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AE 1292

# How Aussie Do Asian Australians Feel? r\_AskAnAustralian

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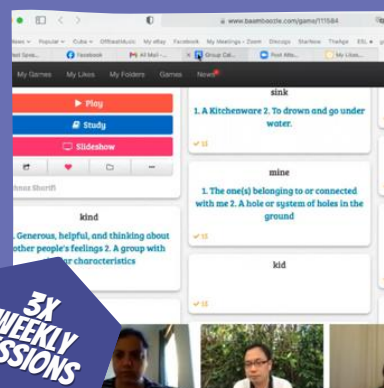
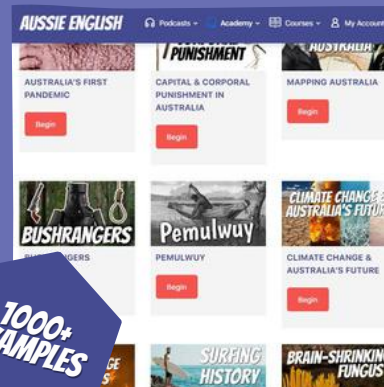
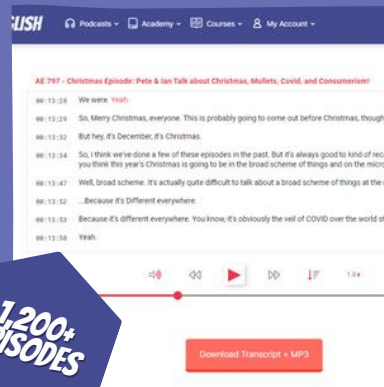
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## **How Aussie Do Asian Australians Feel? r\_AskAnAustralian**

### **Full Transcript**

G'day you mob. Welcome to this episode of Aussie English. So I've got something a little different today. The goal today. So I've done a few of these episodes on the podcast recently where I read out and sort of discuss some of the interesting questions that people ask on the subreddit forum Ask An Australian.

If you guys are interested in asking Aussies all sorts of questions, or just learning about these sorts of things, definitely jump over there. I'll leave the link in the description so you can check it out.

Anyway, today's was really interesting. I was having a read and I thought, look, I'm not Asian, I'm not an Asian Australian. [No shit!] But I would discuss it on here and read out some of these comments because there seemed to be



a really good discussion happening. So it's going to be great for your English skills, and you're also going to hopefully learn a lot about Australian culture and everything. And the issues that Asian Australians face with identity, when growing up in Australia, when moving to Australia, everything like that.

Editor Pete here: I have since reached out to a whole bunch of my Asian Australian friends, and I've asked them to contribute videos talking about this very topic. I won't include it in today's video, but I will try and include it in a future video because otherwise it's just going to get too long. Anyway, enjoy today's. So without any further ado, let's just get into it.

"As a Chinese Australian who grew up here, I've never fully felt 'standard Australian' in a white Anglo-Australian sense. Most of my friends are other Chinese Asian Australians and we are definitely different to bulk White Australians to the extent that we might as well be different demographics at this stage. I feel a sense of distance to White Australians, which was especially evident during university."

"Many Asian Australians tend to feel excluded in classes because white Aussies would oftentimes ignore us, or passive aggressively talk with each other. Asian Australians seem to also do this as well. To be honest, in terms of interests or the media I watch, I mostly consume Korean and Japanese media along with Hollywood generic stuff. I'm very removed from local Australian media and politics of which I care very little about, question mark."

"I do notice that Asian Australian subgroups differ in how 'Australian' they present. For example, Filipino Australians seem more or less in the same social circle as white people, but Australian born Chinese from mainland China in selective schools might as well be their own Australian subculture at this point. Most of us can't really make friends with Chinese internationals or mainstream White Australians."

"Our friend groups are usually this pan Asian Australian mixed group, with specific interests and experiences that others may not understand. Ultimately, I think I definitely feel 'Australian', but just a different type of Australian."

And then "Edit: For the average Chinese or Asian Australian, I think it can be rather easy to befriend certain rural regional white Australians rather than certain grammar school preppy quote, 'my dad is a lawyer' types." I think that, that goes for anyone, man. "My observation is that the latter group seems more cliquy and hard to break into. Interestingly, my white friends at uni are



usually of regional and rural origin."

So the first thing that I note here, obviously again, I'm not Asian. [Are you sure?] I haven't been born and raised Asian Australian and so I can't really talk from firsthand accounts. I can talk from experiences with friends who are Australians, and who are also Asian and what they've gone through. But yeah, obviously I'm not talking from personal experience when I answer these sorts of things.

