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BACKGROUND NOTE

Migration to Australia since federation: a guide to the statistics

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Key points

Migration and population growth

- The rate of Australia's population growth has increased significantly over the last five years largely driven by an increase in net overseas migration (NOM). The largest contribution to NOM in recent years has been from people on temporary visas—mostly comprised of overseas students and temporary skilled migrants.
- Although permanent migration intakes over the last few years have been high in comparison to previous years, Australia's recent population growth predominantly reflects a significant increase in temporary, not permanent migration.

Permanent migration statistics

- Net overseas migration (NOM) (Table 3) compiled since 1925 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is not a measure of the number of permanent migrants arriving in any given year as it measures departures and arrivals of both permanent and (long-term) temporary entrants and the resulting increase or decrease in the population overall. In addition, the methodology for the calculation of NOM has changed significantly over the years and should be used with caution.
- Migration Program outcome (visa grant) data (Table 1), currently recorded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), provide the most accurate statistics on the number of permanent migrants to Australia—data is available back to the 1980s.
- Humanitarian Program outcome (visa grant) data (Table 1), currently recorded by DIAC, provide the most accurate statistics on refugee and humanitarian intakes to Australia—data is available back to the 1970s (prior to that there are estimates available for the number of post war refugees).

Temporary migration statistics

- There has been a significant increase in the number of people entering the country on temporary visas in recent years, particularly overseas students and temporary (long-term) skilled migrants. However, the number of temporary entrants can fluctuate in response to changing circumstances (for example, changes in immigration policy regarding permanent



residency eligibility for graduating overseas students).¹ Data available from DIAC over the last 15 years shows the fluctuations in numbers (Table 2).²

Other

- Settler arrival statistics are a better indication of permanent migration flows than NOM, but include NZ and some other temporary migrants who have indicated an intention to settle—data is available back to the 1920s in the statistical appendix (Table 6).
- It is important to note that ABS data on overseas arrivals and departures in general may relate to the multiple arrivals and departures of individuals in any year and not the number of people. They are not an appropriate source of migration statistics.

Introduction

Since 1945, when Australia's first immigration department was established, approximately seven million permanent migrants have settled in Australia.³ According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the contribution of immigrants from all parts of the world to Australian society, culture and prosperity 'has been an important factor in shaping our nation'.⁴

However, while Australia is often described as a 'nation of immigrants', there is a great deal of confusion and misinformation in the public debate on how many permanent migrants Australia

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1. For more details see; E Koleth, *Overseas students: immigration policy changes 1997–May 2010*, Parliamentary Library, Background note, Canberra, 2010, viewed 20 July 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/pubs/BN/sp/OverseasStudents.pdf>
 2. DIAC's statistical publications (in particular *Population flows*) provide the best sources of information for temporary and permanent migration outcomes since the 1980s. See DIAC's statistical publication web page <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/>
 3. An additional 700 000 people settled in Australia between 1905 and 1945. Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), *Key facts in immigration*, fact sheet no. 2, DIAC, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm>
 4. Ibid.

has actually accepted over the years. In particular, some publicly available statistics on both permanent and temporary migration are often used interchangeably and/or incorrectly with the result that the statistics used to describe migration flows are often inaccurate or misleading.

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on Australia's migration programs and to define and present the relevant data in a simplified format. The paper aims to clarify which statistics are the best to use when measuring permanent migration and addresses some of the popular misconceptions that surround the debate on migration flows to Australia. It is envisaged that some of the statistics provided in the appendix will be updated at regular intervals.

Historical overview of Australia's Migration Program

Australia's immigration program is divided into two distinct programs for permanent migrants—the Migration Program for skilled and family migrants and the Humanitarian Program for refugees and those in refugee-like situations. There have been many changes to these programs and to data collection over the years making it difficult to compare statistics on permanent migration over time. The following background illustrates some of those changes and the corresponding tables are presented in the statistical appendix.

Australia's Migration Program (Table 1)

At the time of federation in 1901, the states administered their own migration programs, but over time the Commonwealth Government began to assume more and more responsibility for immigration policy. After World War I the Commonwealth took active control of immigration and encouraged new settlers, with the result that in the 1920s about 300 000 settlers arrived (mostly under assisted schemes such as the Empire Settlement Scheme). Between 1901 and the beginning



of World War II, approximately 700 000 new settlers arrived and Australia's population grew to about seven million.⁵

Australia's first federal immigration portfolio was created in 1945. The major impetus for the new portfolio, and for the implementation of a large-scale migration program, was World War II and its aftermath. After the war the Australian Government was keen to boost the population in order to stimulate post-war economic development and to increase the numbers of people able to defend the country in the event of another war, with the result that about one million migrants arrived in each of the six decades following 1950.⁶

For many years the Australian Government has reviewed and adjusted the number of places available for permanent migrants on an annual basis according to government priorities. As a result, the Government's planned annual intakes and the numbers of permanent migrants have fluctuated markedly.

Available data on migration levels prior to the 1980s is patchy. It relies on a variety of ABS data, some of which may also include temporary arrivals; or on government planning figures that only provide an indication of migration outcomes for certain years.⁷ Prior to 1959 the Government found it difficult to collect figures on permanent or net migration to Australia. Settler arrivals were not recorded separately from temporary and other arrivals.⁸ In 1959 the Commonwealth Statistician began publishing separate figures for 'settler arrivals' and the new system began identifying and recording actual arrivals as distinct from long term visitors, returning Australians and others.⁹ Similarly, government migration program planning figures were not published

5. Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), *Immigration–federation to century's end*, Canberra, 2001, pp. 1–3, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/federation/>

6. DIAC, *Key facts in immigration*, op. cit.

7. DIMA, *Immigration–federation to century's end*, op. cit., provides some indication of the planning figures for certain years, but it is not comprehensive.

