

Demographic Profile: Redfern & Waterloo

The source of the information in this profile is First Release Processing of the 2001 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the 2016 (Redfern) and 2017 (Waterloo) postcodes.

The two inner Sydney suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo are part of the South Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) and lie just to the south of the Central Business District. Redfern covers 1.2 square kilometres, while Waterloo is larger at 1.9 square kilometres. While each has its distinct identity, the two neighbouring suburbs are often coupled for public policy purposes.

Both have long been known as economically disadvantaged areas. Research by Professor Tony Vinson in 1999¹ found that, of the 578 postcode areas in NSW he studied, Waterloo ranked 22 in terms of disadvantage (one of only two urban postcodes in the top 30), and Redfern ranked 189. The 2001 census data indicates that the lower ranking of Redfern is likely to be related to its higher proportion of private housing which has made it possible for parts of the suburb to be 'gentrified' as higher income people buy-up properties close to the city centre.

Population

Despite its smaller area, Redfern is the more densely populated. The 2001 census shows a total of:

- 11,202 people in Redfern
- 5,787 people in Waterloo.

Indigenous population

On census night, Redfern recorded 311 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (2.8% of the total population), and Waterloo recorded 411 (7.1%). These figures are high when compared to a Sydney-wide proportion of 1.0% and a nation-wide proportion of 2.2%.

29% of Redfern's Indigenous population and 43% of Waterloo's Indigenous population are children and young people under the age of 18.

Some more detailed data was also extrapolated using the smaller ATSI regions as the boundary lines. Using these boundaries, Redfern had a total of 282 Indigenous people and Waterloo had exactly 400. An age breakdown across the two regions shows 62 children in the 0-4 group and 157 in the 5-14 group. 138 of the 157 children aged 5 to 14 were recorded at attending a school.

¹ Tony Vinson (1999) *Unequal in Life : the distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales*, Jesuit Social Services, Sydney.

In terms of the total South Sydney LGA (a much larger area than just Redfern and Waterloo), the Indigenous population has decreased by 6.9% since the 1996 census but increased by 40% since the 1991 census. The recent decrease in the LGA is noteworthy given the 16% national increase in the Indigenous population between the 1996 census and the 2001 census.

Children aged 14 and under

The two suburbs demonstrate a marked difference in the proportion of children aged 14 and under, with this age group comprising 8.5% of the Redfern population and 14% of the Waterloo population. Both figures are, however, significantly less than the national average of 21% of the population being children 14 or under.

Number of Children Aged 14 and Under

Age group	Redfern	Waterloo
0 to 4 years	370	236
5 to 9 years	302	278
10 to 14 years	283	296
Total number	955	810
% of population	8.5%	14%

School attendance

The census shows 561 children and young people attending school in Redfern and 618 in Waterloo.

School Attendance

Type of school	Redfern	Waterloo
Pre-school	59	45
Infants/Primary	266	310
Secondary	236	263
Total number	618	561

Families with children under 15

There are a total of 2,171 families in Redfern and 1,259 in Waterloo.

Of these families, 485 (22.4%) in Redfern and 443 (35.2%) in Waterloo are coupled or sole parent families with children under 15, as the following table shows

Families with children under 15

	Redfern - no. of families	Redfern – % of total families	Waterloo – no. of families	Waterloo – % of total families
Couple families with children under 15	301	13.9%	156	12.4%
Sole parent families with children under 15	184	8.5%	287	22.8%

Housing

There are 5,496 dwellings in Redfern. Of these:

- 55% are being rented and 29% are owned or being purchased by the occupant.
- Of the rental dwellings, 42% are State Housing Authority properties.
- SHA housing comprises 22.8% of all dwellings in the suburb.

Waterloo has 3,004 dwellings.

- 77.7% are being rented and 11.8% are owned or being purchased by the occupant.
- Of the rental dwellings, 89% (2,025) are State Housing Authority properties.
- SHA housing comprises 67.4% of all dwellings in the suburb.

Both suburbs have very low numbers of free-standing houses. This means that most dwellings have either no yards for children to play in or only very small yards.

Type of Dwelling

Dwelling type	Redfern	Waterloo
Separate house	57 (1%)	131 (4.4%)
Semi/terrace/town house	1746 (31.8%)	707 (23.5%)
Flat/unit/apartment	3,558 (64.7%)	2091 (69.6%)

Weekly income

The following table shows the weekly individual income for people over 15 in both Redfern and Waterloo – after adjustments have been made to eliminate overseas visitors to the area on census night and those who did not answer the question.

Weekly Income – Individuals 15 years & over

\$ per week	Redfern – no. of people	Redfern – % of people	Waterloo – no. of people	Waterloo – % of people
Nil	461	5.4%	204	4.9%
Less than \$159	738	8.6%	672	16.1%
\$160 – \$299	2127	24.9%	1858	44.5%
\$300 – \$599	1704	19.9%	741	17.8%
Over \$600	3512	41.1%	692	16.6%
Total	8542	100%	4167	100%

This table shows that:

- The number of destitute people in Redfern is more than double the number in Waterloo.
- The actual number of people who are very poor (that is, have an income of less than \$159 per week) are about the same in both suburbs, and there is little difference in the number of those who have only between \$160 and \$299 to live on.

- The largest income grouping in Waterloo is the \$160 - \$299 group, whereas it is the over \$600 group in Redfern – strong evidence of the increasing gentrification of parts of Redfern.

Birthplace

The Redfern Waterloo area is a very ethnically diverse community. It has a much higher proportion of residents born overseas than the national (22%) or NSW (23%) averages.

Birthplace by Region

	Redfern	Waterloo
Australia	5,249 (46.8%)	2,708 (46.7%)
Other Oceania/Antartica	508 (4.5%)	198 (3.4%)
North West Europe	779 (7%)	275 (4.7%)
South & East Europe	937 (8.4%)	958 (16.5%)
Nth Africa & Middle East	258 (2.3%)	187 (3.2%)
South East Asia	481 (4.3%)	319 (5.5%)
North East Asia	508 (4.5%)	154 (2.6%)
South & Central Asia	300 (2.7%)	45 (0.8%)
The Americas	227 (2%)	126 (2.2%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	92 (0.8%)	11 (0.2%)
Other/not stated/overseas visitors	1,863 (16.6%)	809 (14%)
Total Persons	11,202	5,790

Ancestry

For the first time, the 2001 census asked people to consider the “ancestry with which you identify”. Multiple responses could be provided. If more than two responses were given, the first two were recorded. Hence the responses in the table below number more than the total number of persons who answered the question in Redfern and Waterloo.

Self-identified Ancestry –total responses

	Redfern	Waterloo
Oceania	2,588 (19.7%)	1,538 (26.8%)
North West Europe	4,816 (36.7%)	1,822 (27.3%)
South & East Europe	1,656 (12.6%)	1,249 (18.7%)
Nth Africa & Mid East	564 (4.3%)	427 (6.4%)
South East Asia	357 (2.7%)	312 (4.7%)
North East Asia	829 (6.3%)	316 (4.7%)
South & Central Asia	345 (2.6%)	59 (0.9%)
The Americas	193 (1.5%)	94 (1.4%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	59	13
Total Responses	13,120	6,653
Total Persons	10,969	5,745

Note: ‘Oceania’ includes Australians and New Zealanders, including Indigenous people of those two countries.