

Christian Profile

PLEASE NOTE: This religious profile provides an overview of the range of beliefs and practices that may apply to individuals who practice this religion. This description may not apply to all people as individual experiences may vary. However this profile can be used as a guide to some of the issues that may concern your clients.

Introduction:

- Christianity takes its name from Jesus Christ who was born to Mary in Bethlehem near Jerusalem. Christianity is the religion based on the life, death and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, also known as the Christ or Messiah.
- Christianity is the largest religion in the world and in Australia. There are approximately 2 billion people worldwide who regard themselves as Christian. This is about 33% of the world's population. There are various denominations of Christianity including Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Pentecostal Salvation Army and Seventh-Day Adventist. Many of these denominations are represented in Australia today. Christianity has had a significant influence on the development of Australia, including the political and legal systems, institutions and our democracy. The beliefs of different branches of Christianity may differ, based on each denomination's interpretation of the Bible (see scriptures).

Migration:

- Formal Christianity came to Australia in 1788 with the Reverend Richard Johnson, a Church of England (Anglican) minister, who sailed with the First Fleet. The first church building was completed in 1793 near Circular Quay. Methodism arrived in 1815; Catholicism in 1820; Presbyterianism in 1822; Congregationalism in 1830 and the Baptist Churches in 1834. Other early groups included the German Lutherans, Christadelphians, Christian Scientists and Seventh-Day Adventists.
- Roman Catholics made up 22.6%, Anglicans 13.3%, and 3.7% were affiliated with the Uniting Church in Australia (ABS 2016).
- According to the 2016 Australian Census about 52.1% of Australia are stated an affiliation with Christianity in Victoria (ABS 2016).
- Compared with the 2011 Census, the proportion of the population with a Christian affiliation decreased from 61% to 52% in 2016.

Local Demographics:

Local Government Area	No. of Christian Residents	% of Population
Boroondara	76,727	50.3%
Knox	76,809	53.9%
Manningham	60,704	56.5%
Maroondah	55,765	54.8%
Monash	80,294	47.9%
Whitehorse	72,624	48.6%
Yarra Ranges	68,537	50.3%
Eastern Region	491460	49.8%

(ABS Census 2016)

Language:

Christians live all over the world and are represented in many different cultures and therefore speak many different languages.

Religious Practices:

Beliefs

- Christians follow the teachings of and about Jesus. Most Christians regard Jesus as the Son of God, who was born of a virgin (Mary), imprisoned and crucified on a cross, resurrected three days after his death and later ascended to heaven.
- Most Christians believe in the Trinity, which consists of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three separate deities, all eternal, all omnipresent, who form a single, unified God.
- Most Christians believe in life after death, though their beliefs may vary according to their denomination.
- Christians also await the second coming of Christ which will bring fulfilment of the Kingdom of God and a final day of judgement.
- Christians seek to live by God's Ten Commandments, which are rules or guidelines to living your life, set out in the Bible (see scriptures).
- Many conservative Protestant Christians believe that people are born and remain sinful and that they will end up being eternally punished in Hell unless they are 'saved' by trusting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
- Roman Catholics believe that salvation comes from God, and that this is channelled through church sacraments to sinful but repentant persons. Roman Catholics believe that the soul, at death, either enters Heaven to be with the angels; Purgatory, which is a type of temporary Hell; or to Hell to face eternal torment.
- Religious liberals interpret hell symbolically, not as an actual place. They reject the concept of a loving God creating a place of eternal torment for the vast majority of humans.
- The divisions and conflicts between different Christian denominations are largely due to different interpretations of the Bible.
- Evangelism (spreading the word of God) is another important aspect of Christianity. Evangelism can be practiced in many different ways, ranging from 'door to door', 'friendship evangelism' to sending missionaries to other countries. Evangelism is commonly combined with service. For example, missionaries often run medical facilities and teach.

Worship:

- Sunday is the traditional day of worship.
- Worship can involve the practice of God's teachings in daily life.
- Worship may include reading from the bible, singing hymns and prayer.
- Christians may pray to God to seek guidance from God, to thank God, to ask for God's help and to seek God's forgiveness.
- An aspect of worship, which is most specific to Christianity, is the sacraments. The sacraments involve a specific symbolic action (a 'sign') that confirms membership of the specific denomination. Baptism and Communion are sacraments, which are practiced by most Christian denominations. Other Sacraments include: confirmation, penance (confession), marriage, holy orders (the rite of setting people aside as clergy) and anointing the sick.

- Baptism marks a person's entry into the Christian community. It involves the symbolic sprinkling of water to complete immersion, depending upon the denomination. The water symbolises being cleansed from sin and symbolises dying with Christ and being raised with him.
- Communion is a symbolic meal, involving bread and wine. It commemorates Jesus' last meal, which he ate with his followers the night before he was killed. The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' body and blood. Jesus' sacrifice for his followers is remembered through communion.

Places of Worship:

- Traditional places of worship include Churches or Cathedrals.
- Christians believe that God is everywhere and therefore he can be worshipped or can hear prayers from any location.

Religious / Community Leaders:

- A minister is any person who is responsible for spiritual care of a church. This can be a layperson or a member of the clergy.
- Reverend indicates that the person is a member of the clergy.
- A Pastor is an ordained minister of a local Protestant Church.
- In some Anglican and Lutheran churches a Pastor may be called a Rector or a Vicar.
- Monks, Nuns, Priests, Vicars, and missionaries all devote their lives to serving God.
- Roman Catholic Priests must always remain unmarried while in the Eastern Orthodox Church a Priest may be ordained if he is married but he cannot remarry if he is widowed. Protestant Pastors may marry.
- In Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches a Priest may be called Father. Also in some Lutheran and Anglican churches a Pastor may be called a Father.
- In some Protestant denominations women can be ordained.
- A Bishop is a Priest that has administrative and leadership duties over a group of churches in a region called a diocese. Bishops ordain priests. An Archbishop is a Bishop that has administrative duties over other Bishops in a particular geographical region
- The Pope is the Bishop of Rome this is exclusive to Roman Catholics. A Cardinal is a Bishop in the Roman Catholic Church who advises the Pope. In some Eastern Orthodox churches the Bishop may be called a Pope.

Icons/Statues/Symbols:

- Images of the Cross and the Crucifixion are symbolic of Jesus dying for the sins of humankind. A Christian may wear a cross pendant around their neck.
- The outline of a Fish is symbol of the Christian faith. Angels are also Christian icons.
- Icons of the Virgin Mary are often displayed in Orthodox homes.
- In the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Church there are many Saints. Saints are Christians who have lived a holy life, are in heaven, and are to be honoured by the Church. The first saints were martyrs, people who had given up their lives for their Faith.
- Patron Saints are chosen as special protectors or guardians over areas of life. These areas can include occupations, illness, churches, countries and causes.
- Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians ask Saints to pray for them in times of trouble.

Scriptures:

- The most used text by Christians is the Bible, which is a collection of writings and includes the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is made up of stories, poems, psalms, prayers, laws and letters. The first four books in the New Testament are called the gospels.
- The Bible is the most sacred text to Christians but hymn and prayer books can also be used, primarily in Church.
- The divisions and conflicts between different Christian denominations are largely due to different interpretations of the Bible.

Clothing:

- Generally Christians dress smartly when attending church.
- **Vestment** is the term for special clothing worn by the ministers and other clergy who conduct a worship service.
- **Clerical** is the term to describe the distinctive street clothing that clergy wear, such as black shirts with white collars.

Food:

- Fasting is sometimes considered to be 'praying with the body'. It is believed to improve spiritual discipline. Variations of fasting, or abstinence from some foods such as meat, eggs, and dairy are observed by some Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants on occasions such as Lent or Good Friday.
- Most Protestants observe only Easter and Christmas as feast days, and don't follow ritualised fasting.

Holy days:

- Christians refer to Sunday the day of worship as the Sabbath, which is different to the Jewish definition of the Sabbath. Seventh-day Adventists worship on Saturdays.
- Christians commonly worship on Sunday, in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection. This is often considered a day of rest. Often families will get together on Sundays.

Health Beliefs and Practices:

- Specific beliefs regarding health practices may differ for different Christian groups, however many denominations of Christianity are generally accepting of Western practices and medicine.
- Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions based upon passages within the Bible that refer to abstaining from the consumption of blood. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that all human blood should be destroyed when it leaves the body.

Beliefs about Ageing:

- The elderly are to be respected.
- Cultural influences may have more of a bearing on beliefs about ageing. Christians may therefore have varying beliefs around these issues because they come from a range of different cultures.

Beliefs about Disability and Mental Illness:

- Christianity has no set beliefs regarding disability and mental illness. Cultural influences seem to have more of a bearing on how disability and mental illness are viewed. Christians

may therefore have varying beliefs around these issues because they come from a range of different cultures.

- Some Christians believe that because of sin we live in an imperfect world, but at the resurrection of the dead on the last day we will all inherit new perfect bodies.

Communication Styles:

- Christianity has no set communication style. Again, cultural influences appear to have more of a bearing on specific communication styles.

Naming Conventions:

- Naming conventions can be seen more in relation to cultural influences.

The Role of the Family/Women:

- The role of the family is generally very highly valued.
- The role of women may differ between denominations. More progressive branches see men and women equally in the home and the workforce.
- In some denominations, women are forbidden from becoming clergy.

Some of the key Christian Festivals:

- The Western Church which includes the Roman Catholic Church and all Protestant bodies, uses the Gregorian calendar.
- The Eastern Church includes the Eastern Orthodox churches, the Oriental Orthodox churches, and the eastern-rite churches that are affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church all use the Julian calendar.
- **Lent**, a period of fasting and prayer begins on **Ash Wednesday**, 46 days before **Easter Sunday** (sometimes know as Easter Day) or 40 days of fasting not including Sundays.
- **Palm Sunday** is recognised 7 days before Easter Day. It is the beginning of **Holy Week**.
- **Holy Thursday**, (also called **Maundy Thursday**), commemorates the Last Supper.
- **Good Friday**, (also called **Holy Friday**), commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus.
- **Easter Sunday** celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.
- **Ascension Thursday**, (also called **Ascension Day**), occurs 40 days after Easter Sunday; it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into heaven.
- **Pentecost**, (also known as Whit Sunday), is the 7th Sunday after Easter, the day when the Holy Spirit is reported as having descended upon the Apostles.
- The first day of **Advent** is the Sunday closest to 30th November; it foretells the coming of Christmas.
- **Epiphany**, on 6th January celebrates visit of the three wise men to Jesus after his birth.
- **Christmas** is the day associated with Jesus' birth. It is celebrated on 25th December by Western Churches and on 7th January the following year by Eastern Orthodox churches

Local Services Useful for Christian Residents in the Eastern Region

There are a large number of aged and disability and other support services offered by organisations that are Christian-based. The following list is not exhaustive. Contact information is for residential and community care services and respite services.

Aged Care & Disability Support Services

Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC)

Aged & Disability Services

Address: Suite 2, Town Hall Hub, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill 3128

Ph: (03) 9275 6901

Email: wzhang@miceastmelb.com.au

Website: <http://miceastmelb.com.au/our-services/elderly-people-younger-people-disabilities-carers/>

The Access & Support Program provides short term support to help people access aged care and other services so they can continue living at home independently. The Program provides information, referral, support and monitoring. The aged and disability team generally aims to increase access to aged care and disability services for CALD communities in the EMR through working with CALD communities to promote those services, provide information and referral and supporting organisations to provide culturally appropriate care.

AdventCare – Residential Care - Whitehorse

Address: 163-165 Central Road, Nunawading 3131

Ph: (03) 9259 2000

Website: <https://adventcare.org.au/>

Baptcare (Central Office) - Residential and community care

Address: 1193 Toorak Road, Camberwell 3124

Ph: (03) 9831 7222

Email: info@baptcare.org.au

Website: <https://www.baptcare.org.au/home>

Benetas - Residential and community care

Address: Level 1/ 789 Toorak Road, Hawthorn East 3123

Ph: (03) 8823 7900

Website: <http://www.benetas.com.au/>

Catholic Homes for The Elderly Inc - Residential and community care

Address: Suite B, 2 Domville Ave, Hawthorn 3122

Ph: (03) 8862 9000

Email: reception@catholic-homes.org.au

Caritas Christi Hospice - Palliative Care

Address: Kew campus, 104 Studley Park Rd, Kew 3101

Ph: (03) 9056 1050

Website: <https://www.svhm.org.au/patients-visitors/campus-information/caritas-christi-campus>

Churches of Christ Care Oak Towers Aged Care Service Oakleigh - Residential Aged Care

Address: 139 Atherton Rd, Oakleigh, VIC 3166

Ph: (03) 8574 4000

Mercy Home and Community Care - Aged care, mental health, palliative care, hospitals

