

# Australia's unrecognized resources boom

Languages for Australia's  
future

-Michael Clyne-

- Indigenous Australia – Multilingual
- British settlers – introduced monolingualism though some plurilingual (more than one language)
- More multilingualism through migration
- Continuing tension – monolingualism and plurilingualism

- Now nearly 400 languages from all over the world
- 2006 – 16.8% speak a LOTE at home
- 31.4% in Sydney, 27.9% in Melbourne

- Top 20 languages in Australia:
- 5 out of 6 most widely studied languages
- 3 of 4 languages of main Asian trading partners
- 9 of the 20 most widely used first languages in the world

**Table 1 - Languages spoken at home-  
Australia**

<b>Top 20 Lang. in 2006</b>	<b>Speakers in 1991</b>	<b>Speakers in 2001</b>	<b>Speakers in 2006</b>	<b>%Change since 1991</b>	<b>% Change since 2001</b>
1 Italian	418801	353605	316893	-24.3	-10.4
2 Greek	285702	263717	252222	-11.7	-4.4
3 Cantonese	163266	225307	244554	49.8	8.5
4 Arabic	162855	209372	243662	49.6	16.4
5 Mandarin	54430	139288	220596	305.3	58.4
6 Vietnamese	110185	174236	194858	76.8	11.8
7 Spanish	90477	93593	97998	8.3	4.7
8 Tag./Filipino	59109	78878	92330	56.2	17.1
9 German	113335	76443	75634	-33.3	-1.1
10 Hindi	22727	47817	70013	208.1	46.4
11 Macedonian	64428	71994	67831	5.3	-5.8
12 Croatian	63081	69851	63615	0.8	-8.9
13 Korean	19756	39529	54619	176.5	38.2
14 Turkish	41966	50693	53858	28.3	6.2
15 Polish	66933	59056	53390	-20.2	-9.6
16 Serbian	24336	49203	52534	115.9	6.8
17 French	45496	39643	43219	-5.0	9.0
18 Indonesian	29803	38724	42038	41.1	8.6
19 Persian		25238	37155		47.2
20 Maltese	52997	41393	36517	-31.1	-11.8

**Table 2: Top ten Languages other than English (LOTEs) in the home in Australian capital cities, 2006**

<i>Sydney</i>	<i>Melbourne</i>	<i>Adelaide</i>	<i>Canberra</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Darwin</i>	<i>Brisbane</i>	<i>Hobart</i>
Arabic	Italian	Italian	Mandarin	Italian	Greek	Mandarin	Greek
Cantonese	Greek	Greek	Italian	Mandarin	Tag./Filipino	Vietnamese	Italian
Mandarin	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Cantonese	Aust. Indig.	Cantonese	Mandarin
Greek	Cantonese	Mandarin	Cantonese	Vietnamese	Indonesian	Italian	German
Vietnamese	Mandarin	Cantonese	Greek	Arabic	Vietnamese	Samoan	Polish
Italian	Arabic	Polish	Croatian	Indonesian	Cantonese	Greek	Cantonese
Spanish	Macedonian	German	Spanish	German	Italian	Spanish	Spanish
Tag./Filipino	Turkish	Arabic	German	Croatian	Portuguese	Tag./Filipino	Dutch
Hindi	Spanish	Serbian	Arabic	Polish	Mandarin	Hindi	Arabic
Korean	Tag./Filipino	Tag./Filipino	Hindi	Macedonian	German	German	French

- Melbourne, Sydney share top 6 languages (Table 2)
- Melbourne: balance of 4 'European', 4 'Asian', Arabic, Turkish
- Sydney: 6 of top 10 'Asian'
- 3 'European'
- 1 Middle Eastern

- School age population: Table 3
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
- Chinese languages