Before we get into the comments, it sounds like he is a very rich Chinese Australian who goes to a private school, or went to a private school, and then went on to university. So mileage may vary here, but he is probably not the same as the average quote unquote 'Asian Australian' being, yeah, very- from a wealthy family at a 'selective school', as he says, and talking about trying to befriend kids at grammar schools like, Oh my God. Yeah, that's, that's the, the rich of the rich, in Australia, if you're going to a grammar school.

University wise. So I can talk a little bit about this, I definitely experienced this as a white person at Melbourne University. I studied there for over 11 years doing different degrees. I found it incredibly difficult to break into Asian circles. And I think most of those would have been students from overseas because they tended to come and end up creating very cliquey groups with other compatriots, people from their own home countries, and they would always be speaking in their native language.

And obviously as a, as a white Australian, I only spoke at the time Australian English and just, it was, it made that barrier very hard to kind of overcome. That said, I'm sure that there was also the same thing the other way, where they would have felt excluded and outside the group or not part of the clique, as you know, migrants or students from from overseas. So it definitely did go both ways. And I was very, very hyper aware of that at university.

Okay. So top comment here from goater10. "I feel comfortably both, but I consider myself Australian first. I feel more Asian in Australia, but I feel more Australian when I'm in South East Asia. I'm lucky I can appreciate the good parts of both cultures." And we can probably dive into a few of the comments that follow up here. Dedem13: "Not Asian myself, but as a first gen (generation) Australian, I feel this. Mum's Spanish, dad's Iranian, never been to Iran due to the political situation and all. Though I'd love to someday, but when I worked in Spain, I probably felt more distinctly Australian than I ever have while in Australia."



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And then goater10 follows up. "Yeah, I completely relate to that. Even though I'm close to my cousins in Indonesia and can speak the language quite fluently, they will always remind me how they can hear my Australian accent when I talk to them. They also told me that I carry myself like a Westerner, and that I have that aura that someone raised in a western country has." That's interesting to think about. I wonder what the sort of signals are that give that away when somewhere like Indonesia.

"I was also lucky that while I had somewhat of an Indonesian upbringing at home and ate mostly food from there, Dad would occasionally have a barbecue, bring home pizza, and take me and my brother to the footy, like all of my other friends did, and he and mum would only talk to me and my brother in Indonesian if we had family or there were other Indonesians around."

That's a really interesting thing in terms of how much of your own culture you kind of impart on your kids, and mixing that with Australian culture. I remember growing up, it was definitely harder to connect with kids whose parents didn't embrace Australian culture and try and take part in, say, sporting events or, you know, just those everyday things, have barbecues and that sort of stuff. Because as a result of not doing that, you end up not spending as much time with other locals whatever country you're in.

And so I think that's probably a big part of it, too. I wonder how much this, this original poster's parents, um, were actively trying to integrate into Australian society and, you know, taking part in our hobbies and interests and the aspects of our culture and everything. Because, yeah, again, the less you do that, the harder it is to, I think, feel Australian or feel, um, a part of whatever culture you're in, right?

Let's keep going here and check out some of the other ones. Oh, this was cool. "Smart\_cat\_6212: Filipino Australians are in the same circle with white people. This part is interesting. I don't really read much into circles. I'm married to an Aussie." And again, it would be interesting to think. What do you mean when you say Aussie? "I just go with people who like me and I'm also an introvert, so it's not like it bothers me a lot if I don't have a social circle either."

"However, I did notice that Filipino Aussies get on well with both Asians and non-Asians. But I think it's more because of how we are brought up. Everybody is welcome. We like being warm towards people and even



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generous sometimes. Most who I know live here have brought Filipino food at work and shared with everyone. And in schools, they mix with different groups, but also come home to a Filipino household where they still get to enjoy their own culture."

"We also tend to not force people to understand our culture and way of thinking, but we try to adapt to who we are surrounded by. Also, the Philippines is multicultural, so being friends with people from different backgrounds is not new to us. The Philippines also has a long history of being colonised by Spanish, by the Spaniards, for 300 years, which exposed us to their culture and religion. But we have close ties to America and speak their language very well, but also have lots of Chinese, Koreans, Japanese and Indians living there that we are exposed to their culture, religion and food."

Yeah. So that's an interesting thing too, how much the Asian cultures that you would come from, or your parents come from, what their cultures are like, how much they are from countries that are full of, you know, multicultural aspects, people from different countries compared to countries where that isn't the case, you know? So it's probably quite different if you're from somewhere like Korea, Japan or China, mainland China, compared to somewhere like Malaysia or Singapore, or even the Philippines.

In this case, where you have so many different cultures, you may or may not have been colonised. Um, you know, there's there's many different languages that may be spoken there, many different foods and cultures, everything like that. So that probably plays a big part too, into how easily you probably integrate into other cultures when and if you migrate to those places.

So yeah, again, please leave comments below. Tell me about your experiences, guys, coming to Australia or interacting with other cultures or migrating to other places, you know, what's it been like? Have you experienced specific problems that you didn't expect or that are unique to you?