Address: 152 Springfield Road, Blackburn 3130

Ph: (03) 9894 7666

Olivet Aged Persons Home - residential aged care

Address: 7-9 Rupert Street, Ringwood 3134

Ph: (03) 9131 5500

Email: reception@olivet.com.au

Mercy Health

Address: 45-47 Warrigal Road, Hughesdale 3166
Ph: (03) 8564 1800

Trinity Manor - Residential Aged Care

Address: 10-14 Pretoria St, Balwyn 3103 & 12 Edwards St, Burwood 3125
Ph: (03) 9091 5200
Website: <http://www.trinitycare.com.au/>

Uniting AgeWell Manningtree Hawthorn

Address: 20/26 Manningtree Road, Hawthorn 3122
Ph: 1800 001 047
Website: <https://unitingagewell.org/our-services/independent-retirement-living/manningtree-hawthorn>

Villa Maria - Range of community care for aged and people with disability

Address: 486 Albert Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002
Ph: 1300 698 624
Website: <https://vmch.com.au/>

Wesley St Mark's Support Services - community care

Address: 7 Edward St Chadstone VIC 3148
Ph: (03) 9807 3634
Website: <https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/services/aged-care/>

Other Support Services**Anglicare Victoria**

The range of services Anglicare offer differs at each location. Services for each location can be found on their website (<http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/office-locations>)

Box Hill Office

Address: 37-41 Prospect Street, Box Hill 3128
Ph: (03) 9896 6322

Lilydale Office

Address: 47-51 Castella St, Lilydale 3140
Ph: (03) 9735 6100

Karinya Counselling Centre Inc

Address: 588 High Street Road, Glen Waverley 3150
Ph: (03) 9802 2886
Email: admin@karinya.org.au
<http://www.karinyacounselling.com.au/>

St Vincent's Health: Prague House - Accommodation for men

Address: 283 Cotham Road, Kew 3101
Ph: (03) 9231 8600
Website: <https://svhm.org.au/home/health-professionals/aged-and-community-care/aged-care-facilities/prague-house>

SalvoCare East – Youth Services Box Hill

Address: 31 - 33 Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill 3128
Ph: (03) 9890 7144

UnitingCare Harrison - Housing and family support

Address: Knox Shopping Centre (O-Zone), Wantirna South, 1012 Little Burwood Highway,
Wantirna South 3152
Ph: (03) 9871 8700

Vincentcare Victoria - Welfare services

Address: 43 Prospect Street, Box Hill Vic 3128
Ph: (03) 9611 9200

Media

Media	Program	Details
Radio	Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship	Suite 4/5 Court Street, Box Hill 3128 Ph: (03) 9890 2338 http://www.maf.org.au/contactmag
	Light FM, FM – 89.9	Locked Bag 899, 333 Mitcham Road, Mitcham 3132 Ph: (03) 9955 8899 Email: accounts@lightfm.com.au
	Christian Science in Victoria, Australia	http://www.spirituality.net.au/radio/index.htm
	ABC – Religion and Ethics	http://www.abc.net.au/religion/
Newspaper/ Journal / Articles	Trowel and Sword – is a Christian magazine of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia.	Email: editor@trowelandsword.org.au https://crca.org.au/121-21synodical-committee/1337-46trowel-sword-denominational-magazine.html
	New Life Christian newspaper	33 Blackburn road, Blackburn 3130 Ph: (03) 9877 4833 http://www.nlife.com.au/
	Sight magazine	Email: editor@sightmagazine.com.au http://www.sightmagazine.com.au/index.php
	Australian Catholics Magazine	PO BOX 553, Richmond 3121 Ph: 03 9421 9666 http://www.australiancatholics.com.au/
	Caritas Australia	Mob +61 2 8306 3400 Email: questions@caritas.org.au http://www.caritas.org.au/about/contact-us
	Communications – Australia's largest Catholic magazine, Australian Catholics, was established in 1993.	http://www.jesuit.org.au/what-we-do/communications
	Viewpoint – Viewpoint is published and edited by the Australian Christian Lobby	https://www.viewpointmag.com/
	Christian Woman Magazine	https://www.todayschristianwoman.com/
Television	Australian Christian Channel	https://acc.tv/
	Catholic Church Television Australia (CCTVA)	https://catholicchurchtv.com.au/

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