121 men for every 100 women.
- Almost half (45%) of the Iraq-born were young adults aged between 25 and 44 years and the smallest group was older people aged 65 years and over (3%).
- The median age of the Iraq-born was 33 years.
- Two-thirds (66%) spoke English well and spoke a language other than English (LOTE) at home.

- ▣ The main languages spoken by the Iraq-born were Arabic (83%) and Kurdish (6%).
- ▣ Most (97%) lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area.
- ▣ Almost two-thirds (61%) of the Iraq-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education, and more than one-third (35%) had a post-school qualification.
- ▣ More than one-quarter (29%) were employed and almost two-thirds (63%) were not in the labour force.
- ▣ The Iraq-born were employed mainly as professionals (21%), machinery operators and drivers (20%), and technicians and trade workers (17%).
- ▣ Half (44%) were low income earners with a weekly income of less than \$300 and 29% earned between \$300 and \$999 per week. One-tenth (10%) had no weekly income.
- ▣ More than one-third (42%) of the Iraq-born owned their home.
- ▣ Almost three-quarters (73%) of people aged 25 years and over were married and more than two-thirds (69%) lived in couple families with children.
- ▣ More than one-quarter (29%) of the Iraq-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 2599 Iraq-born Western Australians, representing 0.1% of the State's total population. This was an increase of 55% (from 1675) since 2006. More than two-thirds (68%) were Australian citizens.

### ARRIVAL

Almost half (49%) of the Iraq-born arrived in WA between 2001 and 2010. This compares with the State's total overseas-born population, of which more than one-quarter (28%) arrived during the same period.

### AGE AND GENDER

The Iraq-born population is composed of a larger proportion of young adults and a smaller proportion of older people compared with the total WA population. In 2011, almost half (45%) of the Iraq-born were aged between 25 and 44 years, and a small proportion (3%) were aged 65 years and over compared with proportions of 29% and 12%, respectively, for the total WA population. The proportion of Iraq-born young people aged between 15 and 24 years (21%) was larger compared with the total WA population (14%).

Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of the Iraq-born aged between 45 and 64 years almost doubled (from 11% to 20%), while the proportion of children aged between 0 and 14 years almost halved (from 21% to 11%). Both were smaller compared with the total WA population (25% and 20%, respectively).

The median age for the Iraq-born was 33 years, compared with 36 years for the total WA population.



Age and gender profile	Iraq-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Age group	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
0–14 years	10.3	12.1	11.1	14.2	21.2	20.1	19.2	19.7
15–24 years	18.3	23.3	20.6	22.6	14.9	14.1	13.3	13.7
25–44 years	44.8	45.1	44.9	44.5	49.9	29.4	28.9	29.1
45–64 years	24.0	16.0	20.4	15.6	11.1	25.1	25.3	25.2
65+ years	2.5	3.4	2.9	3.2	3.1	11.3	13.2	12.3
<b>All (number)</b>	1424	1175	2599	1675	1474	1,126,177	1,112,994	2,239,171
<b>Sex ratio</b>			121.2	121.8	158.6			101.2

In 2011, there were more Iraq-born men than women. The sex ratio (number of men per 100 women) was estimated at 121. This was similar to 2006 (122), lower than in 2001 (159), but higher compared with the total WA population (101).

### ANCESTRY

People born in Iraq, with one or both parents born there, or who were born elsewhere but have Iraqi ancestors may identify that they have Iraqi ancestry.

In 2011, almost half (48%) of the Iraq-born identified that they had Iraqi ancestry. Iraq-born Western Australians also reported that they had Arab (28%), Kurdish (8%) or English (3%) ancestry. Most (95%) had one or both parents born overseas.

Small numbers of the WA population identified that they had Iraqi (2036) and Arab (2804) ancestries.

Ancestry	Iraq-born		WA population 2011	Australia-born 2011
	2011	2006		
Self-identified ancestry	Total %	Total %	Total %	Total %
Iraqi	47.6	47.6	0.1	0*
Arab (not further defined)	27.9	22.3	0.1	0*
Kurdish	7.6	8.6	0*	0*
English	2.9	2.4	37.9	41.3
Australian	2.2	2.0	49.6	51.3
One or both parents born overseas	95.4	95.7	56.2	35.2
Both parents born in Australia	0.2	n/a	43.8	64.8
One parent born in Australia	0.5	0.7	51.3	75.3

\* The proportions are listed as zero because of the small numbers identifying with these ancestries. In 2011, the number of Australia-born identifying with Iraqi, Arab and Kurdish ancestries were 282, 423 and 113 respectively. There were 664 Western Australians who identified as having Kurdish ancestry.

