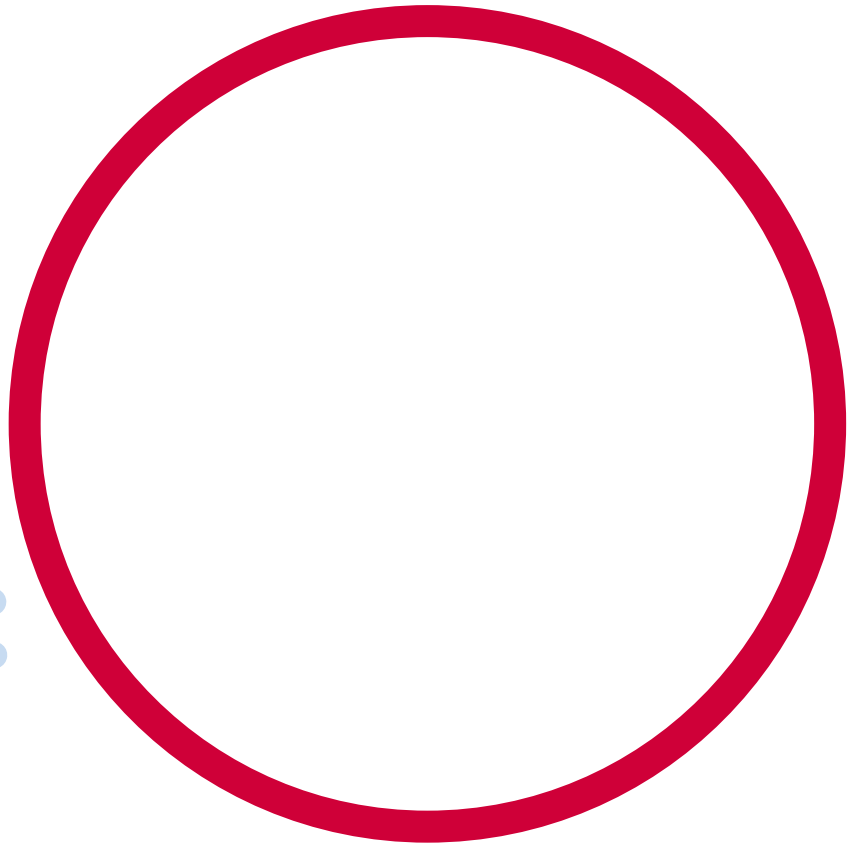
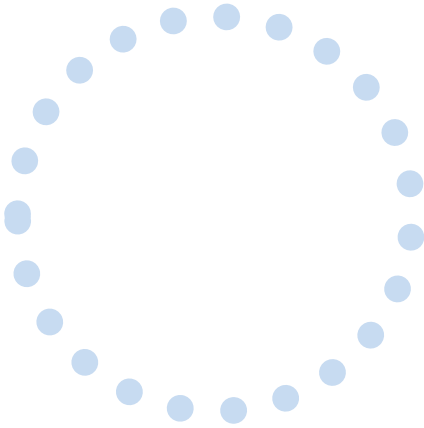
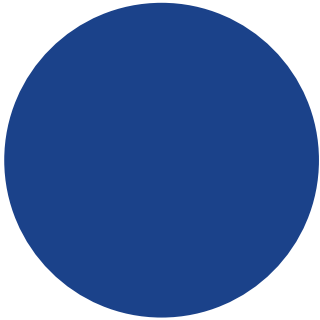