**Table 3 - 5-19 year olds by language, Australia, 2006**

<i>Language</i>	<i>5-19 years</i>	<i>% of total, 5-19</i>
Arabic	63,430	1.6
Cantonese	47,586	1.2
Vietnamese	46,455	1.2
Mandarin	41,995	1.0
Greek	31,405	0.8
Italian	21,092	0.5
Spanish	14,687	0.4
Turkish	13,641	0.3
Korean	12,849	0.3
Hindi	12,685	0.3

(English: 3,294,964, 81.7%)

- 2011 (national projections):
- Mandarin 1<sup>st</sup>
- Arabic 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 9 languages – including:
  - Hindi
  - Filipino
  - Spanish

- Melbourne's most multilingual contiguous area:
- Monash (12 languages over 1000 speakers) – concentrations of Greek, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tamil, Sinhala
- Greater Dandenong (16); 61.5% LOTE at home
- Casey (20) .
- Dandenong South: 21.8% LOTE at home
- 27.5% Albanian, nearly 16%: Dari, Russian, Arabic, Mandarin
- Grassroots cross-cultural communication experience

- David Graddol (2006) – English Next?
- Forecasts bleak economic future for English monolinguals
- Rosen et al (2000) – Australian CEOs – proficiency in fewer languages than those of 27 other countries
- All languages important (as stated in National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools, 2005-2008)

- Cognitive benefits – also of economic importance
- Understanding of arbitrary nature of language/ separation of form and content
- Start of monolingual mindset
- Divergent thinking
- More economic neural activity
- Delay in onset of dementia

- Kevin Rudd – zhengyou
- Summit – Nothing on cultural diversity
- ‘Australia’s capacity in *foreign* languages’ included under ‘Australia’s future prosperity and security in a rapidly changing region and the world’
- ‘Mr Rudd, lamenting the decline of the teaching of *foreign* languages in schools, announced a \$68 million program to revive *Asian* languages’. (Age, 24 March 2008)

- 'To ensure that the major languages and cultures of our region are no longer foreign to Australia but are familiar and mainstreamed into Australian society' (Summit ambition)
- 'Living in a first-language family is such an advantage that they merely practise their learned skills and dominate the exam...(those starting Chinese in Year 7) *the very ones who should be learning Chinese* are being put off by the inequality..Witness the dominance of Chinese surnames in the study scores over 40'

- BUT continuum of learners with/without backgrounds.
- ([www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au))
- Wherever you draw lines, you discriminate and demotivate.
- Differentiated syllabuses according to need
- Incentives not penalties

- 'the modern environment will require (young Australians) to be able to converse with people *in our region* in *their own* languages'. (Julia Gillard)
- Accreditation of 47 languages as Year 12 subjects – Australian achievement

- Targets: 25% LOTE in Year 12 by 2002 (Dawkins 1991)
- 25% LOTE in Year 12 - 15% in prioritized Asian language, 10% other languages – by 2006 (Rudd 1993)
- 12% prioritized Asian lang. By 2020 (Rudd 2008?)
- Not prioritized: Hindi, Vietnamese, Spanish

- Monolingual mindset considers languages burdensome
- Monodimensional assumption – bilingualism impairs literacy
- Research shows reverse:
- Preoccupation with structures of words, sentences and sound systems

- Research shows bilinguals make better use of their knowledge of how language works than monolinguals in learning a new language
- They are often deterred from learning another language at school
- Only 2% take two LOTEs in VCE

- Need to reassess what it means to be a multicultural nation
- Social inclusion needs to include cultural diversity
- Social inclusion needs to be about empowerment not just correcting deficits
- Social inclusion needs to be about interconnectedness (incl language)
- Multiculturalism policy is social inclusion policy

- What to do with resources:
- Keep them buried
- Did them up and then ignore them
- Bring in dividends for the owners
- Learn to understand them to benefit them in an ecological way
- LANGUAGES for
- Inclusion
- Empowerment
- Cognitive and economic benefits

- All Australians should have the opportunity to participate in our multilingual society
- This means liberation from linguaphobia and the monolingual mindset
- Collaborative national activity – governments, education systems, schools, universities, business, communities, families