Language	Iraq-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
English proficiency	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Speaks English only	4.6	3.0	3.9	4.5	4.6	78.8	79.8	79.3
Speaks other language and English; very well or well	71.1	60.1	66.1	70.9	54.9	12.4	12.7	12.5
Speaks other language and English; not well or not at all	20.0	35.7	27.1	22.8	24.8	1.8	2.4	2.1
<b>Main language spoken at home other than English (top two responses)*</b>								
Arabic	81.1	88.2	84.3	83.1	68.6	0.6	0.5	0.5
Kurdish	6.5	5.3	6.0	6.4	7.7	0**	0**	0**

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

\*\* The proportions are listed as zero because of the small numbers speaking these languages. In 2011, 403 Western Australians, 234 men and 169 women, reported speaking Kurdish.

## LANGUAGES

In 2011, most (93%) Iraq-born Western Australians reported speaking a language other than English (LOTE) at home, mainly Arabic (83%) and Kurdish (6%).

In 2011, two-thirds (66%) of the Iraq-born reported speaking a LOTE and speaking English well or very well. This was a slightly smaller proportion than in 2006 (71%), but was larger than in 2001 (55%). The proportion (4%) of the Iraq-born who spoke English only at home was comparable to 2001 (5%). A larger proportion of Iraq-born men (71%) than women (60%) reported a high level of English proficiency. More than one-quarter (27%) of the Iraq-born reported speaking a LOTE and English not well or not at all, which was unchanged since 2001 (25%).

## RELIGION

In 2011, the majority (86%) of Iraq-born Western Australians reported that they identified with Islam, an increase since 2001 (from 76%). The proportions of the Iraq-born who identified with Christianity (6%), Judaism (0.5%) and Baha'ism (0.2%), or as having no religion (2%) were relatively unchanged since 2001. This was different to the general trend for the total WA population in which identification with Christianity decreased and identification with non-Christian religions, or not identifying with any religion had increased.



## Geographic distribution

Between 2001 and 2011, the settlement pattern for Iraq-born Western Australians changed. In 2001, 84% lived in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area and 16% lived in non-metropolitan areas. By 2011, the proportion living in the Greater Perth Metropolitan Area had increased to 97% and those living in non-metropolitan areas had decreased to 3%. Compared with the Iraq-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 Iraq-born lived mainly in the Local Government Areas of Stirling (26%), Swan (15%) and Gosnells (14%).

## Education

In 2011, almost two-thirds (61%) of the Iraq-born aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 or an equivalent level of education. This was a larger proportion than in 2006 (54%) and 2001 (46%), and compared with the total WA population (48%).

Between 2001 and 2011, the proportions of the Iraq-born with qualifications at degree/tertiary level or at advanced diploma, diploma and certificate level was almost unchanged (20% and 16%, respectively). Compared with Iraq-born Western Australians (35%), more Western Australians held post-school qualifications (45%). A larger proportion of Iraq-born men (39%) had a post-school qualification than women (30%).

A small proportion of Iraq-born Western Australians (4%) reported that they had not attended school, which was larger compared with the proportion of the total WA population (0.6%).

Educational attainment	Iraq-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Degree/tertiary level	23.3	16.5	20.3	16.2	15.9	15.9	19.2	17.5
Advanced diploma/diploma/certificate	16.1	13.8	15.1	14.6	10.7	32.8	22.4	27.6
Completed Year 12/equivalent	63.4	57.3	60.7	53.9	46.4	46.2	49.4	47.8
Did not attend school	3.4	5.5	4.3	5.4	7.7	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 one-third (35%) of the Iraq-born were in the labour force. This was relatively unchanged since 2001 (37%), but was lower compared with the total WA population (64%).

Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportion of the Iraq-born employed (from 20% to 29%), the proportion unemployed decreased (from 18% to 7%) and those not in the labour force remained stable (62%). Compared with the Iraq-born, the proportion of the total WA population not in the labour force was almost half (29%), while the rate of employment was more than double (61%).

Labour force participation	Iraq-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	2001	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Employed	41.0	13.3	28.5	25.9	19.7	66.7	55.3	61.0
Unemployed	8.4	4.1	6.7	7.8	17.6	3.2	2.9	3.0
Not in the labour force	48.7	80.7	62.0	62.5	61.9	22.7	36.1	29.4

A larger proportion of Iraq-born men (41%) than women (13%) were employed. A larger proportion of women (81%) than men (49%) were not in the labour force. These gender-based trends reflect those for the total WA population, although the proportion of Western Australian women employed (55%) was larger and not in the labour force (36%) smaller compared with the Iraq-born.

### OCCUPATION

In 2011, the Iraq-born were employed mainly as professionals (21%), machinery operators and drivers, (20%) and technicians and trade workers (17%). Comparable proportions of the total WA population were employed as professionals (20%), and technicians and trade workers (17%).

Iraq-born men were mainly employed as machinery operators and drivers (25%), technicians and trade workers (19%), and professionals (18%). Iraq-born women were mainly employed as professionals (35%), community and personal service workers (18%), and sales workers (15%).

### BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

One-quarter (25%) of the Iraq-born were small or medium business owners. This was similar to 2006 (23%) but larger compared with the total WA population (15%).

More than half (59%) of businesses owned by the Iraq-born were self-managed, more than one-third (38%) employed between one and 19 people, and the remainder (3%) employed 20 or more people. A larger proportion of Iraq-born men (29%) than women (7%) were working in their own business.