Schools: Language diversity in NSW, 2021



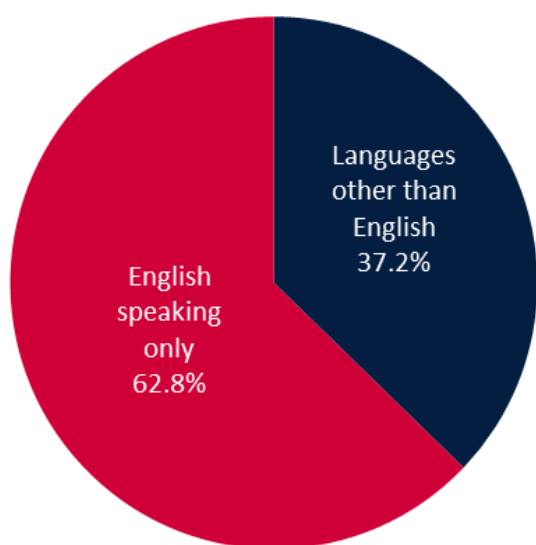
LBOTE enrolments

In March 2021, 62.8% (510,837) of students enrolled in NSW government schools came from homes where English was the only language spoken. More than a third (37.2%, 302,779) of students came from homes where languages other than English were spoken (Figure 1) by either the students themselves and/or at least one parent or carer.

Enrolment figures stayed relatively stable between 2020 (36.9% or 302,099) and 2021, when 37.2% (or 302,779) of NSW government students came from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE). The proportion of LBOTE students has grown steadily from 30.1% in 2011, an increase of 7.1 percentage points in ten years.

A student's country of origin cannot be inferred by their language background, as country of origin is where the student was born, while language background refers to the languages spoken by the student and their families. French, for example, is the official language of approximately 30 countries, with many more countries, including Australia, having French speakers as citizens and migrants.

Figure 1: Language background of students in NSW government schools, March 2021



Language breakdown

Students from language backgrounds other than English in NSW government schools came from 237 different language backgrounds.

58.8% of all LBOTE enrolments came from five language backgrounds. Indian and Chinese (both comprised of several languages) accounted for 21.2% and 15.2% of students from a language background other than English respectively.

Arabic

In 2021, the largest single language spoken by LBOTE students and/or their parent/carers was Arabic with 41,116 enrolments (13.6% of all LBOTE students).

