

Australian Hellenic Council

STATISTICAL DATA AND FACTS ABOUT THE GREEK LANGUAGE IN AUSTRALIA

(Correlating 2009 and 2010 data and excluding Greek language pre-school Centres)

1. There are currently 42,850 students attending Greek language classes in Australia provided by the following sectors:

Ethnic Schools:	21,000
Government Schools:	14,200
Saturday Schools of Languages:	1,950
Greek Daily Schools:	4,200
Independent Schools:	450
Tertiary Institutions:	1,050

2. Greek language and culture is the most popular language within the Ethnic Schools sector in Australia.
3. Greek is the fourth most popular taught language within the Saturday School of Languages.
4. Greek is the sixth most widely taught language in Government schools.
5. In 2009, almost 33% of the students in government and Greek Daily schools were of non-Greek language background.
6. Greek language possesses the strongest retention rate amongst students in government schools from Preps to Grade Six (92%) and from Year Seven to Year 10 (72%), compared with any other language.
7. Greek is the third most popular home language in Australia at inter-generational level.
8. Greek has the strongest language maintenance rate in Australia at an inter-generational level. The language shift from Greek to English a-

mong 1st generation speakers in almost zero; the language shift for second generation is 8.6% and for 3rd generation Greek Australians 24%.

9. Greek is known and used by approximately 500,000 Australians of Greek and non-Greek ancestry and descent.
10. Greek is also the language of an additional 135,000 Australian citizens who live permanently in Greece. Greece is the second most popular destination country for Greek Australian citizens after United Kingdom with 240,000 Australian citizens.
11. Greek is one of the five official languages of the European Union and the official language of two European Union countries.
12. Greek is the official language of the Greek and the Cypriot shipping industries, which are responsible for almost 35% of the total transport of global products.
13. Greek is the oldest and sole survival of ancient European language bearing a linguistic tradition of 4,000 years;
14. Greek is the language in which fundamental texts of western civilization and Christian scripture were written and transmitted through the ages.
15. Greek remains the strong (re)source language for all other world languages, i.e. 28,000 English words have been originated from Greek.
16. The concepts and notions born from the Greek language, pervaded the languages of Europe and the civilizations of the world, leaving eternal mark on what is known today as "European civilization".

17. Greek has a utilitarian role in Australia because of an established presence of 600,000 Greek speaking Australian citizens and of many more thousands of Australian with ancestral, sentimental, professional, cultural and intellectual ties with Greece and Cyprus.

18. Greek came to be not the exclusive property of the Greeks only, but remains the ancestral language for all Europeans.
19. Greece is arguably the only home country of Australian citizens that contributes so generously and supports multifaceted types and schemes of language learning and teaching. Greece's sound and unparalleled contribution is estimated to approximately AU\$10,000,000.00 annually and this generosity deserves the reciprocal attitudes of the Australian Commonwealth Government by including Greek as one of the languages in the national curriculum policy.
20. Australia's interest in enhanced trade and investment arrangements with the European Union and the sensitive Eastern Mediterranean region and its burgeoning economy, as well as its potential links with Europe could be better implemented via a role of the Greek language in establishing and maintaining Greek speaking experts in European capitals including Athens and Nicosia.

*For and on behalf of the Australian Hellenic Council
Professor Anastasios M. Tamis
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New multilingual information booklet launched

Member for Grayndler and Minister for Infrastructure, Anthony Albanese MP, today launched Centrelink's new Information in your language booklet at Petersham Town Hall in Sydney.



“Australia is enriched by its migrants and refugees, and their diverse cultural backgrounds,” Mr Albanese said.

“It’s very important that people who arrive are made to feel welcome and included, and get support if they need it, whether they speak English or not.

“This new Information in your language booklet is the latest addition to Centrelink’s suite of information products for Australians who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

“For the first time, translated introductory information on all of Centrelink’s wide range of payments and services is packaged neatly into one booklet.

“It comes in 35 languages from Chinese, Greek and Italian to Nepali, Swahili, Tagalog and more,” Mr Albanese said.

Mr Albanese said it was a valuable

resource for people who are often vulnerable and at risk of being left out due to language barriers.

“Centrelink plays an important role in the lives of most Australians at some point in their lives, and is a front-line agency for new Australians who don’t speak English,” said Mr Albanese.

“Near here in my own electorate, almost half the customers at the Marrickville Centrelink office are from migrant or refugee backgrounds. Language should be no barrier to finding

Government services.

“It’s estimated that around 1.3 million of Centrelink’s 6.8 million customers are from backgrounds where English is not the primary language.

“Centrelink’s Multicultural Service Officers reach out to non-English speaking communities to ensure they have the same access to Australian Government services as everyone else.

“Centrelink already produces a wide range of multilingual publications, and often places articles in ethnic media as

well as producing translated audio and visual material to help people understand their rights and obligations.

“This new flagship booklet is an important addition to Centrelink’s existing and impressive array of multicultural communication and promotional material, helping to inform and empower non-English speakers so they can have equal access to Australian Government services.

“Along with basic information about payments, programs and eligibility it also covers topics of particular interest to migrants and refugees – such as waiting periods, proof of residence requirements and international social security agreements.”

Background: Centrelink’s Information in your language book comes in Arabic, Assyrian, Bosnian, Burmese, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, French, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Karen, Khmer, Kirundi, Korean, Lao, Macedonian, Maltese, Nepali, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinia, Turkish and Vietnamese.

**The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Member for Grayndler
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local
Government**