Article: Migration: permanent additions to Australia's population

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Article: Migration: permanent additions to Australia's population

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SYMBOLS AND USAGES

billion	1,000 million
kg	kilogram
m	metre
n.a.	not available
n.e.c	not elsewhere classified
n.p.	not published
n.y.a.	not yet available
no.	number
'000	thousand
'000m	thousand million
$	dollar
$m	million dollars
$b	billion dollars
$US	American dollar
%	per cent
*	estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution
**	estimate has a relative standard error of greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use
. .	not applicable
—	nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Where figures have been rounded, discrepencies may occur between the sums of the component items and totals.

Migration: permanent additions to Australia's population

In 2005–06, skilled migrants made up more than half (51%) of all permanent additions to Australia's population through migration.

Australian society has been shaped by a long history of immigration. Since 1945 around 6.5 million people have arrived as new settlers and in 2006, nearly one in four (24%) Australian residents were born overseas.[1,2,3]

Some people arrive from overseas and are entitled to stay permanently in Australia (settler arrivals). Others apply for and gain permanent residency while already in Australia on temporary visas (permanent onshore visa grants). With an increasing emphasis on skilled migration in recent years, permanent onshore visa grants have become an increasingly important aspect of the Australian Government's Migration Program. Permanent additions (that is, the sum of the settler arrivals and those who gain permanent residency onshore) provide a better picture of the contribution of migration to our permanent resident population than settler arrivals alone.

Over time, changes in government immigration policy, as well as national and international events, have influenced the number and types of permanent additions to Australia. This article looks at recent trends in permanent additions, focusing on the type of migration and the characteristics of the migrants.

Trends in permanent additions

In 2005–06, there were 180,000 permanent additions of migrants, 72% more than the number in 1996–97 (105,000). The upward

trend largely reflects prevailing economic conditions, and changes in the Government's immigration targets.

These changes have also affected the relative contribution of settler arrivals and permanent onshore visa outcomes over the period. In 1996–97, settler arrivals contributed 82% (85,800) of permanent additions of migrants, with onshore visa outcomes making up the balance (18% or 18,800). While the number of settler arrivals increased by an average 4.9% per year to be 132,000 in 2005–06, the relative contribution of settler arrivals to

Permanent additions
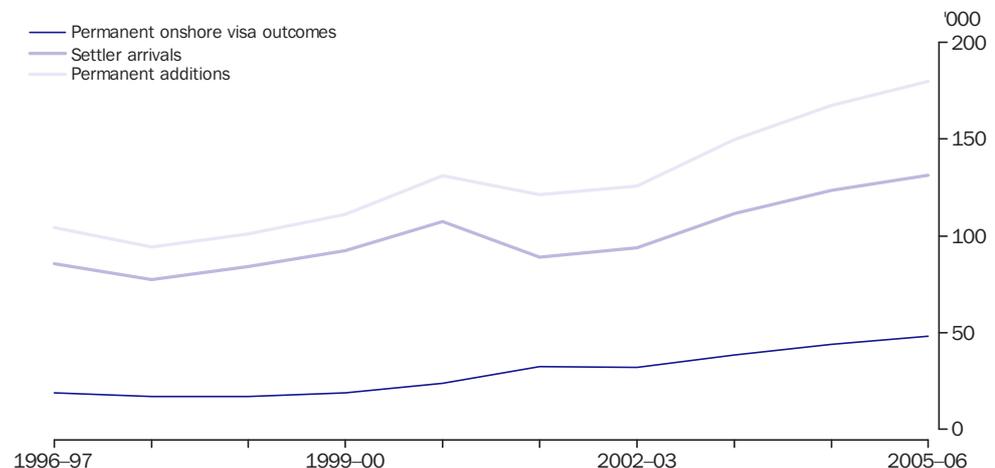
Source: DIAC, *Immigration Updates 2002–03 to 2005–06,* and DIAC unpublished data (1997–2001).

permanent additions was reduced to 73%. This was due to the faster growth (11% per annum on average) of onshore visa grants, which numbered 48,200 and accounted for 27% of permanent additions in 2005–06.

The increase in onshore migration reflects the increased propensity for temporary entrants to be granted permanent onshore visas on the basis of their skills.[4] These people include overseas students, working holiday makers and business visitors.

