

# Boroondara languages guide

Language barriers can limit a person's ability to access essential resources and services, and therefore increase their risk of social exclusion. Knowing the different cultural groups in our community enables us to plan appropriate services and design effective communication channels to overcome language barriers.

According to 2016 census data, 27.2% (45,538) of Boroondara residents reported that they speak a language other than English at home and 6,784 of these reported speaking English not well or not at all (4.1%).

English proficiency varies by age-group and by language group, and it may be useful to know these distinctions when communicating with specific groups within the community.

For example, there is a relationship between ageing and low English proficiency with one in four residents aged 65-79 years not speaking English well or at all, compared to less than one in 10 residents aged five to 11 years (24.4% and 7.1% respectively).

This document includes information on individual age-cohorts including the main languages other than English spoken and the level of English proficiency for each.

All information is from the 2016 Census (ABS), and compiled using TableBuilder.

Emerging languages are also included. For our purposes here, emerging languages are those that did not appear in the top five languages, but that had an overall population of more than 50 residents and where 30% of the population arrived in Australia five years preceding the 2016 census (between 2011 and 2016).

## Overview

### Language in Boroondara

For general information about language spoken at home, including number of speakers of individual languages and change over time, see the [Boroondara Population Profile](#) and [Our Diverse Community section](#) on our social statistics page [All about Boroondara](#).

#### English proficiency by language group

Over 45,000 people in Boroondara speak a language other than English with 6,784 of these not speaking English at all, or not speaking it well (ie low English proficiency).

Mandarin speakers had the highest rate of speakers with low English proficiency (24.9%) followed by speakers of Korean and Arabic (20.1% and 18.2% respectively).

Table 1 shows the language groups that overall have higher percentages of their population reporting low English proficiency (> 10% not speaking English well or not speaking English at all).

**Table 1: Languages with high rates of low English proficiencies reported**

Language	Number of speakers in Boroondara	Number of speakers with low English proficiency	Percent of speakers with low English proficiency
All languages	45,608	6,784	14.9%
Mandarin	13,707	3,411	24.9%
Korean	716	144	20.1%
Arabic	910	166	18.2%
Cantonese	4,946	776	15.7%
Greek	4,761	579	12.2%
Vietnamese	2,043	238	11.6%
Japanese	552	61	11.1%

## English proficiency by age group

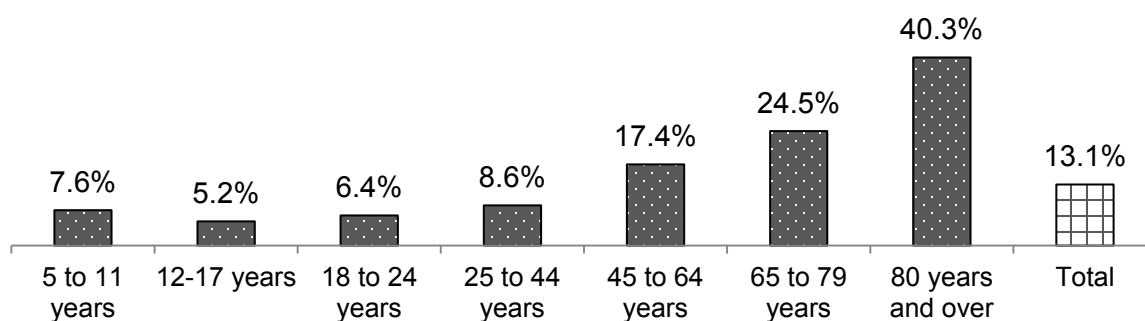
One in three residents aged between 25 and 44 years speak a language other than English, the highest rate among all age cohorts (33.7%).

Age groups with the highest rates of residents that did not speak English well or at all, were found in the age groups over 45 years, with rates increasing to a high of 40.3% among residents aged 80 years and over.

**Table 2: English proficiency of age groups**

Age group	Speak a language other than English (number)	Speak a language other than English (percent)	Speaks another language and has low English proficiency (number)	Speaks another language and has low English proficiency (percent*)
5-11 years	3,333	23.1%	253	7.6%
12-17 years	3,375	24.7%	175	5.2%
18 to 24 years	5,056	27.7%	325	6.4%
25 to 44 years	14,594	33.7%	1,256	8.6%
45 to 64 years	11,350	26.3%	1,973	17.4%
65 to 79 years	4,031	21.8%	988	24.5%
80 years and over	1,828	21.9%	736	40.3%
Total	43,554	27.3%	5,692	13.1%

\* of those that speak another language



**Figure 1: Percent of residents that speak another language with low English proficiency (ie speak English not well or at all)**

## Residents aged 5 to 11 years

Almost a quarter of children aged five to 11 years spoke a language other than English at home with Mandarin the main language spoken, followed by Greek and Cantonese. English proficiency was lowest in children reporting speaking Mandarin with 148 children, or 11.8%, of the children that spoke Mandarin, not speaking English well or not speaking it at all.

Emerging languages in this age-group include Hindi, Korean, Arabic and Tamil.

**Table 3: 5 to 11 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main 5 languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	10,638	73.6%	-	-
Speaks another language	3,333	23.1%	253	7.6%
Mandarin*	1,249	8.6%	148	11.8%
Greek	334	2.3%	<20	<6.0%
Cantonese	226	1.6%	<20	<8.7%
French	163	1.1%	<20	<12.4%
Vietnamese	147	1.0%	<20	<14.1%

\* Over thirty percent of this population arrived in Australia after 2011

## Residents aged 12 to 17 years

There are 3,375 residents aged 12 to 17 years that speak a language other than English, (representing 24.7% of this age group). Overall, 175 young people reported low English proficiency with Mandarin speakers recording the highest rate (7.9%).

