

Religious beliefs are an important aspect of many people's lives. Information about the religious affiliation of Australians has been collected since the first Census in 1911.

Type of religion

Reflecting the historical influence of European migration to Australia, Christianity was the most common religion reported in 2016 (52%). Islam (2.6%) and Buddhism (2.4%) were the next most common religions reported.

Nearly a third of Australians reported in the Census that they had no religion in 2016 (30%).

Religious Affiliation		Population ('000)	Population (%)
Christian	Catholic	5 291.8	22.6
	Anglican	3 101.2	13.3
	Other Christian	3 808.6	16.3
	Total	12 201.6	52.1
Other Religions	Islam	604.2	2.6
	Buddhism	563.7	2.4
	Hinduism	440.3	1.9
	Sikhism	125.9	0.5
	Judaism	91.0	0.4
	Other	95.7	0.4
	Total	1 920.8	8.2
No Religion^a		7 040.7	30.1
Australia^b		23 401.9	100

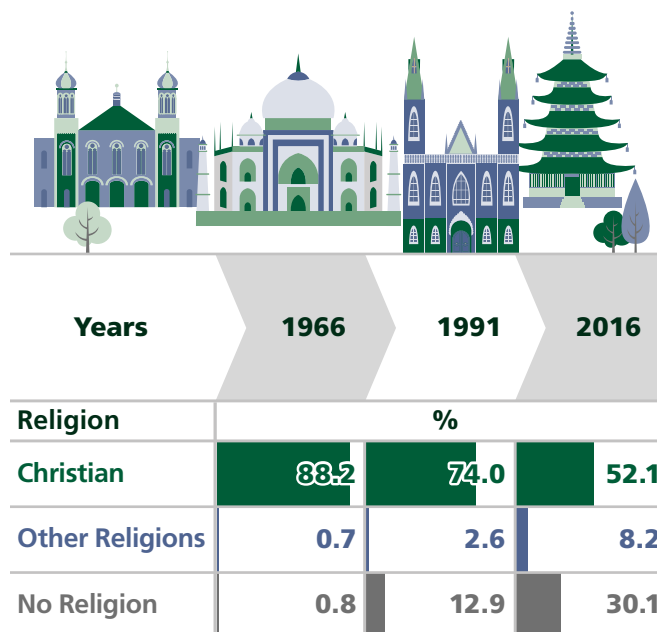
a No religion includes secular and other spiritual beliefs.

b As religion was an optional question, the total for Australia will not equal the sum of the items above it.

Changes over time

The religious makeup of Australia has shifted slowly over the past 50 years. In 1966, Christianity was the main religion (88%).

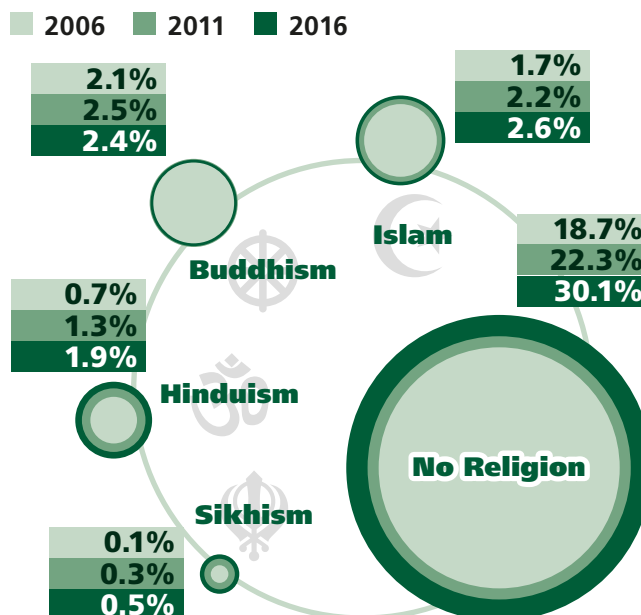
After Australia abolished the White Australia Policy in 1966, migration grew from non-European countries where religions other than Christianity were common. The proportion of people reporting to be affiliated with a religion other than Christianity had increased to 2.6% in 1991 but increased more rapidly in the last 25 years to 8.2% in 2016.



Emerging religions and having no religion

In the 10 years from 2006 to 2016, the proportion of people reporting a religion other than Christianity in the Census increased from 5.6% in 2006 to 8.2% in 2016. Although the increase was spread across most of the non-Christian religions, the top two were Hinduism (0.7% in 2006 to 1.9% in 2016) and Islam (1.7% to 2.6%).

Those reporting no religion increased noticeably from 19% in 2006 to 30% in 2016. The largest change was between 2011 (22%) and 2016, when an additional 2.2 million people reported having no religion.