Eligibility categories of permanent additions

Non-residents can obtain permanent residency in Australia via the Migration Program, the Humanitarian Program or through Non-Program Migration. In 2005–06, most (77%) permanent additions entered through the Migration Program, which comprises the Family and Skill Streams. The Humanitarian Program contributed 9% of all additions in the same year, while the remainder (14%) were Non-Program Migrations, nearly all of whom were New Zealand citizens.

Over the past two decades, the proportion of migrants arriving to Australia within each eligibility category has changed. The Family Stream was the largest eligibility category until it was overtaken by the Skill Stream after 1997–98. This was partly due to a shift in emphasis of the migration program onto the Skill Stream and also due in part to a change in classification of the former Concessional Family visa category into the Skilled-Australian Linked visa category for skilled migrants with a relative in Australia to sponsor them.

Permanent additions by eligibility category
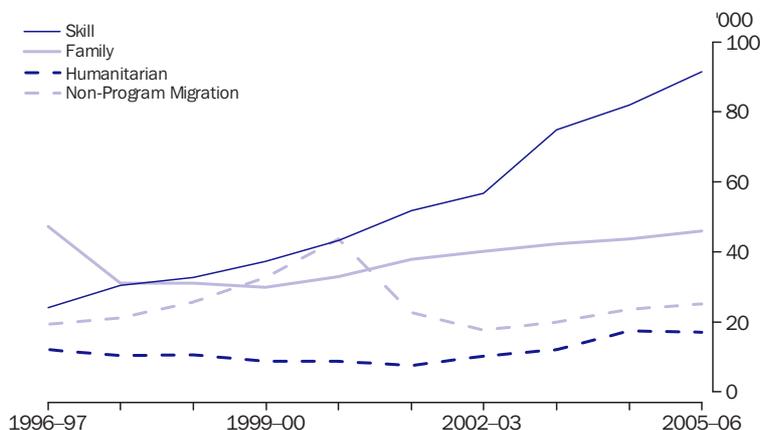
Source: DIAC, *Immigration Updates 2002–03 to 2005–06*, and DIAC unpublished data (1997–2001).

Migration Program – Skill Stream

Migrants of the *Skill Stream* are selected on their ability to contribute to the Australian economy. This stream consists of a number of categories including:

◆ *Independent* is for unsponsored applicants whose education, skills, English language ability and ready employability will contribute to the Australian economy.

◆ *Skilled-Australian Linked* (sponsored) category. Skilled persons who have an eligible relative living in Australia to sponsor them may migrate via this category. (Note: from 1997, includes the former Concessional category comprising non-dependent relatives from the Family stream.)

◆ *Employer nomination* is for highly skilled people nominated by employers in Australia who have been unable to find or train skilled workers in Australia for the position.

◆ *Business skills* is for persons with established skills in business and who have a genuine commitment to owning and managing a business in Australia.

Migration Program – Family Stream

Family Stream migration enables the immigration of immediate family members and certain other extended family members of permanent Australian residents. It consists of these main categories:

◆ *Partner* includes spouse, prospective marriage and interdependants.

◆ *Child* includes dependent child, adopted child or orphan relative.

◆ *Parent* category applicants must be the parent of a child who is a settled Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen.

◆ *Other family* includes aged dependent relatives, remaining relatives or carers.

Humanitarian Program

The Humanitarian Program aims to resettle refugees based on an assessment of worldwide need. The program assists people from overseas who have suffered substantial discrimination, amounting to a gross violation of their human rights. It includes the following categories:

◆ *Refugee Program* provides resettlement for people overseas who are subject to persecution in their home country.

◆ *Special Humanitarian Program* assists people who have suffered substantial discrimination amounting to a gross violation of human rights in their home country. To be granted this visa, applicants must be sponsored by an Australian resident, citizen or organisation operating in Australia.

◆ *Special Assistance Category* includes groups considered to be of special concern to Australia and in real need, but who do not fit within other humanitarian categories. This program was created in 1991 and closed during the 2000–01 financial year.[4]

Source: DIAC, viewed 9 July 2007, <http://www.immigration.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/#skilled>.

...Skill Stream

The Skill Stream of Australia's Migration Program is designed to assist national economic development by attracting highly skilled immigrants to live and work in Australia, bringing with them skills, business expertise and capital.[5]

Since the late 1990s, the Skill Stream has been the largest and fastest growing Migration Program stream. Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the annual number of Skill Stream migrants (including dependants) increased from around 24,000 to 92,000 people, resulting in an increase in the proportion of total permanent additions in this category from 23% in 1996–97 to 51% in 2005–06.

The proportion of permanent migrants entering with an Independent visa (a sub-class of the Skill Stream) has increased over the period, from 11% of total permanent additions (11,700 people) in 1996–97 to 27% (49,000 people) in 2005–06. This group comprises people with skills and qualifications in an occupation required in Australia and who do not require sponsorship by a relative living in Australia or an Australian employer. Independent visa holders made up over one quarter of total permanent additions at every year between 2002–03 and 2005–06 and this group was the largest single component of permanent additions in 2005–06.

The proportion of people entering under the Employer nomination category increased from 5% (5,500 people) in 1996–97 to 8% in 2005–06 (15,100 people).

The Australian sponsored categories allow skilled migrants to be sponsored by a family member who already resides in Australia. In 2005–06, 10% (around 17,900 people) of total permanent additions were sponsored by non-dependent family members.

In 2005–06, Skill Stream permanent additions who were employed at the time of their visa application were mostly concentrated in Professional occupations (53%). Other common occupations were Tradespersons (14%), Managers and Administrators (10%) and Associate Professionals (10%).

...Family Stream

The Family Stream is designed to facilitate the reunion of close family members. To be granted a permanent visa, immigrants must be sponsored by a close family relative or partner who is an Australian citizen or permanent resident.[4]

As a proportion of total permanent additions, the Family Stream has decreased from 45% (47,300) in 1996–97 to 26% (45,900) in 2005–06. The composition of the remaining categories within the Family Stream has also changed since then.

Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the number of partners arriving under the Family Stream increased, from around 26,400 to 36,700 people. This corresponds with a decrease in the number of parents immigrating through this stream, from 7,800 people (7% of total permanent additions) to 4,500 people (3% of total permanent additions).

Permanent additions by eligibility category

Eligibility category	1996–97	2005–06
	%	%
Skill(a)	23.0	50.9
Independent	11.2	27.3
Employer Nomination(b)	5.2	8.4
Australian Sponsored(a)(c)	n.a	10.0
Business Skills	5.5	3.3
Other(d)	1.1	1.9
Family(a)	45.2	25.6
Partners(e)	25.3	20.4
Parents	7.4	2.5
Concessional family(a)	7.9	n.a
Other	4.6	2.6
Humanitarian Program	11.6	9.4
Refugee	3.2	2.9
Special Humanitarian	2.0	3.9
Special Assistance	4.2	n.a
Onshore	2.2	2.7
Non-Program Migration	18.4	14.0
Total(f)	**100.0**	**100.0**
	'000	'000
Total Skill(a)	24.1	91.5
Total Family(a)	47.3	45.9
Total Humanitarian Program	12.2	17.0
Total Non-Program Migration	19.3	25.1
Total persons(f)	**104.6**	**179.8**

(a) In 1997–98 the Skilled-Australian Linked category commenced in the skilled stream replacing the Concessional Family category within the family stream.
(b) Includes Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme.
(c) Includes Skilled-Australian Linked and Regional Designated Area Sponsored categories.
(d) Includes Distinguished Talent, 1 November Onshore and Skilled Independent Regional categories.
(e) Includes Spouses and Fiancees.
(f) Components do not add to total as total includes Special Eligibility category of the Migration Program.

Source: DIAC, *Immigration Updates 2002–03 to 2005–06,* and DIAC unpublished data (1997–2001).

In 2005–06, migrants in the Family Stream who were employed prior to arrival in Australia were mainly employed in Professional and Associate Professional occupations (34% and 15% respectively), making up half of all employed Family Stream migrants. A further 24% were employed in Clerical, Sales and Service occupations.

...Humanitarian Program

The Humanitarian Program is the smallest of Australia's immigration categories, although the proportion and composition of migrants coming from the program have varied over the past decade. This variation is a result of the often unexpected nature of international events that trigger humanitarian crises such as warfare and political instability.

In 2005–06 there were around 17,000 permanent additions through the Humanitarian Program, representing 9% of all permanent additions in that year. Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the proportion in this program has been as high as 12% (12,200 people) of total permanent additions in 1996–97 and as low as 6% (7,500 people) in 2001–02.

Most of the migrants within the Humanitarian Program arrive via the offshore program. That is, they have applied for entry from overseas. These include refugees and the Special Humanitarian Program. The number of refugees has ranged from 3,100 (2%) in 2003–04 to 5,200 (3%) in 2005–06. In 2005–06, the Special Humanitarian Program was the largest group within the Humanitarian category with around 6,900 people (3.9%).

Immigration detention

Australia's immigration detention policy was introduced in 1992 and expanded in 1994. The policy reflects a maintenance of Australia's migration program, and requires that non-Australian citizens who are unlawfully in Australia are detained, unless they are granted permission to remain in Australia.

In 2005–06, approximately 6,490 people were in immigration detention. The main nationalities of people held in detention since 2002–03 have been Indonesian, Chinese, Malaysian and Korean.

The majority of people in detention were detained as a result of arriving in Australia without a visa, overstaying their visa, visa cancellation or for illegal foreign fishing.

Source: DIAC, *Immigration Fact Sheet 82,* viewed 29 May 2007, <http://www.diac.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/82detention.htm>.

Characteristics of migrants

Some of the demographic characteristics of migrants differ from those of the Australian population and others have changed over time. For example, permanent additions have a very different age structure than the overall Australian population, and the region of birth of permanent additions has changed considerably over the past decade.

...age profile

In 2005–06, most (72%) permanent additions were aged less than 35 years, including almost one-third (32%) who were aged between 25 and 34 years. This compares to 48% of the Australian resident population aged less than 35 years, and 14% aged between 25 and 34 years, at June 2006.

The younger age distribution of permanent additions is largely a result of the targeting of the skilled migration stream. Australia's immigration policy makes it compulsory for assessed applicants granted a skill migration visa to be aged under 45 years, with the exception of some Business Skills visas and special cases.

...regions of birth

Over the past decade, there have been distinct shifts in the regions of birth of permanent additions, reflecting changes in immigration policy and particularly the emphasis on skilled migration. While the proportion of migrants arriving from Europe has steadily decreased from 12% in 1996–97 to 5% in 2005–06, persons born in the United Kingdom and Ireland have consistently made up at least 10% of total permanent additions over the same period. However, proportions

Permanent additions and estimated resident population by age — 2005–06
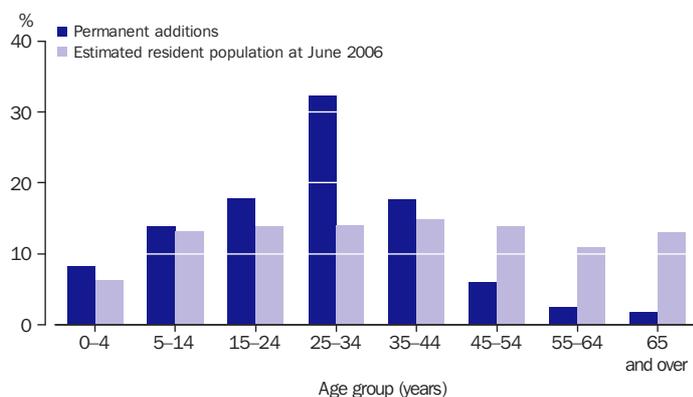
Source: ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics,* (ABS cat. no. 3101.0) and DIAC, *Immigration Update 2005–06*.

coming from this region have fluctuated from 11% in 2000–01 to 17% in 2005–06. In 2005–06, almost three-quarters (73%) of all migrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland entered through the Skill Stream, with 22% of the remainder comprising Family Stream migrants.

The proportion of people coming from Oceania, mainly New Zealand, has been as high as 24% in 1999–2000 but fell to 13% in 2002–03. Persons born in New Zealand continue to be the second largest source of immigration to Australia, representing 11% of total permanent additions in 2005–06 and accounting for 2.3% of Australia's population at June 2006.[3]

Some Asian countries have become an increasingly important source of immigration over the past decade. Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the proportion of migrants from Southern and Central Asian countries has doubled from 7% to 14%. Most of these migrants (70%) were Skill Stream entrants, compared to just over half (51%) of total permanent additions entering through the Skill Stream.

In recent years, there have been sharp increases in the number of permanent additions from certain countries within regions. In 2005–06, China and India were the third and fourth largest sources of all migration to Australia (after New Zealand and the United Kingdom), and the second and third largest sources of Skill Stream migration after the United Kingdom. Between 2000–01

Permanent additions by the five leading countries of birth — 2005–06
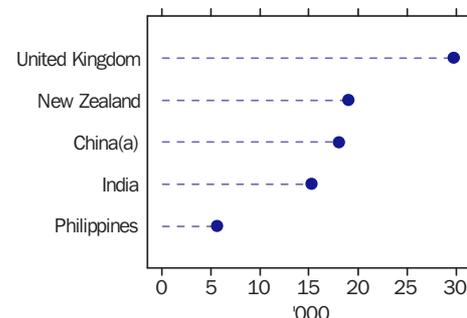

(a) Excludes SARs and Taiwan Provence.

Source: DIAC, *Immigration Update 2005–06* and DIAC unpublished data (1997–2001).

and 2005–06, the number of skilled migrants coming to Australia from China more than tripled, from 3,800 to 12,500 people. Skilled migrants coming from India also increased, from 4,700 to 12,300, over the same period.

The proportion of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa has also increased. Of these, more than half (51%) were Skill Stream entrants in 2005–06, the same as the overall proportion of permanent additions from all countries in that year. The majority of permanent additions from Sub-Saharan Africa have been from South Africa and Zimbabwe, making up 60% and 21% respectively in 2005–06.

Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the country of birth composition of humanitarian migrants changed as a response to changing international circumstances. Over the past few years, people born in Sudan and Iraq have had the highest number of Humanitarian Program migrants. In 2003–04, 38% of all humanitarian migrants (or around 4,500 people) were born in Sudan. In 2005–06, over one-fifth (22%) of humanitarian migrants (3,700 people) were from Sudan with a further 11% coming from Iraq.

...state and territory destinations

Immigrants have consistently nominated New South Wales and Victoria as their intended state of residence. The large population and economic dominance of these states have made them popular choices for migrants. While New South Wales is still the most popular state, it has declined over the past decade. In 2005–06, 64,000 (36%) migrants intended to settle in New South Wales, a decrease of 8 percentage points from 1996–97 (44%).

Permanent additions, selected regions of birth

	1996–97	2000–01	2005–06
Region	%	%	%
Oceania and Antarctica	17.5	23.8	13.3
Europe and former USSR(a)	12.4	8.5	5.1
United Kingdom and Ireland	13.3	10.8	17.4
North Africa and Middle East	7.3	6.0	6.7
Southeast Asia	13.0	13.1	13.6
Northeast Asia	18.1	15.1	15.3
Southern and Central Asia	6.9	9.8	14.1
Americas	4.8	3.8	3.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.6	8.0	7.2
Total(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000
Total	**104.6**	**131.2**	**179.8**

(a) Excludes the United Kingdom.
(b) Total includes supplementary country codes and those for which country of birth was not stated.

Source: DIAC, *Immigration Updates 2002–03 to 2005–06,* and DIAC unpublished data (1997–2001).

Intended state and territory destinations of permanent additions	1996–97	2005–06	
	%	%	'000
New South Wales	43.7	35.6	64.0
Victoria	21.7	25.0	45.0
Queensland	15.8	17.1	30.7
South Australia	3.8	6.6	11.9
Western Australia	11.6	12.4	22.3
Other(a)	2.3	2.6	4.7
Australia(b)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**179.8**

(a) Other includes Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

(b) Total includes those for which state and territory destinations were not known.

Source: DIAC, *Immigration Update 2005–06.*

The proportion of migrants intending to reside in all other states increased. For example, Victoria increased from 22% in 1996–97 to 25% (45,000 people) in 2005–06.

Migrants also tend to be heavily concentrated in the major cities of these states, which are more likely to offer benefits such as better employment opportunities and in some cases communities of people from the same countries. (For more information see *Australian Social Trends 2004*, Where do overseas-born people live?, pp. 22–25).

Endnotes

1   Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, *Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2006, Table 57,* cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra.

2   Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, *Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2006,* cat. no. 3101.0, ABS, Canberra.

3   Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, *Migration, Australia, 2005–06,* cat. no. 3412.0, ABS, Canberra.

4   Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2007, *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects January 2007*, viewed 29 May 2007, <http://www.diac.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2005-6/index.htm>.

5   Productivity Commission Report 2006, *Economic Impacts of Migration and Population Growth, Part C: Australia's Migration Policy and Flows*, viewed 29 May 2007, <http://pc.gov.au/study/migrationandpopulation/finalreport/migrationandpopulation.pdf>.

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