



Changing Patterns of Religious Adherence

Linked to Presentation DS133 Religious Adherence

Christian	1947		1991		2006		2011		2016	
	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000
Anglican	39	2.960	23.8	4.000	18.7	3.718	17.1	3.679	13.3	3.101
Catholic	21	1.590	27.3	4.606	25.8	5.126	25.3	5.439	22.6	5.291
Uniting Church			8.24	1.387	5.7	1.135	5.0	1.065	3.7	.870
Presbyterian /Reformed	10	0.740	4.28	.732	3.0	.596	2.8	.599	2.3	.526
Eastern Orthodox	0.2	0.017	2.8	.474	2.9	.576	2.6	.563	2.1	.502
Lutheran	1	0.076	1.48	.250	1.3	.251	1.2	.251	.7	.174
Baptist	2	0.110	1.65	.279	1.6	.316	1.6	.352	1.5	.345
Other Christian groups	1.4		4.6	1.422	4.9	.995	5.5	1.197	5.9	1.389
Total Christian	74.6	3.672	74.15	13.15	63.9	12.713	61.1	13.145	52.1	12.198





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Non-Christian	1947		1991		2006		2011		2016	
	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000	%	N X 1,000,000
Islam		0.0027	0.88	.147	1.7	.340	2.2	.476	2.6	.604
Judaism	0.4	0.0320	0.44	0.074	0.4	.088	0.5	.097	0.4	.091
Buddhism		0.0004	0.83	.139	2.1	.418	2.5	.528	2.4	.563
Hinduism		0.0002	0.26	0.043	0.7	.148	1.3	.275	1.9	.440
Australian Aboriginal Traditional Religions					0.0	.005	0.0	.007	0.0	.008
Sikhism					0.1	.026	0.3	.072	0.5	.125
Other Religious groups	.1		.24	.039	0.4	.076	0.4	.087	0.4	.087
Total Other Religions	0.5	0.0353	2.65	.442	5.4	1.101	7.2	1.542	8.2	1.918
No Religion	0.4		13	2.18	18.8	3.706	22.5	4.841	30.1	7.040
Not Stated	11.1		10.2	1.71	11.9	2.357	9.2	1.972	9.6	2.238
Total Population		7.579	100	17.482	100	19.877	100	21.500	100	23.394

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Updated 2017) http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_CENSUS2011_B14

Reference material: CRA – Pointers Vol. 27 No.3, September 2017





Complete the following questions using the above statistics and other related material.

1. What do you notice about people identifying with the two major Christian denominations in Australia (Catholic and Anglican) since 1991?
2. The proportion of the population identifying itself as Christian from 1947 to 2016 has...
Explain your response.
3. Over the last 10 years most Christian groups are seeing a significant decline in numbers.
Give reasons for this decline.
4. The Catholic Church remains the largest Christian denomination in terms of people identifying with it.
Why do you think this is the case?
5. What do you notice about people identifying with other non-Christian religions?
Give reasons for this change.
6. In the 2016 Census, what proportion of the population identified itself with the four major religions (Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism) other than Christianity?
7. People who have identified with 'No religion' category has shown the largest increase from 2006. How big is this change?
Give reasons for this increase.

“The Census continues to show the changing Australian culture and the long-term continued movement away from identification with religious institutions that has been in process since 1971 and looks likely to continue for another 30 or 40 years”

CRA – Pointers Vol. 27 No.3, September 2017, Page 4

- Why do you think people are moving away from religious institutions?
- Does this tell us anything about the 'spirituality' of the Australian population?