

Fact Sheet – Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community in Willoughby[^]

Key insights

47% of Willoughby residents were born overseas, a higher proportion compared to 39% for Greater Sydney.

Willoughby has a large non-English speaking community with 41% of residents speaking a language other than English at home compared to 37% for greater Sydney.

Overseas born residents in Willoughby are highly educated but more likely to be unemployed.

Non-English speakers are more likely to be living in medium to high density dwellings in Willoughby.

Older residents (65yrs+) are more likely to be born overseas than younger age groups in Willoughby.

Willoughby welcomes a culturally diverse community.

Willoughby has a high proportion of residents born overseas.

In the 2021 census, 35,168 or 47% of Willoughby City residents were recorded as being born overseas. This is a higher proportion than the Greater Sydney region (39%), and the second highest of all the Northern Sydney Councils, just behind Ryde (49%).

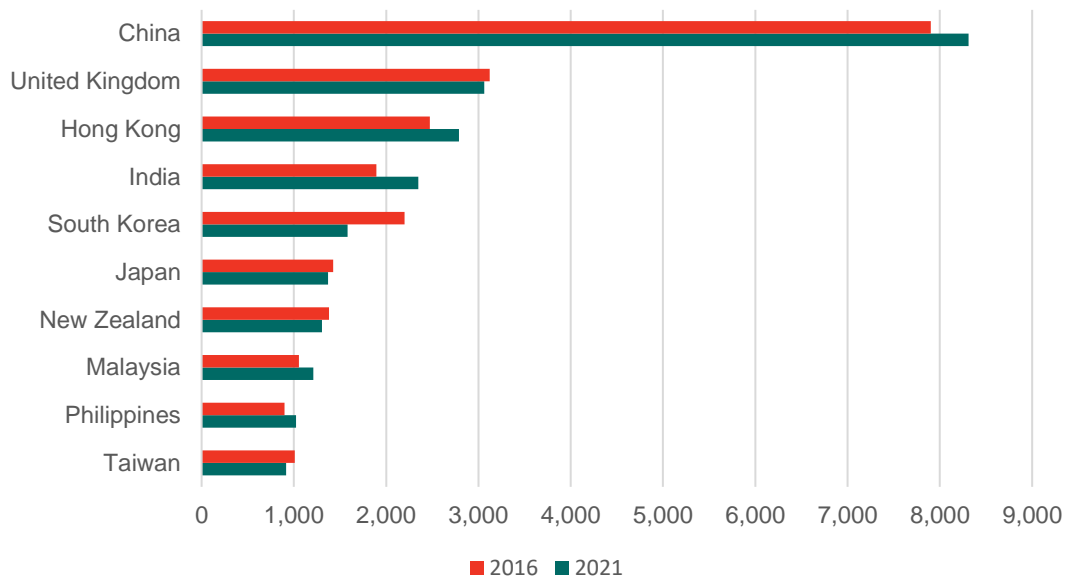
Of those born overseas, the most common birthplaces were China (8,311), United Kingdom (3,062), Hong Kong (2,788), India (2,350), South Korea (1,582) and Japan (1,370) (see Figure 1).

Between 2016 and 2021, Willoughby welcomed 7,418 new overseas arrivals, including from China (25%), India (15%), Japan (6%), Hong Kong (6%) and the Philippines (4%).

Between 2016 and 2021, residents born in India (↑ 455), China (↑ 409) and Hong Kong (↑ 314) increased, while those born in South Korea (↓ 617) decreased. More work needs to be done to explore why the Korean population has declined in Willoughby as it has remained relatively stable across the Greater Sydney region.

[^] All figures are sourced from the ABS Census via analysis from .id (profile.id.com.au/Willoughby) unless otherwise stated.

