

Podcast 60 – Multicultural Australia

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 60 – Multicultural Australia

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast60.mp3>

Hi,

About one quarter of all Australians today were born overseas. That's pretty amazing. Switzerland is the only other country with such a high proportion of their population born overseas. Australia has become a multicultural society. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about how we became a multicultural society and what it means to us.

The first Australians are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Today they make up about 3% of our population. Their ancestors came to Australia around 50,000 years ago. I guess, in a sense, they were the first migrants to Australia. It is said that we are a nation of migrants and that is absolutely true. In 2013/14, there were around 212,000 new migrants who came to live in Australia. So our population continues to grow from migration.

Australian residents who were born overseas come from almost every country in the world. However the top 10 countries, in order, are the United Kingdom (5.2%), New Zealand (2.6%), China (1.9%), India (1.7%), the Philippines (1%), Vietnam (1%), Italy (0.9%), South Africa (0.8%), Malaysia (0.7%) and Germany (0.5%). I have friends or have worked with people from all of these countries, plus a whole lot more. Of course, many of these people have children of their own who were born in Australia. I love it when I see people speaking with a typical Australian accent, yet it is obvious that they have Chinese,

Indian, Vietnamese or Italian parents. What's also great is that most of them can also speak the language of their parents. This is a real demonstration that we are a multicultural nation. What I also love is that the traditions of their parents' culture continues to be important to them. This is encouraged in Australia and we value it. It's actually part of government policy that people have the right to express and share their cultural heritage, including their language and their religion. Of course it is also part of government policy that migrants have a responsibility to support our values and make a commitment to Australia, its democracy, to equality for all and the rule of law.



2014 Moomba Parade – Melbourne

(By Chris Phutully from Australia (2014 Moomba Parade (60th Anniversary) Melbourne) [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons)

When I was in my teens I had a close friend who was born in

Australia and whose parents had migrated from Greece. I can remember going to a family party at his place one time and it was there that I found out about how Greek people celebrate at a party. I saw them dancing in a big circle to Greek music and everybody was having a fantastic time. It was so different to what happened in my family's parties. I joined in and I loved it. I guess that was my first exposure to multiculturalism and it showed me that other cultures have some great traditions which can make Australia a richer place.

Another example is the different sports which have come to Australia with our migrants. I did Taekwondo for 10 years which comes from Korea. This sport has a strong cultural element and I was able to learn some basic Korean language and also learn some Korean history and customs. I found it taught me something new about how to live my life and I really appreciated that.

I should add that Australia's multiculturalism is not always without its problems. Sometimes some people find it hard to accept the customs of other cultures and it is true to say that there is still some discrimination in Australia. We were not always a multicultural society so looking at our history of migration can help explain where we have come from and just how far we have come.

Excluding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, there have been 3 major waves of immigration to Australia. First there was early European settlement which started in 1788. This was initially prisoners from the jails of England, who were sent to Australia as their punishment. During this first wave of migration, free settlers from Britain also started to arrive from around 1815, although not in large numbers.

The second wave of migration came with the discovery of gold in 1851 in Australia. This caused a large number of people to come to Australia, mostly British and Irish although also other Europeans and some Chinese. The Chinese were badly discriminated against and it was from this time that

immigration of people from Asia became restricted on racial grounds. When Australia became a nation in 1901, this restriction was made into a law which became known as the White Australia Policy. The people in Australia at that time wanted to exclude non-white people and in particular encourage migrants from Britain. Thankfully, this policy was removed in stages from 1949 to 1973. In fact, a non-discrimination law was passed in 1975 which made it illegal in Australia to discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, culture, religion, or language. I am personally not proud of our history of the White Australia Policy, but Australia is now a truly multicultural nation and that is something of which I am very proud.

The third wave of immigration came from 1949 on, after the Second World War. At that time, Australia's government made the decision to start a major immigration program, as Australia's population was relatively small and the country needed more people if Australia was to grow and prosper. The catchphrase was 'Populate or Perish'. The government started an assistance program.

Over 1,000,000 British people and hundreds of thousands from European countries came to Australia. The British people had to pay only 10 pounds and so they were called the 10 pound poms. With the removal of the White Australia Policy in the years following the war, we started to receive migrants from all over the world.



1954 – Migrant Arrivals in Australia –
50,000th Dutch migrant arrives in
Australia aboard the SIBAJAK

The number of migrants each year has varied from year to year. In 1993, around 70,000 migrants came to Australia and this has increased to 212,000 in 2013/14. In addition to the migration program, Australia has a Humanitarian Program for refugees. In 2013/14, this program had a target of 13,750.

Today, the migration program for Australia has 2 major streams. They are called skilled migration and family migration. Skilled migration means that if you have the required skills which Australia needs, and you meet other criteria, you can apply to migrate to Australia. Family migration is about existing permanent residents of Australia bringing their family members to Australia to live with them. Migration to Australia is a complicated subject, so anyone interested in that should always go to the Australian government website.

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/>



Posing with the Australian flag.

(By DIAC images (Citizens and flag 1 Uploaded by russavia) [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons)

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 60 Quiz - Did you

understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

- Play absolutely = completely
- Play accent = the way a person speaks. For example, an Australian accent
- Play accept = to agree with something
- Play ancestors = those who lived before you
- Play apply = when you ask for something
- Play appreciated = when you like something
- Play celebrate = to join with others and be happy about something
- Play commitment = when you believe in something and want to protect it
- Play complicated subject = when there are many difficult things to explain
- Play criteria = a measure
- Play culture = the common things people do in a particular country
- Play customs = things you do because you belong to a culture
- Play democracy = a type of government where everybody votes
- Play demonstration = when you show something to other people
- Play discriminated against = when people say or do bad things to you because you are not the same as them
- Play discrimination = when others don't like you because you are not the same as them
- Play element = a part of something
- Play encouraged = telling someone they should do something
- Play equality = when people are all treated the same
- Play exclude = not included
- Play exposure = when you are shown something
- Play express = speak aloud or to show to others
- Play fantastic = when something is very, very good

- Play heritage = the history of your people
- Play Humanitarian = when something is done to be kind to another person
- Play illegal = against the law, you are not allowed to do it
- Play initially = at first
- Play migrants = people who go to live in another country, never to return
- Play multicultural = when you have people from many different countries living together
- Play nation = country
- Play nationality = what country you come from
- Play non-discrimination = discrimination is not allowed
- Play obvious = something you can easily see
- Play overseas = in another country over the sea
- Play party = when you celebrate with other people
- Play perish = to die
- Play permanent = when something will not change
- Play policy = a way of doing something. Governments have policies
- Play poms = a slang term used to describe migrants who come from England
- Play population = the number of people who live in a country
- Play pretty amazing = you like something
- Play program = a group of activities
- Play proportion = part of something, not the full amount
- Play prosper = become richer
- Play punishment = what happens to you after you have done something bad
- Play quarter = 25%
- Play racial grounds = when someone uses your race to make a decision about you
- Play receive = to get
- Play religion = For example Muslim, Christian, Jew, Buddhist
- Play required = needed
- Play residents = those who live in a town or country
- Play responsibility = when you must do something
- Play restricted = not allowed for some people

- Play settlement = when people go to a place to live for the first time
- Play skills = when you can do something special which other people can't do
- Play society = describes all the people in a country and how they live
- Play Streams = a part
- Play teens = when you are a teenager
- Play traditions = things that have been done for a long time
- Play typical = an example of something you see many times
- Play value = when you think something is good
- Play whole lot more = a much bigger number of something