Census 2021 Snapshot: Western Australian Women 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 ensure that women from CaLD backgrounds are valued, supported and empowered to reach their full potential.

This snapshot is for Western Australian women (hereafter women) 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 248,170 women from CaLD backgrounds, comprising 18.6 per cent of the total Western Australian women from all backgrounds (hereafter 'Western Australian women') population, and 53.4 per cent of the overall CaLD population in Western Australia.
- The number of women from CaLD backgrounds increased faster (by 16.4%), compared with Western Australian women (8.2%), since 2016.
- The majority of women from CaLD backgrounds were aged between 25 years and 44 years (41.9%), followed by those in the 45 to 64 years age bracket (26.7%), and seniors aged 65 years and over (17.5%). This was higher compared with the Western Australian women cohort (28.4%, 24.9% and 16.9%, respectively).
- The top 10 birthplaces of women from CaLD backgrounds were India, the Philippines, Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Italy, Thailand and Zimbabwe.
- The 10 most common ancestry responses of women from CaLD backgrounds were Chinese, Indian, Filipino, English, Italian, Vietnamese, German, Thai, Australian and Indonesian.

- The 10 most common languages other than English (LOTE) spoken at home by women from CaLD backgrounds were Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Punjabi, Italian, Filipino, Indonesian, Spanish and Arabic.
- Three-quarters (74.7%) of women from CaLD backgrounds spoke a language other than English at home, with 85.5 per cent reported to speak English very well or well, and 14.5 per cent of not speaking English well or at all.
- The most common religious affiliations of women from CaLD backgrounds were Christianity (46.7%), followed by Buddhism (10.5%), Islam (8%), Hinduism (7.5%), Sikhism (2.6%) and Judaism (0.2%). More than one-fifth (21.2%) of CaLD women also identified with secular beliefs or no religion.
- With almost two-thirds of women CaLD backgrounds arriving in Australia (63.7%) since 2001, their migration peaked in the last 20 years, although it started since 1905 and steadily increased thereafter in the following decades.
- Most women from CaLD backgrounds (91.5%) lived in the Perth Metropolitan Local Government Areas (LGAs) with almost three-quarters (72.6%) living in the top 10 LGAs of Stirling, Gosnells, Canning, Wanneroo, Swan, Cockburn, Melville, Armadale, Joondalup and Bayswater.
- The top 10 regional LGAs where women from CaLD backgrounds lived were Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Bunbury, Albany, Greater Geraldton, Busselton, Harvey, Karratha, Port Hedland, Broome and Augusta Margaret River.

Socioeconomic[1]

- Almost two out of five women aged 15 years and over from CaLD backgrounds (38.1%) had a postgraduate or Bachelors' degree level qualification and more than one-fifth (21.3%) had a technical or certificate level qualification. Less than one-tenth (8.2%) had low (Year 8 or below) or no education at all. In comparison, the rates were lower for tertiary level qualification (23.7%) and low or no education (3.4%), but higher for technical qualification in the case of their Western Australian women cohort.
- A similar proportion of women from CaLD backgrounds were employed part-time (28%) or full-time (27%), while 3.7 per cent were unemployed. This trend was also similar for the Western Australian women cohort with 27.3 per cent and 26.2 per cent of them employed part-time and full-time, respectively, although their rate of unemployment was lower (3%). In comparison, the employment pattern reversed for men with significantly larger proportions employed full-time (50% and 47% for those from CaLD backgrounds and the Western Australian men cohort, respectively), and much smaller proportions of men in part-time employment (17.1% and 13.4%, respectively).
- More than two out of five (43.8%) women from CaLD backgrounds had a weekly income of less than $500, with 16.5 per cent having negative or no income at all. The corresponding proportions were lower for men from CaLD backgrounds (18.4% and 8.1%, respectively), and the Western Australian women (26.8% and 10.8%, respectively) and men cohort (18% and 6.8%, respectively).

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[1] Please note that data related to socioeconomic characteristics is for women or men aged 15 years and over, as provided in the Australian Bureau of Statistics TableBuilder program.

- The rate of volunteering was higher for women from CaLD backgrounds (14.5%), compared with men from CaLD backgrounds (11.7%) but lower than for the Western Australian women cohort (17.9%).

Health and wellbeing

- One-third of women from CaLD backgrounds (33.3%) reported one or more long-term health conditions. This was slightly higher than for men from CaLD backgrounds (31.1%), but lower than for Western Australian women and men (45.3% and 39.3%, respectively).
- Of those women from CaLD backgrounds who had one or more long-term health conditions, larger proportions of them reported arthritis (20.8%), asthma (11.3%) and mental health conditions (12.2%), than men (12.4%, 9.2% and 8.6%, respectively). The corresponding proportions for Western Australian women and men were lower for arthritis (19.4% and 13.7%, respectively), but higher for asthma (16.5% and 15.9%, respectively) and mental health conditions (20.4% and 15.8%, respectively).
- Five per cent of women, compared with four per cent of men from CaLD backgrounds required assistance in core activities in the areas of self-care, mobility and communication, like Western Australian women and men (4.9% and 4.3%, respectively). However, the disability rate increases with age and was the highest for women from CaLD backgrounds aged 85 years and over (65%) and 65 years and over (16%). Comparative rates for men from CaLD backgrounds were lower (50.8% and 12.8%, respectively), followed by the Western Australian cohorts (50.6% and 12%, respectively, for women and 38.6% and 10.4%, respectively, for men).

Table 1:   Demographic and cultural backgrounds, Census 2021

Birthplace	CaLD women*	Language	CaLD women*	Ancestry	CaLD women*
India	29,268	Mandarin	23,459	Chinese	45,926
Philippines	21,737	Tagalog	9,028	Indian	24,497
Malaysia	17,694	Vietnamese	8,973	Filipino	20,559
China	16,214	Cantonese	8,625	English	15,488
Vietnam	10,314	Punjabi	7,377	Italian	10,783
Singapore	8,777	Italian	7,150	Vietnamese	8,246
Indonesia	8,765	Filipino	6,430	German	7,048
Italy	8,747	Indonesian	5,766	Thai	6,403
Thailand	7,428	Spanish	5,220	Australian	6,172
Zimbabwe	6,497	Arabic	5,177	Indonesian	5,990

* Abbreviation for women from CaLD backgrounds

Table 2: The top metropolitan and regional LGAs, 2021 Census

Top 10 metropolitan LGAs	CaLD women*	Top 10 regional LGAs	CaLD women*
Stirling	30,919	Kalgoorlie-Boulder	1,733
Gosnells	21,298	Bunbury	1,598
Canning	20,186	Albany	1,510
Wanneroo	19,822	Greater-Geraldton	1,374
Swan	16,861	Busselton	1,312
Cockburn	12,977	Harvey	1,391
Melville	12,362	Karratha	1,147
Armadale	10,697	Port Hedland	1,099
Joondalup	10,157	Broome	787
Bayswater	9,831	Augusta Margaret River	753

* Abbreviation for women from CaLD backgrounds