And it's interesting. I remember going to school with a guy who was Asian Italian, right? He was Filipino Italian, his mum was Filipino, his dad was Italian. And he was probably the, the Aussie guy I knew. He was six foot something tall. He was a very big guy. He was the goalie when we were playing soccer. Just a massive guy, but just the most Aussie dude.

And it was funny because a big part of it, I think, was that both of his parents



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didn't push their languages or cultures onto him, for better or worse. I remember he used to always be like, God, I wish I spoke Italian, I wish I spoke Filipino, but my parents put in so much effort when they came to Australia to not be from those places or to not, you know, for whatever reason, they decided they didn't want to push their culture and their language and everything on their kid. And it's, it was interesting to see how that ended up, you know, leading to him just having a bit of distance between those cultures. Again, for better or worse.

And I think it was probably a detriment to some degree. Because I think if it were me, I would want to be able to speak those languages so I could communicate with my family members from those countries, and just have a deeper understanding of those cultures. But on the other, the other hand, he was just so thoroughly Australian that, yeah, he just didn't even really consider himself. I don't even really think he thought of himself that much as Asian Australian. He was just like, I'm just, I'm just Australian man.

And yeah, his parents, I think probably took part in lots of activities and stuff in Australia. And an interesting aspect to it too, may have been that they didn't push their languages onto their kid because they only communicated with English. They didn't speak each other's languages.

All right. The next one. So this one comes from Briewnoh. "Very. I mean, I live in Australia. I work with mostly non-Asian people. Heaps of my friends through hobbies or school aren't Chinese, although plenty from uni are. I'm writing in English and read traditional English language media. My voting options are white peeps." Okay! So, "Let me be real. You have this weirdly reductionist attitude that comes through most from you using the phrases 'bulk White Australians' and 'mainstream White Australians'. The fact is that people in Australia come in all shapes and sizes. Take any subgroup, whether it's Chinese Australians from selective schools, or white young liberals or people living in rural areas, and there'll be some sense of distance from everyone outside the subgroup. The model of Chinese Australians versus mainstream white Australia is so off. It's more like hundreds of overlapping subgroups."

"Saying most of us can't really make friends with Chinese internationals or mainstream white Australians sounds so defeatist and sad, dude. I don't think it's true either. All of you, Chinese descent selective school kids, can make friends with anyone with the right attitude and actions. Learn how to socialise at the pub or at a run club or sport. Or find a way to invite people into your





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niche interests. And, you know, stop hanging out on Asian masculinity subreddits and spend more time in the real world."

So I think, I think this guys kind of hit the nail on the head. In Australia, you will hear about a lot of people saying they have trouble integrating into community, finding friends and everything like that. And I think his point here about being a bit defeatist and just saying, you know, Oh, it's hard or, you know, The average Australian is racist. And that's why I find it hard to integrate into these groups.

You need to put in the work, at the end of the day. People aren't going to befriend you on your behalf, right, for you. So if you want to become a part of, you know, cliques with white Australians or just non-Asian Australians, you're going to have to find interests and hobbies and all that sort of stuff that mean you interact with those kinds of people, right? And so, as this guy was saying at the start, I think if you're spending most of your time consuming Korean and Japanese culture and not taking any part in Australian, you know, consuming any Australian media or any of that sort of stuff, you kind of already showing that you're isolating yourself a bit from what the average, quote unquote, 'Australian' would be consuming, right?

So that doesn't necessarily mean that you need to change your interests, but it's something to be aware of, right? Like if I got really, really interested in, I don't know, Greenland-ish waltz folk music, it's probably going to be hard for me to find other Australians who share that passion. Whereas if I put in some effort to go down the pub or to, you know, join a club. Or to start doing jiu jitsu. Or to, I don't know, try and form a band. Or go to a music meet up, or whatever it is. You're more likely to meet people who are just everyday Australians, or migrants to Australia, and be able to befriend them, right?

So it does, I think, come back to your interests and how much you put yourself out there interacting with other people, whoever they are. Let's keep going.

"Onlythehighlight: I feel pretty Australian as an Asian born Australian, but I just don't fit in the blokey or sporty subculture that is prevalent in social media slash TV." I guess just Australia in general, right. "I fall mostly in the nerdy subculture. There isn't a weird single Australian group that make up your view. Remember, there are so many different groups you can fall into like cooks, tradies, city slickers, nerdy and more that make up our great country."



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Yeah. So exactly. I think that's it, right? I don't really fit into the blokey or sporty kind of subculture in Australia, but I have other interests, you know, things like music, jiu jitsu, even indoor plants. You know, I've got loads of weird interests. And you end up making loads of friends based on those interests.