Indian languages

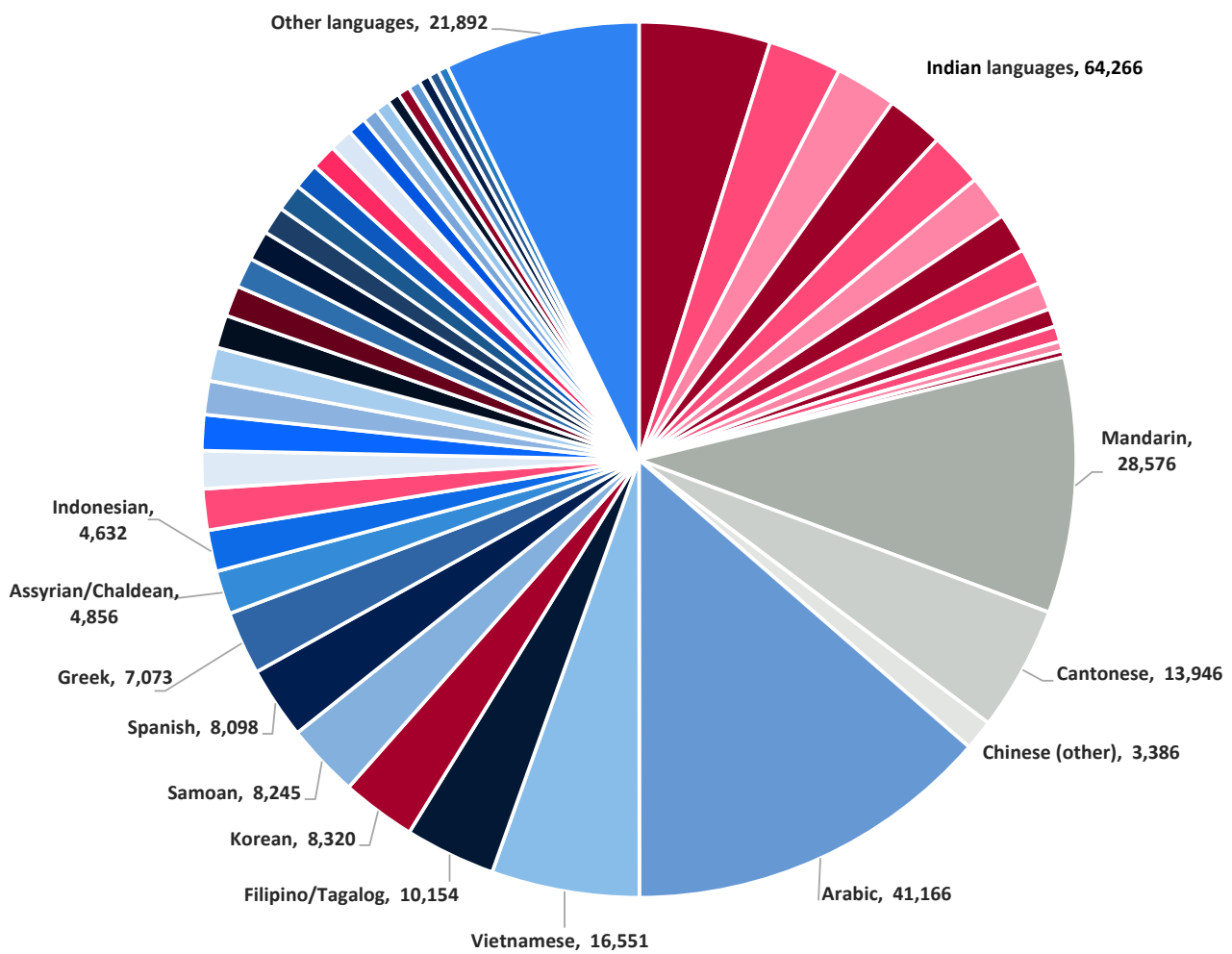
Collectively, Indian languages accounted for 21.2% of all LBOTE students. Of the 24 Indian languages reported, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi and Gujarati each represented the backgrounds of more than 5,000 students.

There were six other Indian languages with more than 1,000 LBOTE students at NSW government schools in 2021—Nepali, Telugu, Malayalam, Sinhalese, Marathi and Kannada. Refer to Note 2 for a list of Indian languages with fewer than 1,000 students.

Chinese languages

Students from a Chinese language background made up 15.2% of LBOTE students in 2021 (45,908 students), with the largest number of these students (28,576 or 9.4%) coming from a Mandarin speaking background. There were also 13,946 students from a Cantonese background and 3,386 students from other Chinese language backgrounds including Hakka, Min Nan, Wu, Hokkien, Teochew and Chinese other.

