



# Western Australian Community Profiles 2006 Census

## Burma-born

### Population

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**Burmese migration to Western Australia (WA) began in the 1960s after the military coup in Burma. Migrants during this period were mainly Anglo-Burmese. A second period of significant Burmese migration was recorded between 2001 and 2006. Almost two-thirds (64%) of Burma-born people arriving during this period came through the Humanitarian Program. This group consisted mainly of ethnic minorities including the Chin, Karen, Rakhaine and Rohingyas people. The number of Burma-people in WA has remained steady, numbering 5577 in 1996 and 5553 in 2006. In 2006, Burma-born people represented approximately 0.3% of the total WA population.\***

Burma-born Western Australians were older compared with the total WA population. In 2006, only a small cohort was aged under 15 (2.1%) and 15–24 (6.5%) compared with the total WA population (20% and 14.2%, respectively). The cohort of Burma-born people aged 65 or more was significantly higher (22.5%) than for the total WA population (12%). The majority of Burma-born people were aged 25–44 (29.6%) and 45–64 (39.3%). The 2006 percentage for the cohort aged 45–64 was higher than the total WA population (25.2%). Between 2001 and 2006, the cohort aged 25–44 decreased (from 35.6%) and the cohort aged 45–64 increased (from 35.3%). The 2006 percentage for the cohort aged 25–64 was similar to that for the total WA total population (28.5%).

Women outnumbered men in all age cohorts except 0–14 and 15–24. The sex-ratio (number of males per 100 females) was estimated at 87.8, much lower than for the total WA population (99.5).

### Family pattern

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The majority of Burma-born Western Australians lived in couple families with children (38%), significantly more than in 2001 (23.8%), and comparable to the total WA population (38.5%). One-quarter (25%) lived in couple families without children, significantly less than in 2001 (46.3%), but greater than the total WA population (19.4%). Approximately 10.4% of Burma-born people lived in one-parent families, which was comparable to the total WA population (10%).

### Geographical distribution

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Between 2001 and 2006, the settlement pattern for Burma-born Western Australians remained consistent. The majority lived within the Perth Statistical Division (SD). Local Government Areas (LGAs) recording relatively higher concentrations of Burma-born people were Stirling (15.2%), Gosnells (13.7%), Wanneroo (11.7%) and Swan (9.5%). A small proportion (4%) of Burma-born people had settled outside of the Perth SD, with the largest concentration in the South West SD (2%).



## Religious affiliation

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The majority of Burma-born Western Australians identified Christianity as their religion (78%), a slight decrease of 2.3% since 2001, but significantly higher than for the total WA population (58.7%). A significant proportion of Burma-born people identified Buddhism as their religion (15.7%), higher than for the total WA population (2%). Only 2.2% identified as having no religion, in comparison with the total WA population (22.6%). A smaller proportion of Burma-born people identified Islam as their religion (1.6%), comparable to the total WA population (1.2%).

## Languages

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In 2006, 44% of Burma-born Western Australians reported speaking only English at home, fewer than in 2001 (47.9%). The main language other than English spoken at home was Burmese. The proportion of people who reported speaking English well or very well increased slightly between 2001 and 2006 (44.6% to 46%), as did the proportion of those who reported speaking English not well or not at all (7% to 9.2%).

## Education

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Between 2001 and 2006 the proportion of Burma-born Western Australians qualified at degree level increased from 13.7% to 16.9%, to be slightly higher than the total WA adult population (14.3%). The proportion of Burma-born people qualified at advanced diploma, diploma or certificate level also increased (18.6% to 19.6%) for the same period, but was lower than for the total WA adult population (24.7%). A higher proportion of Burma-born men (25.5%) than women (15.3%) were qualified at advanced diploma, diploma or certificate level. More than half of Burma-born Western Australians (52.7%) had completed Year 12 or equivalent, more than in the total WA adult population (41.8%). The proportion of the Burma-born adult population who had not attended

school (2.1%) was higher than for the total WA adult population (0.6%) but unchanged since 2001.