So, yeah, if you're nerdy, if you're into going to the gym, if you're into random hobbies, as long as they're the kind of thing that I think loads of people are interested in, you're going to be able to find like minded people around who want to spend time with you and get to know you and share those, those interests.

One, like, I became really good friends with a migrant who- Filipino migrant who came to Australia who works as a chef here. He's just a great guy. But I became friends with him when I inquired about buying one of his guitars on Facebook Marketplace, and I just ended up chatting to him. You know, he had this guitar for sale. I was kind of interested in buying it, but I wasn't sure about the price and everything. And we ended up just having a chat because we both were passionate about guitars and music, and I was like, what kind of music do you play? And then after the conversation kind of kept going. I was just like, just add me to Facebook, man, you seem like a cool guy. Let's keep chatting.

And I chat to him all the time. You know, I've made friends that way. It's sort of unconventional, but at the same time, we're all on social media, so why not try and make friends on social media if you get the chance. And if you click with people. All right, let's do a few more and then we can finish up.

"DontJealousMe: I think it would depend on who you grow up with, what you did at high school, who you hung out with. Did you go to school with a lot of Asians? Did you try to involve yourself with Aussies? Did you speak your language whilst with other Chinese at school? I grew up in a low socioeconomic white neighbourhood. Only time I felt left out was during Christmas because I do not celebrate Christmas. Also after 9/11, it got a little worse. But then the influx of-" Muslims. He's used, he's used a racial term here. "Came. But I still have a lot of Aussie mates, especially from going out, playing soccer, going to clubs, etc."

So, besides the racist term there, I think his point again is pretty valid, right? As long as you put yourself out there, you don't necessarily have to celebrate all the same things like Christmas and all that sort of stuff. But you, you know, get into clubs, get into sport, interact with other people with shared interests.

"KTR83: Also Asian Australian. I consider myself equally both, but that means sometimes you meet other people who will never consider me 'one of them'.



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Also equally on both sides. It took me some time, but I'm 100% okay with that." And we've got a lot of follow up comments here, even from the original poster. "Yep, this. Everybody's own definition of being Aussie is also different, which gives space for you to have your own once you realise."

And then Joistheyo said, "I think I consider myself culturally Australian, but a different form of Australian to the mainstream white Anglo ones. Might be similar to how African Americans currently do not relate to people in Africa at all, yet they're socially different to white Americans." And then KTR83 has followed up here. "I get it. Cultural identity can be super complex. It's one of those things that each of us have to decide for ourselves."

So anyway, you know, this has been a really interesting kind of Reddit thread. I thought I would share it on here, see what you guys think.

Again, I can't really talk from personal experience not being Asian. [Okay, okay, we get it. Okay.] But I can talk a little bit about what it was like growing up in Australia and having a lot of Asian friends. I had friends that did kind of struggle with identity, to some degree. But then I had friends who just never considered themselves Asian and only wanted to think of themselves as, you know, true blue Australians. And but for the fact that when you saw them, you could see that they obviously had Asian heritage, you would never have known, right? Like if you were blind and you were chatting to these people and befriending them, you could probably go 20 years without finding out that they're actually, you know, from mainland China or whatever, um, heritage wise.

So anyway, let me know your experiences down in the comments below. Let me know if you enjoy this type of episode, and I'll do more of them in the future. Again, the whole point of this is to just share a bit of Australian culture, and when I myself can't share certain aspects of identity or personal experience, I feel like it's really cool to share these types of posts and talk about them on here so that you guys can think about these things, you know, and we can discuss them. Anyway, I'm Pete! This is Aussie English. Thanks for joining me and I'll see you next time!





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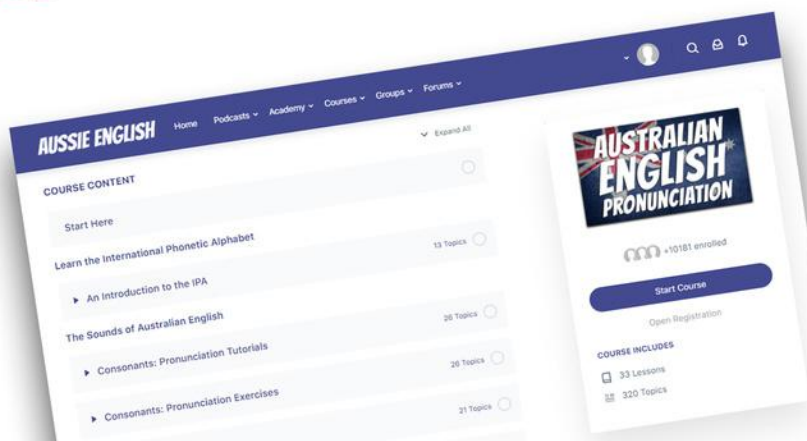


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