Figure 2: Language backgrounds in NSW



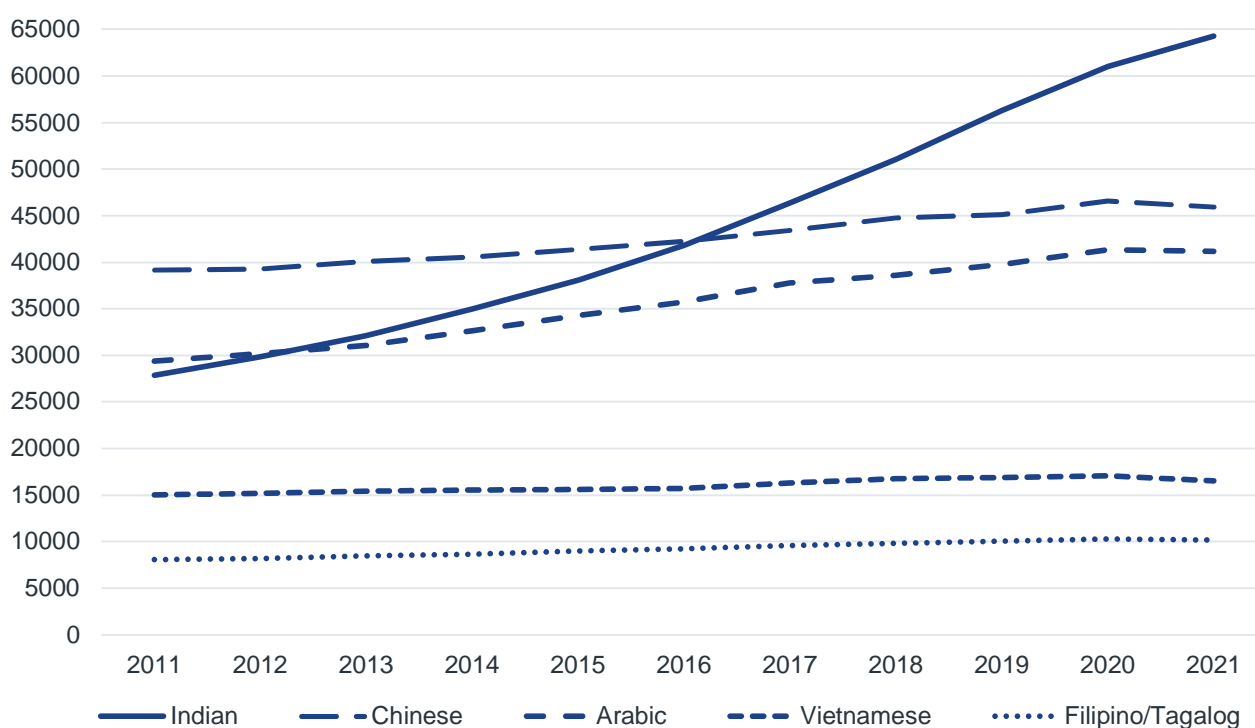
For more information visit [‘Enrolments of LBOTE government school students by largest language groups’](#) on the NSW Education datahub.

Largest language backgrounds other than English, 2011-2021

In March 2021, there were 20 language backgrounds that each accounted for more than 1% (or approximately 3,000) students, and 34 languages which more than 1,000 students identified as their language background. Diversity in language background of students in NSW government schools has seen an overall increase of 9.2% since 2010. However, it decreased slightly in 2021, down 2.5%, from 243 in 2020 to 237 in 2021. This decrease is likely to be largely the result of reduced immigration due to COVID-19.

Enrolments of students from Indian language backgrounds continued to rise, the only one of the 5 largest language groups to rise in 2021.