8. Department of Labor and Immigration, *1788–1975 Australia and immigration*, AGPS, Canberra, 1975, p. 7; and Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australia and immigration 1788 to 1988*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 43.

9. Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australia and immigration 1788 to 1988*, op. cit.

systematically before the 1980s and are only available for some years in historical departmental reports and records.¹⁰

According to departmental records, the highest number of settlers to arrive in any one year since World War II was 185 099 in 1969–70 under the Gorton Government. The lowest number in any one year was 52 752 in 1975–76 during the Whitlam and Fraser Governments.¹¹ After the peak of 185 000 settler arrivals in 1969, numbers declined and by 1975 the Government's planned intake for the year was only 50 000. The migration intake gradually climbed again and by 1988 there was another peak under the Hawke Government with a planned intake of 145 000. After 1988, the migration planning levels were gradually reduced, with lows of 60 000 to 80 000 in the early 1990s.¹²

When the Howard Government came to power in 1996, there was an initial dip, followed by a gradual increase in the planned migration numbers again with an intake of 148 200 in 2006–07. This increase continued under the Rudd Government, despite some reductions in the skilled migrant intakes due to the economic downturn.¹³

In response to these migration waves, the makeup of Australia's overseas-born population has also fluctuated over the years from around 32 per cent in 1891 to 20 per cent in the 1980s. As of 30 June 2009, 27 per cent of the overall resident population was born overseas.¹⁴ Statistics on the top ten countries of birth for the overseas-born population since 1901 are presented in Table 7 of the statistical appendix.

10. For some detail on planning intakes prior to the 1980s see Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australia and immigration 1788 to 1988*, op. cit.; and DIMA, *Immigration–federation to century's end*, op. cit.

11. DIAC, *Key facts in immigration*, op. cit.

12. DIMA, *Immigration–federation to century's end*, op. cit.

13. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Migration Program: the size of the skilled and family programs*, media release, 12 May 2009, <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce02-budget-09.htm>

14. See ABS, *Migration Australia, 2008–09*, cat. no. 3412.0, Canberra, 2010, pp. 45–47, viewed 2 August 2010, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/3A3EB923A8CBB55CCA25776E001762A6/\\$File/34120_2008-09.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/3A3EB923A8CBB55CCA25776E001762A6/$File/34120_2008-09.pdf)

Australia's Humanitarian Program (Table 1)

After the first federal immigration department was established in 1945, Australia resettled thousands of post-war refugees and displaced people, and ratified the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees on 22 January 1954. However, it was not until the late 1970s with the arrival of the Indochinese 'boat people' seeking asylum, that the government developed a specific refugee policy.¹⁵

Australia's first planned Humanitarian Program tailored to the special needs of refugees and asylum seekers commenced under the Fraser Government in 1977. Before then, the Government's approach was to respond to international events and crises as they arose. Now there was a program specifically designed to deal with refugee and humanitarian issues and which also included the establishment of mechanisms to determine onshore protection claims.¹⁶

The new program was designed to help Australia respond to the Indochinese humanitarian crisis (and any future crises) in an orderly manner.¹⁷ According to departmental records, 108 641 Indochinese refugees were resettled in Australia between April 1975 and June 1988.¹⁸ Most were resettled between 1979 and 1982 when there were around 20 000 Indochinese arrivals per year under the new Humanitarian Program.¹⁹

By the mid 1980s, the Humanitarian Program intake had reduced to 11 000–12 000 a year and has remained at around 13 000 ever since, with a couple of exceptions—for example, higher

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15. J Phillips, *Australia's Humanitarian Program*, Research note, no. 9, 2005–06, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2005, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/2005-06/06rn09.pdf>
 16. DIAC, *Refugee and humanitarian issues: Australia's response*, June 2009, p. 21, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/refugee/ref-hum-issues/pdf/refugee-humanitarian-issues-june09.pdf>
 17. D McMaster, *Asylum seekers: Australia's response to refugees*, Melbourne University Press, 2001, p. 70.
 18. Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA), 'Indochinese Refugees', *Statistical Note*, no. 37, Statistics Section, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, October 1988.
 19. DIAC, *Population flows: immigration aspects 2008–09*, source data, chapter 4, 2010, viewed 27 July 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2008-09/>

numbers of humanitarian visas were granted in 2000–01 due to a wave of boat arrivals carrying asylum seekers from the Middle East.²⁰

By the 1990s, a comprehensive refugee and humanitarian system was in place within the immigration portfolio and in January 1993 a decision was made by the Keating government to separate out the Humanitarian Program from the general Migration Program.²¹

As with the general Migration Program, the Australian Government reviews and adjusts the number of places available for refugee and humanitarian entrants on an annual basis in response to humanitarian need and according to government policy. As a result, both government planning figures and the number of humanitarian entrants have fluctuated over the years. However, available data on refugee and humanitarian entrants prior to the 1970s is limited. In the 1970s and 1980s, Humanitarian Program outcomes began to be published more comprehensively. Table 1 provides figures from 1984–85.

