

Podcast 60 - Multicultural Australia

by Rob McCormack - Thursday, June 04, 2015

<https://slowenglish.info/?p=1647>

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://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/immigration-and-visas/migration-to-australia>



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

[WpProQuiz 46]

Vocabulary

absolutely = completely

accent = the way a person speaks. For example, an Australian accent

accept = to agree with something

ancestors = those who lived before you

apply = when you ask for something

appreciated = when you like something

celebrate = to join with others and be happy about something

commitment = when you believe in something and want to protect it

complicated subject = when there are many difficult things to explain

criteria = a measure

culture = the common things people do in a particular country

customs = things you do because you belong to a culture

democracy = a type of government where everybody votes

demonstration = when you show something to other people

discriminated against = when people say or do bad things to you because you are not the same as them

discrimination = when others don't like you because you are not the same as them

element = a part of something

encouraged = telling someone they should do something

equality = when people are all treated the same

exclude = not included

exposure = when you are shown something

express = speak aloud or to show to others

fantastic = when something is very, very good

heritage = the history of your people

Humanitarian = when something is done to be kind to another person

illegal = against the law, you are not allowed to do it

initially = at first

migrants = people who go to live in another country, never to return

multicultural = when you have people from many different countries living together

nation = country

nationality = what country you come from

non-discrimination = discrimination is not allowed

obvious = something you can easily see

overseas = in another country over the sea

party = when you celebrate with other people

perish = to die

permanent = when something will not change

policy = a way of doing something. Governments have policies

poms = a slang term used to describe migrants who come from England

population = the number of people who live in a country

pretty amazing = you like something

program = a group of activities

proportion = part of something, not the full amount

prosper = become richer

punishment = what happens to you after you have done something bad

quarter = 25%

racial grounds = when someone uses your race to make a decision about you

receive = to get

religion = For example Muslim, Christian, Jew, Buddhist

required = needed

residents = those who live in a town or country

responsibility = when you must do something

restricted = not allowed for some people

settlement = when people go to a place to live for the first time

skills = when you can do something special which other people can't do

society = describes all the people in a country and how they live

Streams = a part

teens = when you are a teenager

traditions = things that have been done for a long time

typical = an example of something you see many times

value = when you think something is good

whole lot more = a much bigger number of something