Figure 1. Birthplace of overseas-born residents in Willoughby



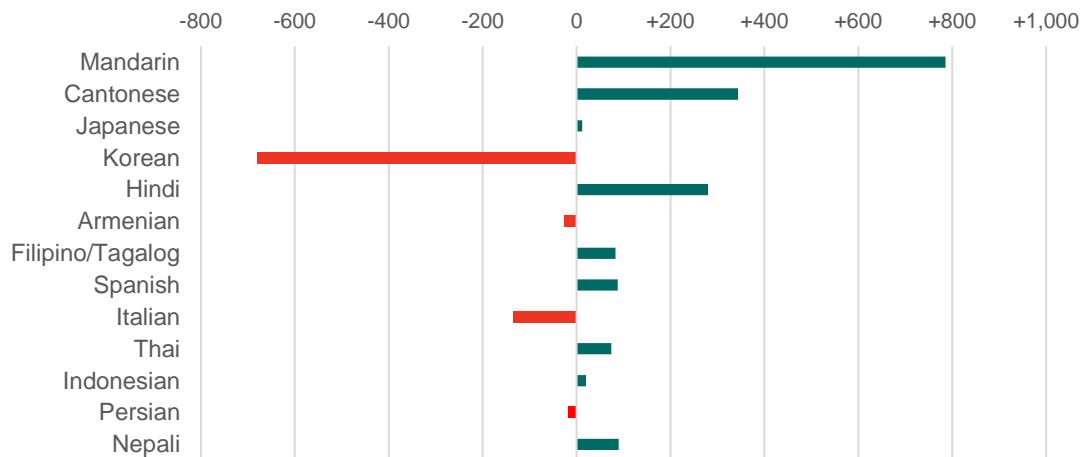
Willoughby has a large Non-English speaking community.

In 2021, 41% of Willoughby residents spoke a language other than English at home. The most common languages spoken included Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean and Hindi, however, our community’s language profile continues to shift with population changes (see Figure 2).

Proficiency in English is an important benchmark for the overseas born population. This may indicate the level to which translation services or communication in other languages is required. In the 2021 Census, 5,166 Willoughby residents, or 7% of the population, reported speaking English not well or not at all.

Translation of written material and the provision of interpreting services for community engagement activities is essential so that everyone can have equal access to relevant information and fully participate in the life of their community.

Figure 2. Change in language spoken at home, 2016-2021



Overseas born residents are highly educated but more likely to be unemployed.

In 2021, 17,059 people or 67% of non-English speaking population in Willoughby City Council had a tertiary qualification, compared to 62% of the general population. This can largely be attributed to the Federal Government's skilled migration program.

Despite their higher rate of tertiary qualifications, non-English speaking residents are more likely to be unemployed (6%) than the general population (4%). These figures may also mask the fact that some skilled migrants are not working in their chosen profession and may be in unskilled jobs due to a lack of recognition of their qualifications in Australia.

Employment support services that provide resume, interview skills and information about transferring overseas qualifications are important to assist overseas-trained residents to access skilled local employment.

In Willoughby, non-English speakers are more likely to be living in medium or high density dwellings.

Of the 7,418 new arrivals from overseas between 2016 and 2021, 4,365 settled in Chatswood. New migrants tend to settle in areas where previous migrants currently reside. In general, non-English speakers in Willoughby were more likely to live in medium or high density dwellings (63%), compared to the general population (48%).

Existing communities and social support services are some of the main determinants of where new migrants tend to live. High density housing may provide affordable rental or home ownership opportunities to new migrants but may also make it harder for them to connect with their new community.

Research¹ has highlighted that across Greater Sydney, housing density and cultural diversity are clearly correlated. Further, while social and cultural differences can contribute to tensions within apartment buildings, they also offer opportunities for residents to enjoy the richness of a diverse and cosmopolitan environment.

Council's 2023 Community Wellbeing Survey² found that people who live in apartments are less likely to be actively engaged with their local community and more likely to experience loneliness or isolation.

Council's Hi Neighbours program, which works with strata managers and apartment residents to create opportunities for social connection, is one way Council is helping to create cohesive and resilient vertical communities.

52% of Willoughby's population have a religious affiliation.

While Catholic, Anglican and other Christian religions made up the greatest totals in terms of religious affiliation, their numbers are falling. Residents reporting adherence to Hindu (↑

¹ Ho C, Liu E, and Easthope H, 'Higher density and diversity: apartments are Australia at its most multicultural', The Conversation 19 June, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/higher-density-and-diversity-apartments-are-australia-at-its-most-multicultural-97176>

² 2023 Willoughby Community Wellbeing Survey. <https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Community/Community-services/Community-Resources>

31.8%), Islamic (↑ 14.4%) and Buddhist (↑ 3.4%) faiths are on the rise, however they remain only a small proportion of our community.

Religious tolerance and understanding are critical indicators of cohesive and connected communities. Council’s Inspire to Lead program works with local cultural and faith leaders to increase awareness and understanding between communities.

Older CALD residents (65yrs+) are more likely to be born overseas.