Weekly income	Iraq-born					WA population 2011		
	2011			2006*	2001**	Male %	Female %	Total %
Population (15+ years)	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
None	7.2	14.0	10.3	7.2	4.5	5.6	9.8	7.7
< \$300	40.0	49.5	44.2	47.5	52.4	11.7	19.8	15.7
\$300–\$999	30.4	27.1	28.9	29.2	20.8	29.3	41.9	35.6
\$1000 or more	12.5	2.5	8.1	6.0	2.2	43.0	20.2	31.6

Note: \*Unlike 2011 and 2001, the threshold for the 2006 Census was less than \$250. The next income group was \$250–\$999.  
 \*\*For the 2001 Census no income also included negative income.

## INCOME

Almost half (44%) of the Iraq-born were low income earners with a weekly income of less than \$300 per week. This proportion was smaller than in 2001 (52%), but double compared with the total WA population (16%).

Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportions of Iraq-born Western Australians earning between \$300 and \$999 (from 21% to 29%) and more than \$1000 per week (from 2% to 8%). The comparative figures for the total WA population were 36% and 32%, respectively.

One-tenth (10%) of the Iraq-born were without a weekly income. This had increased since 2001 (5%), but was comparable to the total WA population (8%).

Among the Iraq-born, almost similar proportions of men (30%) and women (27%) were middle income earners. A larger proportion of men than women were earning \$1000 per week or more (13% and 3%, respectively) while a larger proportion of women than men were without a weekly income (14% and 7%, respectively).

## HOUSING

In 2011, more than one-third (42%) of the Iraq-born owned their home compared with almost two-thirds (63%) of all Western Australians.

Of the Iraq-born, 10% lived in a home they fully owned and one-third (33%) lived in a home they were purchasing. The comparative figures for the total WA population were 24% and 39%, respectively.

Almost half (49%) of Iraq-born Western Australians were living in rental accommodation, larger than the proportion of the total WA population (27%).

## Family

### MARITAL STATUS

In 2011, almost three-quarters (73%) of the Iraq-born aged over 25 years were married. This was similar to 2006 (76%) but larger compared with the proportion of the total WA population (58%). A larger proportion of Iraq-born women (76%) than men (71%) were married.

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportions of the Iraq-born who were divorced or separated (10%), widowed (3%) or never married (14%) remained stable. Comparable proportions of the total WA population were widowed, or divorced or separated (6% and 14%, respectively), and the proportion never married was larger (23%).

A larger proportion of Iraq-born men (20%) than women (8%) had never married.

### FAMILY COMPOSITION

In 2011, more than two-thirds (69%) of Iraq-born Western Australians lived in couple families with children. This was a smaller proportion than in 2006 (74%) and was seven times larger than the proportion (9%) of people living in couple families without children.

Compared with the Iraq-born, a larger proportion of all Western Australians lived in couple families without children (20%) and a smaller proportion lived in couple families with children (45%).

In 2011, 10% of the Iraq-born lived in one-parent families, which was almost unchanged since 2006 (13%) and the same as the total WA population (10%). The proportion of Iraq-born women (14%) living in one-parent families was double that of men (7%).

Registered marital status (25+ years)	Iraq-born				WA population 2011		
	2011			2006	Male %	Female %	Total %
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %			
Married	70.5	75.5	72.6	76.2	59.0	57.1	58.1
Widowed	1.0	5.3	2.8	1.7	2.3	8.8	5.6
Divorced/separated	8.5	11.8	9.9	10.0	12.3	14.9	13.6
Never married	19.8	7.5	14.2	12.0	26.3	19.2	22.7
<b>Family composition (all ages)</b>							
Couple family with children	66.5	71.4	68.7	74.0	45.0	44.7	44.8
Couple family without children	8.5	8.6	8.5	7.0	19.4	20.3	19.8
One-parent family	6.7	13.8	9.9	12.9	7.8	12.0	9.9





## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

In 2011, more than half (53%) of the Iraq-born lived with a spouse or partner; almost unchanged since 2006 (50%). A larger proportion of women (56%) than men (51%) were living with a spouse, while a larger proportion of men (8%) than women (2%) were not living at home.

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportions of the Iraq-born living with other family or non-family members (32%) and living alone (8%) were almost stable.

Of the total Western Australian population, a comparatively smaller proportion (42%) of people lived with a spouse or partner, and comparatively larger proportions (38%) lived with other family or non-family members (38%), or lived alone (12%).

## 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-quarter (29%) of the Iraq-born aged 65 years and over required such assistance, larger compared with the proportion of the total WA population (16%). More Iraq-born older women (33%) than older men (25%) required such assistance. Small proportions of the Iraq-born aged between 15 and 64 years (7%) and between 0 and 14 years (1%) required such assistance.

More than one-tenth (14%) of the Iraq-born aged 15 years and over was providing unpaid care and/or assistance to a family member, a larger proportion compared with the total WA population (9%).

## More information

For more information and assistance, please contact:

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