Figure 3: Largest language backgrounds other than English, 2011-2021



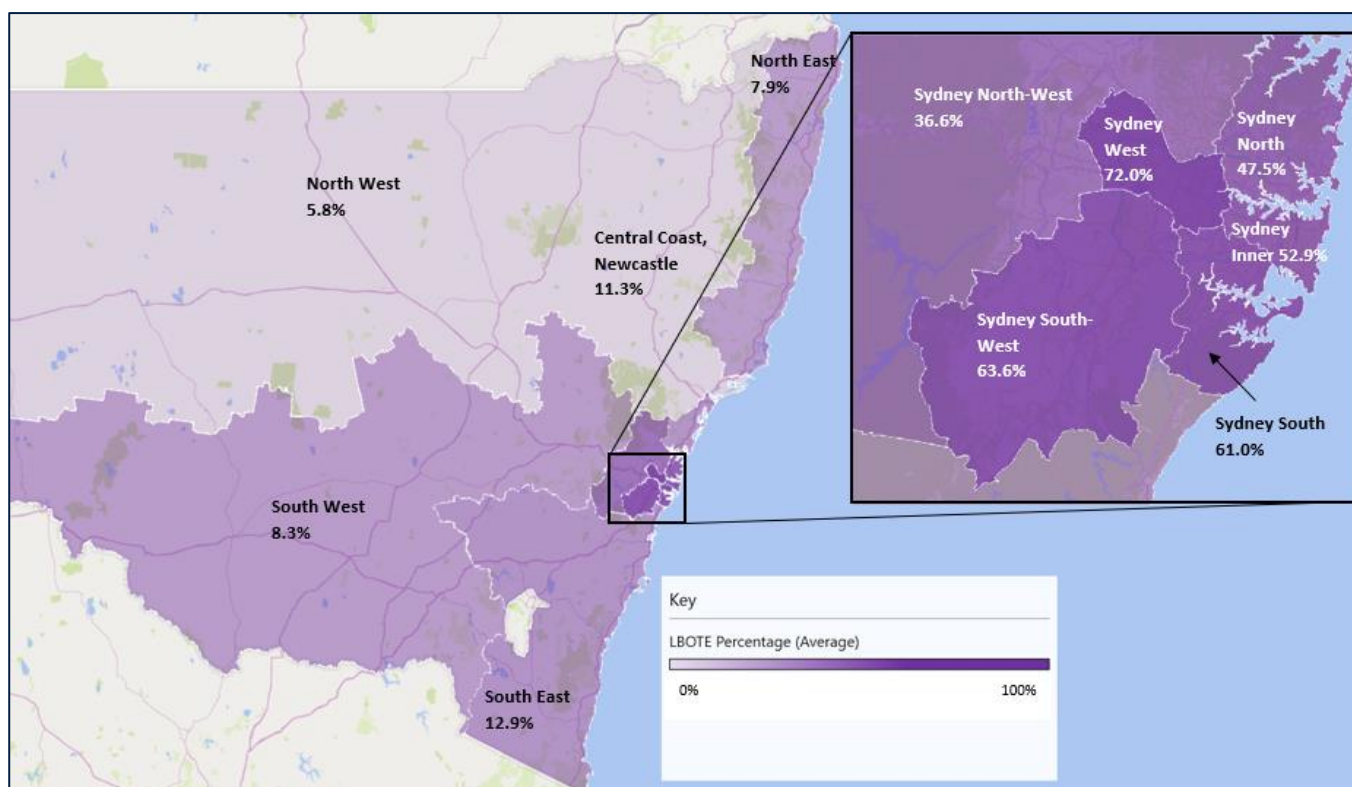
For more information visit '[Schools: language diversity in NSW](#)' on the NSW Education datahub.

Enrolment of LBOTE students in NSW government schools by Statistical Area 4 groupings, 2021

Map 1 shows the concentration of LBOTE students across NSW. There were greater concentrations of LBOTE students in the Sydney metropolitan area than in other parts of NSW. Across all Sydney schools, 56.6% of the students were from language backgrounds other than English compared with 9.4% of enrolments in regional NSW.

Details of the SA4 groupings are included in the notes at the end of the factsheet.

Figure 4: Map, LBOTE as percentage of enrolments by Statistical Area 4



At 72.0%, Sydney-West remained the area with the largest percentage of students from a language background other than English. The areas with the next largest percentages of students with a LBOTE background were Sydney South-West (63.6) and Sydney South (61.0%).

Table 1: LBOTE enrolments by Statistical Area 4 & education level

SA4 Group	Primary total	Secondary total	All enrolls	Percentage LBOTE
Sydney-Inner	16,938	13,452	30,390	52.9%
Sydney-North	27,596	15,229	42,825	47.5%
Sydney-South	27,793	18,738	46,531	61.0%
Sydney-South West	32,671	25,172	57,843	63.6%
Sydney-West	44,919	21,710	66,629	72.0%
Sydney-North West	15,439	9,563	25,002	36.6%
Sydney total	165,356	103,864	269,220	56.6%
North East NSW	3,050	1,800	4,850	7.8%
North West NSW	2,360	1,500	3,860	5.8%
South West NSW	2,691	1,639	4,330	8.3%
South East NSW	5,619	3,713	9,332	12.9%
Central Coast, Newcastle	5,247	3,799	9,046	11.3%
Regional total	18,967	12,451	31,418	9.4%
Grand total	184,323	116,315	300,638	37.2%

For more information visit [‘Enrolment of LBOTE students in NSW government schools by SA4 groupings’](#) on the NSW Education datahub.