No emerging languages were identified for this age group.

**Table 4: 12 to 17 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main 5 languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	9,869	72.3%	-	-
Speaks another language	3,375	24.7%	175	5.2%
Mandarin*	1,473	10.8%	116	7.9%
Greek	374	2.7%	<20	<5.3%
Cantonese	280	2.1%	<20	<7.3%
Vietnamese	157	1.2%	<20	<13.1%
French	141	1.0%	<20	<14.5%

\* Over thirty percent of this population arrived in Australia after 2011

## Residents aged 18 to 24 years

While 28.9% of young adults aged 18 to 24 years spoke a language other than English, only 6.2% reported low English proficiency.

Emerging languages in this age group include Gujarati, Tamil, Indonesian, Hindi, Sinhalese, Thai, Spanish and Japanese.

**Table 5: 18 to 17 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	12,411	68.1%	-	-
Speaks another language	5,056	27.7%	325	6.4%
Mandarin*	1,849	10.1%	144	7.8%
Cantonese	596	3.3%	<20	<3.4%
Vietnamese*	393	2.2%	24	6.1%
Greek	270	1.5%	<20	<7.4%
Arabic	171	0.9%	<20	<11.7%

\* Over thirty percent of this population arrived in Australia after 2011



## Residents aged 25 to 44 years

This age group has the highest rate of residents that speak another language (33.7%).

Mandarin speaking residents had the highest rates of low English proficiency (did not speak English well or at all (17.2%)). This group also recorded the highest number of emerging languages which are listed in the table below.

**Table 6: 25 to 44 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	26,471	61.2%	-	-
Speaks another language	14,594	33.7%	1,256	8.6%
Mandarin*	4412	10.2%	758	17.2%
Cantonese	1240	2.9%	82	6.6%
Hindi	809	1.9%	<20	<2.5%
Greek	739	1.7%	<20	<2.7%
Vietnamese	703	1.6%	51	7.3%

**Table 7: Emerging languages among residents aged 25 - 44**

Language	Arrived after 2011 (number)	Arrived after 2011 (percent)	Total number of speakers
Filipino	75	79.8%	94
Chinese, nfd	74	64.3%	115
Arabic	190	56.9%	334
Telugu	75	56.4%	133
Persian (excluding Dari)	194	54.8%	354
Marathi	69	52.7%	131
Bengali	65	52.0%	125
Kannada	34	50.7%	67
Malayalam	63	50.0%	126
Urdu	62	49.2%	126
Tagalog	52	46.4%	112
Tamil	122	46.2%	264
Spanish	229	44.9%	510
Hindi	335	41.4%	809
Nepali	28	40.0%	70
Portuguese	33	38.8%	85



Thai	80	36.4%	220
Gujarati	186	35.0%	532
Russian	41	34.2%	120
French	92	33.0%	279
German	49	32.0%	153
Korean	94	31.9%	295
Mandarin	1361	30.8%	4412
Sinhalese	84	30.1%	279

## Residents aged 45 to 64 years

Overall, 17.4% of residents that spoke another language had low English proficiency. The rate among Mandarin speakers is particularly high at 40.9% - four in 10 speakers of Mandarin in this age group do not speak English well or at all.

No emerging language groups were identified within this age group.

**Table 8: 45 to 64 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	29,825	69.2%	-	-
Speaks another language	11,350	26.3%	1,973	17.4%
Mandarin	3,182	7.4%	1,302	40.9%
Greek	1,644	3.8%	25	1.5%
Cantonese	1,639	3.8%	321	19.6%
Italian	988	2.3%	<20	<2.0%
Vietnamese	474	1.1%	70	14.8%

## Residents aged 65 to 79 years

Among the 4,031 residents aged 65 to 79 years who spoke another language, one in four (24.4%) reported speaking English not well or not all. The majority of those who spoke Mandarin at home reported that they speak English not well or not all (61.9%).

No emerging language groups were identified within this age group.

**Table 9: 65 to 79 years - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	13,479	73.0%	-	-
Speaks another language	4,031	21.8%	988	24.5%
Greek	787	4.3%	243	30.9%
Cantonese	655	3.5%	149	22.7%
Mandarin	617	3.3%	379	61.4%
Italian	580	3.1%	47	8.1%
German	108	0.6%	0	0.0%

## Residents aged 80 years and over

Residents aged 80 years and over who spoke another language had the lowest English language proficiency of all age groups. Four in 10 residents in this age group that spoke another language did not speak English or did not speak English well (40.3%).

Eight out of 10 residents that spoke Mandarin reported low English proficiency (79.2%).

No emerging language groups were identified within this age group.

**Table 10: 80 years and older - Top 5 languages and English proficiency**

Main languages other than English	Number	Percent	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (number)	Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all' (percent)
Speaks English only	5,925	70.9%	-	-
Speaks another language	1,828	21.9%	736	40.3%
Greek	494	5.9%	229	46.4%
Italian	456	5.5%	161	35.3%
Cantonese	172	2.1%	107	62.2%
Mandarin	120	1.4%	95	79.2%
German	68	0.8%	<20	<29.4%