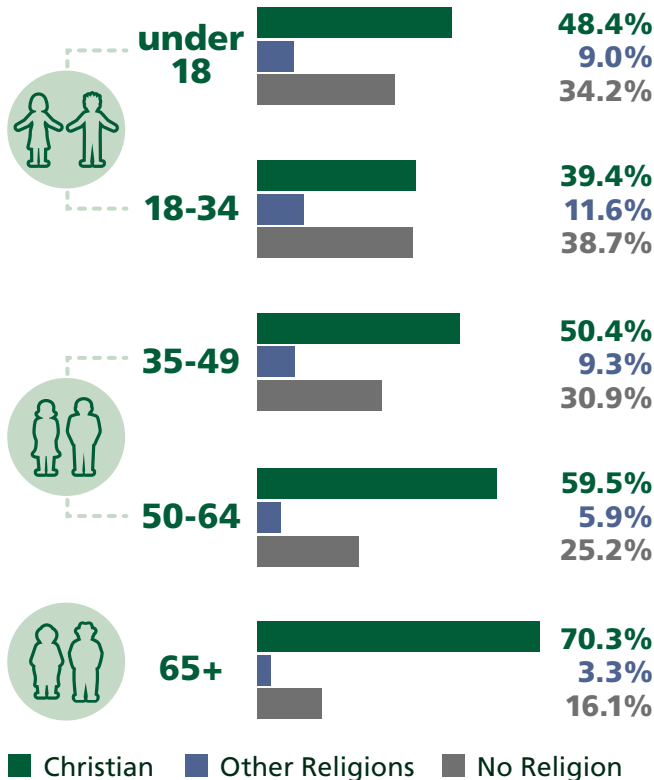
RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA

Religion and age

Young adults (aged 18–34 years) were more likely to report not having a religion (39%) and more likely to be affiliated with religions other than Christianity (12%) than other adults.

Older people, particularly those aged 65 years and over, were most likely to report Christianity (70%).

The religious pattern of those under 18 is most similar to the 35–49 year olds, suggesting the form may be completed with their parents' beliefs.



Religion, men and women

Men were less likely than women to report being Christian in 2016 (50% and 55% respectively). However there was little difference in the proportion reporting a religion other than Christianity (8.3% of men and 8.1% of women).

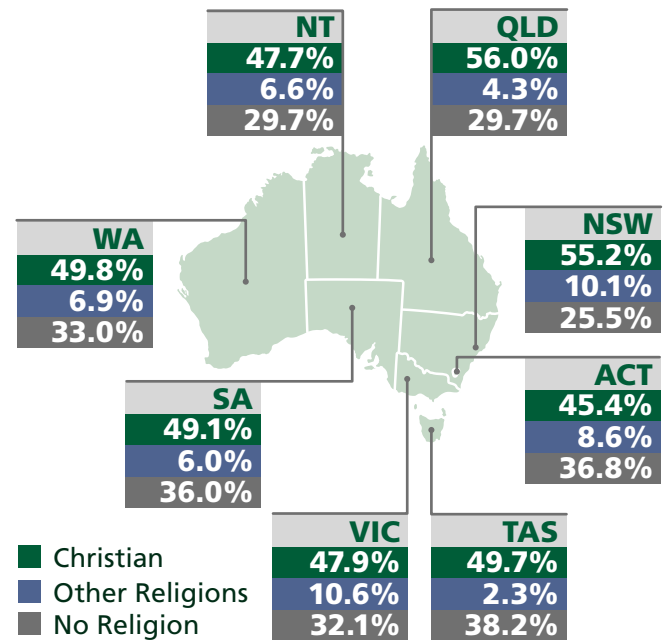
Men (32%) were more likely than women (28%) to say they had no religion.

Religion in the states and territories

The proportion of people reporting a religion or stating they had no religion varied between the states and territories in 2016.

Victoria had the highest proportion reporting an affiliation with a religion other than Christianity and Tasmania reported the lowest.

Tasmania also had the highest proportion of people stating that they did not have a religion.

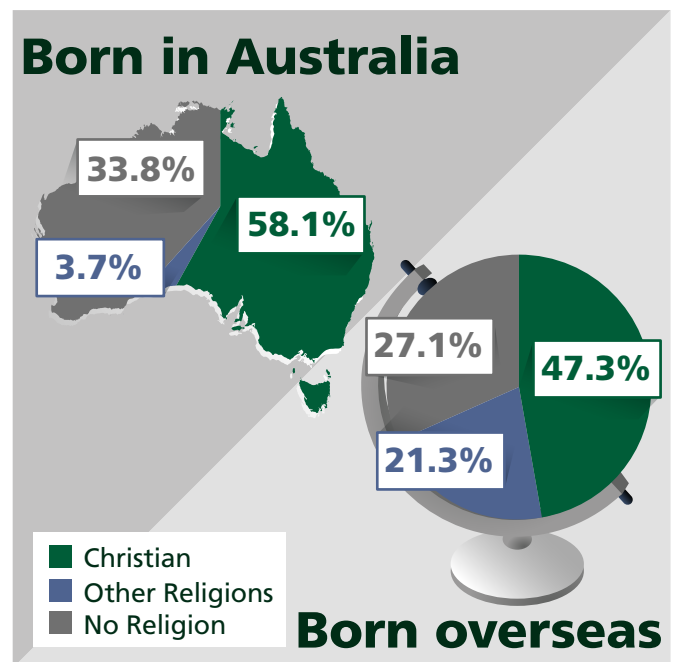


Religion for those born overseas

In 2016, nearly half (47%) of those born overseas reported an affiliation with a Christian religion, compared with 58% of the Australian-born population.

The proportion of those born overseas who were affiliated with a religion other than Christianity was considerably higher than for those born in Australia (21% and 3.7% respectively).

The overseas-born are less likely to report that they did not have a religion (27%) than the Australian-born (34%).



Source: All visual representations are based on data collected in the 2016 Census. For definitions of the terms used above, see the Census Dictionary. For more information about 2016 Census data release and products, go to www.abs.gov.au/census