

Attitudes to Immigration



Edited by Justin Healey

ISSUES
IN SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

Attitudes to Immigration is Volume 456 in the 'Issues in Society' series of educational resource books. The aim of this series is to offer current, diverse information about important issues in our world, from an Australian perspective.

KEY ISSUES IN THIS TOPIC

The Australian nation was founded on immigration; for several decades its growth and values have been sustained by multiculturalism and tolerance. Our population and economic growth have been underpinned by a large, legal, non-discriminatory immigration program with broad public support. However, increasing signs are emerging of anti-immigration sentiments and a rising backlash over the size of the nation's annual immigration intake.

Issues of concern for people include urban congestion, housing prices, border protection, humanitarian refugee intake, environmental sustainability, and discrimination over racial and religious integration and diversity.

This book presents analysis and opinions from the latest immigration figures, polls and debates to explore how community attitudes towards immigration are evolving.

Are Australians' sentiments increasingly positive, negative or neutral? Are our immigration levels too high, or should they be increased, or paused? What is the impact of immigration on our shared quality of life? As a people, are Australians at risk of the polarisation seen in other western nations, where social cohesion itself is under threat?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Titles in the 'Issues in Society' series are individual resource books which provide an overview on a specific subject comprised of facts and opinions.

The information in this resource book is not from any single author, publication or organisation. The unique value of the 'Issues in Society' series lies in its diversity of content and perspectives.

The content comes from a wide variety of sources and includes:

- Newspaper reports and opinion pieces
- Website fact sheets
- Magazine and journal articles
- Statistics and surveys
- Government reports
- Literature from special interest groups

CRITICAL EVALUATION

As the information reproduced in this book is from a number of different sources, readers should always be aware of the origin of the text and whether or not the source is likely to be expressing a particular bias or agenda.

It is hoped that, as you read about the many aspects of the issues explored in this book, you will critically evaluate the information presented. In some cases, it is important that you decide whether you are being presented with facts or opinions. Does the writer give a biased or an unbiased report? If an opinion is being expressed, do you agree with the writer?

EXPLORING ISSUES

The 'Exploring issues' section at the back of this book features a range of ready-to-use worksheets relating to the articles and issues raised in this book. The activities and exercises in these worksheets are suitable for use by students at middle secondary school level and beyond.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This title offers a useful starting point for those who need convenient access to information about the issues involved. However, it is only a starting point. The 'Web links' section at the back of this book contains a list of useful websites which you can access for more reading on the topic.

Australia's population by country of birth

*Over 7 million people – almost a third of Australia's population – were born overseas, according to the **Australian Bureau of Statistics***

Key statistics

In 2019, there were over 7.5 million migrants living in Australia. This was 29.7% of the population that were born overseas. One year earlier, in 2018, there were 7.3 million people born overseas.

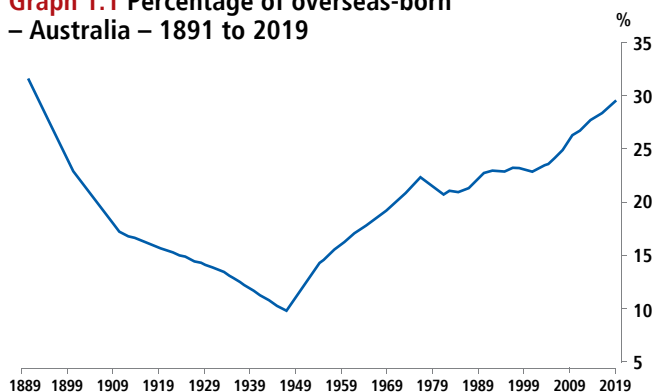
Every single country from around the world was represented in Australia's population in 2019. People born in:

- England (986,000) continues to be the largest group of overseas-born living in Australia. However, this has dropped from just over a million recorded between 2012 and 2016
- China (677,000) remained in second place from 2017 with strong growth since 2002
- India (660,000) with strong growth remained in third place with an extra 68,000 people
- Sri Lanka (140,000) continued to increase and is now in tenth place, dropping Scotland (134,000) to eleventh place
- Australian-born (17.8 million) increased 186,000 during the year.

Australia's population by country of birth

Historically, more people immigrate to, than emigrate from, Australia thereby adding to the growth of the national population. The various waves of migrants from numerous countries over time, have had an important effect on the diversity of Australia's population.

Graph 1.1 Percentage of overseas-born – Australia – 1891 to 2019



(a) Census years only until 1981. Post 1981 based on estimated resident population at 30 June.
(b) Estimates from December quarter 2018 are preliminary.



TABLE 1.2 AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH – 2019^(a)

Country of birth ^(b)	'000	% ^(c)
England	986	3.9
China	677	2.7
India	660	2.6
New Zealand	570	2.2
Philippines	294	1.2
Vietnam	263	1.0
South Africa	194	0.8
Italy	183	0.7
Malaysia	176	0.7
Sri Lanka	140	0.6
All overseas-born	7,530	29.7
Australia-born	17,836	70.3

(a) Estimates are preliminary.

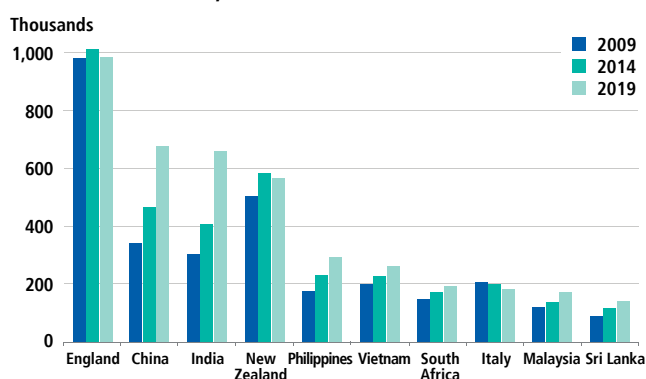
(b) Top 10 countries of birth for overseas-born are at 30 June 2019.

(c) Proportion of the total population of Australia.

High levels of immigration in the years before 1891 resulted in 32% of the population enumerated as overseas-born in the first country-wide census in 1891. In 2019 the proportion of Australia's population born overseas was 30%.

In 2019, those born in England (986,000 people) continued to be the largest group of overseas-born residents, accounting for 3.9% of Australia's total population. This

Graph 1.3 Overseas-born – top 10 countries of birth – Australia – 2009, 2014 and 2019



(a) Top 10 countries of birth for overseas-born are at 30 June 2019.
(b) Population estimates are preliminary.

year, the growing overseas-born residents from Sri Lanka has moved into 10th position, replacing Scotland.

Country of birth by age and sex

There are differences in the age structure of people born in Australia and those born overseas. As seen below, those born in Australia dominate the younger age groups, while the overseas-born increase from the 20-24 year age group which in part, is due to international students studying in Australia. The main reason there are less overseas-born in the very young age groups is that most people are far less likely to migrate with young families.

In 2019 the highest proportions of the population for those born:

- Overseas, were aged 30-34 years (2.9%), with 1.4% being males and 1.5% females.
- In Australia, were aged 0-4 years (5.9%), with 3.1% being males and 2.9% females.

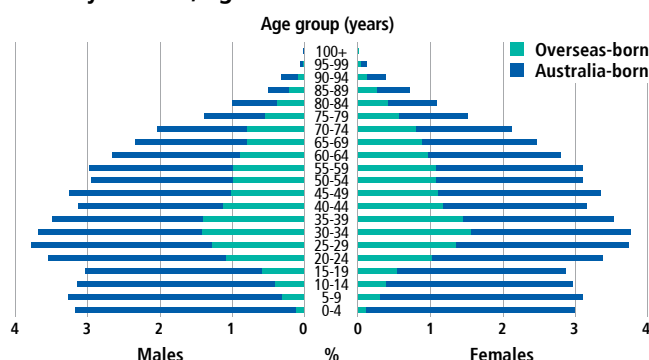
For comparison, in 2009 the highest proportions of the population for those born:

- Overseas, were aged 45-49 years (2.3%), with 1.2% each being males and females.
- In Australia, were aged 0-4 years (6.3%), similar to 2019.

Median age and sex ratio

The median age is useful to assess the changing age structure of a given population over time. It is the

Graph 1.4 Population structures of Australia^(a), Country of birth, age and sex – 30 June 2019^(b)



(a) Australian-born and overseas-born persons as a proportion of Australia's total population.
(b) Population estimates are preliminary.

TABLE 1.5 AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH – 2019^(a)

Country of birth ^(b)	Median age ^(c)
England	57
China	34
India	34
New Zealand	44
Philippines	40
Vietnam	47
South Africa	44
Italy	72
Malaysia	40
Sri Lanka	41
All overseas-born	43
Australian-born	34

(a) Estimates are preliminary.
(b) Top 10 countries of birth for overseas-born are at 30 June 2019.
(c) Median age is the age at which half the population is older and half is younger.

age at which half the population is older and half is younger.

The median age of the overseas-born population has gradually decreased from a decade ago to now be 43 years of age in 2019. On the other hand, the median age of the Australian born population has gradually increased over time to now be 34 years of age. The decrease in the median age of the overseas-born population is having a positive effect on the age structure of Australia by slowing the ageing of the total population.

Migrants from countries who were part of the post-Second World War migration streams were now generally older, for example the Italian born population have a median age of 72 years. Whereas, those from more recent groups of migrant arrivals are younger, for example the Chinese and Indian born both have a median age of 34 years. This is the same as those born in Australia.

When analysing those countries of birth in 2019 within Australia (those with a population of 100 or more), the group with the:

- Oldest median age was from Latvia at 77 years of age
- Youngest median age was from the Cayman Islands at 13 years of age
- Highest sex ratio was from Benin (with 195 males per 100 females)
- Lowest sex ratio was from Turkmenistan (with 41 males per 100 females).

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (28 April 2020).
Migration, Australia, 2018-19. Retrieved from
www.abs.gov.au on 28 April 2020.

NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION

While varying over time, net overseas migration has remained above 180,000 people since 2006, according to the **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

Net overseas migration is the net gain or loss of population through immigration (overseas migrant arrivals) to Australia and emigration (overseas migrant departures) from Australia.

Key statistics

Overseas migration to and from Australia in 2019, resulted in a net increase to Australia's population of 239,600 people:

- There were 537,800 overseas migrant arrivals, a slight increase reversing the decline seen in 2018.
- There were 298,200 overseas migrant departures which is the highest number on record.
- Temporary visa holders were the majority of overseas migrant arrivals (64.3%) and overseas migrant departures (52.8%).

Net overseas migration – Australia

While exhibiting a pattern of variability over time, net overseas migration has remained above 180,000 people since 2006. After a 9.5% decrease in 2017-18, migrant numbers remained relatively steady in 2018-19.

In the year ending 30 June 2019 there was:

- A net gain from overseas migration of 239,600 people. This is a slight increase of 0.6% from 2017-18 (1,400 people).
- 537,800 overseas migrant arrivals, which was 10,300 more than during 2018.
- 298,200 overseas migrant departures, which was 8,900 more than during 2018.

Net overseas migration by visa groupings and Australian citizens

Temporary visa holders were the majority of overseas migrant arrivals (64.3%) and overseas migrant departures

(52.8%) in the year ending 30 June 2019.

- There were 346,000 migrant arrivals on temporary visas including nearly 173,000 international students (32.2% of all migrant arrivals).
- Arrivals on temporary work skilled visas increased from a year ago by 18.1% to 31,800 people.
- Migrant departures on temporary visas increased by 9.7% to 157,000 people.

For permanent visa holders in 2019, overseas migrant arrivals declined while migrant departures increased from one year earlier.

- 15.4% of all migrant arrivals were permanent visa holders
- Permanent visa holders arriving decreased from a year ago to 82,600 people (down 6.0%).
- Permanent visa holders departing decreased from a year ago to 21,100 people (down 2.1%).
- 7.1% of all migrant departures were permanent visa holders.

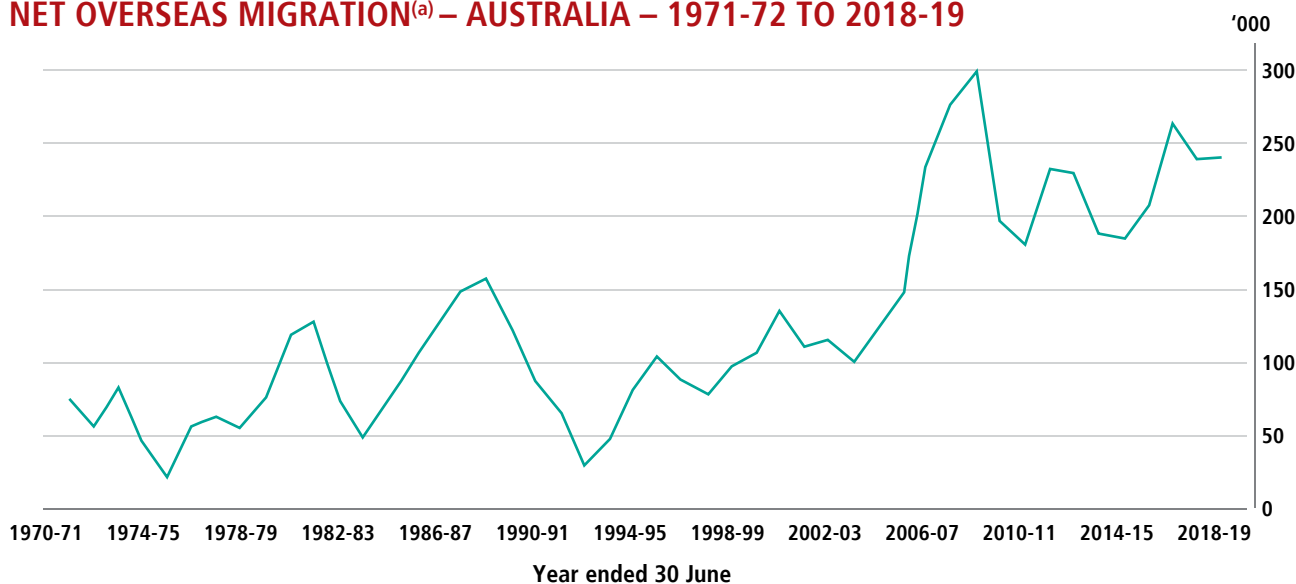
For Australian and New Zealand citizens (who do not require a visa for migration to Australia), in the year ending 30 June 2019:

- 30,200 New Zealand citizens moved to Australia to live, however in the same year, 22,200 left Australia to live overseas.
- 74,900 Australian citizens returned to Australia after living overseas but in the same year 86,700 decided to move overseas to live.

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (28 April 2020). *Migration, Australia, 2018-19*. Retrieved from www.abs.gov.au on 28 April 2020.

NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION^(a) – AUSTRALIA – 1971-72 TO 2018-19



(a) Estimates from December quarter 2018 onwards are preliminary.

Source: Australian Historical Population Statistics (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001); Migration, Australia (cat. no. 3412.0).

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SHAPING A NATION – POPULATION GROWTH AND IMMIGRATION OVER TIME

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT BY **TREASURY** AND THE **DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Population growth and population distribution affect most areas of public policy. This paper examines the benefits that population growth and migration bring to Australia, while remaining alive to the challenges brought by a larger population.

Australia has long stood out from other nations as a country shaped by strong population growth and migration. Population growth has increased in recent times but still remains lower than in the 1960s and 1970s. While births have been the main driver of population growth over the last century, there have been times when net overseas migration has contributed a larger share, including over the most recent decade or so.

Australia's population growth has varied widely across the states and sub-state regions. In general, however, Australia's cities have grown strongly while population growth in regional areas has been more mixed. Over the last decade, migration has contributed particularly strongly to population growth in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne.

While migrants from the United Kingdom featured strongly in Australia's early migration efforts and remain the largest group of overseas-born residents, migrants from China, India and other Asian countries now also feature strongly. According to the 2016 Census, for the first time in Australia's history, a greater proportion of people born overseas are now from Asia rather than from Europe. However, more of Australia's residents still have European ancestry.

Australia's migrants increasingly first enter the country on temporary visas before transitioning to permanent residency. Permanent migrants are also increasingly coming through skilled pathways, including employer sponsored pathways.

Migrants deliver an economic dividend for Australia due to current policy settings which favour migrants of working age who have skills to contribute to the economy. This leads to higher rates of workforce participation and likely productivity benefits. This, in turn, increases Australia's GDP and GDP per person, with positive flow-on effects for living standards.

As well as delivering an economic growth dividend, migration improves the Commonwealth's fiscal position, since migrants are likely to contribute more to tax revenue than they claim in social services or other government support.

The positive effects of migration on economic growth and Australia's fiscal position are well documented. However, the effects of migration and

population growth more generally on the geographic distribution of Australia's population are less well documented.

High rates of population growth can heighten existing pressures on infrastructure, housing, and the environment. Without continuing action to find innovative solutions, high rates of growth may also intensify issues such as congestion and excessive waste production. To fully reap the benefits of immigration and population growth, Australia must continue to explore and address these issues.

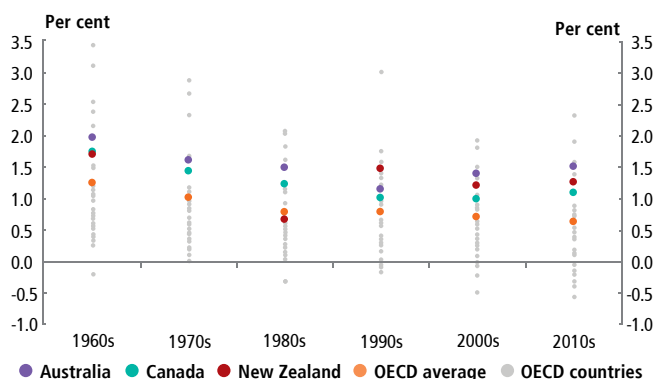
POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION: GROWTH OVER THE LAST CENTURY

The story of Australia's population over the last century is one shaped by baby booms and successive waves of migration. Australia's population is now almost 25 million, having increased by almost five times over the last century. Over nearly five decades, Australia's population growth rate has changed only slightly, although it has been high compared to population growth rates in most OECD countries (*Figure 1*). Canada and New Zealand – countries often considered similar to Australia – have also experienced high population growth rates, although not as high as Australia's.

As at 2016, Australia had the sixth highest population growth rate in the OECD, the same ranking as in the 1960s. Population growth rates have slowed across many OECD countries. However, Australia's population growth rate was higher in 2016 than it was at its low point during the 1990s, despite remaining lower than during the 1960s and 1970s (*Figure 1*).

FIGURE 1: POPULATION GROWTH RATES ACROSS OECD COUNTRIES



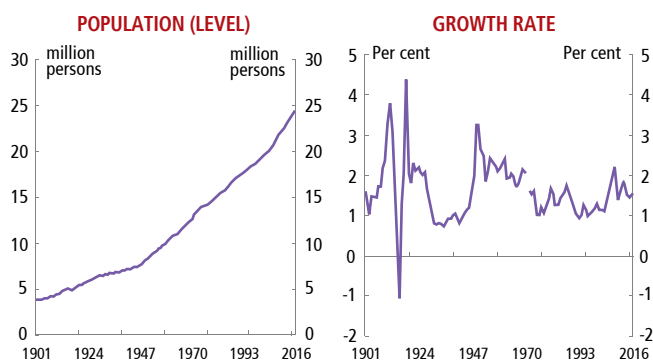
Note: Australia had the sixth highest growth rate in the OECD in 2016 but the fourth highest, on average, over the 2010s.

Source: World Bank 2017, authors' calculations.

Australia's population has had periods of faster growth and slower growth over the past century. As Australia emerged from World War I, the population grew rapidly, and continued to do so during the 1920s. Population growth then slowed to its lowest point during the Great Depression of the 1930s, falling to just 0.7 per cent in 1935.

The highest population growth occurred after World War II, from 1946 to 1970, during which time annual population growth rates averaged 2.2 per cent. After a relatively slow growth period over the 1980s and 1990s, Australia's population growth rate increased again in the mid-2000s before peaking in 2008 (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE LAST CENTURY



Note: The break in the right-hand side chart reflects a series break in 1971. Series breaks also occurred in 1922, 1925, and 2006. Series breaks can limit the comparability of data over time.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2014a & ABS 2017a.

Australia's population growth is determined by two components: natural increase and net overseas migration (NOM). Natural increase measures the excess of births over deaths where births and deaths are determined by the fertility rate and life expectancy respectively. NOM is the difference between the annual intake of immigrants into Australia and the outflow of emigrants departing Australia. It is primarily determined by Australia's migration programs for permanent residence together with the annual changes in arrivals and departures of migrants on temporary visas.

Changes to these two elements – natural increase and NOM – affect both the size and the structure of the population. Natural increase is largely outside government control, in contrast to NOM which is heavily influenced by government policy.

The relative contribution of natural increase and NOM to population growth has changed over time. As shown in Figure 3, NOM has fluctuated from year to year, rising and falling with policy changes and economic conditions. In contrast, natural increase has remained relatively steady, although it has decreased slowly over time.

From the start of the 20th century until 1948, natural increase almost single-handedly drove Australia's population growth. NOM then increased markedly and contributed more than half of Australia's population growth during brief periods in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s, as well as during the last decade or so. NOM

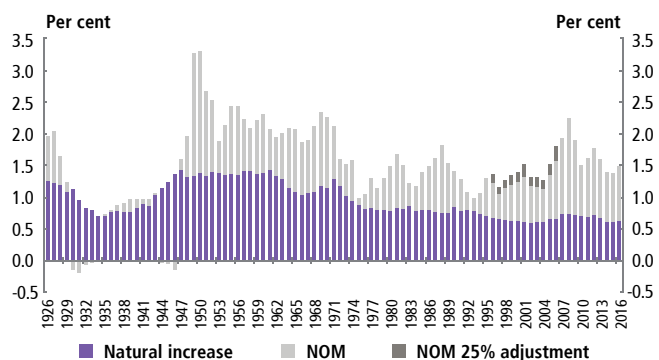
underwent a steep increase in the mid-2000s and this, combined with a slowing rate of natural increase, meant that NOM has contributed 59 per cent of Australia's population growth over the last decade. However, the increase in NOM in the mid-2000s may not be as large as it first appears.

From 2007, the ABS broadened the definition of NOM. Instead of an Australian resident for NOM purposes being defined as someone who had been in Australia for at least 12 months, a resident was redefined as someone who had been in Australia for at least 12 out of the past 16 months. While this new definition of a resident was officially adopted in 2007, the ABS measured NOM using both methods from December 2003 to September 2006. ABS analysis found that the new method produced NOM levels that were 25 per cent higher on average than the old method (ABS2017b).

If this relationship between the two definitional methods holds more broadly, a 25 per cent adjustment could be made to NOM prior to 2007 (see Figure 3). Once this adjustment is made, the increase in NOM from the mid-2000s onwards is less pronounced, although it is still higher on average compared to the previous three decades.

Relatively higher NOM since the mid-2000s is, in large part, explained by changes in the number of international students and New Zealanders.

FIGURE 3: COMPONENTS OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION GROWTH



Source: ABS 2014a & ABS 2017a, author's calculations.





International student numbers increased by almost 86 per cent from 2006 to 2009 (*Home Affairs 2017*), after new pathways to permanent residency through the skilled migration program were opened in 2005 (*Australian National Audit Office 2011*).

During 2009 and 2010, a number of measures were introduced to improve the integrity of student visas.

This, combined with appreciations in the dollar and negative publicity around the safety of students, may explain the 21 per cent drop in student numbers between 2009 and 2013. Student numbers have again increased since 2013, with upwards impacts on NOM.

The number of New Zealanders in Australia grew by more than 41 per cent between 2007 and 2012. The largest single year increase occurred from 2007 to 2008, with an almost 14 per cent increase in the number of New Zealanders. The number of New Zealanders in Australia has continued to climb since 2013, albeit at a slower pace. The combined impact of high student numbers and significant growth in New Zealanders help explain the large NOM peak in 2008 (*Home Affairs 2017*).