In 1996 the Howard Government introduced the practice of separately identifying those granted protection within Australia, or 'onshore', from those accepted 'offshore'.²² This introduced some new confusion in terms of the collection and presentation of Humanitarian Program data. While offshore and onshore components were separately identified for the first time, the data was numerically linked. Under the Howard Government, this meant that those processed extraterritorially under the 'Pacific Solution' were mostly included and counted under the 'offshore' component of the Humanitarian Program. In contrast, under the current Government, places allocated to those processed offshore on Christmas Island are counted under the 'onshore' not 'offshore' category. To confuse things further, the 7750 planning places currently allocated against the offshore humanitarian category are also shared with those granted onshore protection visas (including those processed on Christmas Island). The annual visa grant outcomes are then broken down and published each year (refugee, humanitarian and onshore) to reflect the actual outcomes.

20. DIAC, *Refugee and humanitarian issues: Australia's response*, op. cit.

21. Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Refugee and humanitarian issues: the focus for Australia*, Canberra, 1994; and DIAC, *Refugee and humanitarian issues: Australia's response*, op. cit.

22. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *1996–97 Humanitarian Program*, media release, Canberra, 3 July 1996.

Measuring permanent migration

There are two main sources of immigration related data—DIAC and the ABS—and the limitations of the data sets need to be understood. Changes in government policy and data collection methodology by these government agencies have also added to the complexity in interpreting this data and make it very difficult to compare migration-related statistics over time. The following examples illustrate these points.

The annual statistics on Migration and Humanitarian program 'outcomes' (visa grants) provided by the Department of Immigration since the 1980s show the number of permanent visas granted in any given year. This is the most accurate measure of the actual number of permanent migrants. However, one limitation is that offshore visa recipients may not actually arrive and settle in the country in the year the visa was issued.²³

The ABS provides a figure for net overseas migration (NOM). However, in September 2006, the ABS changed the methodology for determining what is meant by a 'long-term' arrival or departure. As a result NOM data provided after September 2006 is not strictly comparable with previous years.²⁴ In particular, in 2007 the ABS introduced the '12/16 rule' whereby a traveller is included in the resident population if they are in the country for a total of 12 months or more over a 16 month period and vice versa. Prior to that, a traveller had to be in (or out of) the country continuously for 12 months.²⁵

The following sections describe the more commonly used categories of migration-related statistics and offer suggestions as to when it may be appropriate to use them. The corresponding tables are presented in the statistical appendix.

23. DIAC, *Population flows: immigration aspects*, 2006–07, Canberra, 2008, p. 4, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2006-7/>

24. ABS, *Statistical implications of improved methods for estimating net overseas migration*, information paper, Canberra, 2007, viewed 25 May 2010, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/1B5B665D7B575C40CA2572E5002216FD/\\$File/3107055005_2007.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/1B5B665D7B575C40CA2572E5002216FD/$File/3107055005_2007.pdf)

25. ABS, *Migration Australia*, op. cit., p. 16.

Migration and population growth (Tables 4 and 5)

The rate at which Australia's population has grown has increased significantly over the last five years—faster than at any other time in the past several decades.²⁶ Population growth is affected by two components; natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths); and net overseas migration (NOM). Although Australia's fertility rate has increased since the early 2000s, it is NOM that has been the main driver of population growth in the last few years.²⁷

The largest contribution to NOM in recent years has been from people on temporary visas—mostly comprised of overseas students and temporary skilled migrants—and Australian residents returning to the country due to the economic downturn.²⁸ So, although permanent migration intakes over the last few years have been high in comparison to previous years, it is important to note that Australia's recent population growth predominantly reflects a significant increase in temporary, not permanent migration, and that NOM can fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Net overseas migration (NOM) statistics (Tables 3, 4 and 5)

Net overseas migration statistics are often used as an indicator of migration flows. However, they should be used with caution as NOM data includes the movements of those who are not permanent migrants or not migrants at all, such as Australian and New Zealand citizens coming and going on a long term basis, and any long term temporary migrants who are intending to stay for a year or more.

NOM is calculated by taking into account the addition (or loss) to the population of Australia arising from the difference between those leaving permanently or on a long-term basis (12 months or longer) and those arriving permanently or on a long-term basis.²⁹ This data includes:

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26. ABS, 'Population growth: past, present and future', *Australian social trends 2010*, Canberra, 2010, viewed 20 July 2010, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/LookupAttach/4102.0Publication30.06.102/\\$File/41020_PopulationGrowth.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/LookupAttach/4102.0Publication30.06.102/$File/41020_PopulationGrowth.pdf)
 27. Ibid.
 28. Ibid.
 29. DIAC, *Population projections*, fact sheet no. 15, DIAC web page, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/15population.htm>

- people who change their travel intentions, such as those who come to Australia intending to stay short-term but who actually stay longer than 12 months, and vice versa
- permanent residents and Australian citizens either leaving the country or returning home long-term (over 12 months)
- long term arrivals and departures of New Zealand passport holders (New Zealanders are granted a Special Category visa which remains valid for as long as the person remains in Australia), and
- entrants on temporary visas who intend to remain in the country for longer than 12 months, such as international students, people on long-term temporary (457) business visas and other long term visitors.³⁰

In recent years it has been temporary, not permanent, migration that has contributed significantly to fluctuations in net overseas migration data. The ABS states that:

The largest contribution to NOM in recent years has been from people on temporary visas. In 2007–08, these accounted for 186 500 people or two-thirds of all net migration. Students made up the largest category of temporary net migration and 39 per cent of all NOM. The number of overseas students contributing to NOM has more than doubled from 45 300 in 2004–05 to 108 700 in 2007–08. Over half of the student component of NOM was made up of students who were citizens of India (33 300) and China (25 600). The third largest source of students in 2007–08 was Nepal with a NOM contribution of 7300 (equal to 7 per cent of the total NOM of students).³¹

Over the past 25 years, the contribution of NOM to population growth has averaged around 39 per cent per year, but has significantly increased in recent years (it has doubled since 2005–06).³² Increases in the migration intakes, along with larger numbers of Australians returning from places like the UK due to the economic downturn, have pushed the average level of NOM up.³³ The net

30. DIAC, *Population projections*, op. cit.; and ABS, *Information Paper: Improving net overseas migration estimation*, March 2010, viewed 16 July 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3412.0.55.001Main+Features1Mar%202010?OpenDocument>

31. ABS, 'Population growth: past, present and future', op. cit.

32. ABS, *Migration*, op. cit., p. 7.

33. DIAC, *Population projections*, op. cit.

number of New Zealand citizens in Australia increased by 75 per cent between 2004–05 and 2007–08, and New Zealanders contributed 13 per cent to NOM in 2007–08.³⁴

The preliminary NOM estimate for 2008–09 is 298 900 (the highest figure on record) representing 65 per cent of population growth.³⁵ However, NOM can fluctuate considerably from year to year and is estimated to have dropped by around 20 per cent over the last financial year.³⁶

In summary, caution should be used when using NOM—while it may be an indication of changes to the population, it is not a measure of the number of permanent migrants arriving in any given year. Instead, NOM measures departures and arrivals of both permanent and (long term) temporary entrants and the resulting increase or decrease in the population overall. Also, statistics on overseas arrivals and departures relate to the number of movements of individuals and not necessarily the number of people. The ABS states that:

Care should be taken when using permanent and long-term movement data as it is known that some individuals who travel multiple times in a year are counted each time they cross Australia's borders.³⁷

It is also important to note that, although ABS net overseas migration data is available back to 1901, the methodologies used to estimate NOM have changed significantly over time and the statistics for different years are not always comparable.³⁸

34. ABS, *Migration*, op. cit., p. 28.

35. Ibid., p. 7.

36. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Net overseas migration on track to fall by 20 per cent*, media release, 30 June 2010, viewed 16 July 2010, <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2010/ce10055.htm>

37. ABS, *Overseas arrivals and departures, Australia, January 2010*, Canberra, February 2010, viewed 25 May 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/3401.0Main%20Features2Jan%202010?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3401.0&issue=Jan%202010&num=&view>

38. For example, in 2006 the ABS changed its definition of 'long term'. For a discussion of the complexities affecting the reliability of NOM in earlier periods see: P McDonald, S Khoo and R Kippen, *Alternative net migration estimates for Australia: exploding the myth of a rapid increase in numbers*, Working papers in demography no. 89, ANU, Canberra, 2003, viewed 20 July 2010, <http://dspace.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/41502/4/89.pdf>. For more information on the 2006 changes

Settler arrival statistics (Table 6)

The definition of a 'settler arrival' for migration purposes is someone arriving in Australia who:

- holds a permanent visa
- holds a temporary visa where there is a clear intention to settle
- is a New Zealand citizen indicating an intention to settle, and
- is any person otherwise eligible to settle.³⁹

Eligible 'settler arrivals' may hold a permanent visa under the family, skill or special eligibility streams of the Migration Program or a visa under the refugee, special humanitarian or special assistance streams of the Humanitarian Program. However, others not covered under the Migration or Humanitarian Programs may also be eligible, such as New Zealand citizens; children born to Australian citizens overseas; people granted Australian citizenship overseas; and residents of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island.⁴⁰

As noted above, ABS data on arrivals and departures, including settler arrivals, tracks the number of movements not individuals. Prior to 1959, arrivals and departures were only classified as permanent or temporary. The permanent category was subsequently subdivided into permanent and long-term movement. The data for these categories is based on the stated intentions of travellers. Recent research comparing arrivals and departures data with data obtained using the new ABS methodology for calculating NOM (which is able to track travellers' movement history) indicates that the stated intentions and actual movements of individuals diverge significantly.⁴¹

In summary, settler arrival statistics are a better indication of permanent movements than NOM, but include NZ citizens and some other temporary migrants who have indicated an intention to

and its effects on the final NOM estimate see B Birrell and E Healy, 'Net overseas migration: why is it so high', *People and Place*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2010, pp. 56–65.

39. DIAC, *Settler arrivals 2008–2009*, Canberra, 2009, p. 62, viewed 25 May 2010, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/settler-arrivals/settler_arrivals0809.pdf

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63.

41. B Birrell and E Healy, *op. cit.* p. 57, 62–63.

settle. Care should be taken in using these statistics and the ABS does not consider them an appropriate source of migration statistics.⁴²

Migration Program statistics (Table 1)

As part of its planned Migration Program, the federal government allocates places each year for people wanting to migrate permanently to Australia. Migration Program planning numbers fluctuate according to the priorities and economic and political considerations of the government of the day. Since the first federal immigration department was established, immigration policy has become more highly planned and in recent decades has specifically targeted skilled migration while continuing to allow a certain amount of family and humanitarian migration.

In the late 1980s, the federal government introduced the practice of dividing the immigration program into three main streams (family, skill and humanitarian).⁴³ Since then, data on the number of visas granted by category under Australia's Migration Program each year has been collected and published by the Government.

