



# PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

## Pray for Australia

All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, LORD; they will bring glory to your name.

— Psalm 86:9

## Country Profile

Australia is one of the wealthiest Asia-Pacific nations and has enjoyed more than two decades of economic growth. In addition to abundant natural resources, its economy has benefited from an effective system of government, a well-functioning legal system, and an independent bureaucracy. Australia is an attractive destination for investment and immigration.

Australia is very diverse and multicultural, with ethnic peoples from all over the world. As of August 2017, over 700,000 international students enrolled in its educational institutions, mainly from China, India, Nepal, Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Indonesia and Hong Kong. There is incredible potential for growing diaspora work and partnership with multicultural churches.

At present, OMF Australia has a small team reaching out to the Chinese, Thai and Japanese peoples in Sydney and Melbourne, but it hopes to facilitate and encourage work amongst other growing groups such as Indonesian and Vietnamese peoples. Research shows that while some will become Christians through university campus ministries and through local church outreach, 50-80% will abandon their faith in the first year of returning home. One focus of the Diaspora Returnee Ministries in Australia is therefore to work alongside churches and existing university ministries to help prepare and connect these new believers with churches and fellowships back in Asia so that they can continue to be discipled.

Notably, there is a decline in Australians who identify as Christians over the last decade, and a dramatic increase in those who claim to have no religion. For the first time in Australia's history, the 2016 census revealed that the number of individuals who identify as 'no religion' had surpassed the number of people who claim to be Catholics. Many churches are aging and young people are increasingly finding Christianity irrelevant as they wrestle with popular social issues such as homosexuality, feminism and scientific reasoning.

Despite this, Chinese and multicultural churches are growing supporters of mission work, with approximately 40% of OMF workers sent from Australia being ethnically Asian. Bible colleges are also partnering with mission agencies to mobilise their students through mission conferences, partnering events, and short-term trips. OMF's short-term program, Serve Asia, is receiving strong interest, and many volunteers return years later for long-term work. Encouragingly, the mission discussion and mentoring groups have been incredibly popular for young adults. However, many young adults and young families seriously wrestle with the challenges and implications of cross-cultural work, juggling career, family, and expectations.



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## Population

- **Total:** 24.6 million

## Top 5 Countries of birth

- **Australia:** 66.7%
- **England:** 3.9%
- **China:** 2.2%
- **New Zealand:** 2.2%
- **India:** 1.9%

## Religions

- **Christian:** 52% (Catholic: 23%, Anglican: 13%, Other Christian: 16%)
- **Non-religious:** 30%
- **Muslim:** 2.6%
- **Buddhist:** 2.4%
- **Other:** 13%

*Lord, thank you for the abundant opportunities to reach East Asians who are coming to Australia for work and study. Please raise up more workers to reach out and disciple new believers to go back and be missionaries in their home countries.*

*Lord, thank you for churches around Australia who are faithful to you and your mission, and the work that you are doing through them. Please continue to use them in praying, sending, and mobilising for your work amongst East Asians.*