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The Australian Government, the Treasury and the Department of Home Affairs. *Shaping a Nation – Population growth and immigration over time*, pp. 1, 2-4. Retrieved from <http://research.treasury.gov.au> on 15 January 2020.

Permanent and temporary migration

PERMANENT MIGRATION

Australia's permanent migration program incorporates economic and family migration and is the main pathway to permanent residence. It includes the Skill stream, Family stream and Special Eligibility visas. The only other way to obtain permanent residence is on humanitarian grounds.

Skill stream visas

The Skill stream is designed for workers with the skills, qualifications and entrepreneurship most needed in the Australian economy. The Skill stream comprises four components; namely: Points Tested Skilled Migration; Employer Sponsored; Business Innovation and Investment; and Distinguished Talent.

Family and Child stream visas

The Family stream allows the permanent migration of close family members, of Australian citizens, permanent residents, and eligible New Zealand citizens. It focuses on partners and parents, but also provides the opportunity for additional family members, such as aged dependent relatives, carers, remaining relatives and orphan relatives, to join their family in Australia. Child visas allow the permanent migration of children, of Australian citizens, permanent residents, and eligible New Zealand citizens. The Child visa comprises two categories, namely Child and Adoption visas.

Special Eligibility visas

Special Eligibility visas allow former residents and certain people who served in the Australian Defence Force to live in Australia as permanent residents.

TEMPORARY MIGRATION

People can come to Australia for a temporary stay for a range of purposes, for example, visiting Australia for tourism or attending a conference, or for more specific purposes, such as medical treatment, study, skilled work,

working holidays or other specialist activities. There are six main categories of temporary residents, which can cover stays of more than three months in Australia.

Visitor visas

Visitor visas are mostly used by people visiting Australia for holidays, tourism and recreation, or to see family and friends. People may also use Visitor visas for certain short-term business activities that do not entail working in Australia.

Working Holiday Maker Program

The Working Holiday Maker Program allows young adults to have an extended holiday and engage in short-term work and study.

Student visa

The Student visa program enables international students to come to Australia to study full-time in a registered course.

Temporary Resident (Skilled) visa

Allows a business to sponsor a skilled overseas worker if they cannot find an appropriately skilled Australian citizen or permanent resident to fill a skilled position.

Other temporary visas

Other temporary visas include visas that allow people to undertake short-term, non-ongoing highly specialised work, enrich social and cultural development, strengthen international relations or provide training opportunities of benefit to Australia.

New Zealand citizens

Under the 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, New Zealand citizens can enter and leave Australia freely and live in Australia indefinitely on grant of a Special Category visa (subclass 444).

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Department of Home Affairs, *Country profiles: Permanent migration and Temporary migration*. Retrieved from www.homeaffairs.gov.au on 15 April 2020.

FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME: IMMIGRATION IN AUSTRALIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS FROM A REPORT BY THE **BANKWEST CURTIN ECONOMICS CENTRE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This seventh report in the BCEC's *Focus on the States* series explores the profile and evolution of immigration in Australia over recent years, and undertakes a comprehensive assessment of immigrants' contributions to Australia's social and economic development. The report also sheds light on the wellbeing of immigrants and their ability to take a meaningful and valued role in Australian society.

With increasing immigration, there is also increased interest and relevance to understand its impact on Australia's labour market. We observe increase in immigrant density across most industries and occupations. The concern that immigrants may adversely affect the employment and wage situation of native-born workers continues to dominate the public debate. Our results dispel such concerns. They highlight that the rise in immigration is in fact associated with rising wages for native-borns.

Migrants have, on average, more accumulated years of education than the Australian-born population. But are their skills well-utilised? This report shows that only 60 per cent of migrants from a non English-speaking background are working in well-matched jobs. Moreover, not only are the migrants from non English-speaking background more likely to be over-educated for their jobs, they also incur the greatest wage penalty associated with this mismatch. We estimate that achieving a perfect match between the educational qualifications of these migrants and the jobs they hold could deliver a potential gain to the economy of up to 6 billion dollars per annum.

Our report finds that Australia has some way to go to become a truly multicultural society. We find that a significant share of native-born Australians – particularly those in the older age cohorts – have unfavourable attitudes towards certain groups, such as asylum seekers, Muslim Australians and African Australians. We provide empirical evidence to bear on the extent to which knowledge and exposure to such minority groups can mitigate the bias against them. The greater the knowledge and exposure, the fewer the negative attitudes and stereotypes.

The majority of immigrants in Australia take pride in this country, speak the language and identify with the values and norms of the majority. At the same time, preserving their primary cultural identity is important for the social wellbeing of immigrants. The report shows that complete assimilation may come at a cost of social wellbeing although it may enhance the economic status of immigrants. Yet, 70 per cent of native-born Australians oppose government assistance for ethnic minorities to preserve their traditions.

Are we doing enough in meeting the needs of the worlds' displaced populations? Not nearly as much as many other developed and developing countries do. Our comprehensive assessment based on newly released data on Australia's humanitarian migrants suggests, however, that those who are in this country are settling in well and can even see their socio-economic outcomes improve over the years. The report highlights the role of education and training in Australia for the chance to find a job at a similar skill level to which humanitarian migrants were holding in their home country.

KEY FINDINGS

PROFILE OF IMMIGRATION

A profile of migrants to Australia

- More than a quarter (26.3%) of Australia's population were born in a country other than Australia – equivalent to nearly 6.2 million at the time of the 2016 Census.
- Australia's overall population grew by a sixth (3.54 million) between the 2006 and 2016 Censuses, while the number of people born overseas rose by some 40% (1.76 million) over the same decade.
- More than 90 per cent of permanent skilled visa and family visa holders are concentrated in the 20 to 50 age range.
- Most of Australia's migrants are in the 30 to 34 year age band, around 820,000 overall, with citizens and those on permanent skilled visas accounting for nearly 60 per cent of this total.

How has immigration changed in Australia?

- Under 5 per cent of Australia's immigrants were from Asia in 1966. By 2016, Asian migrants comprised close to a half of the total immigrant population of Australia, at around 2.75 million.
- The number of migrants to Australia from Africa has increased from 10,000 in 1981 to over 388,000 by 2016 – representing over 7 per cent of the immigrant population.
- The growth of new permanent entrants on skilled visas accelerated over the course of the resource-driven economic boom, reaching a peak with nearly 150,000 new entrants in 2008.
- Australia has taken an average of around 14,000 humanitarian migrants per year since the start of the millennium. The recent exception was in 2016, with over 23,000 new humanitarian migrants moving to Australia, largely from Iran and Syria.

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Characteristics of Australia's immigrant population

- India tops the list as the largest source country of permanent migrants currently entering Australia under the skilled visa stream, with nearly 28,000 Indian immigrants in 2018.
- The number of skilled visa migrant arrivals from Pakistan has increased by 184 per cent over the past decade, making it the fourth largest origin of skilled visa migrants in Australia in 2018.
- The number of permanent skilled migrants entering Australia from the United Kingdom has dropped substantially from 24,600 in 2008 to under 5,400 in 2018 – a decline of 78 per cent.
- The annual arrival of permanent skilled migrants from South Africa also fell from a peak of nearly 11,000 in 2008 to 2,600 by 2018.
- The top five source countries in 2018 for permanent humanitarian migrants into Australia were Iraq, Syria, Myanmar, DRC Congo and Afghanistan.
- Around 3,650 humanitarian migrants from Iraq were received into Australia on permanent visas in 2018.
- The number of permanent humanitarian migrants from Syria has increased thirty seven-fold over the course of the past decade; over 2,100 Syrian humanitarian migrants on permanent visas entered Australia in 2018.

LABOUR MARKET IMPACTS

Labour market outcomes of immigrants

- The labour force participation is significantly higher for migrants selected for their labour market skills under points-based and employer-sponsored visa streams than for native-born Australians.
- There was nearly a 17 percentage points difference in the labour force participation rates of points-based migrants and native-born Australians in 2016.
- In 2016, the unemployment rate was under 3 per cent across all three groups – points-based visa migrants, employer-sponsored migrants, and native-born Australians.
- Full-time employment was more prevalent among the points-based migrants (68.5%) and employer-sponsored migrants (65%) than among natives (57.5%).
- The Health Care and Social Assistance sector employed the largest shares of skilled migrants in 2016, with 19 per cent of employer-sponsored migrants and 16.5 per cent of points-based visa migrants working in the sector.
- 15 per cent of points-based migrants and 10 per cent of employer-sponsored migrants were employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical services in 2016.
- Migrants are concentrated at higher skilled occupation levels, with 55 per cent of points-based visa migrants and 46 per cent of employer-sponsored migrants employed as professionals or managers.
- Professionals are the largest occupational grouping with 43 per cent of points-based visa migrants, 31 per cent of employer-sponsored migrants and 21

per cent of native-born Australians employed in this occupation.

How do migrants affect the Australian labour market?

- There has been an increase in the immigrant share of the Australian workforce across most industries and occupations.
- Migrant workers represent over 40 per cent of the professional workforce in more than half of Australia's industry sectors.
- The migrant share of the labourer workforce has risen most strongly in Wholesale Trade (up by 8.8 percentage points to 44 per cent of all workers), in Manufacturing (up 4.4 ppt to 48 per cent of all workers) and in Administrative and Support services (up 5.9 ppt to 48 per cent of all workers).
- There is a positive net wage benefit to native workers from increases in the share of migrant workers.
- A one percentage point increase in the share of migrant workers leads to an increase of 2.4 percentage point in the real wages of native-born workers.
- Skilled migrant workers drive positive benefits across Australia's industry sectors through increased productivity, innovation and knowledge spillovers.
- The key finding in this report accord with other research which shows that a greater share of migrant workers leads to increased full-time employment, more hours of work and higher wages among native workers.
- There is no evidence to support the contention that an increase in the share of migrant workers leads to systematically worse labour market outcomes for native-born workers.

Are migrant skills and education well utilised?

- 48 per cent of immigrants from non English-speaking countries have a tertiary degree, compared to 36 per cent of immigrants from English-speaking countries and 33 per cent of native-born Australians.
- Nearly 16 per cent of individuals born outside the English-speaking countries had a postgraduate degree, compared to 6 per cent of native-born Australians.
- In the period from 2006 to 2016, the number of foreign-born individuals holding a tertiary degree has increased by 77 per cent. This compares to a 30 per cent increase for the native-born population.
- 35 per cent of recent immigrants have pursued further studies after arriving in the country.
- A quarter of individuals who already possessed a postgraduate degree on arrival completed another postgraduate degree after they had arrived in Australia.
- There were 812,104 enrolments in the international education sector in 2019. Half of these were in higher education.

- Migrants born outside the main English-speaking countries are more likely to feel their skills are under-utilised compared to migrants from English-speaking countries and native-born workers. Over 15 per cent self-assess as being over-skilled for their job.
- Australian-born workers and migrants born in one of the main English-speaking countries experience similar levels of skills mismatch. Three quarters are 'correctly matched'.
- Only 60 per cent of migrants from a non English-speaking background are working in well-matched jobs. Potentially, this represents a substantial opportunity cost to the economy from under-utilised skills.
- We estimate that in 2017, there were 715,000 migrants from a non English-speaking background with more years of education than is normally required for their job.
- Compared to similar Australian-born workers, migrants from the main English-speaking countries earn 3.2 per cent higher wages, while those from non-English backgrounds earn 5.5 per cent lower wages.
- A migrant with low English proficiency typically earns around 12 per cent lower hourly wages than otherwise similar workers. We estimate that this accounts for one third of the overall wage penalty of 5.5 per cent experienced by migrants from non English-speaking backgrounds.
- Migrants from non English-speaking backgrounds are not only more likely to be over-educated for their jobs, they also incur the greatest wage penalty associated with this mismatch.
- On average, migrants who were born in one of the main English-speaking countries receive a higher pay-off to each year of education completed than native-born workers.
- Skills mismatch accounts for one third of the lower hourly earnings experienced by migrants from non English-speaking countries.
- Achieving a perfect match between the educational qualifications of migrants from non English-speaking backgrounds and the jobs they hold could deliver a potential gain to the economy of up to \$6 billion dollars per annum.
- Only a very small fraction of the large wage penalty associated with low English proficiency can be attributed to English language barriers exacerbating skills mismatch experienced by those migrants.

WELLBEING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Health and wellbeing

- In younger age cohorts in Australia, the foreign-born population has physical health advantages over the native-born population.
- Around 70% of foreign-born Australians but only 60% of native-born Australians aged 18-24 assessed

their health as excellent or very good in 2017.

- The foreign-born physical health advantage disappears for older age cohorts.
- Unhealthy behaviours are more common among the native-born population compared to the foreign-born population.
- As of 2017, nearly 86% of foreign-born Australians reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their lives overall.
- The share of Australians satisfied with their lives has increased over the past 16 years. However, less people are very satisfied now compared to 16 years ago.
- In 6 out of 8 domains of life satisfaction, a higher share of foreign-born Australians were very satisfied in 2001 than in 2017.
- Feeling socially isolated or having a lack of companionship was more common for native-born Australians than for immigrants in 2017.

Bias and discrimination

- Based on the latest data from the World Values Survey, over a quarter of South Koreans, 9% of Australians and only 3.6% of Swedes said they don't want immigrants as neighbours.
- 47% of native-born Australians surveyed in 2012 thought they should have priority for jobs.
- As of 2014, nearly 21% of foreign-born females in Australia thought they had been discriminated against when applying for a job – an increase of 2.2 ppt from 2008.
- The rate of perceived discriminatory treatment is significantly lower among foreign-born males compared to females, and has been decreasing overtime.
- 32% of native-born Australians surveyed in 2013 agreed that immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in Australia.
- In 2014, only 17% of university graduates but over half of individuals without a degree said 'the true Australian way of life is disappearing'.
- Asylum seekers and Muslim Australians are particularly unfavourably treated in Australia based on individual reports elicited in 2013.





- Over 53% of native-born Australians admitted to having unfavourable attitudes to asylum seekers and to Muslim Australians in 2013.
- Unfavourable attitudes to different minority groups in Australia are less prevalent in younger generations.
- 71% of baby boomers but only 35% of generation Y surveyed in 2013 said they felt unfavourably towards Muslim Australians.
- According to survey data of 2016, there are significantly more negative predispositions towards Muslims than towards representatives of other major religions in Australia.
- 22% of native-born Australians surveyed in 2016 said they would feel negative about having a Muslim neighbour; under 6% would oppose a Buddhist neighbour.
- Negative attitudes towards Muslims are more prevalent among those who know less about the Muslim religion.
- The share of individuals opposed to having a Muslim neighbour in 2016 was 13% among natives who knew the most about Islam and 30% for those who knew the least.
- Exposure to Muslims, be these relatives, friends, neighbours, schoolmates or colleagues, brings down the rate of anti-Muslim attitudes.
- Among individuals who believe that Islam has a lot or something in common with their own religion, the share of those opposed to having a Muslim neighbour is 10%.
- In 2013, nearly half of the Australians born to Australian parents opted for reducing the number of immigrants in Australia.
- There is an increasingly large share of first generation immigrants who believe immigration should be cut.
- In 2013, 68% of native-born Australians believed Australia should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants.

Support for multiculturalism

- 87% of males and nearly 90% of females surveyed in 2013 felt immigrants should retain their culture of origin alongside adopting Australia's culture.

- In 2013, 70% of native-born Australians disagreed that ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their traditions.
- Being an Australian citizen is as important to first generation immigrants as it is to second generation immigrants.
- 67% of foreign-born and 88% of native-born Australians surveyed in 2013 said they would rather be a citizen of Australia than of any other country in the world.
- The vast majority of both native – and foreign-born Australians surveyed in 2013 said respecting Australian political institutions and laws, having Australian citizenship, feeling Australian and speaking English are important to be 'truly Australian'.
- Over 60% of native-born, but only 20% of foreign-born Australians surveyed in 2013, thought being born in Australia was important to being truly Australian.
- As of 2016, 73% of immigrants from non English-speaking countries were linguistically integrated, speaking English very well or well plus their own language.
- 18% of immigrants from non English-speaking countries were linguistically separated in 2016 – they did not speak English very well or well but spoke their own language.
- The share of linguistically assimilated immigrants from non English-speaking countries was just under 8% in 2016.
- The share of individuals who report being 'very satisfied' with life overall is the highest among those who are linguistically integrated, that is they speak both English as well as their own language.
- Assimilation may bring economic returns to immigrants from non English-speaking countries. The share of individuals who report being very satisfied with their employment opportunities and financial situation is the highest among linguistically assimilated immigrants and is the lowest among the linguistically separated immigrants.
- Maintaining primary cultural identity is important to the social wellbeing of immigrants in Australia.
- The share of individuals who report very high satisfaction with their home, feeling part of their community, and amount of free time they have, is higher among linguistically integrated and separated groups compared to those who are linguistically assimilated.

HUMANITARIAN MIGRANTS

Humanitarian migration in Australia and globally

- In 2018, there were 20,356,406 refugees seeking asylum from persecution in countries around the world.
- In the same year, there were 2.3 refugees residing in Australia per 1,000 inhabitants, which placed it 51st in the world.

- In comparison, Sweden accommodated 24.4 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants and Germany 12.8 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants.
- Between January 2009 and August 2016, the Australian government granted 142,480 humanitarian visas. Of these humanitarian migrants, just over 60 per cent settled in either New South Wales or Victoria.
- Western Australia had the fourth largest settlement of humanitarian migrants during this period, some 10.8 per cent of the total.

A profile of humanitarian migrants in Australia

- Humanitarian migrants who settled in Australia were made up of a number of different family structures.
- The largest proportion were single person family structures, which made up 42.9% of all the humanitarian migration units.
- Couples with children made up the second largest proportion at 34.5%, followed by single parents at 11.1% and couples with no children at 6.2%.
- The most common forms of trauma or persecution experienced by humanitarian migrants were: wars and conflict (cited by 58 per cent), political or religious persecution (52 per cent), extreme living conditions (36 per cent), and violence (19 per cent).
- After being in Australia for four years, the percentage of male humanitarian migrants who reported their overall health as being poor or very poor increased from 12 per cent in 2014 to nearly 16 per cent in 2018.
- For female humanitarian migrants, this increased from 18 per cent in 2014 to 22 per cent in 2018.

Making Australia home

- Feeling safe (77 per cent) was the most common reason given for helping humanitarian migrants to settle in Australia.

- Four fifths of humanitarian migrants found it hard or very hard to find housing when they first arrived in Australia.
- Some of the most common reasons why humanitarian migrants found it hard or very hard to find housing were: costs of living (cited by 58 per cent), language difficulties (55 per cent), and no references or rental history (53 per cent).
- In their first year in Australia, 43 per cent of humanitarian migrants experienced one or more types of financial hardship.
- The most common financial hardship experienced by humanitarian migrants in their first year in Australia was being unable to heat/cool home (28 per cent), followed by not being able to pay bills on time (20 per cent).

Finding a job and studying

- Of those humanitarian migrants in the labour force in their first year in Australia, only 29 per cent reported being in paid work. By 2018, this had more than doubled to 63 per cent.
- Humanitarian migrants cited no Australian work experience (59.0%); English not good enough (54.6%); and no qualifications or skills (37.1%) as the main reasons for finding it hard to get a job in their first year in Australia.
- Humanitarian migrants who had worked as technicians and tradespersons prior to arriving in Australia had the lowest level of occupational skill level mismatch, at 40.6 per cent.
- Humanitarian migrants who had worked in field of sales prior to arriving in Australia had the highest level of occupational skill level mismatch, at 92.3 per cent.

Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (November 2019).
Finding a Place to Call Home – Immigration in Australia, pp. ix-xv.
 Retrieved from <http://bcec.edu.au> on 15 January 2020.

Refugee and humanitarian program

Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program helps people in humanitarian need who are:

- Outside Australia (offshore), and need to resettle to Australia when they do not have any other durable solution available.
- Already in Australia (onshore), and who want to seek protection after arriving in Australia.

Australia has a long history of providing resettlement for refugees and others who are displaced as a result of conflict, persecution and human rights abuses. Since the end of World War II, Australia has resettled more than 880,000 refugees and others in need.

The Refugee and Humanitarian Program is a key plank of Australia's comprehensive response to refugee displacement along with humanitarian assistance we provide to countries that host refugees.

Australia works closely with international partners to provide resettlement pathways for refugees and others in humanitarian need through the program.

Over the years, the Refugee and Humanitarian Program intake has been drawn from a range of nationalities and ethnic groups, reflecting global displacement arising from conflict and persecution.

The program is flexible and responds to resettlement need. Australia has allocated 18,750 places in 2018-19 to the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. We also fulfil our international obligations by offering protection to non-citizens who are already in Australia.

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Department of Home Affairs, *About the refugee and humanitarian program*. Retrieved from www.homeaffairs.gov.au on 15 April 2020.

CHAPTER 2

Polls and attitudes towards immigration

MAPPING SOCIAL COHESION: IMMIGRATION

The Mapping Social Cohesion survey by the **Scanlon Foundation** provides the only probability-based annual tracking of opinion on immigration, employing a consistent questionnaire structure and questions to measure the trend of public opinion.

IMMIGRATION

In the years 2007-09, the survey found that a majority considered the immigration intake to be 'about right' or 'too low,' in the range 53%-55%.

In 2010 there was heightened political debate over immigration and the desirable future population of Australia, in the context of increased unemployment and economic uncertainty. In that year the Scanlon Foundation survey obtained the largest single year increase in agreement that the intake was 'too high', up from 37% in 2009 to 47%.

This increased negativity towards immigration was, however, temporary. Between 2011 and 2013 the proportion in agreement that the intake was 'too high' was in the range 38%-42%, between 2014 and 2016 a lower 34%-35%.

In 2017 there was a minor increase in 'too high' response, up three percentage points from 34% to 37%, while 56% considered that it was 'about right' or 'too low.' In 2018 the negative proportion increased a further six percentage points to 43%, the second highest level since 2007.

With a recorded increase of nine percentage points in the 'too high' response between 2016-18, the Scanlon Foundation survey was consistent with the finding polls that recorded an increase in concern at the level of immigration. But it differed in finding that this remained a minority perspective, with the majority view in 2018 (52%) that the intake was 'about right' or 'too low.'

The 2019 Scanlon Foundation survey finds that concern at the level of immigration has lessened marginally, but not at a level of statistical significance: agreement that the intake is 'too high' has declined from 43% to 41%, while the proportion agreeing that the intake is 'about right' or 'too low' is at 53%, up from 52%. If attention is narrowed to those who are Australian citizens (and have voting rights) there is little difference in the result.

Across the twelve Scanlon Foundation surveys, 40% of citizens have considered the intake to be 'too high'; for the last six years the proportions are 36%, 36%, 34%, 38%, 45% and 42%.

Lessened concern in 2019 has been found in three other surveys which provide for tracking of attitudes over time.

The Lowy Institute Poll conducted in March 2019 employs a similarly worded but not identical question to the Scanlon Foundation. It found that those of the view that the intake was 'too high' was at 47%, down from 54% in 2018.¹

Figure 22: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?', 2007-19, RDD

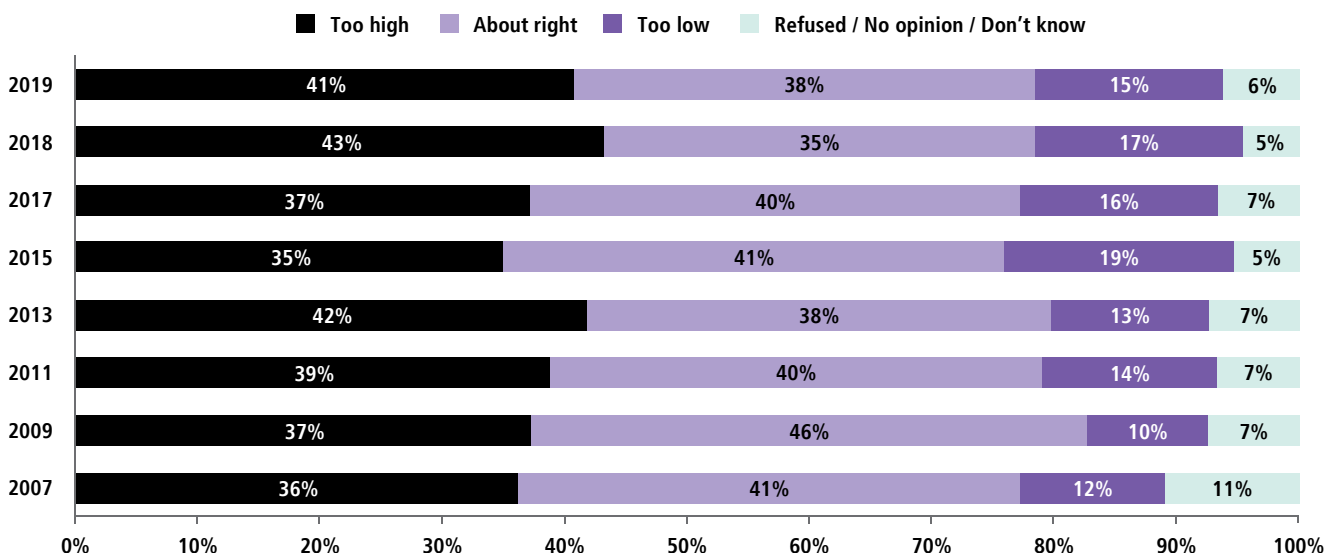


Table 25: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is ...', 2007-19 (percentage, RDD)

Survey year	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + too low	No opinion/ don't know
2007	36	41	12	53	11
2009	37	46	10	55	7
2010	47	36	10	46	7
2011	39	40	14	55	7
2012	38	42	14	56	7
2013	42	38	13	51	7
2014	35	42	17	58	8
2015	35	41	19	60	5
2016	34	40	19	59	7
2017	37	40	16	56	7
2018	43	35	17	52	5
2019	41	38	15	53	6

* Change between 2018 and 2019 not statistically significant at $p < .05$

The Scanlon Foundation survey conducted in July 2019 on the Life in Australia™ panel obtained 41% of the view that the intake is 'too high', down from 44% in 2018.

In a question with a different focus, Essential Report asks its respondents 'Do you think the levels of immigration into Australia over the past ten years has been ... too high or too low?' While a majority consider that the intake has been too high, the proportion in agreement at 56% in January 2019 is down from 64% in April 2018. In another question, Essential Report asked respondents to specify 'the most important issue for the Federal Government ... over the next 12 months' and provided for indication of three issues. In February 2019, 24% selected 'limit the amount of immigration', in October 2019 a lower 19%.²

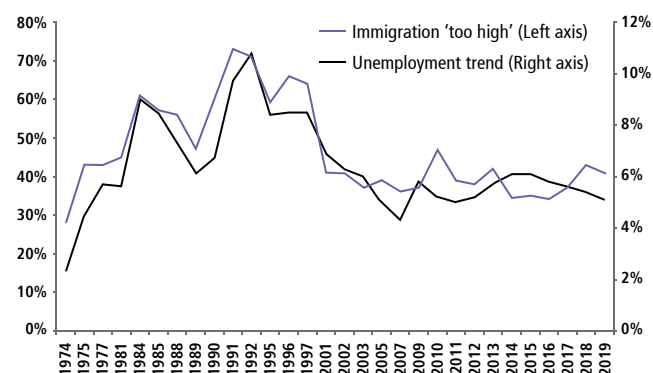
EXPLAINING SHIFTS IN OPINION

In past years the interpretation presented in the Scanlon Foundation survey reports has been that two key factors determine shift in opinion in Australia on

Table 26: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia at present? Would you say it is ...', 2018-19 (percentage, LinA)

Survey year	Too high	About right	Too low	About right + too low	No opinion/ don't know
2018	44	40	15	55	2
2019	41	45	13	58	1

Figure 23: Time series, trend of unemployment and view that immigration is 'too high', 1974-2019



attitudes to the immigration intake: the condition of the labour market, particularly the level of unemployment, and the political prominence of immigration issues.

Over the long term, there has been a strong correlation between changes in the level of unemployment and shifts in attitude to immigration, a Pearson correlation of 0.88 ($p < 0.0001$).

From 1989 to 1992 unemployment in Australia increased from 6% to 11%; in that context, the negative view of immigration recorded in a number of polls exceeded 70%. As labour market conditions improved, concern at the level of immigration decreased.

In recent years, as the level of unemployment has been below 6%, concern that the immigration intake was too high was close to a historical low for Australia, in the range 34%-37% from 2014 to 2017.

The increase in negative sentiment towards immigration in 2017 and 2018 did not appear to be linked to economic concerns. The level of unemployment has been trending downwards.

The Scanlon Foundation surveys have not found a significant increase in the level of economic concern between 2015 and 2019. Economic issues are ranked first as the major problem facing Australia, but the proportion of respondents specifying this has declined since 2014, from 34% to 28%.

The 2014-19 surveys asked respondents 'how worried are you that you will lose your job in the next year or so.' Of respondents aged 18-64 and in employment, 20% in 2014 indicated that they were 'very worried' or 'worried', 17% in 2015, 23% in 2016, a much lower 10% in 2017, 12% in 2018 and 13% in 2019.

The proportion aged 18-64 indicating that they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their 'present financial situation' changed little over the last five years: 26% in 2015, 23% in 2016, 24% in 2017, 26% in 2018, and 25% in 2019.

While there is no evidence that links current shifts in attitude to economic insecurity, there is evidence that links to the second explanatory factor, the political context. The proportion of the view that immigration is 'too high' markedly increased in 2010, to a lesser extent in 2013 and 2018; 2010 and 2013 were years in which federal elections were held; 2018 was a year of

political instability, with increased attention to size of the immigration intake and population growth.

Although 2019 was an election year, immigration was not a major issue in the campaigns of the major parties. Prime Minister Morrison set the tone in November 2018 in what was described as a ‘dramatic shift in rhetoric’, with his statement that while ‘population growth has played a key role in our economic success ... I know Australians in our biggest cities are concerned about population ...’

‘The roads are clogged, the buses and trains are full. The schools are taking no more enrolments. I hear what you are saying. I hear you loud and clear.’³

In the Morrison government’s *Plan for Australia’s future population* released in March 2019, two months before the election, the permanent migration cap was cut by 15% from the level in 2016-17 to 160,000 and new regional visa places were introduced.⁴ This policy was not challenged by the Labor Opposition and immigration ‘disappeared from the campaign.’⁵

A third explanatory factor is the impact of immigration on quality of life in major cities, although this is a factor that is not simply quantifiable in terms of increased population size and its impact. It needs to be considered in the context of the character of individual cities and the politics of immigration in specific regions.

New questions first included in 2018 and repeated in the 2019 Scanlon Foundation survey provide insight into issues of greatest concern.

Consistent with the argument that the shift in

attitudes that has occurred is not primarily driven by economic fears, in 2019 only a minority of close to one-third (27% RDD, 35% LinA) indicate concern that ‘immigrants take jobs away,’ and fewer (19% RDD, 23% LinA) disagree with the proposition that ‘immigrants are good for the economy.’ Similar proportions were obtained in the earlier 2018 survey.

But the two years of surveying on the self-completion LinA panel, which as discussed lessens the risk of Social Desirability Bias masking true opinions, does indicate a high the level of concern over the impact of immigration.

In both the RDD and LinA versions of the Scanlon Foundation survey, the highest level of concern is for the ‘overcrowding in cities’, the perceived ‘impact of immigration on house prices’, government failure to ‘manage population growth’, and ‘impact on the environment.’

In the interviewer administered survey, majority negative opinion is obtained only for overcrowding; in the LinA survey, majority negative views are indicated for all four top ranked issues: overcrowding (65%, 2018; 70%, 2019); house prices (60%, 60%); government failure to manage population growth (59%, 57%); and environmental impact (50%, 58%).

Among the substantial minority of survey respondents who indicate that the current immigration intake is ‘too high,’ the level of negative sentiment is close to 20 percentage points higher, in 2019 in the range 72%-90% (RDD, LinA) regarding the impact of overcrowding and 64%-80% regarding house prices.

Table 27: Concerns about immigration, selected questions, (i) all respondents, (ii) those who consider the immigration intake ‘too high’, (iii) those who consider the immigration intake ‘about right’ or ‘too low’, 2018 and 2019 (percentage, RDD)

Question and response: RDD	All respondents		Respondents who consider the intake to be ‘too high’		Respondents who consider the intake is ‘about right’ or ‘too low’	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Concern at ‘impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities’ – ‘a great deal’, ‘somewhat’	54	52	73	72	40	39
Concern at ‘impact of immigration on house prices’ – ‘a great deal’, ‘somewhat’	49	46	65	64	36	35
Government management of population growth – ‘very badly’, ‘fairly badly’	48	44	66	59	36	35
Concern at ‘impact of immigration on the environment’ – ‘a great deal’, ‘somewhat’	38	44	51	58	29	36
‘Immigrants take jobs away’ – ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’	31	27	50	47	15	13
‘Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy’ – ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’	14	19	27	37	4	6
‘Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures’ – ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’	14	14	25	28	4	3
N (unweighted)	1,500	1,500	638	596	792	831

Table 28: Concerns about immigration, selected questions, (i) all respondents, (ii) those who consider the immigration intake 'too high', (iii) those who consider the immigration intake 'about right' or 'too low', 2018 and 2019 (percentage, LinA)

Question and response: LinA	All respondents		Respondents who consider the intake to be 'too high'		Respondents who consider the intake is 'about right' or 'too low'	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Concern at 'impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	65	70	88	90	47	56
Concern at 'impact of immigration on house prices' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	60	60	80	80	45	46
Government management of population growth – 'very badly', 'fairly badly'	59	57	75	74	46	45
Concern at 'impact of immigration on the environment' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	50	58	69	76	36	46
'Immigrants take jobs away' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	34	35	58	61	14	17
'Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	25	23	47	47	8	6
'Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	23	20	45	41	6	6
N (unweighted)	2,260	2,033	967	779	1,266	1,233

On the other hand, among those who consider the intake to be 'about right' or 'too low', the levels of concern are markedly lower: thus 39%-56% are concerned by the impact of overcrowding, 35%-46% by the impact on house prices, and just 13%-17% over impact on jobs.

These findings highlight the extent of concern and potential for majority opinion to oppose current immigration levels. The annual tracking of opinion by the Scanlon Foundation survey indicates that this has not yet occurred, but the potential is evident.

Age and education

Further analysis of the aggregated 2018 and 2019 Life in Australia™ samples was undertaken to provide insight into the attitudes of highly educated young Australians, aged 18-34, a cohort that can be expected to have a major influence on the direction of Australian society in coming decades. The 2016 Census indicated that close to 40% of young adults now have a university level qualification, compared to 15% of those over the age of 65.

The main concerns of 18-34 year-old respondents who have obtained a university degree are similar to the full sample, with the highest levels indicated for house prices, overcrowding, the environment, and government management of population growth.

However, among highly educated young adults there is a very low level of agreement with a range of negative propositions concerning immigration; thus, disagreement with the propositions that immigrants do not improve Australia by bringing new ideas and

cultures is at 9%, that immigrants are good for the economy at 10%, that a diverse immigration intake does not make Australia stronger at 11%, and agreement that the immigration intake is too high also at 11%.

There is a marked contrast in the attitudes of those aged 65 or above whose highest educational qualification is at the trade or apprenticeship level. On three issues there is less than 10% difference between the two age and educational groups: concern over the impact of immigration on house prices and the environment and negative view of government management of population growth. But there are marked contrasts in response to six of the propositions, notably the level of immigration (11%, 66%), the value of a diverse immigration intake (11%, 54%), and the impact of immigrants on overcrowding (50%, 82%).

Towards a nuanced understanding

There are two additional issues to be considered if discussion of attitudes towards immigration is to move beyond a narrow focus on the size of the intake: the relative importance of the issue, and the perceived value of immigration to the nation. Do Australians still embrace the notion that their country is an immigrant nation, one in which immigration will continue to play an important role, or is there readiness to bring the program to an end, a rejection of the idea that immigration is good for the country?

If it was the case, as has been suggested by more than one media commentator and politician, that the population is angry and demand that immigration be

Table 29: Attitudes towards immigration, two age groups and highest educational attainment compared, 2018-19 (percentage, LinA)

Question and response	18-34 BA or higher	65+ School, trade, or apprenticeship	Difference
Concern at 'impact of immigration on house prices' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	60	65	6
Concern at 'impact of immigration on the environment' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	47	54	7
Government management of population growth – 'very badly', 'fairly badly'	44	54	9
'Immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	9	27	18
'Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	10	28	18
'Immigrants take jobs away' – 'strongly agree', 'agree'	18	43	25
Concern at 'impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities' – 'a great deal', 'somewhat'	50	82	32
'Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes stronger' – 'strongly disagree', 'disagree'	11	54	44
Number of immigrants at present – 'too high'	11	66	55
N (unweighted)	359	538	

radically curtailed, then immigration would rank first – or very highly – when survey respondents are asked to rank issues of importance for the country. This has been the finding of some European surveys.⁶

Since 2011 the Scanlon Foundation surveys have asked respondents, in an open-ended question, to indicate 'the most important problem facing Australia today.' In 2018, just 7% of respondents in both survey modes indicated that immigration was the most important problem, in 2019 6% (RDD) and 10% (LinA). While the proportion has increased since 2015 in the interviewer administered survey, which provides time series data, the increase has been by just 4%.

There is further evidence of the relative importance of the immigration. In April 2018, at a time of growing concern at the level of immigration, the Essential Report specified six 'main problems facing Australia', one of which was 'excessive levels of immigration.' In the ranking, which combined respondents' first, second and third choices, immigration came fifth. The rank order was: 'housing affordability pushing people to the fringes of major cities' (66%); lack of government investment in infrastructure like roads and

public transport' (62%); lack of employment opportunities driving people to the cities' (62%); 'poor planning that means people live too far from where they work' (45%); 'excessive levels of immigration' (37%); and 'lack of regulations for property developers' (29%).

The politics of immigration

The previous discussion considered shifts in attitude across the total population. To provide further insight into the political significance of immigration analysis is narrowed to different segments of the population.

In their campaigning, political parties focus not on all voters, but on the voters who are most likely to switch their support to – or from – their party in marginal electorates.

There is a different salience of immigration for the respective political parties. The current party of government, the Liberal-National Coalition, is positioned as the party more closely aligned to the business sector, which in large measure is a supporter of current immigration levels.⁷ But Liberal-National voters also indicate a relatively high level of concern at the current immigration intake – in the interviewer

Table 30: What do you think is the most important problem facing Australia today?', 2013-19 (percentage, RDD and LinA)

Issue	RDD							LinA	
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2018	2019
Immigration/population growth (concern)	3	3	3	5	6	7	6	7	10

Table 31: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?', Response: 'Too high' by intended vote, 2018 and 2019 (percentage, RDD and LinA)

Intended vote	2018		2019	
	RDD	LinA	RDD	LinA
Greens	13	10	12	14
Labor	36	43	32	33
Liberal/National	56	54	52	54
One Nation	91	82	97	83

administered version of the survey (RDD), in 2018 56% of Coalition supporters indicated that the current intake is 'too high', compared to 36% Labor and 13% Greens; in 2019, the relative proportions were 52%, 32%, and 12%. There is a similar pattern of response in the online version of the survey (LinA), within two percentage points for the major parties in 2019.

Aggregated analysis of the 2018 and 2019 LinA samples finds relatively high levels in agreement with the view that the immigration intake is too high among One Nation voters (83%), those with education up to Year 11 level (70%), and aged 65-74 (64%) and 75+ (56%). Relatively low levels of agreement are among Greens voters (12%), those aged 18-24 (18%), with a university degree (27%), and of non-English speaking background (33%).

The politics of immigration are simplest to navigate for the Greens and One Nation – on the one hand, among Greens supporters there is little demand for a cut in immigration, on the other for One Nation it is a major demand and it serves to define the party. Opinion is more divided among Labor and Coalition voters.

ENDNOTES

1. Natasha Kassam, *Lowy Institute Poll 2019*, p.17.
2. *Essential Report*, 5 Oct. 2016, 24 April 2018, 15 Jan. 2019, 16 Oct. 2019.
3. Bevan Shields, "'Enough, enough, enough': Scott Morrison says he will cut Australia's migration intake", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 Nov. 2018.
4. Prime Minister of Australia, 'A Plan for Australia's Future Population,' Media release, 20 March 2019.
5. Bo Seo, 'Why immigration has disappeared from the election campaign,' *Australian Financial Review*, 16 May 2019.
6. In Britain, the Ipsos Mori Issues Index found that between 2014-16 immigration was the 'most important issue' facing the country, indicated by a peak of 56% of respondents. In July 2019, immigration had fallen to the ninth ranked issue, specified by 14%. In the European Union, the Eurobarometer in 2015 found that immigration was the equal top-ranked issue (together with unemployment), indicated by 36% of respondents averaged across the EU28 countries, and above 50% in Germany (76%), Malta (65%), Denmark (60%), Austria (56%), Netherlands (56%), and Sweden (53%). In 2019 it was the fifth-ranked issue, indicated by 17%. In terms of issues facing the EU as a whole, immigration was by a large margin the top-ranked issue in 2015 and remained top-ranked in 2019, although the proportion selecting immigration fell from 58% to 34%. Standard Eurobarometer 84, Autumn 2015, Public Opinion in the European Union, T31 (QA3a); Annex Spring 2019, Standard Eurobarometer.
7. See for example, James Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 'Immigration a resounding positive for business and communities', 27 February 2018; Paul Karp, 'Industry brands Australia's 10% migration intake drop disappointing', *The Guardian*, 13 July 2018.

Scanlon Foundation. *Mapping Social Cohesion 2019*, pp. 46-54. Retrieved from <http://scanloninstitute.org.au> on 15 January 2020.

Table 32: 'What do you think of the number of immigrants accepted into Australia?', Response: 'Too high', 2018-19 (percentage, LinA)

Gender	Female	Male					
	43	43					
State	Victoria	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland		
	41	45	44	45	42		
Region	Capital city	Rest of state					
	40	49					
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	18	24	43	51	51	64	56
Highest completed education	BA or higher	Diploma/Technical Certificate	Trade/Apprenticeship	Year 12	Up to Year 11		
	27	40	51	34	70		
Financial Situation	Prosperous/very comfortable	Reasonably comfortable	Just getting along	Struggling to pay bills/Poor			
	35	42	43	51			
Intended vote	Labor	Liberal/National	Greens	One Nation			
	38	54	12	83			
Birthplace	Australia	ESB	NESB				
	48	34	33				

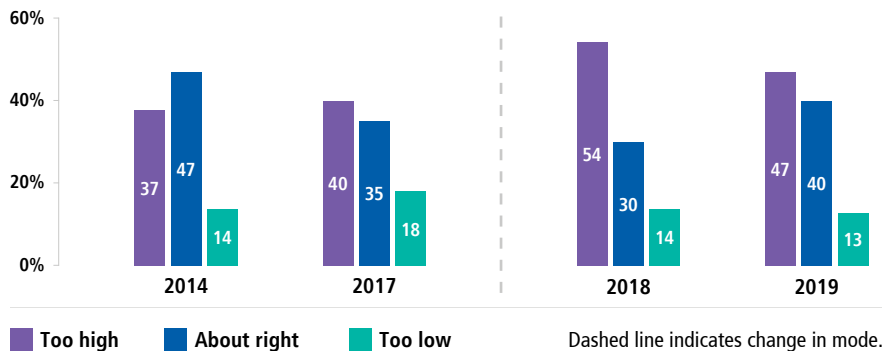
CURRENT ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

Fewer Australians believe the number of migrants moving to Australia is too high, according to this extract from the latest **Lowy Institute** poll by Natasha Kassam



IMMIGRATION RATE

Thinking now about Australia's immigration program. Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low, or about right?



Concerns about the rate of immigration to Australia appear to have softened somewhat in 2019. After a sharp spike in 2018, fewer than half of Australians this year (47%, down seven points) say that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is 'too high'. However, this level remains ten points higher than in 2014.

When considering the pros and cons of immigration more generally, a majority of Australians remain positive, but the balance of attitudes appears to be shifting. In 2019, 67% agree that 'overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy', 65% say that 'immigrants strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents', and 62% agree that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger'.

ries makes Australia stronger'. However, each of these results is lower than in 2016 (six points, seven points and ten points, respectively).

When considering the pros and cons of immigration more generally, a majority of Australians remain positive, but the balance of attitudes appears to be shifting.

The pressure on cities and infrastructure may be driving this shift in attitudes in 2019, with almost three-quarters (71%) of Australians saying that 'Australian cities are already too crowded'. However, a majority of Australians (59%) reject the idea that 'immigrants take away jobs from other Australians', although fewer disagreed than in 2016.

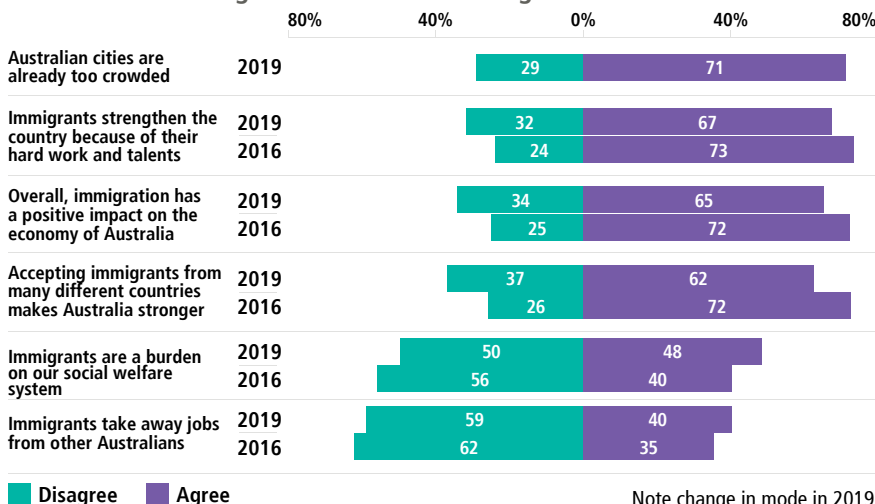
from other Australians', although fewer disagreed than in 2016. The population is divided on the question of whether 'immigrants are a burden on our social welfare system' (48% agreeing, 50% disagreeing).

Younger Australians seem to be more positive about the benefits of immigration. Three-quarters of 18-44 year olds (75%) say that 'immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Australia', compared with 59% of Australians over 45 years. There is a similar split on the question of whether 'immigrants strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents' (75:55).

However, far more older Australians (58% of those aged over 45 compared with 35% of those aged 18-44), see immigrants as 'a burden on our social welfare system'.

ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

Please indicate whether you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements about immigration.



Border protection

Australia's border protection policies have received international attention in recent years. Australians are quite divided on the impact of these policies on our reputation in the world. More Australians (40%) think Australia's border protection policies make no difference to its international reputation than those who think it either helps (30%) or hurts (28%) that reputation.

Kassam, N (26 June 2019). *Lowy Institute Poll 2019*, pp. 16-17. Retrieved from www.lowyinstitute.org on 15 January 2020.

POLLS APART: HOW AUSTRALIAN VIEWS HAVE CHANGED ON “BOAT PEOPLE”

*Charged atmospherics over border security has plenty guessing about public attitudes, but the numbers tell a story too, according to Kelsey Munro and Alex Oliver from the **Lowy Institute***

Since 2005, the annual Lowy Institute Poll has been tracking the attitudes of Australians to foreign policy issues and their place in the world. The issue of boat people, unauthorised asylum seekers, irregular maritime arrivals, refugees – the politics is so contested that it is difficult to find a neutral term – has been a lightning rod in Australian politics since 2001.

The issue of boat people, unauthorised asylum seekers, irregular maritime arrivals, refugees – the politics is so contested that it is difficult to find a neutral term.

That was when then prime minister John Howard refused landing permission to a boat of more than 430 asylum seekers who had been rescued by Tampa, a Norwegian freighter, off the coast of Christmas Island. Howard won the next election comfortably.

Now, following Labor’s win in parliament last week permitting mainland medical treatment of serious cases among existing asylum seekers in offshore detention – presented by its supporters as a minor, humanitarian change – Prime Minister Scott Morrison appears to be using the charged atmospherics of border security for his own “Tampa moment” in the upcoming election, expected in May.

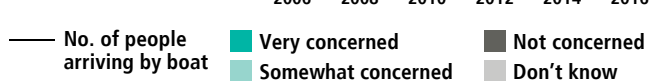
But what does the Australian public think?

When Lowy Institute polling has focused on the issue of asylum seekers and boat arrivals, the number of respondents who expressed the highest level of concern (“very concerned”) about “unauthorised asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat” remained surprisingly steady, even between 2010 and 2013 where there was a very significant increase in boat arrivals.

There is significant concern among Australians about the issue. But at least as far back as 2005 (which was the year the Lowy Institute commenced polling

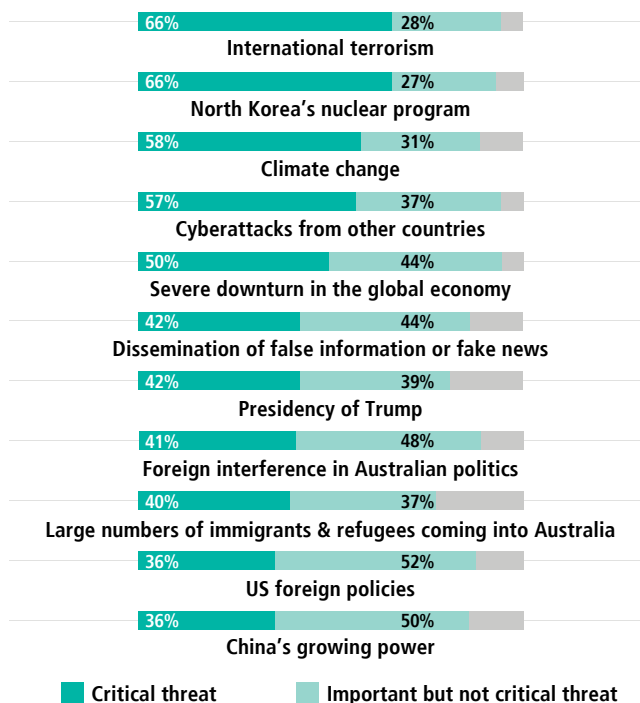
BOAT ARRIVALS AND CONCERN ABOUT THE ISSUE FROM LOWY POLL

Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned or not concerned about unauthorised asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat or do you have no view on this?



Source: Lowy Institute Poll; Parliamentary Library.

THREATS TO AUSTRALIA 2018



attitudes on foreign policy issues) it has not been seen as a critical threat by the majority of the adult population when they have been asked to give their opinions on a range of threats to Australia.

In 2018, “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into Australia” was seen as a critical threat by 40% of Australians, essentially unchanged from the last time the question was asked in 2009 when it was 39%.

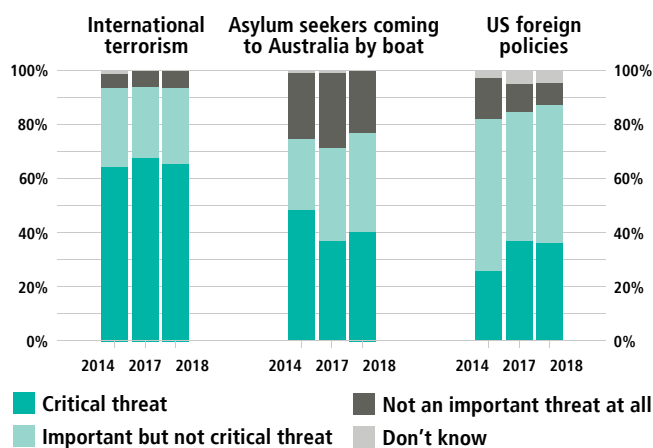
More tellingly, the issue is a low-order concern compared with most other potential threats on which the Lowy Institute has polled, including international terrorism, North Korea’s nuclear program, climate change, cyber-attacks, disruption in energy supply, food shortages and scarcity of water.

Among eleven possible threats, it ranked third last in 2018; fourth last of fourteen in 2009; third last of twelve in 2008; and third last of thirteen in 2006. Last year, 66% of Australians saw “international terrorism” as a critical threat; by comparison, 40% said the same about “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into Australia”.

A considerably larger proportion of the population (50%) thought a “severe downturn in the global economy” was a critical threat in 2018; 42% thought the same of “the presidency of Donald Trump”. In 2009, “Islamic fundamentalism” was rated a critical threat by 50% of respondents.

There is a clear demographic difference in responses

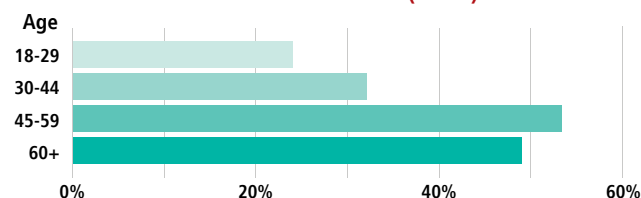
IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM SEEKER THREAT – CONTRAST WITH OTHER THREATS OVER TIME



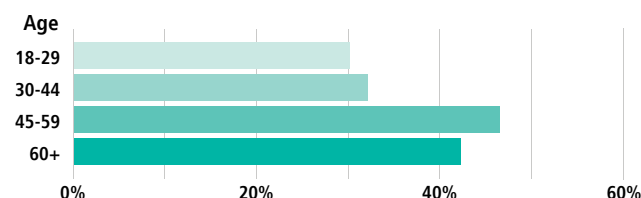
too: older people are much more likely to see large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into Australia as a critical threat than younger people (53% of people aged 45-59, compared with 24% of people aged 18-29). There is a similar age difference in the responses to “asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat” (53% of people aged 45-59, compared with 30% of people aged 18-29).

Older people are much more likely to see large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into Australia as a critical threat than younger people.

RESPONDENTS WHO SEE LARGE NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES COMING TO AUSTRALIA AS A CRITICAL THREAT (2018)



RESPONDENTS WHO SEE ASYLUM SEEKERS COMING TO AUSTRALIA BY BOAT AS A CRITICAL THREAT (2017)



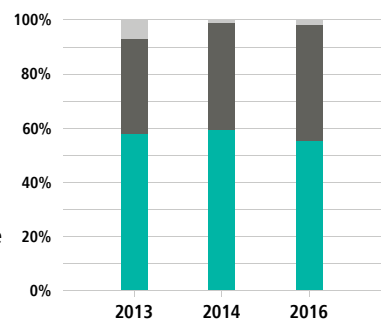
The Lowy Institute has conducted detailed polling on attitudes to offshore processing three times: in 2013, 2014, and again in 2016. The results indicate that there has been strong support for boat turn-backs and steady support for offshore processing.

Support for the harder-line proposition – that no asylum seeker coming to Australia by boat should ever be allowed to settle in Australia – has been a minority position, which weakened a little between 2014 (42% agree) and 2016 (38%) before firming again in 2017 (48%).

ATTITUDES TO OFFSHORE PROCESSING

2013: Are you personally in favour of or against the offshore processing of large numbers of unauthorised asylum seekers?

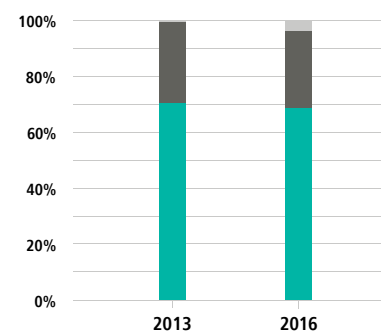
2014/2016: Please say whether you personally agree or disagree with the following policy ideas: ‘Asylum seekers should be processed offshore in places such as Nauru and Papua New Guinea, before deciding whether they should be settled in Australia’.



ATTITUDES TO TURNBACKS

The government should turn back boats when it is safe to do so

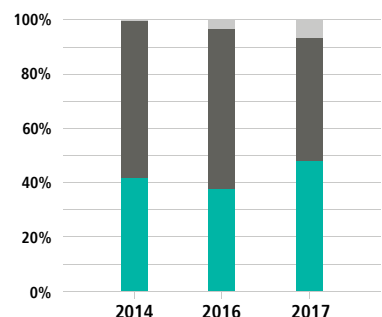
Agree
Disagree
Don't know



ATTITUDES TO BOAT ARRIVALS BEING PERMANENTLY BARRED FROM AUSTRALIA

2014/2016: Please say whether you personally agree or disagree with the following policy ideas: ‘No asylum seeker coming to Australia by boat should be allowed to settle in Australia’.

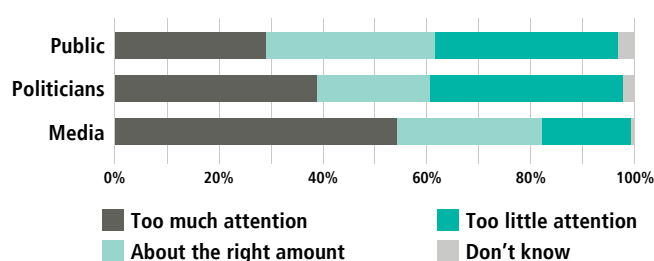
2017: Now about asylum seekers currently in Nauru and Manus Island detention centres. For those asylum seekers who have been determined to be refugees, please say which of the following statements mostly closely represents your own view:



2014/2016: Agree
2017: They should never be settled in Australia
2014/2016: Disagree
2017: They should be settled in Australia
All years: Don't know

ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE ASYLUM SEEKER ISSUE (2013)

Do you personally think too much, too little or about the right amount of attention is given to the asylum seeker issue by each of the following groups:



Incidentally, in 2013, at the peak of the boat arrivals, the Lowy Institute Poll asked people if they thought too much attention was paid to the issue by media, politicians, and the public. Most thought it was.

Munro, K, and Oliver, A (19 February 2019). *Polls apart: how Australian views have changed on “boat people”*. Retrieved from www.lowyinstitute.org on 15 January 2020.

Population growth, migration and refugees: a political headache that's split the nation

Since the post-World War II catchcry of “populate or perish”, domestic resistance to increased migration has been a thorn in the side of successive governments, according to this **ABC News** report by Stephanie Dalzell

In 1996, a then-unknown politician cashed in on that resistance, as she catapulted into Australian politics. Pauline Hanson used her maiden speech in Parliament to call for a reduction in the number of immigrants – particularly Asians, who she claimed were “swamping” the country. And two decades later, when she returned to politics after a long hiatus, a new maiden speech echoed the same views, with a different focus group: Muslims.

Those views secured the support of some Australians, and as Senator Hanson gained votes on the back of her immigration policy, the Government lost them.

In 2018, the Lowy Institute's annual polling on migration showed that for the very first time in almost 15 years, a majority – 54 per cent – of Australians preferred a lower annual immigration intake, expressing concern that the current level was too high.

Complicating the issue even further for the major parties is population growth. There are now 25 million people in Australia, with the population growing by about 400,000 a year for the past three years, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Concerns over transport infrastructure and property prices in Sydney and Melbourne have seen population growth become a political issue, leaving the Government desperately seeking a remedy for the political headache that has split the nation and its own party.

Like the general population, Government MPs have been divided on what the rate of migration should be. Some wanted the cap lowered, but others were concerned about the economic impact that would have.

Increased skills-based migration raises the workforce participation rate, which in turn boosts GDP growth, and the government's budget bottom line.

In March, the Prime Minister announced the Government's new national population plan, which will encourage skilled migrants to live and work in country towns in a desperate attempt to ease congestion in major cities. The plan cuts the permanent migration cap from 190,000 to 160,000 places per year. But when you consider the fact only 163,000 visas were granted last year, it's not much of a change.

Labor has a 'long-term' plan for migration

Labor is also yet to announce any specific decisions in regards to population growth, but was quick to describe the Government's policy as “smoke and mirrors”.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten also said it failed to address high numbers of temporary visas. At its national conference in December, the party stated it would adopt a “long-term” approach to setting the migration

rate, stating it would consider the positive and negative impacts on employment, the economy and demographic trends.

However, it said its skilled migration program would target job shortages that could not be filled locally, and encourage migrants to take up positions in rural and regional locations where gaps needed to be plugged.

In April, Mr Shorten also pledged changes to some foreign worker visas, promising a Labor government would lift the minimum pay rate for foreign workers on temporary skilled visas from \$53,900 to \$65,000 to prevent exploitation and lower the incentive for employers to hire foreign workers before Australians.

Australia's economy relies, among other things, on strong skills-based migration, international students and tourism. But the political focus is often distilled to local jobs, and whether migrants are properly “assimilating” with other Australians.

Both Labor and the Coalition have already struck a deal to pass legislation that would see migrants wait up to four years to access welfare payments such as Newstart or concession cards.

It was a controversial decision on Labor's part, with their political allies, the Greens, describing it as a “Trump-esque” move. However, Labor defended its support for the laws, saying it took the “rough edges” off the bill in order to stop it from falling into the hands of One Nation.

The final battle

With the Coalition's national population policy failing to address the high numbers of temporary visas or tourists who use public transport, the political challenge for whomever wins government will be to try to share the burden more equitably among the states and territories, to ensure it does not change the standard of living.

It is a complex issue, often told through populist politics. Australia's economy relies, among other things, on strong skills-based migration, international students and tourism. But the political focus is often distilled to local jobs, and whether migrants are properly “assimilating” with other Australians.

In the trade of election soundbites, that is likely to continue – and any complexities will be lost.

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Dalzell, S (27 April 2019). 'Population growth, migration and refugees: A political headache that's split the nation', *ABC News*. Retrieved from www.abc.net.au/news on 15 January 2020.

Political parties and their voters don't always see eye to eye on immigration

The voters of Australia don't always agree with the immigration policies of the party they support, the ABC's **Vote Compass** survey shows. By Catherine Hanrahan

Key points

- About one-third of Australian voters would like to see increased immigration.
- Coalition, Labor and Greens voters don't always fall into line with party policy.
- But One Nation voters overwhelmingly back Pauline Hanson's desire to cut immigration.

Overall, voters are approximately evenly split on the question of how many immigrants Australia should accept – about one-third say more, one-third say fewer and another third say the intake is about right where it is now.

And while the political parties are locked into their positions on whether asylum seeker boats should be turned back, voters remain divided on the issue.

One Nation in step with its voters on immigration cuts

More than 90 per cent of One Nation voters want to see immigration numbers cut, in line with the party's policy to bring the current annual intake of 160,000 migrants down to 20th-century levels of 70,000.

Greens voters are the most likely to support higher immigration, whereas the party says the current rate is appropriate.

Numerous Labor and Coalition voters also differ from parts of the party platforms on immigration.

Liz Allen, a demographer at the Australian National University, says the data cannot answer whether political parties are meeting the needs of voters and in touch with what Australians really want.

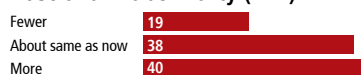
Left-leaning voters want more immigrants and right-leaning want fewer

Proportion of voter responses to the statement: 'How many immigrants should Australia admit?'

Australian Greens



Australian Labor Party (ALP)



Liberal-National Coalition



Pauline Hanson's One Nation



Based on 301,013 respondents to Vote Compass between April 10 and April 22, 2019.

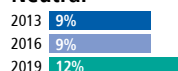
The electorate is still deeply divided on boat turnbacks

Proportion of voter responses to the statement: 'Boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'.

Disagree



Neutral



Agree



Data comes from Vote Compass results in the 2013, 2016 and 2019 election years; 2019 data based on 301,013 respondents to Vote Compass between April 10 and April 22.

"The question is whether or not parties are responding to what Australians want or whether they are telling Australians what they want. Is it voter response or voter framing?"

The immigration data also found:

- More women (39 per cent) than men (27 per cent) want to increase immigration.
- The highest levels of support for lifting immigration rates were in the inner-metropolitan areas of our capital cities.
- The proportion of voters who said they would like to see more immigrants reached approximately 50 per cent in the Labor-held Melbourne electorates of Cooper and Wills, and the Greens-held seat of Melbourne.
- At the other end of the scale, less than 25 per cent of voters in the Liberal National Party-held rural Queensland electorates of Hinkler, Flynn and Maranoa wanted to see immigrant numbers increase.

Turning back boats remains divisive

Australians' views on whether boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back have barely shifted since it was a top-order issue in the 2013 election.

Nearly equal numbers of voters support turnbacks (46 per cent) as oppose them (42 per cent) – an almost identical result to 2013, after a slight uptick in support for turnbacks in 2016.

La Trobe University associate professor Andrea Carson, a member of the Vote Compass advisory panel, says the data shows when it comes to asylum seekers, Australians are polarised and have largely made up their minds.

"What we don't know compared to 2013 is how

Labor voters not in favour of boat turnbacks, despite party policy

Proportion of voter responses to the statement: 'Boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'.

Australian Greens



Australian Labor Party (ALP)



Liberal-National Coalition



Pauline Hanson's One Nation



Based on 301,013 respondents to Vote Compass between April 10 and April 22, 2019.

salient the issue is," she said. "In 2013, it was used a lot in Liberal messaging, it was part of Tony Abbott's six points for the electorate."

She said immigration and asylum seekers were rated as important issues in 2013.

"We're not seeing that in this campaign, except with One Nation voters. When we asked the most important issue, it was One Nation voters who rated [immigration] as most important," she said.

"But as in 2013, this is an issue that creates pressure for Labor because they are evenly distributed across the responses."

The major parties are in lockstep on asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat – both the Coalition and Labor policy is for boats to be turned back to their destination when it is safe to do so.

Voters support immigrants' cultural values

Vote Compass found strong support for the view that all immigrants can retain their cultural values without being less Australian – a statement that gained the backing of 70 per cent of voters overall.

One Nation voters were the biggest exception, with about 70 per cent of them disagreeing. One Nation policy is to assess immigrants, including those coming to Australia under the humanitarian program, on whether they are likely to assimilate.

Dr Carson says the data shows most electorates in Australia are accepting of immigrants' cultural values.

"Where we see this emphasis change is in particular electorates, similar to the ones less supportive of migration," she said.

Indeed, the geographic distribution on this question mirrored that of support for a higher immigration intake overall:

- More than 80 per cent of voters in Labor-held Cooper and Wills, and Greens-held Melbourne agree that keeping cultural values does not make immigrants less Australian.

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On Nation voters think immigrants' cultural values and being more Australian don't mix

Proportion of voter responses to the statement: 'All immigrants can retain their cultural values without being any less Australian'.

Australian Greens



Australian Labor Party (ALP)



Liberal-National Coalition



Pauline Hanson's One Nation



Based on 301,013 respondents to Vote Compass between April 10 and April 22, 2019.

- The LNP-held Queensland seats of Hinkler, Maranoa and Flynn had the lowest support of all electorates, but even there more than 50 per cent agree immigrants who retain their cultural values are no less Australian.

About the data

Vote Compass responses have been weighted by gender, age, education and place of residence to match the Australian population, creating a nationally representative sample. The sample size for this report is 301,013 respondents.

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Hanrahan, C (24 April 2019). 'Political parties and their voters don't always see eye to eye on immigration, Vote Compass finds', ABC News. Retrieved from www.abc.net.au/news on 15 January 2020.



REASONS FOR AND AGAINST A GROWING POPULATION

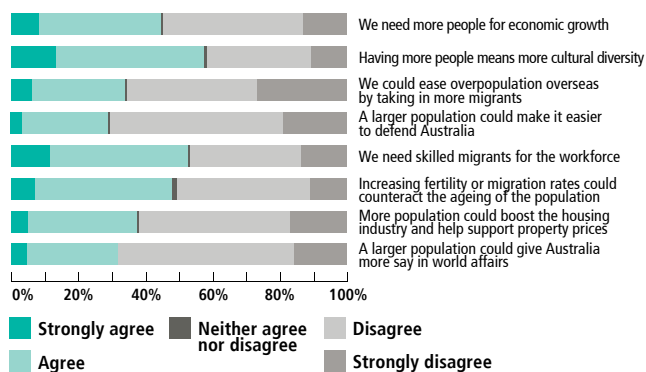
This extract from an **Australian National University** survey reveals just three out of ten people believe the country needs more people

Given the potential costs and benefits of a growing population, it is important to understand the aspects that shape people's views on potential reasons for supporting or not supporting population growth. Not only does it bring depth to our analysis of the question of population, it also makes it easier for policy makers to design a population policy that leverages the positives but avoids the negative of either a growing or stable population.

The first question on this topic we asked was 'Various reasons have been given for increasing Australia's population. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements ...'.¹ The two reasons with the greatest level of support or where more than half of the population are in support are cultural diversity (57.7 per cent agree or strongly agree) and a skilled workforce (52.7 per cent). The two reasons with the lowest level support or where less than one-third of the population agree are for defence (28.9 per cent) and a greater say in world affairs (31.8 per cent).

Figure 5. Reasons for increasing Australia's population

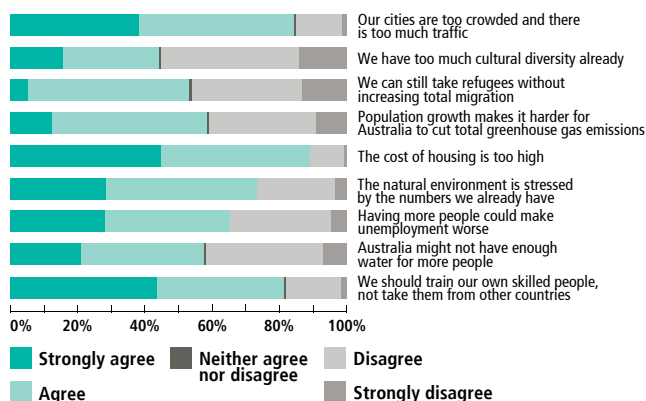
Source: ANUPoll on Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia, January 2019



The second question we asked was 'Various reasons have been given to not increase Australia's population.

Figure 6. Reasons for not increasing Australia's population

Source: ANUPoll on Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia, January 2019



Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements ...'

The three reasons against population growth that people are most likely to agree or strongly agree with relate to services and policy delivery. Nearly nine out of ten people (89.2 per cent) agree or strongly agree that the fact that 'the cost of housing is too high' is a reason for not increasing the population, alongside 84.6 per cent who agree or strongly agree that 'our cities are too crowded and there is too much traffic.' While it is unclear as to whether people are thinking about investment in Australia's workforce, or the negative effect on the skilled workforce of others (the so-called 'brain drain'), 81.5 per cent of people agreed or strongly agreed that 'we should train our own skilled people, not take them from other countries.'

Environmental issues were important reasons for a majority of people for not growing the population (although not as important as the infrastructure and other issues mentioned above). However, the lowest level of agreement was for the statement that 'We have too much cultural diversity already.' Less than half of the weighted sample agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (44.6 per cent), much less than the per cent mentioned earlier who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'having more people means more cultural diversity' being a reason for an increased population.

In 2010, when questions on population-related issues were last asked in an ANUPoll, the reasons for and against increasing Australia's population were

Figure 7. Reasons for increasing Australia's population, 2010 and 2018 for those who said Australia needs more people

Source: ANUPoll on Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia, January 2019

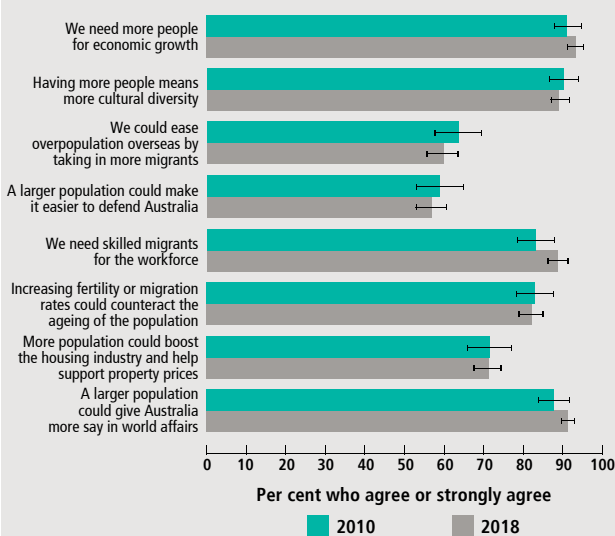
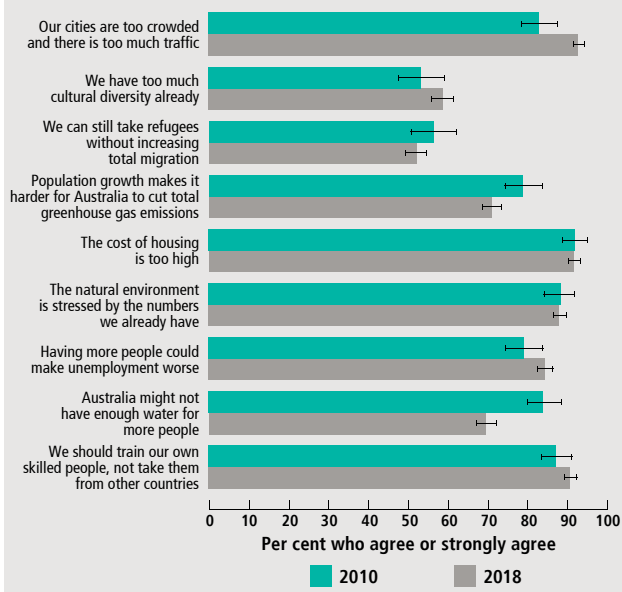


Figure 8. Reasons for not increasing Australia's population, 2010 and 2018 for those who said Australia does not need more people

Source: ANUPoll on Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia, January 2019



only asked of those who did/did not support a growing population (respectively). In the 2018 survey, on the other hand, we asked everyone about reasons for, and everyone about reasons against. It is possible, however, to subset the 2018 data in order to make the samples comparable. Results are summarised in Figures 7 and 8, focusing on those who agree or strongly agree with that particular reason.

Despite there being a decline in the per cent of people who said that Australia needs more people (between 2010 and 2018), there was very little difference in the reasons for saying so over the period. There was a small increase in the percentage of people who said 'We need skilled migrations for the work force', but this was only statistically significant at the 10 per cent level of significance. All other differences aren't close to being significant.

There was a much greater change in the reasons for not supporting an increase in Australia's population (amongst those who said that Australia does not need more people). There was a very large increase in people saying that 'Our cities are too crowded and there is too much traffic', and a smaller increase in those saying that 'Having more people could make unemployment worse.' On the flipside, there was a large decrease in those who cite environmental reasons, particularly amongst those who say 'Population growth makes it harder for Australia to cut total greenhouse gas emissions' and 'Australia might not have enough water for more people.'

POLICY RESPONSES TO MANAGE POPULATION GROWTH AND MIGRATION

The responses summarised in Figures 6 and 7 point to the policy balance that needs to be made for Australians to be supportive of population growth. For some of the positive reasons covered in Figure 6 to be worthwhile

(diversity, a skilled workforce, and mitigation of an aging population), Australians need to be convinced that traffic and house prices won't increase unduly, that there will be limited effects on the environment, and that Australia's existing workforce will still receive adequate training.

There is considerable policy debate as to how to achieve this balance, with Australia's points-based migration policy and heavy use of temporary visas the existing response (Miller 1999, Gregory 2015). Another policy option that has received more recent (and historically intermittent) discussion is increasing the geographic spread of recent migrants. Although not exclusively the case, the vast majority of migrants to Australia (and hence the fastest growing areas) tend to be in our large capital cities, with particular stress believed to be occurring in Sydney and Melbourne. There are other cities that have experienced less growth than the heads of the State/Territory or Local Governments might like. While the specifics are very different to Australia and have varied through time, particular provinces within Canada have run an independent migration policy to attract (or dissuade) international migrants.

As there is no specific policy proposal on how this might occur in Australia, it is hard to gauge levels of support for such an approach. However, we asked half of the ANUPoll the following question: 'Governments in Australia are considering requiring some new migrants in Australia to live in regional towns or cities for a period of time. Do you agree or disagree with this policy?' In total, 70.0 per cent of respondents who were asked this question either agreed or strongly agreed.

Agreement was highest amongst males compared to females (73.9 per cent compared to 66.8 per cent); much lower for those aged 18 to 24 years (60.8 per cent) compared to the rest of the age distribution; and lower for those who had not completed Year 12 (65.4 per cent) compared to those who had (72.5 per cent).



Geographically, those in relatively disadvantaged parts of the country (based on the Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) created by the ABS) have the lowest level of support for the policy proposal. Interestingly, those who live outside of the capital cities, who would be the recipients of an increase in migrants under such a policy approach, were less supportive than those who lived in one of Australia's capital cities (66.1 per cent compared to 71.9 per cent).

There were significant differences in support for such a policy response based on a person's voting intentions. However, these differences aren't necessarily as one would expect. The greatest level of support (80.4 per cent) was amongst those who did not know who they would vote for if an election were held at the time of interview. As this is a reasonable small part of the sample though, the standard errors are reasonably high and there is considerable uncertainty around this estimate. There were, however, statistically significant differences between Coalition and Greens voters on the one hand (75.9 per cent and 74.2 per cent respectively) and Labor and Other voters on the other hand (64.7 per cent and 62.9 per cent respectively). Support for such a policy proposal does not appear to fit a neat left/right distinction.

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this question is that support for the policy proposal for new migrants being required to live in regional towns or cities is significantly and substantially higher for those who support a growing population (82.5 per cent) compared to those who do not (64.0 per cent). While we didn't test this explicitly, it may be the case that such policies consolidate support for a growing population.

In order to gauge experimentally the reasons behind people's support or lack thereof, we gave the other half of the sample the same question, with two separate prefaces. For one-quarter of the sample, the preface was 'The population has grown very rapidly in some of Australia's large capital cities'. For Treatment Group 1, 73.5 per cent said that they agreed or strongly agreed. While this difference is reasonably large, it is not quite statistically significant (p-value of 0.142).

For the second treatment, the preface was 'The population has grown very rapidly in some of Australia's large capital cities. Many people feel that this has increased house prices and put pressure on infrastructure'. For the group that received this preface, 76.0 per cent of people said they agreed or strongly agreed that migrants should live in regional towns or cities for a period of time. This difference is not only larger, but also statistically significant (p-value of 0.011).

Many of the criticisms of such a policy approach are that it is either unworkable or that it will be ineffective. While such a policy would need to be carefully thought through and evaluated for its positive and negative effects, results from the ANUPoll show that such a policy has general support, and particular support amongst those who support a growing population or those who are reminded of the potential effect of migration on house prices and infrastructure.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It is worth reflecting on the support for population growth and the reasons for and against increasing Australia's population in light of Australia's history of population policy. At the time of Federation in 1901, Australia had a specific policy aim to reduce the level of ethnic diversity with Attorney General Alfred Deakin stating² in 1901, 'That end, put in plain and unequivocal terms ... means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more, it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst. The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy – the policy of securing a 'white Australia'.

During and immediately after World War II, there was a real fear that Australia had too small a population for its land mass and was vulnerable during the next Pacific conflict. Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell wrote³ in 1945 that, 'If the experience of the Pacific War has taught us one thing, it surely is that seven million Australians cannot hold three million square miles of this earth's surface indefinitely' and that 'Population is our number one problem [and if] we are determined to develop our country, maintain and increase its living standards, and avoid depressions, those of us who will be alive when the next storm breaks over the Pacific Ocean may have less reason to be as apprehensive than we were about our lives and our liberties when the Japanese stood on the wrong side of the Owen Stanley Range less than 40 miles from Port Moresby – and when bombs were falling on Broome and Townsville, and Darwin was being reduced to rubble.'

21st Century Australians and those that represent them in Parliament still clearly see population as an important issue. However, the issues that are feeding into that debate seem to have changed quite substantially. Most people are now more supportive of, rather than worried by cultural diversity. Geopolitics, defence and population pressures overseas are now less likely to factor into someone's decision than they might have in the past. Australians are now more likely to support population growth if it increases our skills base, mitigates the ageing of the population and increases our economic growth and diversity. However, they do not want that population growth to cause crowding or affordability issues, or come at the expense of training our own workforce or the natural environment.

ENDNOTES

1. Bolding was in the original question. Unlike in previous surveys, we asked questions on reasons for and against population growth for all respondents, regardless of their previously stated support.
2. www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/white-australia-policy
3. www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/calwell_2.pdf

Biddle, N (28 January 2019). *Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia: Australia's views on population*, pp. 9-14. Canberra: Australian Data Archive, The Australian National University, 2019. Retrieved from <http://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au> on 15 January 2020.

New research: rich and poor Australians united on pausing immigration

The majority of both rich and poor Australians support cutting the immigration intake to relieve population pressures on infrastructure, requiring migrants to learn English and Australian values to promote integration, and maintaining strong border protection policies, according to research from the **Centre for Independent Studies**

The research, *Australian Attitudes to Immigration: Coming Apart or Common Ground?* is based on polling by YouGov Galaxy that surveyed the opinions on immigration-related topics of 500 Australians who live in the top 10% of metropolitan postcodes by income and education, and 500 who live in the bottom 10%.

Research authors Dr Jeremy Sammut and Monica Wilkie say the polling shows that attitudes to key immigration questions in both the most affluent and least affluent suburbs are not starkly polarised and are far more similar than they are different.

“In both rich and poor postcodes, strong majorities – 65% of residents in the top postcodes and the 77% in the bottom postcodes – support cutting or pausing immigration until struggling transport, schools, and housing infrastructure catches up with demand,” Dr Sammut says.

“The consensus is even stronger regarding integration, with 75% in the top postcodes and 82% in the bottom postcodes believing the government should require migrants to attend a course about Australian values before granting them permanent residence.

“And 80% in the top suburbs and 86% in the bottom ones also agreed that migrants should have to learn English.”

The researchers said that majorities across the polling (67% in the least affluent suburbs and 58% in the most affluent ones) also agreed ‘regardless of whether the Coalition or Labor wins the next federal election, the border protection policies introduced by the federal government in 2014 should remain in place.’

“Conflict between elites and ordinary voters over immigration – combined with loss of control of borders – has led to populist insurgencies against the political establishment in many European countries, and to the ‘Leave’ Brexit victory in the UK and Trump’s election victory in the US,” Ms Wilkie says.

“What our polling indicates is that Australia faces an old-fashioned political problem over immigration: politicians being ‘out of touch’ on the intake and integration issues that are of common concern to the majority of metropolitan voters.

“Infrastructure-linked intake cuts, actively promoting integration, and strong border protection measures are not ‘fringe’ (or worse) views – they are mainstream public opinion.



“In both rich and poor postcodes, strong majorities ... support cutting or pausing immigration until struggling transport, schools, and housing infrastructure catches up with demand.”

“To ensure our immigration program retains public support, governments must respond to public concerns about urban congestion and social cohesion.”

Jeremy Sammut is the Director of the Culture, Prosperity and Civil Society Program. **Monica Wilkie** is a Policy Analyst at The Centre for Independent Studies.

Their report, *Australian Attitudes to Immigration: Coming Apart or Common Ground?* was released on 19 November 2019.

Sammut, J, and Wilkie, M (18 November 2018). *New CIS research: Rich and poor Australians united on pausing immigration*. Retrieved from www.cis.org.au on 15 January 2020.

IMMIGRATION, POPULATION GROWTH AND VOTERS: WHO CARES AND WHY?

This executive summary from an **Australian Population Research Institute** research report was authored by Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell

Previous research has shown a wide split between elite and non-elite opinion on topics such as cultural diversity, globalisation and immigration. Media professionals and most politicians share these elite views, but large swathes of the electorate do not.

The current findings of the survey conducted late in 2018 by The Australian Population Research Institute (TAPRI) on attitudes to immigration and population growth confirm this. They show that the split between elite and non-elite opinion is mirrored in the divisions between voters who are university graduates and voters who are not. This is logical as most elites are now recruited from the graduate class.

The gap is wide. Overall 50% of voters want a reduction in immigration. But this proportion rises to 60% of non-graduates while only 33% of graduates agree.

Overall 72% of voters say Australia does not need more people, a proportion that rises to 80% of non-graduates and falls to only 59% of graduates.

But these findings nonetheless present a puzzle. Given elite domination of cultural and political institutions, why haven't the non-graduate majority fallen into line on population growth and immigration?

To answer this question we need to look more deeply into the second major finding of the TAPRI survey: the central relationship between attitudes to the cultural consequences of high immigration and a desire for the rate of growth to be slowed right down.

We now know that most Australian voters are unhappy with the heavy growth that immigration policies impose upon them. Survey data and numerous complaints about congestion and unaffordable hous-

ing attest to this. The TAPRI survey asks whether there is anything more to their disquiet than practical and economic problems.

In 2016 commentators were taken aback by two unexpected and, seemingly, unrelated events: the Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the US. Analysts scrambled for explanations and initially settled on the idea of voters who had been 'left behind', people economically pinched by the evaporation of manufacturing jobs in the heat of globalisation. These 'left behinds' had sought relief from their common misfortune by choosing the populist side in each of these two elections.

From this perspective the two events were related after all: economic pressures could explain them both.

But now there has been time for more research and opinions have become more nuanced. A number of analysts have found that it is not always the most destitute who have swung to the populist side. On the contrary, in both countries they are often people of middling means who are not as distressed by low wages and job losses as much as they are by the high immigration of ethnically diverse people and the cultural changes that they bring with them.

The divide is not so much between the well-to-do and the poor and unemployed. Rather it is between the graduate class, immersed in a cosmopolitan world view, and non-graduates attached to the ethos of their national home. Immigrants can share this attachment. Indeed it may have been the pull of the national culture which encouraged them to migrate in the first place. Because of this some of the new populists may be immigrants themselves.

Eric Kaufmann uses the analogy of Londoners moving to Cornwall because they are attracted by the local culture. They are less than pleased if their fellow Londoners stream in after them and turn Cornwall into just another London suburb.

These more recent analysts also note that social taboos can stifle open expressions of scepticism about high immigration; the risk that honest expressions of concern about population pressures will be read as racism can inhibit open discussion. These constraints on public debate may mislead growth enthusiasts into believing that voters are more acquiescent than they actually are. Such constraints can also mean that people at all levels of society are less well informed about demography than might otherwise be the case.

Could a similar dynamic be influencing the attitudes of Australian voters, both native-born and possibly immigrant as well?



The TAPRI survey finds that this is possible. After all, in the safety of an anonymous online survey, 50% per cent of voters say they want immigration to be reduced and 72% say that Australia does not need more people.

Voters see property developers, big business, and new migrants as the main beneficiaries of immigration, not themselves or even the economy as a whole. They are also keenly aware of population pressures on vital institutions such as hospitals, transport and schools.

But consistent with the imposition of speech taboos, they are not well informed about the nature of the demographic challenge. The survey's questions about demographic knowledge show that, while voters who know the most are the most sceptical about growth, the more ignorant are both more compliant and more numerous.

But the strongest division that the survey uncovered was between graduates and non-graduates. As we have seen only 33% of graduates want a reduction in immigration compared to 60% of non-graduates.

Just as Kaufmann found that many immigrants are sceptical about the benefits of further large-scale immigration, TAPRI found that some groups of migrants, those born in English-speaking background (ESB) countries and in Europe, tend to be even more sceptical about immigration than are the Australian-born. Fifty per cent of the Australian-born wanted immigration to be reduced compared to 58% of the ESB-born and 56% of those born in Europe. In contrast only 33% of voters born in Asia wanted a reduction.

The survey asked a number of questions designed to measure attitudes to cultural change, including attitudes to asylum seekers arriving by boat. This is a question at the heart of the rift between graduates and non-graduates. Should national sovereignty as manifested in strict border controls supersede compassion for outsiders? We found that 60% of voters supported turning back the boats, a proportion rising to 66% among non-graduates and falling to 50% among graduates. Sixty-seven per cent of the voters who supported turning back the boats wanted immigration to be reduced compared to only 17% of those who were opposed to turn-backs.

The survey also found that 47% of voters supported 'a partial ban on Muslim immigration', a proportion that rose to 53% among non-graduates and fell to 39% among graduates. The voters supporting and strongly supporting this policy were the most likely to want all immigration to be reduced (70%).

A further question read: 'Some people say that today Australia is danger of losing its culture and identity. Do you agree or disagree?' Fifty-six per cent per cent agreed and, of this group, 68% wanted a reduction in immigration. Among non-graduates this proportion rose to 76%.

There was also widespread support for economic protection: 63% of all respondents said that 'we should protect Australia's manufacturing, using tariffs if necessary'. Among non-graduates the proportion was



There is a wide split between elite and non-elite opinion on topics such as cultural diversity, globalisation and immigration. Media professionals and most politicians share these elite views, but large swathes of the electorate do not.

66% and among graduates it was 59%. (Only 16% of all respondents said 'we should get rid of all tariffs so that we can buy goods more cheaply from overseas').

Fifty-eight per cent of all those who supported protection also wanted lower immigration, as did 69% of non-graduates. However only 38% of graduates shared this view. Support for economic protection was also strongly associated with support for other forms of cultural protection.

In contrast, individual experiences of unemployment, job insecurity and financial hardship showed only a modest association with support for reducing immigration. Among the small proportion experiencing economic hardship so extreme that they would find it 'nearly impossible' to find \$400 in an emergency, 61% wanted immigration to be reduced. Among non-graduates this rose to 68% but was exceeded by the many who wanted national economic protection – 69% of non-graduates who favour protection also want a reduction in immigration.

(It cannot be the case that enthusiasm for protection is caused by widespread experience of economic stress. Sixty-three per cent of respondents say they want economic protection while only 10% say that it would be 'nearly impossible to find \$400 in an emergency'.)

The survey also found a high level of agreement (67%) with the statement 'that people who raise questions about immigration being too high are sometimes thought of as racist'. Overall 24% of the sample thought that this assumption was justified because such people 'usually are racist' while 43% thought it 'unfair because very few of them are racist'.

The former were termed ‘guardians against racism’ and the latter the ‘threatened’. Guardians were more numerous among university graduates (33%) and the threatened more numerous among non-graduates (47%). Guardians are much more likely to want an increase in immigration (48%, as compared to 25% in the sample as a whole) while the threatened are much more likely to want a reduction (66%). Guardians are also disproportionately likely to vote for the Greens and, to a lesser extent, for Labor. The threatened prefer the Coalition, One Nation, or ‘other’ parties.

In sum, the TAPRI survey found that concern about cultural change, including border control, has a stronger association with the desire to reduce immigration than do economic variables. (Support for economic protection and lower immigration sits between these two different sets of variables.)

Most graduates endorse high, or higher, immigration as well as other elements of the cosmopolitan agenda. Yet despite their dominance of Australia’s cultural institutions, most non-graduates are unconvinced.

The TAPRI data support the new hypothesis developed by Kaufmann and others that many voters, especially non-graduates, are quiet non-conformists to the cosmopolitans’ high immigration agenda. The data also show that these non-conformists are motivated more by dissatisfaction with cultural change than they are by economic hardship.

But to date non-graduate dissension from this agenda has not resulted in political populism. Opposition to further high immigration is strong in Australia but this does not mean that it is the most salient problem for most voters. Unlike citizens of the UK and the US, they have not experienced serious economic contraction and, unlike the Europeans, they have not had to deal with a significant influx of asylum seekers and other undocumented immigrants.

Furthermore there are no major media outlets supporting their views. Australia does not have a local version of America’s Fox News nor of Britain’s *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*.

These differences mean that, provided conditions remain fairly stable, political and media elites, with their cosmopolitan supporters among the graduate class, can continue to feel relaxed. Their political experiment with high immigration, ever growing diversity, and globalisation will continue to be free of serious political challenge.

Political implications

This assumption pervades the run up to the 2019 federal election. The dominant view within the media is that the Coalition faces serious threats of losing centre-left voters in blue ribbon Coalition seats. This is because such voters appear to be attracted by relatively strong Labor/Green policies supporting the progressive agenda.

This is a realistic possibility. The TAPRI survey shows that a minority of Coalition voters do hold such views.

For example 26% of Coalition voters want immigration to be further increased and 21% want it to ‘remain about the same as it is’, 8% of Coalition voters do not support turning back the boats, 20% of Coalition voters disagree with the statement that Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity, 14% oppose the idea of a partial ban on Muslim immigration, 16% think we should abolish all tariffs, and 31% say Australia needs more people.

However there has been a notable absence of commentary on the majority of Australian voters who do not share these progressive views.

If there were to be an effort to mobilize this majority around their cultural priorities, as has been the case in recent elections in Europe and the US, it is likely that it would shape the votes of many.

The potential for voter response is much larger than is likely to be the case in blue-ribbon seats and would impinge on many more seats. Since Labor has stamped itself as the centre/left champion it is Labor that would be most at risk. For example 44% of Labor voters want immigration to be reduced, 49% support boat turn-backs, 47% agree that Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity, 38% support a partial ban on Muslim immigration, 61% support economic protection, and 69% say Australia does not need more people.

A similar response is likely should the political contest in Australia be framed between parties in favour of high migration and parties opposed to this stance. As we have seen the TAPRI survey shows that 69% of Labor voters are in favour of lower population growth and 44% want lower migration.

Not only that. The survey also shows that most of those favouring lower migration also oppose the elite progressive agenda. We argue that this is because most of these anti-immigration voters think that high immigration is a threat to their sense of identity and their nation’s sovereignty.

It is true that any attempt to mobilize this voting block would prompt a ‘guardian’ response asserting that such advocacy was shameful and illegitimate. The experience in Europe and the US suggests that this tactic may have only a limited effect (as with the Brexit campaign). This is especially likely if those involved in the mobilisation include credible, mainstream political figures (like the Tory party grandees, Boris Johnson and Michael Gove, who led the leave campaign).

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AUSTRALIAN VALUES SURVEY – THOUGHTS ON IMMIGRATION

Findings from the latest Australian Values Study by Dr Jill Sheppard, Professor Ian McAllister and Emeritus Professor Toni Makkai from the Australian National University's **Social Research Centre**

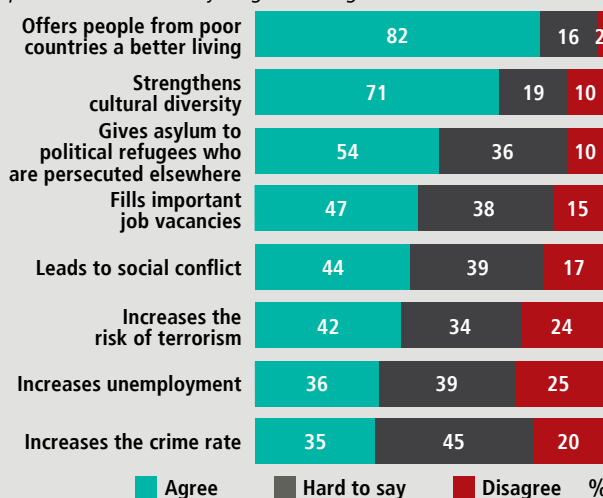
In accordance with other major surveys of Australian public opinion, the *World Values Survey* finds mixed views with regard to immigrants and immigration policy. Broadly, we agree that immigration improves the lives of immigrants and makes Australia more culturally diverse. We tend not to believe that immigration increases the rate of crime nor the risk of terrorism. Fewer than half of Australians surveyed believe that immigration leads to social conflict. On employment benefits, Australians seem unsure. Almost half believe immigration helps to fill important job vacancies, but one third believe it increases unemployment.

Australians also report mixed but largely centrist views on appropriate limits to immigration. More than 90 per cent of respondents selected either of the two most moderate options provided: 45 per cent believe that the Government should continue to allow immigrants to come to Australia so long as there are jobs available, while 46 per cent believe the Government should place 'strict limits' on who moves to Australia. Just over one in 20 – seven per cent – believe Australia should take any immigrant who wants to move to the country, and only two per cent believe we should prohibit all migration into Australia.

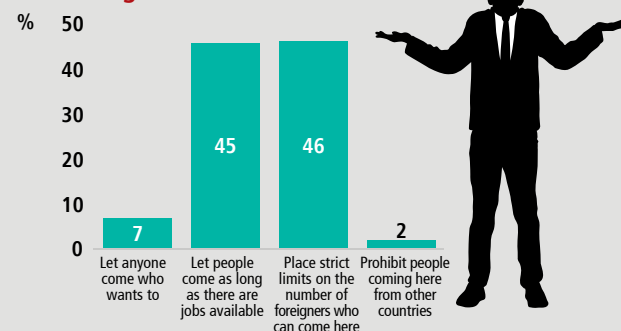
Sheppard, J, McAllister, I, and Makkai, T. *Australian Values Study – 2018*, pp. 18-19. Retrieved from www.srcentre.com.au on 15 January 2020.

From your point of view what have been the effects of immigration on the development of Australia?

For each of the following statements about the effects of immigration, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with it



Which one of the following do you think the government should do?



Australians think immigration should be cut? Well, it depends on how you ask

*While concerns about the level of immigration have increased, there is continued endorsement of the view that Australia is an immigrant nation, that immigration benefits the country and that it will continue to play an important role in the years ahead, finds **Andrew Markus***

Over the past 12 months, immigration policy has been increasingly contested in Australian politics and the media. Former prime minister Tony Abbott has been prominent with his advocacy of a reduction in the permanent intake from 190,000 to 110,000 a year. In October, New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian called for the state's net immigration levels to be halved.

In November, Prime Minister Scott Morrison, in the context of his endorsement of immigration, envisaged a carefully managed cut to the permanent intake, in consultation with the states. He heard "loud and clear" that "Australians in our biggest cities are concerned about population".

They are saying: enough, enough, enough. The roads are clogged, the buses and trains are full. The schools are taking no more enrolments.

While there was inconsistency in the proportions obtained, a number of opinion polls in 2018 reported majority opinion, in the range 54%-72%, favouring a

cut in immigration. These findings were reported without scrutiny, under headlines such as "Voters back migration cut".

But three surveys have obtained different results, highlighting the potential impact on estimates of public opinion of question wording, question context and survey methodology.

In October 2018, the Fairfax-Ipsos poll found that a minority, 45%, favoured reduction while a majority (52%) agreed that the intake should remain at the current level or be increased. In surveys in July-August, the Scanlon Foundation obtained an almost identical result.

One of the Scanlon Foundation surveys was interviewer-administered with a sample of 1,500. A second, with a sample of 2,260, utilised the Life in Australia panel, which provides for almost 90% of the surveys to be self-completed online. The surveys, which used an identical questionnaire, comprised 77 questions, including a broad range of questions on immigration, enabling a balanced understanding of public opinion.





This contrasts with surveys commissioned for the media, which typically include only a small number of questions on immigration.

Results in the interviewer-administered survey found 43% of respondents believed the intake was “too high”, while the Life in Australia panel finding was 44%.

In addition to testing views on the level of immigration, it is important to establish how important people perceive immigration to be. If it is the case that there is widely held public concern that is being ignored then this would be indicated when survey respondents are presented with an invitation to rank issues of concern.

They are saying: enough, enough, enough. The roads are clogged, the buses and trains are full. The schools are taking no more enrolments.

Since 2013, the Scanlon Foundation survey has asked respondents, in an open-ended question, to specify “the most important problem facing Australia today”. In 2018, just 7% of respondents indicate that immigration is the most important issue. While this proportion has increased since 2015, the increase has been of only four percentage points.

The issues that evoke the highest negative response are those related to the perceived impact of immigration on overcrowded cities, as the prime minister indicated. But respondents were also worried about government failure to manage population growth. For example, 54% indicate concern at the “impact of immigration on overcrowding of Australian cities”, 49% at the “impact of immigration on house prices”, and 48% at inadequate “government management of population growth”.

At the same time, a large majority affirmed the value of immigration: 82% agreed with the proposition that “immigrants improve Australian society by bringing new ideas and cultures”, while 80% agreed that “immigrants are generally good for Australia’s economy”.

Furthermore, 85% agreed that “multiculturalism has been good for Australia”, a finding consistent with the Scanlon Foundation surveys since 2013. And 81% disagree with an immigration policy that discriminates on the basis of race or ethnicity, while 78% disagree with discrimination based on religion.

When looking at the views of young adults with university-level education, the report found a relatively high level of concern about house prices (52%) and the impact of immigration on the environment (44%). But a notable distinguishing feature of these young adults was the very low level of agreement that immigrants increase crime rates (7%), that the immigration intake is too high (7%) and that immigrants are not good for the economy (1%).

There is also evidence that, despite the changing tenor of political discussion of immigration, there has been little change in underlying attitudes. Evidence is available in the Scanlon Foundation surveys and also the ANU Poll, the Lowy Institute Poll and the Essential Report from April 2018.

While concerns about the level of immigration have increased, there is continued endorsement of the view that Australia is an immigrant nation, that immigration benefits the country and that it will continue to play an important role in the years ahead.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Andrew Markus has received grants to research Australian public opinion from the Scanlon Foundation, the Australian Research Council and the Australian government.

Andrew Markus is Pratt Foundation Research Chair of Jewish Civilisation, Monash University.

THE CONVERSATION

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CHAPTER 3

Australia's immigration debate

IS AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION GROWTH MOSTLY THE RESULT OF MIGRATION, AND IS THAT UNDERPINNING THE BUDGET?

RMIT ABC FACT CHECK FINDS THIS CLAIM IS CLOSE TO THE MARK

THE CLAIM

Following the release of official population figures, Senator for Queensland Pauline Hanson labelled the Morrison Government's immigration-cutting agenda a "marketing ploy". Senator Hanson said in a tweet: "The Australian population grew by 400,000 people last year. The majority of this came from overseas migration." She went on to say: "[The Government's] budget is built off mass migration."

Is Australia's population growth mostly the result of migration, and is that underpinning the federal budget? *RMIT ABC Fact Check* investigates.

THE VERDICT

Senator Hanson's claim is close to the mark. Official figures put Australia's population at the end of 2018 at more than 25 million people. This was an increase, as Senator Hanson points out, of more than 400,000 year on year, with net overseas migration (NOM) accounting for 61.4 per cent of the growth, as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The Government, which has announced a plan to "freeze immigration" for this term and promote regional migration to allow infrastructure to keep up, has not disputed the figures nor the contribution of overseas migration to the economy.

While the extent of migration's impact on the federal budget is difficult to quantify, its contribution is acknowledged in the budget papers as having a key influence on the government's economic projections.

Liberal Party policy documents make clear, the "freeze" refers to permanent migration. In fact, net overseas migration (which includes temporary and permanent migration) is predicted in the budget to remain high. And Prime Minister Scott Morrison had previously warned against cutting the permanent migration intake to Australia.

In February 2018, as treasurer, he had suggested a proposal by former prime minister Tony Abbott to cut the annual intake by 80,000 would cost the budget \$4 billion to \$5 billion over four years.

An expert told *Fact Check* that governments often wanted to appear tough on migration, while not really wanting to control it because it brought economic benefits. They also said that estimates in the last budget factored in relatively high migration numbers.

While Australia had one of the highest population growth rates in the OECD, experts said this in itself wasn't necessarily a bad thing. High population growth was often driven by high labour demand, especially in industries requiring seasonal or temporary labour.

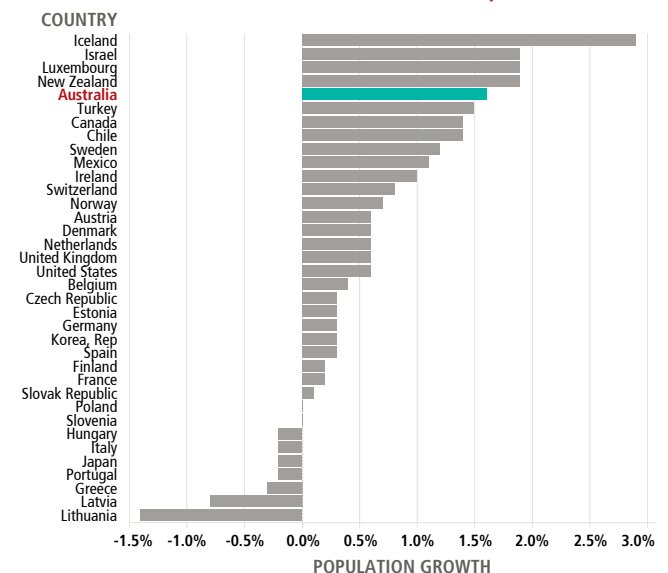
AUSTRALIA'S GROWING POPULATION

Senator Hanson included in her tweet a link to demographic data recently published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The data refers to the estimated resident population (ERP), which takes into account the "natural increase component" (that is, the number of births minus the number of deaths), as well as net overseas migration (NOM).

Accordingly, Australia's population at December 31, 2018 was 25,180,200. This represented an increase of 404,800 people (or 1.6 per cent) over 2017.

Anna Boucher, a global migration expert at the

POPULATION GROWTH BY OECD COUNTRY, 2018



University of Sydney, said that compared to other OECD countries, Australia's population growth was "on the high end" of the scale.

"A lot of OECD countries have declining populations, mainly because of population ageing," she said.

"We have more healthy fertility rates and we have higher – much higher – migration."

Val Colic-Peisker, an associate professor of sociology at RMIT, agreed that 1.6 per cent represented a substantial increase – compared to the average annual growth rates of both this and the previous decade. The average this decade has been about 1.5 per cent a year and, for the century's first decade, about 1.3 per cent (excluding spikes of 1.8 per cent in both 2008 and 2009 as Australia maintained a strong immigration program throughout the Global Financial Crisis).

According to World Bank data, Australia ranks fifth among OECD members for population growth. Iceland ranked first with growth of 2.9 per cent in 2018, followed by Israel, New Zealand and Luxembourg, which all recorded population increases of 1.9 per cent.

Peter McDonald, a professor of demography at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, told *Fact Check* that although 1.6 per cent growth was high "by OECD standards", it wasn't unexpected given Australia's strong demand for labour.

"The other OECD countries with high growth rates also have strong labour demand that cannot be met from domestic sources. In recent times, about 75 per cent of employment growth in Australia can be attributed to recent immigrants."

A 2017 research paper by Professor McDonald published in the *Australian Population Studies Journal* examined the impact of immigration on Australia's employment growth after the Global Financial Crisis (July 2011 to July 2016). It found that in the five-year period, employment in Australia increased by 738,800, with immigrants accounting for 613,400 of these jobs.

"Research indicates that immigration provides major benefits to the Australian economy," his report concluded.

"However, as strong labour demand is likely to sustain migration at relatively high levels in coming years, it is incumbent upon governments to plan for the effects of rapid population growth on infrastructure and resources."

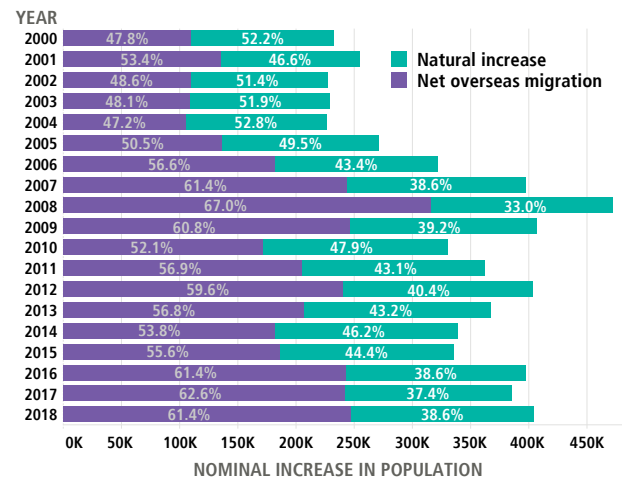
NET OVERSEAS MIGRATION

Net overseas migration, often referred to as NOM, refers to the net gain or loss of population through immigration. It is calculated by comparing the number of migrant arrivals and departures.

ABS data for NOM is collected and presented as quarterly estimates, as well as in calendar and financial-year summaries.

A person residing in Australia can be included in the NOM figure and, therefore, population data, once they have lived here for 12 months or longer (within a 16-month period).

AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROWTH BY TYPE



The inclusion ignores immigration status, so both temporary and permanent visa holders are counted, including many visa holders who do not intend remaining in the country long-term; for example, backpackers and students.

For the year ending 2018, Australia's NOM was estimated at 248,400 people – a 2.8 per cent increase over the previous year (241,700). This accounted for 61.4 per cent of Australia's overall population increase, according to the ABS.

Associate Professor Boucher said this was unsurprising: "The majority of population growth does come from migration because [Australians] are living longer and they are not having that many babies."

Dr Colic-Peisker told *Fact Check*: "NOM represents

Immigration has been driven in recent times by a strong demand for labour that cannot be met from domestic sources ... Consequently, restricting migration could be detrimental to some industries such as farming, horticulture and hospitality, which depend on these temporary visa holders.





A lot of the growth in NOM could be attributed to the high number of international students coming to Australia for extended periods and the number of people holding bridging visas.

a growing proportion of the Australian population increase, as the natural increase stagnates and NOM creeps up.”

“In the 2000s, NOM attributed just under 51 per cent to the population growth.”

DOES THE GOVERNMENT CLAIM TO BE CUTTING MIGRATION?

The Liberal Party’s policy platform ahead of the May federal election committed the Morrison Government to “freeze immigration levels” over the current term of government, and to incentives to encourage more migrants to regional Australia.

“It’s all part of planning for more evenly distributed population growth,” the party announced.

“Population growth is an important economic driver and contributes to our dynamic and diverse society,” it said.

In its most recent budget, the Federal Government capped at 160,000 the annual number of permanent visas to be granted to temporary migrants already living in the country.

Professor McDonald pointed out that this figure does not include people granted permanent residence through Australia’s refugee and humanitarian program, which is currently around 20,000 per year.

Associate Professor Boucher told *Fact Check* that most people would be unaware of the components of the migration statistics.

“They’re not in the permanent flows, because the government can cap those,” she said.

“[People] talk a lot about migration numbers; what

they are really talking about is the permanent section of the migration program.”

The experts agreed that a large part of NOM could be attributed to temporary migration, not permanent migration.

Temporary visas such as those issued to international students, working holiday-makers and temporary skilled migrants, as well as bridging visas (granted to those waiting for their immigration status to be determined) are not capped, they said. Rather, these are controlled by the terms of the individual visa.

MIGRATION AND THE BUDGET

According to statement 7 of Budget Paper 1, population plays a key role in the government’s economic projections: “Potential GDP is estimated based on analysis of underlying trends for population, productivity and participation,” the statement reads.

And, according to “Potential growth scenarios 3 and 4”: “Variations in productivity, population or participation could lead to a lower or higher estimate of potential GDP growth.”

In this year’s budget, Treasury assumed a rise in fertility from 1.78 children per woman in 2018 to 1.9 children per woman by 2021, and placed net migration at 271,700 people in 2019. Both of those rises could result in further population growth.

In fact, according to the latest predictions (in the 2019-20 budget), net overseas migration will remain relatively strong, with an annual average of 268,600 new arrivals expected for the next four years.

This represents a significant increase compared to the forecasts in the previous (2018-19) budget, when net overseas migration was expected to run at an annual average pace of 228,700 over four years.

An article written by a former deputy secretary of the Department of Immigration, and published by *Inside Story* in June drew similar conclusions.

“If [Morrison] sticks to that plan [to cap permanent migration], then Treasury’s rise in net migration inevitably means a huge surge in long-term temporary migration to more than offset the reduction in permanent migration,” it said.

Mr Morrison has previously signalled concerns about the effect on the budget of cutting migration. Last year, as treasurer, he challenged a suggestion by former prime minister Tony Abbott that Australia should slash the number of permanent migration places.

“If you cut the level of permanent immigration to Australia by 80,000, that would cost the budget, that would hit the bottom line, the deficit, by \$4bn to \$5bn over the next four years,” Mr Morrison said.

Associate Professor Boucher told *Fact Check* that the Government wanted to appear “tough” on migration rather than necessarily wanting to control it, because “there are benefits”.

“[High NOM] does present challenges, but those challenges are worth it,” she said.

“But there needs to be adaptation.

“A lot of that has got to be at a city and state level, things like infrastructure, housing, transport policy, education policy rather than immigration policy.”

BECAUSE “THERE ARE BENEFITS ...”

Immigration has been driven in recent times by a strong demand for labour that cannot be met from domestic sources, according to experts consulted by *Fact Check*.

Consequently, restricting migration could be detrimental to some industries such as farming, horticulture and hospitality, which depend on these temporary visa holders.

The increased demand for such workers, and the ability of other temporary visa holders to extend their stay, such as holiday makers and students, was driving NOM, they said. For example, someone on a “working holiday maker” visa might come for a year and then extend it for up to three years.

Dr Valic-Peisker said that “if it wasn’t for NOM, the Australian population would slowly shrink, because the number of children per woman of reproductive age (15-49 years) has been under two children for at least three decades, while the population replacement rate is 2.1 children per woman.

Associate Professor Boucher added that underpinning a relatively high “working-age population” through a temporary visa program was not necessarily a bad thing.

“Whether it’s ethical or not, there are strong benefits of having a population that doesn’t have to make claims on the health and education systems but, rather, contributes to them,” she said.

“None of these migrants have any access to any form of welfare. And those contributions are not insignificant.

“I think it’s a bit more nuanced than that. I think there are both positives and negatives.”

Professor McDonald pointed out that a lot of the growth in NOM could be attributed to the high number of international students coming to Australia for extended periods and the number of people holding bridging visas.

An international student studying for a bachelor’s degree might extend their stay to pursue a post-graduate qualification and then move onto a 485 visa to work for up to 18 months. This meant one temporary visa could lead to another and then another, prolonging a person’s stay in Australia.

Professor McDonald added that there was no real reason to control the entry of international students.

“It will reach a natural peak,” he said.

“And export revenue from education is third only to iron ore and coal for Australia and, in Victoria, is the highest earner of revenue.”

KEEPING TABS ON MIGRATION

The experts agreed that capping was not the only way for governments to control migration.

“There are ways you can slow down processing and control it without having a formal cap,” said Associate Professor Boucher.

“You could, for example, put up international student fees, you could increase the stringency of checks, like security checks.”

Professor McDonald added that the numbers of temporary skilled immigrants and working holiday makers had been falling sharply, causing some difficulties for employers.

“So, the only category that we need to look at ‘controlling’ is the number on bridging visas,” he said.

“In the past, the number on bridging visas was taken as a measure of government efficiency in administering the migration program. High numbers meant inefficiency of processing. I think this is still the case.”

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Why our trains and roads are likely to remain congested, despite immigration freeze

JOSH GORDON EXPLAINS IN THIS ARTICLE FOR **RMIT ABC FACT CHECK**

It is an alarming scenario: in the absence of big ongoing spending on infrastructure, Australian cities will become so choked with people the cost of congestion will double to almost \$40 billion in just 12 years.

The culprit for this huge loss of productivity, according to a report released this week by Infrastructure Australia, is population growth.

Alan Tudge, the Federal Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure, sought to hose down these concerns by claiming the Government had lowered overseas migration to ease the pressure.

“Since this report was written, we’ve dropped the migration rate to ease the population pressure, particularly on Melbourne and Sydney, which have just been growing like gangbusters,” Mr Tudge told ABC radio.

The comment reflected a Liberal Party policy document released in the lead up to the May election, which promised the Coalition would “freeze immigration levels” at an annual intake of 160,000 over the next four years. This would help “ease the pressure on the big capitals”.

Whether or not the migration rate is being “dropped”, as opposed to “frozen”, the federal government is keen to

get the message out that it is working to ease the strain on our overburdened cities by slowing Australia’s annual intake.

BUT IS THIS THE REALITY?

Australia’s population growth has indeed been strong. As *Fact Check* noted recently, Australia has experienced one of the highest rates of population growth in the developed world, ranking fifth among 36 OECD countries.

The Australian economy is dependent upon an uncapped flow of temporary foreign workers and the income generated by foreign students.

In 2018, our ranks swelled by 404,800 people, an increase of 1.6 per cent over 2017.

And the average annual growth for the past decade has hovered around 1.5 per cent, according to Val Colic-Peisker, an associate professor of sociology at RMIT (see *graph on page 34*). Most of that growth has come in the form of overseas migration.

In 2018, for example, 61 per cent of the annual population increase came from net overseas migration. The year before, it was 63 per cent; the year before that, 61 per cent. By contrast, in the early years of this century, net overseas migration accounted for less than half of the increase (see *graph on page 35*).

It is important to note at this point that anyone who has lived in Australia for at least 12 months is counted in the Australian Bureau of Statistics population estimates, regardless of their immigration status.

In other words, temporary and permanent visa holders are counted, including the tens of thousands of foreign students, workers and backpackers who swell our ranks but do not necessarily intend to stay in Australia long-term.

This brings us back to Mr Tudge’s assertion that the Morrison Government has “dropped” the migration rate. It has certainly imposed a freeze on the level of permanent migration over the next four years. In the most recent Federal Budget, Treasury confirmed that the “planning level” for the permanent migration program over the next four years would be lowered from 190,000 places a year to 160,000 places from 2019-20.

Yet, Treasury’s own forecasts suggest Australia’s total migration levels will continue to boom. The 2019-20 budget predicts an annual average of 268,600 new arrivals over the next four years.

This represents a hefty 17 per cent increase over the previous (2018-19) budget forecast, when net overseas migration was expected to run at an annual average pace of 228,700 over four years.





TEMPORARY VERSUS PERMANENT

This suggests that, even if the Morrison Government delivers its plan to cap *permanent* migration, this would be more than offset by a surge in *temporary* migrants.

As experts are quick to note, the Australian economy is dependent upon an uncapped flow of temporary foreign workers and the income generated by foreign students.

Peter McDonald, a professor of demography at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, told *Fact Check* that the demand for labour could not be met through domestic sources alone. In fact, about 75 per cent of recent employment growth in Australia can be attributed to immigrants, Professor McDonald said.

Whether the Government is actually prepared to lower migration to the extent it has a negative impact on the bottom line – and a positive impact on our congested cities – is open to question.

So, total migration can be expected to remain high for the foreseeable future.

You can speculate about the rationale for such high numbers. *Fact Check* recently examined a claim by One Nation Leader Pauline Hanson that the budget was “built off mass migration”.

Whether this amounts to hyperbole is open to interpretation. It is certainly fair to say migration levels have a significant influence on the budget bottom line.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has previously warned against cutting the permanent migration intake to

Australia on the grounds that it would hurt the budget.

In February 2018, as treasurer, he said a proposal by former prime minister Tony Abbott to cut the annual intake by 80,000 would cost the budget \$4 billion to \$5 billion over four years.

This week, the Government announced an inquiry into migration in regional Australia, to be conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration. Among other things, it will examine the current settings for “relevant migration policy”.

Whether the Government is actually prepared to lower migration to the extent it has a negative impact on the bottom line – and a positive impact on our congested cities – is open to question, particularly since it has placed so much emphasis on returning the budget to surplus.