## Employment

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Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of Burma-born Western Australians who were employed increased (from 53.1% to 55.9%). Decreases in the proportion of people who were unemployed (4% to 2.1%) or not in the labour force (41.2% to 39.8%), were also recorded. These figures were comparable to the percentage of the people in the total WA population who were employed (59.1%) and unemployed (2.3%) but higher than those not in the labour force (30.3%).

Burma-born women were slightly less likely than Burma-born men to be unemployed (1.5% compared with 2.4%) but more likely not to be in the labour force (47.7% compared with 30.2%). A similar pattern was recorded for the total WA population in which fewer women than men (2.2% compared with 2.4%) were unemployed, while more were not in the labour force (37.4% compared with 23.2%).

Burma-born men were employed mainly as managers and professionals (22.9%), technicians and trades workers (20.8%), labourers (17.8%) and machinery operators and drivers (17.3%). Burma-born women were mainly, and almost equally, employed as clerical and administrative workers (22.5%); professionals and managers (20.7%), labourers (20%), and community and personal service workers (16.4%).

## Income

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Between 2001 and 2006, there was an increase in the proportion of Burma-born Western Australians earning between \$250 and \$999 per week (from 44.3% to 51.4%) and more than \$1000 per week (from 6.2% to 12.3%). Women were less likely than men to earn more than \$1000 per week (6.6% compared with 18.8%), and more

likely to earn no income (7.8% compared with 3.6%) or less than \$250 per week (39.9% compared with 19.8%).