Although only available since the 1980s, this data provides the best measure of the actual number of permanent migrants planning to settle in Australia.⁴⁴

Humanitarian Program statistics (Table 1)

As discussed in detail earlier in this paper, over the years policy changes have resulted in changes to the methodology for counting humanitarian entrants. For example, onshore refugees were not counted against the Humanitarian Program until the Howard Government introduced the practice

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42. ABS, 'Explanatory Notes', *Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008*, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, Canberra, August, 2008, viewed 27 July 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3105.0.65.001Main+Features12008?OpenDocument>
43. B York, *Australia and refugees 1901–2002: an annotated chronology based on official sources*, Parliamentary Library, 2003, viewed 1 June 2010, http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/online/Refugees_contents.htm
44. Note: ABS (NOM) data on permanent visa holders does not correlate with DIAC data and should be used with caution. For more detail see ABS, *Migration Australia*, op. cit., p. 31.

of separately identifying and quantifying offshore and onshore components of the Humanitarian Program in 1996.⁴⁵

Despite these discrepancies, Humanitarian Program visa grants are the most accurate statistics available for refugee and humanitarian intakes to Australia back to the 1970s. Prior to the 1970s there are only estimates available for the number of post war refugees.

Temporary migration statistics (Table 2)

Although the rise in permanent migration to Australia is significant, many argue that the greatest change in immigration patterns to Australia in the last decade or so is the change in emphasis from permanent to temporary migration—with temporary migration increasingly becoming the first step towards permanent settlement in Australia for many people.⁴⁶ According to the ABS, over the last ten years onshore permanent visas have increased fourfold from 15 000 in 1998–99 to 63 400 in 2008–09.⁴⁷ Over one-third of the Migration Program in 2007–08 was made up of people granted permanent residence after initial entry to Australia on a temporary basis.⁴⁸

Unlike the permanent migration program, the level of temporary migration to Australia is usually not determined by government, but rather is demand driven. The two most significant categories contributing to the rise in temporary migration to Australia in recent years are temporary skilled migrants and overseas students.

The most commonly used visa to sponsor temporary skilled migrants is the (subclass 457) *Temporary business (long stay)* visa introduced by the Howard Government in 1996.⁴⁹ There is no

45. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *1996–97 Humanitarian Program*, media release, Canberra, 3 July 1996; and DIAC, *Population flows: immigration aspects, 2006–07*, op. cit., p. 69.

46. G Hugo, *Temporary migration: a new paradigm of international migration*, Research note no. 55, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2004, viewed 3 August 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/2003-04/04rn55.htm>

47. ABS, *Migration*, op. cit., p. 30.

48. DIAC, *Population Flows: immigration aspects 2007–08*, chapter 2, p.22, 2008, viewed 20 July 2010, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2007-08/PopFlows_09_chp2.pdf

49. J Phillips, *Temporary (long stay) business visas: subclass 457*, Research note, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2007, viewed 20 July 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/2006-07/07rn15.pdf>

cap set on the number of 457 visas which may be granted in a particular year. Rather, the number of visas granted is directly related to the level of demand by employers for temporary skilled migrant workers, and their willingness to sponsor such workers. As a result, the temporary skilled migration program is highly responsive to changes in economic conditions and the demand for labour has risen (and fallen) in recent years accordingly.

Overseas students have also contributed significantly to temporary migration figures in Australia in recent years. In 2007–08 international students made up the largest group of temporary visa holders to arrive:

Australia's immigration program has also seen an exponential increase in overseas student entrants. Indeed, by 2007 Australia accounted for 11 per cent of the international student market and had seen a three-fold increase in student numbers over the previous ten years. Figures published by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) indicate that the number of student visa holders in Australia grew at the average annual rate of 13.9 per cent every year after June 2001, rising to a total of 386 523 student visa holders in the 12 months to the end of June 2009.⁵⁰

Since the mid 1990s, the number of overseas visitors entering Australia on a temporary long-term basis (staying for at least one year) has exceeded the number of people arriving for permanent settlement.⁵¹ However, it is not easy to provide meaningful statistics for long-term temporary migration. Researchers McDonald and Withers point out that:

Immigrants are broadly divisible into two categories, permanent and temporary. To be included in the count of the Australian population, temporary immigrants need to stay in Australia for at least 12 months within a given 16-month period ... Statistics for long-term temporary immigrants are more difficult to describe. The main categories are overseas students, persons coming to Australia for specific employment (long stay business visa), working holiday makers, persons on bridging visas (between other visa types), persons on temporary protection visas and over-stayers (those who have remained in Australia illegally after their visa has expired). As most of these people go in and out of the country relatively frequently, statistics on their movements can be misleading. Stock data are possibly more useful than flow data.⁵²

50. E Koleth, *op. cit.* See also ABS, *Migration*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

51. G. Hugo, *A new paradigm of international migration: implications for migration policy and planning for Australia*, Research paper no. 10, Parliamentary Library 2003–04, p. 19, viewed 20 July 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/2003-04/04rp10.pdf>

52. P. McDonald and G. Withers, *Population and Australia's future labour force*, 2008, p. 11, viewed 20 July 2010, http://dpl/Books/2008/McDonaldWithers_Population.pdf

Statistical appendix

Table 1: Permanent migrants: migration and humanitarian program visa grants since 1985

Year	Migration Program				Humanitarian Program
	Family	Skill	Special Eligibility	Total	
1984–85	44 200	10 100	200	54 500	14 207
1985–86	63 400	16 200	400	80 000	11 700
1986–87	72 600	28 500	600	101 700	11 291
1987–88	79 500	42 000	600	122 100	11 392
1988–89	72 700	51 200	800	124 700	11 309
1989–90	66 600	52 700	900	120 200	12 415
1990–91	61 300	49 800	1 200	112 200	11 284
1991–92	55 900	41 400	1 700	98 900	12 009
1992–93	43 500	21 300	1 400	67 900	11 845
1993–94	43 200	18 300	1 300	62 800	14 070
1994–95	44 500	30 400	1 600	76 500	14 858
1995–96	56 700	24 100	1 700	82 500	16 252
1996–97	44 580	27 550	1 730	73 900	11 902
1997–98	31 310	34 670	1 110	67 100	12 055
1998–99	32 040	35 000	890	67 900	11 356
1999–00	32 000	35 330	2 850	70 200	15 860
2000–01	33 470	44 730	2 420	80 610	13 733
2001–02	38 090	53 520	1 480	93 080	12 349
2002–03	40 790	66 050	1 230	108 070	12 525
2003–04	42 230	71 240	890	114 360	13 823
2004–05	41 740	77 880	450	120 060	13 178
2005–06	45 290	97 340	310	142 930	14 144
2006–07	50 080	97 920	200	148 200	13 017
2007–08	49 870	108 540	220	158 630	13 014
2008–09	56 366	114 777	175	171 318	13 507
2009–10 (planned)	60 300	108 100	300	168 700	13 750
2010–11 (planned)	54 550	113 850	300	168 700	13 750

Sources: Migration Program: DIAC advice supplied to the Parliamentary Library in July 2010 taken from *Population flows: immigration aspects*, various editions since 1992; [Migration Program Statistics](#) web page and C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), [Budget: Migration Program](#), media release, 11 May 2010 for the planning figures. Humanitarian Program: DIAC, [Population flows: immigration aspects 2008–09](#), source data, chapter 4, 2010.

Table 2: Temporary migrants: overseas student and business long stay (subclass 457) visa grants since 1996

Year	Overseas students	Temporary business (long stay) 457 visas
1996–97	113 000	25 786
1997–98	108 827	30 880
1998–99	110 894	29 320
1999–00	119 806	31 070
2000–01	146 577	36 900
2001–02	151 894	33 510
2002–03	162 575	36 800
2003–04	171 616	39 500
2004–05	174 786	49 590
2005–06	190 674	71 150
2006–07	228 592	87 310
2007–08	278 180	110 570
2008–09	320 368	101 280

Sources: DIAC, various years of annual reports, population flows publications and migration statistics web pages; and Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, [Migration Legislation Amendment \(Worker Protection\) Bill 2008](#) report, 2008, pp. 17–18 (for 457 visa grants).

Table 3: Net overseas migration (NOM) since 1901

Year	NOM ^{(a) (b)}	Year	NOM ^{(a) (b)}	Year	NOM ^{(a) (b)}
1901	2 959	1938	8 145	1975	13 515
1902	-4 293	1939	12 527	1976	33 997
1903	-9 876	1940	10 676	1977	68 030
1904	-2 983	1941	5 136	1978	47 394
1905	-2 600	1942	8 536	1979	68 611
1906	-5 049	1943	1 587	1980	100 940
1907	5 195	1944	-1 761	1981	123 066
1908	5 437	1945	-3 273	1982	102 709
1909	21 783	1946	-11 589	1983	54 995
1910	29 912	1947	12 186	1984	59 823
1911	74 379	1948	48 468	1985	89 319
1912	91 892	1949	149 270	1986	110 661
1913	63 227	1950	153 685	1987	136 093
1914	-8 226	1951	110 362	1988	172 794
1915	-84 410	1952	97 454	1989	129 478
1916	-128 737	1953	42 883	1990	97 131
1917	-17 822	1954	68 565	1991	81 669
1918	23 359	1955	95 317	1992	51 358
1919	166 303	1956	102 105	1993	34 822
1920	27 606	1957	77 622	1994	55 506
1921	17 525	1958	64 879	1995	106 864
1922	40 157	1959	83 578	1996	97 444
1923	39 714	1960	92 776	1997	72 402
1924	46 069	1961	65 439	1998	88 781
1925	39 762	1962	64 638	1999	104 210
1926	42 282	1963	76 844	2000	111 441
1927	49 401	1964	103 999	2001	136 076
1928	28 864	1965	111 609	2002	110 475
1929	10 087	1966	95 931	2003	110 104
1930	-9 833	1967	96 558	2004	106 425
1931	-12 117	1968	123 452	2005	137 009
1932	-4 608	1969	140 331	2006	182 200
1933	-1 364	1970	138 382	2007	244 100
1934	- 388	1971	103 553	2008p	301 200
1935	1 251	1972	56 320	2009p	277 700
1936	1 283	1973	67 494		
1937	5 075	1974	87 248		

p = preliminary estimates

Series Break Information

Prior to July 1922 crew members were included

Prior to July 1925 figures are total overseas arrivals and departures from Australia

From July 1925 figures are Net Permanent and Long Term migration

Break in series from September quarter 1971 to June quarter 2006 inclusive, Net Overseas Migration (NOM) was the difference between permanent and long-term arrivals and permanent and long-term departures.

For September quarter 2006 onwards estimates for NOM are the difference between the number of incoming travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more and are added to the population (NOM arrivals) and the number of outgoing travellers who leave Australia for 12 months or more and are subtracted from the population (NOM departures)

(a) Estimates for September quarter 2006 onwards use an improved methodology and are not comparable with NOM estimates prior to this.

(b) An adjustment for category jumping (later referred to as migration adjustments) was included for estimates for September quarter 1976 to June quarter 2006, except for September quarter 1997 to June quarter 2001 when it was set to zero.

Sources: Data for 1901–1924: DIAC, [Immigration: Federation to Century's End](#), DIAC, Canberra, 2001.

Data for 1925–2005: ABS, [Australian Historical Population Statistics](#), cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, 2008.

Data for 2006 onwards: ABS, [Australian Demographic Statistics](#), cat. no. 3101.0, 2010.



Table 4: Components of population growth since 1972

Year	Births (b)	Deaths (b)	Natural Increase (Births - Deaths)	Net Overseas Migration (c)	Estimated resident population (ERP) (d)
1971-72 (a)	271 960	110 191	161 769	75 672	13 303 664
1972-73 (a)	255 848	111 336	144 512	56 562	13 504 538
1973-74 (a)	243 658	110 179	133 479	82 926	13 722 571
1974-75 (a)	239 794	114 501	125 293	44 675	13 892 995
1975-76 (a)	231 135	110 610	120 525	21 239	14 033 083
1976-77	226 954	111 490	115 464	57 897	14 192 234
1977-78	226 359	108 059	118 300	62 715	14 359 255
1978-79	223 370	108 315	115 055	55 137	14 515 729
1979-80	223 664	106 654	117 010	75 941	14 695 356
1980-81	230 920	109 429	121 491	119 175	14 923 260
1981-82	237 076	110 990	126 086	128 117	15 184 247
1982-83	241 764	112 918	128 846	73 295	15 393 472
1983-84	240 544	110 887	129 657	49 098	15 579 391
1984-85	241 814	114 197	127 617	73 708	15 788 312
1985-86	239 115	116 069	123 046	100 359	16 018 350
1986-87	242 797	116 139	126 658	125 730	16 263 874
1987-88	246 200	120 463	125 737	149 341	16 532 164
1988-89	250 155	118 767	131 388	157 436	16 814 416
1989-90	257 521	125 112	132 409	124 647	17 065 128
1990-91	261 158	119 572	141 586	86 432	17 284 036
1991-92	259 186	120 836	138 350	68 580	17 494 664
1992-93	259 959	121 338	138 621	30 042	17 667 093
1993-94	258 314	123 496	134 818	46 549	17 854 738
1994-95	258 210	126 232	131 978	80 125	18 071 758
1995-96	250 438	126 400	124 038	104 137	18 310 714
1996-97	253 660	127 298	126 362	87 079	18 517 564
1997-98	249 105	129 255	119 850	79 162	18 711 271
1998-99	249 965	128 278	121 687	96 483	18 925 855
1999-00	249 310	128 392	120 918	107 275	19 153 380
2000-01	247 500	128 913	118 587	135 673	19 413 240
2001-02	247 288	130 253	117 035	110 556	19 651 438
2002-03	246 663	132 239	114 424	116 498	19 895 435
2003-04	249 082	133 231	115 851	99 966	20 127 363

2004–05	255 934	131 354	124 580	123 763	20 394 791
2005–06	263 540	134 041	129 499	146 753	20 697 880
2006–07	277 724	135 976	141 748	232 824	21 072 452
2007–08	289 492	140 736	148 756	277 332	21 498 540
2008–09	300 936	143 144	157 792	298 924	21 955 256

(a) Between 1971 and 1976 inconsistencies exist between the components of growth of the population and estimates of the population. Estimates of category jumping were made only from September quarter 1976.

(b) Births and deaths figures used to compile natural increase for population estimates are based on year of occurrence and may differ from births and deaths based on year of registration.

(c) Estimates for net overseas migration (NOM) contain a break in time series. Estimates for September quarter 2006 onwards use an improved methodology and are not comparable with NOM estimates prior to this.

(d) 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 out of 16 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 out of 16 months. See ABS, 'Glossary', *Australian Demographic Statistics*, cat. no. 3101.0, December 2009, viewed 4 August 2010. For 1994, the sum of the components of population change for Australia does not equal the difference between the 1994 and 1993 ERPs due to the inclusion of the September quarter 1993 populations of Christmas Island (1470 persons) and Cocos (Keeling) Islands (625 persons) in the Australian population for the first time.

Sources: Data for 1971–72 to 2005-06: ABS, [Australian Historical Population Statistics](#), cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, 2008. Data for 2006–07 to 2008-09: ABS, [Australian Demographic Statistics](#), cat. no. 3101.0, 2010.