What is clear is that, in the short term at least, our trains and roads are likely to remain overcrowded, despite the Government’s rhetoric.

Author: Josh Gordon, Economics and Finance Editor at RMIT ABC Fact Check.

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MIGRATION IS NOT A THREAT TO WAGES OR JOBS OF LOCAL WORKERS

Economic modelling undertaken by **CEDA** in its latest research report has found that immigration to Australia has not harmed the jobs and earnings of local workers

CEDA's report, *Effects of temporary migration*, examines the impact of immigration and recent trends in temporary migration including temporary skilled migration, CEDA CEO, Melinda Cilento said.

"There are currently around two million people in Australia on temporary visas including students, working holiday makers, skilled workers and New Zealand citizens. This is a significant number that should be well understood, transparently managed and appropriately factored into community planning," she said.

"CEDA's report has found that migration to Australia in recent decades has been positive for the labour market, and the outcomes from temporary skilled migration were particularly positive," Ms Cilento said.

"CEDA's analysis shows that temporary skilled migration is critical in delivering benefits to business, the economy more broadly and to the existing workforce.

"However, concerns about the impacts of temporary skilled migration have been raised consistently

resulting in frequent changes to the scheme, including most recently the abolition of the 457 visa class.

"Our research has found that key concerns around temporary skilled migration, such as impacts on local workers as a result of visas such as the 482 and its predecessor the 457, are unfounded.

"The average base salary for a skilled temporary visa holder is quite high at \$95,000, meaning these workers are unlikely to undercut local employment terms and conditions.

"In addition, they are a small group, with temporary skilled migrants of working age accounting for less than one per cent of Australia's labour force.

"However, often unpredictable change to this visa category has come at the cost of undermining the ability of business to undertake workforce planning with certainty.

"At a time when more businesses are finding it difficult to source the skills they need, strengthening and providing greater transparency and certainty around temporary skilled migration would support business investment and productivity.

"Temporary migrants also contribute to the economy by paying taxes and spending in the communities in which they live, increasing demand for goods and services and supporting local economic activity and jobs."

Ms Cilento said while CEDA's research confirms the positive impact of temporary skilled migration it was important to ensure that the broader community had confidence in the system and that the training levies paid by businesses recruiting skilled migrants were being effectively used to build in demand skills locally.

"Australia will continue to need temporary skilled migration to fill periodic and emerging skill shortages."



“CEDA’s report recommends changes to improve transparency and efficiency in the temporary skilled migration system to deliver the dual benefits of improving community confidence in the system and ensuring business can access the skills they need,” she said.

“Skilled migration supports business investment and productivity which are vital for keeping our economy strong.

“Incomes in Australia have been stagnant and lifting productivity can help lift incomes across the community.”

Ms Cilento said there are actions that can be taken immediately to improve the system and make it easier for businesses to get the skills they need now and in the future:

- Increasing transparency of data and methods used in determining professions for the skilled occupation list;
- Ensuring occupation codes used to assess skill shortages align with evolving labour trends to ensure temporary skilled migration is responsive to emerging skill needs;
- Introducing a dedicated path for intra-company transfer of employees to Australia; and
- Better aligning the Skilling Australia Fund Levy to alleviate the skill shortages driving the need for skilled migration.

“If CEDA’s recommendations are implemented, the system will be more responsive to the needs of the economy. It will also reduce reliance on low quality instruments like labour market testing to ensure that genuine skills shortages are being filled,” she said.

Ms Cilento said as a mid-sized economy far away from global markets, the importance to our economic success of free movement of goods, services, investment and skills can’t be understated.

“Australia will continue to need temporary skilled migration to fill periodic and emerging skill shortages,” she said.

“We need to make it easier for business to import the best global talent and expertise, and Australia’s temporary skilled migration system is our gateway for global talent.

“Temporary migration also lifts the skills of the broader workforce through the transfer of knowledge and expertise and by introducing new skills, in some instances enabling Australia to build critical new workforces, for example the growing cyber security industry in Australia.”

Additional recommendations in CEDA’s report include:

- Establishing an independent committee to undertake analysis and consultation on the formulation of skilled occupation lists, mirroring the model used in the UK.

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“We need to make it easier for business to import the best global talent and expertise, and Australia’s temporary skilled migration system is our gateway for global talent.”

- Tasking the Productivity Commission with a review of the temporary skilled visa program on a regular cycle every three or five years.
- Moving the point of levy collection to the visa approval stage rather than visa nomination.

“Improving predictability of the scheme and increasing understanding among the wider community of the benefits to all Australians, will help deliver a fair and efficient system,” she said.

Ms Cilento said other key findings of the report include that only 16 per cent of those on student visas stay permanently, while temporary skilled visas have provided a de facto path to permanent residency for a significant proportion of those migrants.

“This ‘try before you buy’ approach to permanent residency is a positive for the individual and Australia,” she said.

“Both the individual and the employer have the opportunity to see if the ‘fit’ is right before making a longer term decision.

“Recent changes to the 482 visa, previously the 457 visa, may have disrupted this de facto pipeline and it will be worth monitoring the impact this has on the quality of temporary skilled visa holders over coming years.”

CEDA (15 July 2019). *CEDA research finds migration is not a threat to wages or jobs of local workers*. Retrieved from www.ceda.com.au on 15 January 2020.

If you think less immigration will solve Australia's problems, you're wrong; but neither will more

More by luck than design, recent levels of immigration seem to be in a 'goldilocks zone' that balances economic, social and environmental objectives, according to **Cameron Allen, Graciela Metternicht and Thomas Wiedmann**

Are we letting too many or too few migrants into Australia? For 2019-20 the Australian government has cut the annual net migrant intake from 190,000 to 160,000. It's a political decision, balancing the concerns of those who want much lower or higher immigration levels for a mix of social, environmental and economic reasons.

It's an unsatisfactory and ad hoc balancing act. Could there be more "science" in these decisions?

We've sought to come up with an evidence-based method to gauge the effects of migration. To do so we've used the internationally accepted framework for development planning, the Sustainable Development Goals. The goals cover major aspects of economic, social and environmental wellbeing, from decent jobs and quality education to good health and clean water.

We investigated three population scenarios: one similar to Australia's recent annual level of net migration (about 200,000 a year); one much lower (about 70,000 a year); and one much higher (about 300,000 a year). What our results show, perhaps surprisingly, and more by luck than design, is that recent levels of immigration seem to be in a "goldilocks zone" that balances economic, social and environmental objectives. Our results also suggest migration is neither the problem nor solution in many areas where Australia is off-track, from government debt to environmental action.

BALANCING COMPETING AGENDAS

Immigration policy is Australia's de facto population policy. With the birthrate just keeping up with deaths, it's migration that drives population growth. It's why in 2018 the population passed 25 million, years earlier than previously predicted.

Annual migration intake is set as part of the annual budget cycle. The government treats it primarily as a short-term economic issue. But population growth has long-term impacts on many sectors, from health and education to infrastructure and housing. Population growth, particularly through urban expansion, increases pressures on the natural environment.

Ideally, therefore, decisions about migration numbers and population growth should synch with long-term planning at the state and local levels to avoid service shortages, urban sprawl, vehicle congestion and infrastructure shortfalls. The question remains about how to make evidence-based policy that balances deeply divided views. Some strongly support high net migration due to the important role population growth plays in managing an ageing population. Others argue equally forcefully for reducing migration because it places a burden on infrastructure, services and the environment.

USING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To negotiate these differences, we chose the UN



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals cover long-term targets in 17 major areas of economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability. All member states of the UN, including Australia, have agreed to them as a shared blueprint to achieve by 2030.

Each goal area includes multiple specific targets – 169 in all. For example, Goal 11 (“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”) includes the targets of adequate, safe and affordable housing and affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems.

Countries are not required to adopt all targets, but focus on those appropriate. We chose 52 targets relevant to Australia, covering all 17 goals and ensuring a reasonable balance of economic, social and environmental priorities.

Using advanced modelling capabilities, we tested how achieving the targets by 2030 might be affected by different population sizes.

OVERALL, NOT A HUGE DIFFERENCE

The following chart shows our results in a single graphic. For our low-migration scenario, Australia’s population in 2030 is 27.3 million; for the moderate, 28.9 million; and for the high, 30.6 million.

What is perhaps most striking is that, regardless of the population scenario, Australia isn’t tracking well on most measures of sustainable development.

Only in two goal areas – education, clean water and sanitation – do our results show Australia doing better than 85% achievement by 2030 under all three scenarios. Only in another three – health, gender equality and energy – do we do better than 50%.

All scenarios had equal effect on eliminating poverty (Goal 1). However, the low-migration scenario did better for achieving food security and improving nutrition (Goal 2).

Perhaps surprisingly, for decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), the middle scenario scored the best.

In the centre of the chart are the overall scores of each scenario.

The high-migration scenario (39.4% progress towards all targets) is the lowest, but not by much. There is almost no difference between maintaining recent migration levels (40.5%) and significantly slashing the migration intake (40.6%).

This suggests that, on an equal balance across a broad set of competing objectives, recent historic levels may be about right.

However, these results brush over the range of trade-offs between different targets – some of which may be considered more important than others.

Compared against the low scenario, for example, the high scenario results in an estimated 1.7 million extra vehicles on the roads, increased water consumption (~600 million m³), greater urban sprawl (~60,000 ha),



How low, moderate and high population scenarios affect Australian’s performance on the Sustainable Development Goals (the authors).

and higher greenhouse gas emissions (~15 million tons CO₂-equivalent).

POOR PERFORMANCE IN MANY AREAS

What is perhaps most striking is that, regardless of the population scenario, Australia isn’t tracking well on most measures of sustainable development. Other studies have concluded the same.

As already noted, Australia is doing well on health, education and water quality. But it’s performing poorly on climate action (Goal 13) and responsible consumption (Goal 12), to name just two.

Broadly accepted frameworks to measure progress and weigh policy decisions in contested areas is something we lack across the policy board.

Finding new drivers of job creation, addressing infrastructure needs, and tackling climate change are just some of the complex challenges Australia faces.

Ad hoc, short-term approaches to addressing them are unlikely to often deliver optimal outcomes. Combining clear targets, a long-term perspective and advances in modelling might help.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors do not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and have disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

Cameron Allen is Researcher, UNSW. **Graciela Metternicht** is Professor of Environmental Geography, School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW. **Thomas Wiedmann** is Associate Professor, UNSW.

THE CONVERSATION

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AUSTRALIA, IT'S TIME TO CURB IMMIGRATION

A majority of Australians welcome immigrants. So why then do opinion polls of young and old voters alike across the political divide now find majority support for reducing our immigration intake? By **Satya Marar**

Perhaps it could be for the same reason that faith in our political system is dwindling at a time of strong economic growth. Australia is the 'lucky country' that hasn't had a recession in the last 28 years.

Yet we've actually had two recessions in this time if we consider GDP on a per-capita basis. This, combined with stagnant real wage growth and sharp increases in congestion and the price of housing and electricity in our major cities, could explain why the Australian success story is inconsistent with the lived experience of so many of us.

THE DECLINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN DREAM?

Our current intake means immigration now acts as a ponzi scheme. The superficial figure of a growing headline GDP fuelled by an increasing population masks the reality of an Australian dream that is becoming increasingly out of reach for immigrants and native-born Australians alike.

We've been falsely told we've weathered economic calamities that have stunned the rest of the world. When taken on a per-capita basis, our economy has actually experienced negative growth periods that closely mirror patterns in the United States.

We're rightly told we need hardworking immigrants to help foot the bill for our ageing population by raising productivity and tax revenue. Yet this cost is also offset when their ageing family members or other dependents are brought over. Since preventing them from doing so may be cruel, surely it's fairer to lessen our dependence on their intake if we can?

A LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Over 200,000 people settle in Australia every year, mostly in the major cities of Sydney and Melbourne. That's the equivalent of one Canberra or greater Newcastle area a year.

Unlike the United States, most economic opportunities are concentrated in a few major cities dotting our shores. This combined with the failures of successive state and federal governments to build the infrastructure and invest in the services needed to cater for record population growth levels driven majorly by immigration.

A failure to rezone for an appropriate supply of land, means our schools are becoming crowded, our real estate prohibitively expensive, our commutes are longer and more depressing, and our roads are badly congested. Today, infrastructure is being built, land is finally being rezoned to accommodate higher population density and more housing stock in the outer suburbs, and the Prime Minister has made regional job growth one of his major priorities.

But these issues should have been fixed ten years ago and it's increasingly unlikely that they will be executed efficiently and effectively enough to catch up to where they need to be should current immigration intake levels continue for the years to come.

Our governments have proven to be terrible central planners, often rejecting or watering down the advice of independent expert bodies like Infrastructure Australia and the Productivity Commission due to political factors. Why would we trust them to not only get the answer right now, but to execute it correctly? Our newspapers are filled daily with stories about light rail and road link projects that are behind schedule. All of it paid for by taxpayers like us.

FOREIGN WORKERS OR LOCAL GRADUATES?

Consider also the perverse reality of foreign workers brought to our shores to fill supposed skill gaps who then struggle to find work in their field and end up in whatever job they can get.

Our current intake means immigration now acts as a ponzi scheme.

Meanwhile, you'll find two separate articles in the same week. One from industry groups cautioning against cutting skilled immigration due to shortages in the STEM fields. The other reporting that Australian STEM graduates are struggling to find work in their field.

Why would employers invest resources in training local graduates when there's a ready supply of experienced foreign workers? What incentive do universities have to step in and fill this gap when their funding isn't contingent on employability outcomes?

This isn't about nativism. The immigrants coming here certainly have a stake in making sure their current or future children can find meaningful work and obtain education and training to make them job ready.

There's only one way to hold our governments accountable so the correct and sometimes tough decisions needed to sustain our way of life and make the most of the boon that immigration has been for the country, are made. It's to wean them off their addiction to record immigration levels. Lest the ponzi scheme collapse.

And frank conversations about the quantity and quality of immigration that the sensible centre of politics once held, increasingly become the purview of populist minor parties who have experienced resurgence on the back of widespread, unanswered frustrations about unsustainable immigration that we are ill-prepared for.

Satya Marar is an Indian-born, Sydney based writer, public commentator and Director of Policy at the Australian Taxpayers' Alliance. He took part in the IQ2 debate, 'Curb Immigration'.

Marar, S (3 May 2019). *Australia, it's time to curb immigration*. Retrieved from <http://ethics.org.au> on 15 January 2020.

The government is right – immigration helps us rather than harms us

Opponents of Australia's immigration program will be disappointed by the findings of **Robert Breunig**, based on his analysis of key government data

Opponents of Australia's strong immigration program will be disappointed. In announcing a cut in Australia's migration ceiling from 190,000 to 160,000 per year, federal population minister Alan Tudge launched an all-out defence of immigration as a driver of economic prosperity.

It has not only boosted gross domestic product and budget revenue, as would be expected when with more people, but also living standards – measured as GDP per person. Tudge explained:

This is often not sort of fully understood. Not only does population growth help with GDP growth overall, but it helps with GDP per capita growth too. It's actually made all of us wealthier.

In fact, Treasury estimates that 20% of our per capita wealth generated over the last 40 years has been due to population factors. How does that come about? In part because when we bring in migrants, they come in younger than what the average Australian is. On average, a migrant comes in at the age of 26. The average age of an Australian is about 37. So it very much helps with our workforce participation, and that's essentially a big driver of our GDP per capita growth.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison added:

I would also mention from a pensions point of view and social welfare point of view, achieving more of a

balance in the working-age population means there's more people in the working age to actually pay for the pensions and the welfare bill for those who aren't able to be in the workforce and with an ageing population.

The lower ceiling announced on Wednesday will make little difference to Australia's migrant intake. It is already close to 160,000, at about 162,000. Other changes will attempt to influence where migrants settle.

We found immigration had no overall impact on the wages of incumbent workers. If anything, the effect was slightly positive.

Two new regional visas for skilled workers will require them to live and work in less urban Australia (outside of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and the Gold Coast) for three years before being able to become a permanent resident. Of the 160,000 potential places, 23,000 will be set aside for these visa-holders. International students studying outside the big cities will get access to an extra year in Australia on a post-study work visa.

Immigration shouldn't suppress wages

Tudge's acceptance that migration neither boosts unemployment nor cuts wages is consistent with most





evidence from Australia and overseas.

New arrivals increase the supply of workers (such as teachers and house-builders), which might be expected to depress existing residents' wages. But there are two countervailing forces.

First, migrants also increase the demand for goods and services (as the arrivals' children get taught and their homes get built), which might be expected to boost preexisting residents' wages.

Second, if migrants fill jobs that would otherwise go unfilled, they can boost the productivity, and hence the wages, of existing residents.

Most studies of migration shocks, such as the repatriation of more than a million French citizens to metropolitan France after the Algerian civil war, have found that the net effect is close to zero.

There is hardly any evidence that it does

An exception is work in the United States by George Borjas, who found that the boatlift of 125,000 mostly low-skilled immigrants from Cuba to Miami in 1980 did suppress the wages of low-skilled Miami workers, if not Miami workers overall. But this finding has been disputed.

In 2015 Nathan Deutscher, Hang Thi and I set out to replicate his work, using changes in the immigration rates of different skill groups to Australia to identify the effects of immigration on the earnings and employment prospects of particular groups of Australian workers.

Our data came from the Australian Census, the Surveys of Income and Housing, and the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey.

We isolated 40 distinct skill groups at a national level, identifying them with a combination of educational attainment and workforce experience and examined six outcomes – annual earnings, weekly earnings, wage rates, hours worked, labour market participation rate, and unemployment.

We explored 114 different possibilities, controlling for macroeconomic conditions and for the fact that

immigrants to Australia are disproportionately highly skilled with higher wages.

In Australia, we found next to none

We found immigration had no overall impact on the wages of incumbent workers. If anything, the effect was slightly positive.

Some of our estimates showed immigration had a negative effect on some groups of incumbent workers, but the positive effects outnumbered negative effects by three to one. The vast majority of effects were zero.

Some of our estimates showed immigration had a negative effect on some groups of incumbent workers, but the positive effects outnumbered negative effects by three to one. The vast majority of effects were zero.

The statistical basis for our finding of no overall effect was incredibly strong. It more than passed the standard tests.

Our research only looked at one, very limited, aspect of immigration. Immigrants can also bring cultural and demographic benefits. And until infrastructure catches up, they can increase congestion.

But immigration doesn't seem to harm either jobs or wages, a point the Morrison government is right to acknowledge.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Robert Breunig received funding from the Productivity Commission to conduct his research on migration.

Robert Breunig is Professor of Economics and Director, Tax and Transfer Policy Institute, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University.

THE CONVERSATION

Breunig, R (20 March 2019). *The government is right – immigration helps us rather than harms us*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com> on 15 January 2020.

DEBATING IMMIGRATION CAN'T BE DISMISSED AS HATE SPEECH

Commentary by Dr Jeremy Sammut from the **Centre for Independent Studies**

The response to the Christchurch atrocity has been everything that we want and don't want – or need – it to be. The bipartisan condemnation of terrorism of all kinds led by the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader has affirmed Australia's commitment to basic liberal democratic principles: in this country, we resolve our political difference peacefully through rational debate and at the ballot box, not by politically-inspired violence.

The support that has been displayed across the community for the Muslim victims of terror has also affirmed the nation's commitment to the principles of respect for the individual and tolerance towards people of all faiths and ethnicities within Australian society.

Unfortunately, there has also been no shortage of efforts across the political spectrum to politicise the tragedy and score partisan points.

On the Right, Senator Fraser Anning in his putrid pursuit of re-election has obscenely blamed the dead to justify banning Muslim immigration. On the Left, there has also been a concerted attempt led by the Greens and GetUp! to shift the blame by asserting – with no real evidence – that the terrorist attack was inspired by the so-called “hate speech” spoken on immigration-related subjects by Coalition politicians.

The argument is that root cause of the terrorist attack is the “hatred” that has allegedly been “normalised” by the “inflammatory language on race” of Scott Morrison, Peter Dutton, and Tony Abbott – despite none of these politicians being mentioned in the terrorist's online manifesto.

All reasonable people oppose speech that genuinely incites racial hatred, and support laws that make incitement, to racially-motivated and all other forms of violence, illegal.

But it is a monstrous absurdity to blame the cesspit of internet white supremacist fanaticism on the legitimate statements that mainstream politicians have made about immigration – and claim they have “blood on their hands”.

Such politicking not only needlessly divides us and undermines the spirit of national unity in the face of terrorism, it also trivialises the real motivations of those who believe killing innocent people is politically justified, and offers no sound guide to how the authorities should respond to such evil thoughts, words, and deeds. The attempt being made to silence debate about immigration by linking it to Christchurch is also likely to prove counter-productive.

Making immigration a taboo subject beyond the bounds of respectable public discussion would not just feed far right paranoia about political conspiracies to

deny people a say, it would also create a political void the Senator Annings and their ilk will gleefully fill.

What such a response would also ignore is the political realities of immigration policymaking. Concerns about immigration are anything but fringe or worse views, and do not reflect the racist sentiments of the White Australia policy era that are alleged to still prevail in the hearts and minds of most Australians.

Shutting down debate is not the way to build public confidence in the immigration program.

Since World War II, Australia has had a long and proud history of accepting millions of migrants from diverse backgrounds. We have successfully created one of the most tolerant and harmonious multiracial societies in the world – an achievement that would not have been possible if Australia was still the kind of racist country it was at the time of Federation.

However, mainstream public opinion has reasonable and understandable concerns not only about the economic impact of immigration on public infrastructure, but also about the cultural implications of immigration with respect to the integration of migrants and maintenance of social cohesion and community safety.

The later concerns arise, of course, in the context of international and domestic Islamist terrorism. We might wish it was otherwise, but discouraging discussion of such issues by claiming such concerns are due to irrational ‘Islamophobic’ prejudices will not make them go away.

Over the past 20 years, public support for a large, legal, and non-discriminatory immigration program, and a generous humanitarian refugee program, has been predicated on the maintenance of strong border protection policies.

The political lesson – as even Malcolm Turnbull understood – was that immigration policy could not proceed ahead of public opinion; since in a democracy it is ultimately the people who determine who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.

Shutting down debate is not the way to build public confidence in the immigration program.

Mainstream politicians must address what are mainstream public concerns – not cede this ground to the genuine peddlers of race hate and terror.

Dr Jeremy Sammut is a senior research fellow and director of the Culture, Prosperity and Civil Society Program at the Centre for Independent Studies.

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IT'S ABOUT QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

Policies based on raising the quality of our mix of migrants would have direct benefits for us all, asserts **David Leyonhjelm**

Australia's population is a controversial subject. We hear a lot about the need to reduce the migrant intake. Immigration has never been popular at the best of times, but it is even less popular now with our biggest cities suffering terrible congestion and travel times. But so much gets lost when we focus solely on the quantity of immigration.

It's impossible to have a meaningful conversation about immigration without considering quality. Highly skilled professionals and business people have a substantially positive effect when they migrate to Australia. Family reunion migrants, by contrast, are far less likely to contribute.

We also disregard the patchwork nature of the Australian economy, in which some parts of Australia are crying out for population growth. Plus, we lose any chance of moving beyond immigration to considering our approach to population overall, including the issue of how many children we are having.

We need a response on each issue.

Congestion is a consequence of a lack of infrastructure, not simply a reflection of the size of our big cities. There are plenty of bigger cities around the world where congestion is not an issue. What's required is not just new train and bus services, motorways, bridges and tunnels, but practical considerations such as parking at train stations and bus stops. And there is much that could be done to promote greater use of motorbikes and scooters.

Congestion is aggravated by the number of people who commute long distances. To address this, we need to get rid of stamp duty on housing, which applies every time housing is bought and sold. Not only does this lock out thousands of Australians from home ownership, it also discourages existing home owners from moving to be close to a new job.