Further information

The [NSW Education datahub](#) provides further information on LBOTE student enrolments, including data for previous years, data underpinning the figures in this factsheet and additional information such as breakdowns of LBOTE enrolments by scholastic year.

Definitions

LBOTE

Language background other than English: students from language backgrounds other than English are those in whose home a language other than English is spoken by the student, parents, or other primary caregivers. Therefore, a student who only speaks English but whose parent or primary caregiver speaks another language, will be included in the collection.

For students where multiple languages are spoken at home, priority is given first to the primary language spoken by the student and then to that spoken by those caregivers recorded on enrolment forms and in the department's Enrolment Registration Number system (ERN) as parent 1 and parent 2 (in that order).

Within groups from particular language backgrounds, students may come from different countries, have varying levels of literacy in their first language, be multilingual, speak English with varying levels of proficiency, have differing prior schooling experiences, and represent various socio-economic and family circumstances.

Explanatory notes

The census of students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) was conducted on 5 March 2021 in all NSW government schools, including preschools, intensive English centres and distance education centres.

Since 1996, information on LBOTE students has been collected in the first half of the school year. Until 2012 comparative enrolment information for all students was extracted from the School Entitlement System (February enrolment data). From 2013, comparative enrolment information for all students was extracted from the Enrolment Registration Number (ERN) system during March, at the time the LBOTE data was collected.

1. Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL)

For information on languages, refer to Australian Standard Classification of Languages, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ASCL catalogue 1267.0).

2. Combined language groups

The 'Other Chinese' language group includes Chinese, not elsewhere classified (ASCL 7199), Hakka (ASCL 7102), Min Nan, Teochew, Hokkien (ASCL 7107) and Wu (ASCL 7106).

The 'Other Indian' language group includes Tulu (ASCL 5105), Dravidian/Dravidian (Other) (ASCL 5199), Indo-Aryan not further defined (ASCL 5200), Konkani (ASCL 5204), Sindhi, (ASCL 5208), Assamese (ASCL 5213), Kashmiri, (ASCL 5215), Oriya (ASCL 5216), Dhivehi (ASCL 5214), Fijian Hindustani (ASCL 5217), Other Southern Asian languages (ASCL 5999).

Filipino (ASCL 6512) and Tagalog (ASCL 6511) have been combined into one language group.

The 'Assyrian & Chaldean' language group includes Assyrian Neo-Aramaic (ASCL 4206), Chaldean Neo-Aramaic (ASCL 4207) and Assyrian (ASCL 4203).

Other Language Groups are those languages with fewer than 1,000 students in 2021.

3. Statistical Area 4 groupings

Data is presented using a geographical structure based on the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). ASGS Statistical Area 4 (SA4) have been combined into 11 groups for reporting and publication of department data.

SA4 name	
Sydney-North	Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby, Sydney - Northern Beaches, Sydney - Ryde
Sydney-Inner	Sydney - City and Inner South, Sydney - Eastern Suburbs, Sydney - Inner West
Sydney-South	Sydney - Inner South West, Sydney - Sutherland
Sydney-South West	Sydney - Outer South West, Sydney - South West
Sydney-West	Sydney - Blacktown, Sydney - Parramatta
Sydney-North West	Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury, Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains
North East NSW	Coffs Harbour - Grafton, Mid North Coast, Richmond - Tweed
North West NSW	Far West and Orana, Hunter Valley exc Newcastle, New England and North West
South West NSW	Central West, Murray, Riverina
South East NSW	Capital Region, Illawarra, Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven
Central Coast, Newcastle	Central Coast, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie