



Census 2021 Snapshot: Western Australian Seniors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

The Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries' Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) works in partnership with culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities, community sector organisations, government agencies and the private sector to promote development of inclusive policies and appropriate programs and services so that people from CaLD backgrounds, including older people, can fully access and participate in every aspect of civic, social, economic and cultural life.

This snapshot is for Western Australian seniors aged 65 years and over (hereafter seniors) who were born in non-main English-speaking birthplaces (hereafter CaLD) based on an analysis of the 2021 Population and Housing Census data.

Major facts and trends

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census:

Demographic and cultural

- There were 81,196 seniors from CaLD backgrounds, comprising 19 per cent of the Western Australian senior cohort, and 17.5 per cent of the total number of people from CaLD backgrounds in Western Australia.
- The number of seniors from CaLD backgrounds increased faster (by 28.5%), compared with their Western Australian counterparts (23.8%) since 2016.
- The top 10 birthplaces of seniors from CaLD backgrounds were Italy, Malaysia, India, Netherlands, Germany, Singapore, China, Vietnam, Croatia and Myanmar, showing a greater prevalence of Asian birthplaces over those from Europe in recent years.
- The 10 most common ancestry responses of seniors from CaLD backgrounds were Chinese, Italian, English, Dutch, German, Indian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese and Portuguese.
- The top 10 languages other than English (LOTE) spoken at home by seniors from CaLD backgrounds were Italian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Croatian, Polish, German, Greek, Macedonian and Dutch, showing a greater prevalence of European languages, which has been a consistent trend since 2016.

- Two-thirds of seniors from CaLD backgrounds were affiliated with Christianity, followed by those who identified with secular beliefs or no religious affiliation (17.1%), Buddhism (7.1%), Islam (2.8%), Hinduism (2.1%), Sikhism (0.7%) and Judaism (0.4%).
- Around three in five seniors from CaLD backgrounds spoke a language other than English at home, with 70.6 per cent speaking English very well or well, and 29.4 per cent not speaking English well or at all.
- A majority (80%) of seniors from CaLD backgrounds arrived in Western Australia between 1950 and 1980, after which their migration declined to 8.6 per cent in the 1990s and 13.4 per cent in the 2000s.
- Most seniors from CaLD backgrounds (91.2%) lived in the Perth Metropolitan Local Government Areas (LGAs) with two-thirds (65.9%) living in the top 10 LGAs of Stirling, Wanneroo, Melville, Gosnells, Joondalup, Canning, Cockburn, Swan, Bayswater and Armadale.
- The top 10 regional LGAs where seniors from CaLD background resided were Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Greater Geraldton, Harvey, Murray, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Northam, Capel and Manjimup.

Socioeconomic

- Almost one-quarter of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds (23.8%) had low or no education, a rate higher than male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (18.6%), and more than double compared with Western Australian female seniors from all backgrounds (hereafter 'Western Australian female seniors') (10.1%) or male seniors from all backgrounds (hereafter 'Western Australian male seniors') (9.6%).
- Most female seniors from CaLD backgrounds were not in the labour force (86.4%), higher than male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (78.5%) and their Western Australian cohorts (80.5% of women and 73% of men, respectively). Only one-tenth (10.8%) of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds were employed, lower than both male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (18.6%) and Western Australian female seniors (11.9%) and Western Australian male seniors (19.6%).
- The rate of volunteering was 11.4 per cent 10.5 per cent for female and male seniors from CaLD backgrounds, respectively. This rate was higher for the Western Australian cohorts (16.5% and 15.8%, respectively, for women and men).
- A majority of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds (66.7%) had a weekly income of less than \$500, with 13.8 per cent having a negative or no income at all. They comprised the largest group of low-income earners, compared with male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (57.8% and 10.6%, respectively) or the Western Australian cohorts (55.5% and 7.8% of women, and 45.2% and 5.9% of men, respectively).

Health and wellbeing

- Less than one-fifth of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds (15%) had one or more types of long-term health conditions, which was higher than either male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (13%) or the Western Australian cohorts (13.5% of women and 11.3% of men, respectively).
- Of those with one or more chronic health issues, a larger proportion of women reported mental health conditions (including dementia) (46.9% of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds and 59.8% of Western Australian female seniors) than the male cohorts (37.7% of male seniors from CaLD backgrounds and 55.5% of Western Australian male seniors).
- The rates of disability were higher for female seniors compared with men, and highest for female seniors from CaLD backgrounds. A larger proportion of female seniors from CaLD backgrounds

(22.6%) required assistance in core activities in the areas of self-care, mobility and communication, compared with male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (16.8%), and their Western Australian counterparts (17.2% of women and 13.1% of men, respectively).

- Since the need for assistance increases with age, for 85+ years cohort, the corresponding rates for needing assistance almost trebled across board for female seniors from CaLD backgrounds (65%) and male seniors from CaLD backgrounds (50.8%), as well as Western Australian female (50.6%) and male (38.6%) seniors.

Table 1: Demographic and cultural backgrounds, Census 2021

Birthplace	CaLD seniors*	Languages	CaLD seniors*	Ancestry	CaLD seniors*
Italy	11,789	Italian	10,460	Chinese	12,751
Malaysia	6,803	Mandarin	4,141	Italian	12,156
India	6,672	Cantonese	4,108	English	7,293
Netherlands	5,337	Vietnamese	2,300	Dutch	5,713
Germany	4,627	Croatian	2,202	German	4,494
Singapore	3,180	Polish	1,878	Indian	4,404
China	2,836	German	1,819	Polish	2,996
Vietnam	2,690	Greek	1,594	Croatian	2,632
Croatia	2,460	Macedonian	1,554	Vietnamese	1,933
Myanmar	2,345	Dutch	1,435	Portuguese	1,789

* Abbreviation for seniors from CaLD backgrounds

Table 2: Top metropolitan and regional LGAs, 2021 Census

Top 10 metropolitan LGAs	CaLD seniors*	Top 10 regional LGAs	CaLD seniors*
Stirling	11,629	Albany	770
Wanneroo	5,754	Bunbury	637
Melville	5,611	Busselton	515
Gosnells	4,937	Greater Geraldton	484
Joondalup	4,919	Harvey	411
Canning	4,906	Murray	280
Cockburn	4,821	Kalgoorlie-Boulder	241
Swan	4,403	Northam	240
Bayswater	4,393	Capel	213
Armadale	2,155	Manjimup	205

* Abbreviation for seniors from CaLD backgrounds