The quality of migrants would rise if we denied new migrants access to welfare until they become citizens. This would discourage those whose employment prospects are poor or only temporary, while those who still seek to come would be signalling that migrating to Australia is still a good deal for them.

The quality of migrants would also rise if we charged a substantial fee for a permanent visa. This would ensure new migrants made a catch-up payment for the assets paid for by previous generations of taxpayers, like roads, but would discourage migrants with poor employment prospects from joining the migration queue.

Both measures would result in reduced family reunion migration compared to skilled migration.

Continued character, criminal and health checks are important to ensure migrant quality, and there should obviously be rigorous and relevant security screening

before a resident can become a citizen. We also want people who will embrace our values, not seek to impose their values on us. Thus anyone applying for residency or citizenship who supports female genital mutilation, forced marriages, child marriages or the subordination of women, for example, should not be accepted.

Dealing with the patchwork nature of the Australian economy, where some parts of Australia want to close the doors while others are crying out for population growth, is a tricky one. Much of the growth in Sydney and Melbourne is a result of the dynamics of agglomeration, where people are attracted to where other people already are.

Our living standards depend on more than just the population; the population is about more than just immigration; and immigration is more than just a number.

This could be partially offset by reducing the size of the bureaucracies that oversee the provision of government services from the centre of our busiest cities, and by relocating to regional areas as many as possible.

There is also nothing wrong with placing conditions on permanent residency visas that require the holder to live in a regional area, at risk of losing the visa. While it's true that enforcement may be difficult, it's not insurmountable.

We should also recognise that, if there is a genuine problem with population growth itself, then there's a case for paring back the welfare payments that encourage Australians to have children.

The Parenting Payment, for example, provides thousands of dollars more than the dole each year with no requirement to look for paid work provided you have a child under six. There's also Family Tax Benefit, which can be \$10,000 per child each year, with higher amounts once a child turns thirteen.

Our living standards depend on more than just the population; the population is about more than just immigration; and immigration is more than just a number. Policies based on raising the quality of our mix of migrants would have direct benefits for us all.

David Leyonhjelm is a former Senator for the Liberal Democrats. This article was first published in the *Australian Financial Review*.

Leyonhjelm, D (21 March 2019). *It's about quality, not quantity*. Retrieved from www.onlineopinion.com.au on 15 January 2020.

LIMITING IMMIGRATION INTO AUSTRALIA IS DOOMED TO FAIL

Population growth is a real and tangible threat to the quality of life for all human beings on the planet. While immigration limitations seek to protect our nation by addressing the symptoms, we are better served by asking how the problem can be solved from its root, observes ethicist **Gordon Young**

Few topics bridge the ever widening divide between both sides of politics quite like the need to manage population growth. Whether it's immigration or environmental sustainability, fiscal responsibility or social justice. That the global population breached 7.5 billion in 2017 has everyone concerned.

We are at the point where the sheer volume of people will start to put every system we rely on under very serious stress.

This is the key idea motivating the centrist political party Sustainable Australia. Led by William Bourke and joined by Dick Smith, the party advocates for a non-discriminatory annual immigration cap at 70,000 persons, down from the current figure of around 200,000 – aimed at a “better, not bigger” Australia.

While the party has been accused of xenophobic bigotry for this stance, their policy makes clear they are not concerned about an immigrant's religion, culture, or race. Their concern is exclusively for the stress greater numbers of migrants will place on Australia's infrastructure and environment.

It is a compelling argument. After all, what is the point of the state if not to protect the interests of its citizens?

A LOOMING PROBLEM

We should be concerned with the needs and interests of our international neighbours, but such concerns

must surely be strictly secondary to our own. When our nearest neighbour has approximately ten times our population, squeezed into a landmass twenty five per cent Australia's size, and ranks 113 places behind us in the Human Development Index, one can be forgiven for believing that limited immigration is critical for ongoing Australian quality of life.

This stance is further bolstered by the highly isolated, and therefore vulnerable nature of Australia's ecosystem. Australia has the fourth highest level of animal species extinction in the world, with 106 listed as Critically Endangered and significantly more as Endangered or Under Threat.

Much of this is due to habitat loss from human encroachment as suburbs and agricultural lands expand for our increasing needs. The introduction of foreign flora and fauna can be absolutely devastating to these species, greatly facilitated by increased movement between neighbour nations (hence the virtually unparalleled ferocity of our quarantine standards).

While the nation may be a considerable exporter of foodstuffs, many argue Australia is already well over its carrying capacity. Any additional production will be degrading the land and our ability to continue growing food into the future.

The combination of ecological threats and socio-economic pressure makes the argument for limiting

We are at the point where the sheer volume of people will start to put every system we rely on under very serious stress.



immigration to sustainable numbers a powerful one. But it is absolutely doomed to failure.

FORTRESS AUSTRALIA

If the objective of limiting immigration to Australia is both to protect our environment and maintain high quality of life, “Fortress Australia” will fail on both fronts. Why? Because it does nothing to address the fundamental problem at hand. Unsustainable population growth in a world of limited resources.

Immigration controls may indeed protect both the Australian quality of life and its environment for a time, but without effective strategic intervention, the population burden in neighbouring countries will only continue to grow.

As conditions worsen and resources dwindle, exacerbated by the impacts of anthropogenic climate change, citizens of those overpopulated nations will seek an alternative. What could be more appealing than the enormous, low-density nation with incredibly high quality of life, right next door to them?

If a mere 10 per cent of Indonesians (the vast majority of which live on the coast and are exceptionally vulnerable to climate change impacts) decided to attempt the crossing to Australia, we would be confronted by a flotilla equivalent to our entire national population.

THE DILEMMA

At this point we have one of two choices: suffer through the impact of over a decade’s worth of immigration in one go or commit military action against twenty-five million human beings.

Such a choice is a Utilitarian nightmare, an impossible choice between terrible options, with the best possible result still involving massive and sustained suffering for all involved. While ethics can provide us with the tools to make such apocalyptic decisions, the

best response by far is to prevent such choices from emerging at all.

Population growth is a real and tangible threat to the quality of life for all human beings on the planet, and like all great strategic threats, can only be solved by proactively engaging in its entirety – not just its symptoms.

Significant progress has been made thus far through programs that promote contraception and female reproductive rights. There is a strong correlation between nations with lower income inequality and population growth, indicating that economic equity can also contribute towards the stabilisation of population growth. This is illustrated by the decreasing fertility rates in most developed nations like Australia, the UK and particularly Japan.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

The addressing of aggravating factors such as climate change – a problem overwhelmingly caused by developed nations such as Australia, both historically and currently through our export of brown coal – and continued good-faith collaboration with these developing nations to establish renewable energy production, will greatly assist to prevent a crisis occurring.

When concepts such as immigration limitations seek to protect our nation by addressing the symptoms, we are better served by asking how the problem can be solved from its root.

Gordon Young is an ethicist, principal of Ethical Consulting and lecturer in professional ethics at RMIT University’s School of Design.

First published by The Ethics Centre.

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MIGRATION WORKS FOR ALL OF US

*Migration delivers benefits to all Australians, according to this executive summary from a migration policy position paper produced by the **Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry***

Migration benefits all Australians. Our approach to migration, particularly in the last few decades, has given us a comparative advantage. It has made us richer; it drives economic growth and helps deliver the job opportunities and lifestyles that are so important to us.

Migration is also a story of people. Individuals, families, entrepreneurs and investors who have each made an invaluable contribution to their adopted country.

Apart from achieving greater cultural diversity, migration works for us in four important ways:

- It counteracts an aging population
- Provides the skills we need
- Makes us economically stronger
- Creates jobs and improves the workforce participation rate.

The Productivity Commission estimates that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person would be around seven per cent higher in 2060 under a migration business as usual case compared to a zero Net Overseas Migration (NOM) scenario, or an average of 0.15 per cent higher growth each year.

As a result of migration we have one of the youngest workforces of the developed world, which puts us in a much stronger position to fund health and pensions for older Australians.

Migration and natural population growth will lead us to a bigger Australia. This works for us as we are a very large island continent with a lot of land, coastline and resources to secure and manage. There are vast distances between population hubs, and roads, rail and airports are expensive.

Concerns sometimes raised about lack of arable land, water, decent infrastructure, food production and the size of our cities are all either non-existent or surmountable. Our cities are modest in size by world standards and we have the highest ratio of arable land per head of population in the world.

In looking to cut migration to solve our infrastructure shortfalls we are losing sight of the economic benefits of migration and putting unnecessary restrictions on economic growth.

There needs to be a robust but constructive conversation about population. We recommend the outcome not be a detailed population policy, but instead a set of principles that can be agreed within and across Governments and the community, that help shape all policies that impact migration and population. In determining these principles, Australia needs to think about the country it wants to be and our place in the world. We have choices. We can shrink into ourselves, or be bold and outward-looking.



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Adopt population policy principles

That a working group including representatives of business, government, academia and migration stakeholders be established by the Federal Government to draft a set of principles for consideration and adoption by all Australian Governments as well as through COAG, so as to inform and underpin policies that impact population and migration. These principles would include recognition of the benefit of population growth and the comparative advantage gained through migration, as well as the need to plan for growth rather than restrict growth to meet existing planning outcomes.

Skilled migrants are needed to help drive our economic and job-generating powerhouses. Migrants are also needed in the regions, both for permanent settlement and to satisfy the significant demand for seasonal work, both skilled and unskilled, in tourism and agriculture. Regional migration should be encouraged, and regional growth strategies that create jobs and attract both internal and overseas migrants are critically important.

Understanding what makes up our population and migrant intake is fundamental to making decisions about migration caps and population policy.

Population growth in the last few years has been strongly driven by the number of temporary migrants, particularly international students, as any migrant who stays over 12 months of the last 16 months is



counted. This is a cause for celebration, not concern, as international education is a major export earner and job generator. Only around 15 per cent of students become permanent migrants, and when they do, they are subject to the same cap that puts a limit on all permanent migration. If they do transition, this is a benefit for Australia – we have not had to fund their education and yet we benefit from the skills they have, in large part, acquired here.

The 2017-18 permanent migrant intake was 20,000 lower than the previous two years and 30,000 below the 190,000 cap. This reduction hit hardest on the employer-sponsored skilled migration stream despite it delivering the highest economic benefits. This is a major cause for concern. The economic evidence of maintaining

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Make policy changes to preserve the comparative advantage delivered by migration

That the Federal Government make changes to the migration program to improve its accessibility and responsiveness in order to better meet skill and labour needs. These changes should include access to all skilled occupations for employer nominated migration, ensure visa fees and charges are internationally competitive, set the cap for permanent migration based on evidence of economic benefit, and improve the processing times and affordability of the program.

Net Overseas Migration closer to pre 2017-18 levels is very strong and should give assurance that permanent migration of around 190,000 is about right.

Given this evidence, recent changes to the migration program and calls for further cuts to migration mean there is a risk of losing Australia's comparative advantage. We cannot afford to let this happen and must aim for a migration program that is fit for purpose.

To maintain our comparative advantage, we need to make changes to our migration program to ensure each element delivers maximum benefit and works for us in the future.

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Jenny Lambert is Director – Employment, Education and Training.
Krithika Gururaj is Policy Adviser – Employment, Education and Training.

Lambert, J, and Gururaj, K (December 2018). *Migration works for all of us – Delivering benefits to all Australians*, Policy Position Paper – December 2018, pp. 4-5. Retrieved from www.australianchamber.com.au on 15 January 2020.

IN MORE DETAIL THESE RECOMMENDED CHANGES ARE:

- Ensure access to all skilled occupations for employers nominating workers under the employer-nominated temporary and permanent skilled streams, except where there are integrity concerns.
- Maintain within the Australian Bureau of Statistics a current statistical list of occupations, known as ANZSCO, and immediately commence the next review, which is long overdue.
- Enable pathways to permanency for all skilled occupations and eliminate the differential between short-term and long-term temporary skilled workers.
- Look for growth opportunities for the working holidaymaker and seasonal worker programs including reducing the application cost as previously indicated by Government.
- Improve processing times and reduce regulatory red tape including the heavy requirements for labour market testing for skilled occupations. Consider reintroducing migration outreach officers working within industry bodies to provide advice to business to help them navigate the complexity in the system.
- Set the cap for permanent migration based on the evidence of economic benefit taking into account the shifts in Net Overseas Migration and natural increases, and then resource the application process so that the outcome is closer to the cap.
- Implement a whole-of-government approach to labour market analysis and planning; monitor use of skilled migration to ensure system integrity and to inform independent skilled migration; and, align skills development and migration strategies based on labour market needs.
- Ensure visa fees and arrangements are internationally competitive.
- Recommence the review of visa categories with the aim to simplify the system and make it more accessible but not at a cost of reduced flexibility.
- Implement a fit for purpose visa for au pairs.
- Increase confidence in the temporary visa program through an active compliance program of education and enforcement.

EXPLORING ISSUES

WORKSHEETS AND ACTIVITIES

The Exploring Issues section comprises a range of ready-to-use worksheets featuring activities which relate to facts and views raised in this book.

The exercises presented in these worksheets are suitable for use by students at middle secondary school level and beyond. Some of the activities may be explored either individually or as a group.

As the information in this book is compiled from a number of different sources, readers are prompted to consider the origin of the text and to critically evaluate the questions presented.

Is the information cited from a primary or secondary source? Are you being presented with facts or opinions?

Is there any evidence of a particular bias or agenda? What are your own views after having explored the issues?

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Brainstorm, individually or as a group, to find out what you know about immigration in Australia.

1. What is 'immigration', and why is it important for Australia?

2. Who is a 'refugee', and where do they come from?

3. Explain the differences between a 'migrant', an 'asylum seeker' and a 'refugee'. Include examples.

4. What is 'multiculturalism', and what are the benefits for Australia?



DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Complete the following activities on a separate sheets of paper if more space is required.

“The story of Australia’s population over the last century is one shaped by baby booms and successive waves of migration. Australia’s population is now almost 25 million, having increased by almost five times over the last century.”

Shaping a Nation – Population growth and immigration over time, Treasury/Department of Home Affairs.

Form into groups of two or more people to discuss different aspects of immigration in Australia.

1. Debate the pros and cons of immigration and its impacts on Australia’s economy, environment and the community. Include examples and references for your arguments and present to the class.

2. Discuss the origins of your families. Where were you and your ancestors born? If your family has overseas origins, when did they arrive in Australia, how and why? Share your ancestral stories with the class and other groups.

3. Discuss whether you think the number of migrants currently coming to Australia each year is too high, too low, or if you feel that the current balance is just about right. Use examples to back up your arguments. Share your thoughts with the class and other groups.



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Complete the following multiple choice questionnaire by circling or matching your preferred responses. The answers are at the end of this page.

- 1. Approximately what percentage of Australia's population were born overseas?**
 - a. 5%
 - b. 15%
 - c. 30%
 - d. 50%
 - e. 75%
 - f. 90%
- 2. Which one of these countries is the origin of the largest group of overseas-born living in Australia?**
 - a. China
 - b. New Zealand
 - c. Italy
 - d. England
 - e. India
 - f. Japan
 - g. Vietnam
- 3. Which one of these countries is Australia's main source of permanent migrants under the skilled visa stream?**
 - a. India
 - b. England
 - c. Japan
 - d. Italy
 - e. China
 - f. New Zealand
 - g. USA
- 4. Australia's population growth was at its lowest point during which historical period?**
 - a. 1920s
 - b. 1930s
 - c. 1950s
 - d. 1960s
 - e. 1980s
 - f. 2000s
- 5. What is the median age of Australia's overseas-born population?**
 - a. 18
 - b. 21
 - c. 34
 - d. 43
 - e. 56
 - f. 68
 - g. 72

MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS

1 = c, 2 = d, 3 = a, 4 = b, 5 = d.

- Over 7 million people – almost a third of Australia's population – were born overseas (ABS, *Migration, Australia, 2018-19*). (p.1)
- Every single country from around the world was represented in Australia's population in 2019 (*ibid*). (p.1)
- Historically, more people immigrate to, than emigrate from, Australia thereby adding to the growth of the national population (*ibid*). (p.1)
- The median age of the overseas-born population has gradually decreased from a decade ago to now be 43 years of age in 2019 (*ibid*). (p.2)
- As at 2016, Australia had the 6th highest population growth rate in the OECD, the same ranking as in the 1960s (Treasury and Department of Home Affairs, *Shaping a Nation – Population growth and immigration over time*). (p.4)
- Migrant workers represent over 40% of the professional workforce in more than half of Australia's industry sectors (Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, *Finding a Place to Call Home – Immigration in Australia*). (p.8)
- Only 60% of migrants from a non English-speaking background are working in well-matched jobs. Potentially, this represents a substantial opportunity cost to the economy from under-utilised skills (*ibid*). (p.9)
- As of 2014, nearly 21% of foreign-born females in Australia thought they had been discriminated against when applying for a job (*ibid*). (p.9)
- Between 2009 and 2016, the Australian government granted 142,480 humanitarian visas. Of these humanitarian migrants, just over 60% settled in either NSW or Victoria (*ibid*). (p.11)
- The most common forms of trauma or persecution experienced by humanitarian migrants were: wars and conflict (58%), political or religious persecution (52%), extreme living conditions (36%), and violence (19%) (*ibid*). (p.11)
- Australia has a long history of providing resettlement for refugees and others who are displaced as a result of conflict, persecution and human rights abuses. Since the end of World War II, Australia has resettled more than 880,000 refugees and others in need (Department of Home Affairs, *About the refugee and humanitarian program*). (p.11)
- From 1989 to 1992 unemployment in Australia increased from 6% to 11%; in that context, the negative view of immigration recorded in a number of polls exceeded 70%. As labour market conditions improved, concern at the level of immigration decreased (Scanlon Foundation, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2019*). (p.13)
- Younger Australians seem to be more positive about the benefits of immigration. Three-quarters of 18-44 year olds (75%) say that 'immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Australia', compared with 59% of Australians over 45 years (Lowy Institute, *Lowy Institute Poll 2019*). (p.18)
- There are now 25 million people in Australia, with the population growing by about 400,000 a year for the past 3 years, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Dalzell, S, *Population growth, migration and refugees: A political headache that's split the nation*). (p.21)
- 89.2% of people agree or strongly agree that the fact that 'the cost of housing is too high' is a reason for not increasing the population, alongside 84.6% who agree or strongly agree that 'our cities are too crowded and there is too much traffic.' (Biddle, N, *Big Australia, small Australia, diverse Australia: Australia's views on population*). (p.24)
- In 1901, Australia had a specific policy aim to reduce the level of ethnic diversity (*ibid*). (p.26)
- In both rich and poor postcodes, strong majorities – 65% of residents in the top postcodes and the 77% in the bottom postcodes – support cutting or pausing immigration until struggling transport, schools, and housing infrastructure catches up with demand (Sammut, J, and Wilkie, M, *New CIS research: Rich and poor Australians united on pausing immigration*). (p.27)
- Voters see property developers, big business, and new migrants as the main beneficiaries of immigration, not themselves or even the economy as a whole (Birrell, B, and Betts, K, *Immigration, population growth and voters: who cares, and why?*). (p.29)
- A survey found 85% of Australian respondents agreed that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'. And 81% disagree with an immigration policy that discriminates on the basis of race or ethnicity, while 78% disagree with discrimination based on religion (Markus, A, *Australians think immigration should be cut? Well, it depends on how you ask*). (p.33)
- There are currently around 2 million people in Australia on temporary visas including students, working holiday makers, skilled workers and New Zealand citizens (CEDA, *CEDA research finds migration is not a threat to wages or jobs of local workers*). (p.40)
- Temporary skilled migrants of working age account for less than 1% of Australia's labour force (*ibid*). (p.40)
- Immigration policy is Australia's de facto population policy. With the birthrate just keeping up with deaths, it's migration that drives population growth. It's why in 2018 the population passed 25 million, years earlier than previously predicted (Allen, C, Metternicht, G, and Wiedmann, T, *If you think less immigration will solve Australia's problems, you're wrong; but neither will more*). (p.42)
- Over 200,000 people settle in Australia every year, mostly in the major cities of Sydney and Melbourne. That's the equivalent of one Canberra or greater Newcastle area a year (Marar, S, *Australia, it's time to curb immigration*). (p.44)
- The 2017-18 permanent migrant intake was 20,000 lower than the previous 2 years and 30,000 below the 190,000 cap. This reduction hit hardest on the employer-sponsored skilled migration stream despite it delivering the highest economic benefits (Lambert, J, and Gururaj, K, *Migration works for all of us – Delivering benefits to all Australians*). (p.52)

Assimilation

Altering of one culture's social characteristics to conform to those of another, usually the dominant or majority group.

Australian resident

For estimated resident population statistics, the Census year population estimates classify a person as an Australian resident if the person has (in the most recent Census) reported a usual address in Australia where the person has lived or intends to live for six months or more in the Census year. The post-censal estimates, while based on the Census data, are updated with international migration data that have a criterion of one year or more of intended stay in or departure from Australia.

Country of citizenship

Country of citizenship is the nationality of a person. For Overseas Arrivals and Departures data it is usually taken from a traveller's passport or visa information and in some cases from the passenger card.

Cultural diversity

Description of a society composed of people from many different cultural and linguistic groups.

Cultural identity

A person's sense of self-identity related to their notion of belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group.

Emigration

The process of leaving one country to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence in another.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

The official measure of the population of Australia is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months over a 16-month period. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months over a 16-month period.

Ethnicity

The identity of groups based on shared characteristics such as language, culture, history or geographic origin.

Fertility rate

The sum of age-specific fertility rates (live births at each age of mother per female population of that age). It represents the number of children a female would bear during her lifetime if she experienced current age-specific fertility rates at each age of her reproductive life.

Immigrant

An immigrant, or migrant, is someone born outside Australia but who is now permanently resident in Australia.

Immigration

Process of entering one country from another to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence.

Integration

Fitting into mainstream society on an equitable basis but without necessarily abandoning distinctive cultural traits.

Migration

Movement of people across a specified boundary for the purpose of establishing a new or semi-permanent residence. Migration can be international (migration between countries) and internal (migration within a country).

Multiculturalism

A term which recognises and celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic structures and values of Australian democracy.

Natural increase

The excess of births over deaths.

Net overseas migration (NOM)

NOM is a measure of the net increase or reduction in population through people arriving (immigrating) and departing (emigrating). It is measured based on the duration of stay in or away from Australia of at least 12 months out of the past 16 months.

Permanent migration

Australia's permanent migration program incorporates economic and family migration and is the main pathway to permanent residence. It includes the Skill stream, Family stream and Special Eligibility visas. The only other way to obtain permanent residence is on humanitarian grounds.

Population growth

For Australia, population growth is the sum of natural increase and net overseas migration.

Refugee

Category within the Humanitarian Program for people who face persecution in their home country and need to settle in another country.

Temporary migration

People can come to Australia for a temporary stay for a range of purposes, for example, visiting Australia for tourism or attending a conference, or for more specific purposes, such as medical treatment, study, skilled work, working holidays or other specialist activities. There are six main categories of temporary residents, which can cover stays of more than three months in Australia.

Visa

Permission or authority granted by the Australian government to foreign nationals to travel to, enter and/or remain in Australia for a period of time or indefinitely.

Xenophobia

Fear or hatred of foreigners or of their politics or culture.

Websites with further information on the topic

Australian Bureau of Statistics www.abs.gov.au
 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry www.australianchamber.com.au
 Australian Population Association www.apa.org.au
 Business Council of Australia www.bca.com.au
 Centre for Independent Studies www.cis.org.au
 Department of Home Affairs (Immigration and Citizenship) <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au>
 Lowy Institute www.lowyinstitute.org
 RMIT ABC Fact Check (Immigration) www.abc.net.au/news/factcheck/immigration
 Scanlon Foundation www.scanlonfoundation.org.au
 Sustainable Population Australia www.population.org.au
 The Australian Population Research Institute <https://tapri.org.au>
 The Conversation www.theconversation.com/au

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