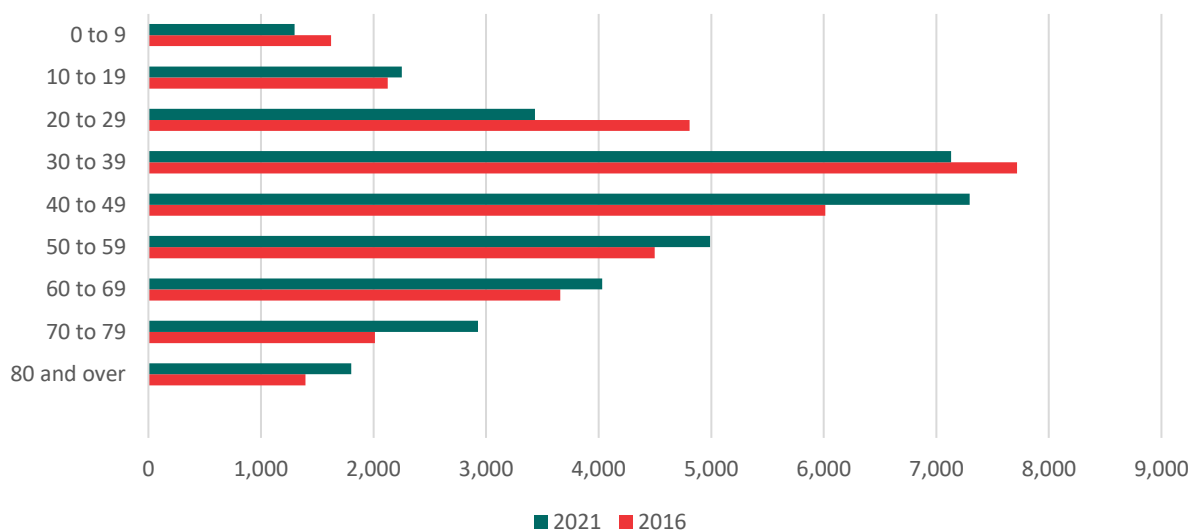
More than 55% of Willoughby residents over 65 were born overseas, a higher proportion compared to 47% of the general population. 38% of this age group speak a language other than English at home. The most common languages spoken among older residents are Cantonese (12%), Mandarin (9%), Italian (2%), Armenian (2%) and Croatian (2%). This cohort has grown significantly between 2016 and 2021 (see figure 3).

Often older CALD residents have the resources and life skills to make important contributions to their families, cultural groups and the wider community. There are however particular factors that can impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. These factors, which may vary according to migration, refugee and settlement experiences, include:

- isolation, loneliness and lack of extended family support;
- grief and loss experienced as part of the migration experience;
- the challenges of ageing in an unfamiliar cultural environment; and
- the loss or deterioration of English language and first language skills especially with the onset of dementia.

Culturally appropriate aged care services are important in meeting the needs of this cohort. As the percentage of older people born overseas grows, attention will need to be given to ensuring services remain accessible for all, including Australian-born residents.

Figure 3. Willoughby residents born overseas by age cohort



Willoughby welcomes cultural diversity.

According to Council's 2023 Community Wellbeing Survey, 91% of respondents agreed³ that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures and 84% agreed that accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Willoughby stronger. The survey also reported that people feel welcome in the broader Willoughby community (83% agreed) and that Willoughby is a place where people from different national or ethnic backgrounds get on well together (82% agreed).

There is strong agreement within Willoughby that cultural diversity brings many benefits. Willoughby has a long history of welcoming new arrivals, demonstrated in 1993 by the establishment of the Multicultural One-Stop Assistance Information Centre (MOSAIC).

MOSAIC makes a significant contribution to Willoughby's reputation as a 'City of Diversity'.

MOSAIC, assisted by a team of over 100 volunteers, offers a range of programs and events to promote social cohesion, resilience, capacity building and social connection.

MOSAIC services include:

- English classes for adults at various proficiency levels
- Cultural social groups for communities from China, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore, as well as a men's group.
- Leisure activities including tai chi, qi gong, line dancing, ukulele, calligraphy, singing, arts and crafts, cooking demonstrations, table tennis and cultural dance.
- Language classes in Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Italian, and Spanish.
- Information and referral services,
- Vibrant community cultural celebrations.

MOSAIC plays a vital role in supporting migrants during their settlement period, helping them enhance their English proficiency through English lessons while fostering connections with the wider community through cultural groups that provide emotional and practical support.

³ Included agreed/strongly agreed survey responses.