## Summary table

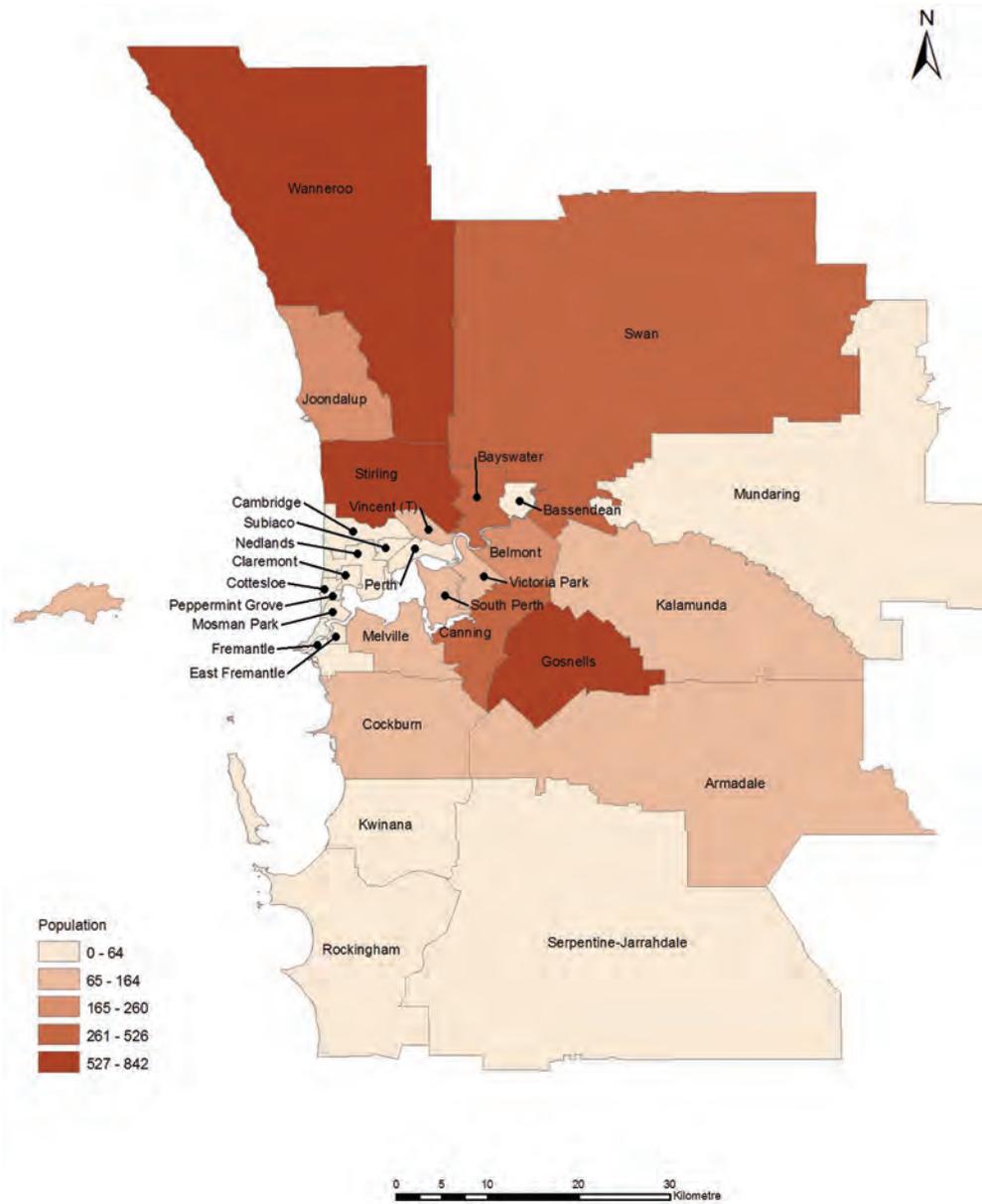
Variables	Burma-born 2006			Burma-born 2001	Total Western Australian population 2006		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
<b>AGE GROUP / GENDER</b>							
0–14	2.5	1.8	2.1	2.9	20.6	19.5	20.0
15–24	7.8	5.4	6.5	6.6	14.6	13.8	14.2
25–44	30.2	29.0	29.6	35.6	28.4	28.5	28.5
45–64	39.9	38.6	39.3	35.3	25.4	25.1	25.2
65+	19.6	25.1	22.5	19.7	11.0	13.1	12.0
All (Number)	2596	2957	5553	5494	990,642	995,607	1,986,249
Sex-ratio			87.8	90.0			99.5
<b>FAMILY TYPE</b>							
Couple family without children	25.3	25.6	25.4	46.3	19.2	19.6	19.4
Couple family with children	35.6	31.3	33.3	23.8	38.7	38.3	38.5
One-parent family	7.1	13.3	10.4	10.8	7.9	12.1	10.0
<b>LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>							
Speaks English only	42.6	44.9	43.9	47.9	80.6	81.3	80.9
Speaks other language and English; very well or well	47.9	44.1	45.9	44.6	9.6	9.9	9.8
Speaks other language and English; not well or not at all	8.2	10.0	9.2	7.0	1.5	2.0	1.7
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (15 YEARS AND OVER)</b>							
Degree level	16.4	15.5	15.9	13.7	13.4	15.1	14.3
Advanced diploma/diploma/ certificate	24.5	15.3	19.6	18.6	30.3	19.2	24.7
Completed Year 12 schooling	54.5	50.7	52.7	49.0	40.8	42.9	41.8
Did not attend school	1.5	2.5	2.1	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.6
<b>LABOUR FORCE (15 YEARS AND OVER)</b>							
Employed	64.7	48.2	55.9	53.1	65.5	52.7	59.1
Unemployed	2.4	1.7	2.1	4.0	2.4	2.2	2.3
Not in LF	30.2	47.7	39.8	41.2	23.2	37.4	30.3
<b>WEEKLY INCOME (15 YEARS AND OVER)</b>							
None	3.6	7.8	5.9	5.3	4.6	8.1	6.4
<\$250	19.8	30.9	25.7	40.3	13.8	24.4	19.2
<\$1000	53.0	50.0	51.4	44.7	39.7	46.7	43.2
\$1000 and more	18.8	6.6	12.3	6.2	29.9	10.4	20.0

Note: Totals do not add up to 100% because of the use of selected indicators.

\* The 2006 Census recorded a total WA population of 1,959,095 people.

\*\* For 2001, the cut-off point was \$299.

Figure 1: Distribution of Burma-born people by settlement pattern in the LGAs of the Perth Metropolitan Area  
 (Data Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 and 2006 Census of Population and Housing.