



• COMMON MONIKERS

Changing names of Aussies

When it comes to surnames, the Nguyens are keeping up with the Smiths and the Joneses.

Nguyen is the seventh most common surname in Australia after Smith, Jones, Williams, Brown, Wilson and Taylor.

Michael Dove – managing director of Melbourne-based company MD&A, which worked on a study of surnames by University College London – said of the top 20 Australian names originating from outside Britain, all but three were of Asian origin.

“The data is reflecting the diversity of the cultural background,” Dove said.

Dove said the dominance of Asian names compared to those from other countries with large populations of migrants in Australia could be explained by the fact that many Asian surnames were extremely common in Asia, while there was more of a range of surnames in Europe.

For example, Greek, Greek

Cypriot and Italian names are often tied to a particular village or region, while Nguyen is used widely throughout Vietnam.

Cornish names, while not numerically strong in Australia, are well represented here compared to in the UK.

A total of 39 Cornish names are more common in Australia than they are in the UK.

Cornish names in Australia are most heavily concentrated in South Australia – six of the top 10.

University College London professor of geography Richard Webber said the prevalence of Cornish names in South Australia reflected the fact that many people migrated after Cornish mines declined in the late 19th century.

Other British names are now more prevalent in Australia than in the UK.