Table 5: Population growth rates since 1972

Year	Natural increase rate	Net overseas migration rate	Total population growth rate (a)
1971-72	1.24	0.58	1.81
1972-73	1.09	0.43	1.51
1973-74	0.99	0.61	1.61
1974-75	0.91	0.33	1.24
1975-76	0.87	0.15	1.01
1976-77	0.82	0.41	1.13
1977-78	0.83	0.44	1.18
1978-79	0.80	0.38	1.09
1979-80	0.81	0.52	1.24
1980-81	0.83	0.81	1.55
1981-82	0.84	0.86	1.75
1982-83	0.85	0.48	1.38
1983-84	0.84	0.32	1.21
1984-85	0.82	0.47	1.34
1985-86	0.78	0.64	1.46
1986-87	0.79	0.78	1.53
1987-88	0.77	0.92	1.65
1988-89	0.79	0.95	1.71
1989-90	0.79	0.74	1.49
1990-91	0.83	0.51	1.28
1991-92	0.80	0.40	1.22
1992-93	0.79	0.17	0.99
1993-94	0.76	0.26	1.06
1994-95	0.74	0.45	1.22
1995-96	0.69	0.58	1.32
1996-97	0.69	0.48	1.13
1997-98	0.65	0.43	1.05
1998-99	0.65	0.52	1.15
1999-00	0.64	0.57	1.20
2000-01	0.62	0.71	1.36
2001-02	0.60	0.57	1.23
2002-03	0.58	0.59	1.24
2003-04	0.58	0.50	1.17
2004-05	0.62	0.61	1.33
2005-06	0.63	0.72	1.49
2006-07	0.68	1.12	1.81
2007-08	0.71	1.32	2.02
2008-09	0.73	1.39	2.12

(a) Population change over a period as a proportion (percentage) of the population at the beginning of the period.

Sources: Data for 1971-72 to 2005-06: ABS, [Australian Historical Population Statistics](#), cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, 2008.

Data for 2006-07 to 2008-09: ABS, [Australian Demographic Statistics](#), cat. no. 3101.0, 2010.

Table 6: Permanent and long-term overseas movement since 1925

Arrivals					Departures			
Year	Permanent Settler Arrivals (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-term Arrivals	Permanent departures (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-term departures
		Residents returning (a)	Visitors arriving (a)			Residents departing (a)	Visitors departing (a)	
1925	56 477	n/a	n/a	56 477	16 715	n/a	n/a	16 715
1926	59 464	n/a	n/a	59 464	17 182	n/a	n/a	17 182
1927	67 078	n/a	n/a	67 078	17 677	n/a	n/a	17 677
1928	48 233	n/a	n/a	48 233	19 369	n/a	n/a	19 369
1929	31 698	n/a	n/a	31 698	21 611	n/a	n/a	21 611
1930	17 537	n/a	n/a	17 537	27 370	n/a	n/a	27 370
1931	9 441	n/a	n/a	9 441	21 558	n/a	n/a	21 558
1932	9 868	n/a	n/a	9 868	14 476	n/a	n/a	14 476
1933	10 749	n/a	n/a	10 749	12 113	n/a	n/a	12 113
1934	11 778	n/a	n/a	11 778	12 166	n/a	n/a	12 166
1935	12 608	n/a	n/a	12 608	11 357	n/a	n/a	11 357
1936	12 653	n/a	n/a	12 653	11 370	n/a	n/a	11 370
1937	16 291	n/a	n/a	16 291	11 216	n/a	n/a	11 216
1938	19 548	n/a	n/a	19 548	11 403	n/a	n/a	11 403
1939	24 068	n/a	n/a	24 068	11 541	n/a	n/a	11 541
1940	16 152	n/a	n/a	16 152	5 476	n/a	n/a	5 476
1941	8 940	n/a	n/a	8 940	3 804	n/a	n/a	3 804
1942	10 145	n/a	n/a	10 145	1 609	n/a	n/a	1 609
1943	3 516	n/a	n/a	3 516	1 929	n/a	n/a	1 929
1944	2 511	n/a	n/a	2 511	4 272	n/a	n/a	4 272
1945	7 512	n/a	n/a	7 512	10 785	n/a	n/a	10 785
1946	18 217	n/a	n/a	18 217	29 806	n/a	n/a	29 806
1947	31 765	n/a	n/a	31 765	19 579	n/a	n/a	19 579
1948	65 739	n/a	n/a	65 739	17 271	n/a	n/a	17 271
1949	167 727	n/a	n/a	167 727	18 457	n/a	n/a	18 457
1950	174 540	n/a	n/a	174 540	20 855	n/a	n/a	20 855
1951	132 542	n/a	n/a	132 542	22 180	n/a	n/a	22 180
1952	127 824	n/a	n/a	127 824	30 370	n/a	n/a	30 370
1953	74 915	n/a	n/a	74 915	32 032	n/a	n/a	32 032
1954	104 014	n/a	n/a	104 014	35 449	n/a	n/a	35 449

Arrivals					Departures			
Year	Permanent Settler Arrivals (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-	Permanent departures (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-
1955	130 795	n/a	n/a	130 795	35 478	n/a	n/a	35 478
1956	123 822	n/a	n/a	123 822	21 717	n/a	n/a	21 717
1957	118 695	n/a	n/a	118 695	41 073	n/a	n/a	41 073
1958	109 857	n/a	n/a	109 857	44 978	n/a	n/a	44 978
1959	97 777	15 285	10 960	124 022	12 900	21 296	6 248	40 444
1960	110 079	16 495	12 797	139 371	10 853	25 331	10 411	46 595
1961	95 407	18 602	13 577	127 586	14 777	32 157	12 213	59 147
1962	90 464	20 580	13 941	124 985	15 429	31 781	13 137	60 347
1963	108 150	22 205	13 813	144 168	16 278	38 317	12 729	67 324
1964	134 464	23 641	15 020	173 125	15 083	40 958	13 085	69 126
1965	147 507	26 260	17 497	191 264	20 913	46 313	12 429	79 655
1966	141 033	28 292	19 234	188 559	26 308	54 321	11 999	92 628
1967	135 019	35 655	21 637	192 311	30 804	52 148	12 801	95 753
1968	159 270	36 387	23 473	219 130	31 675	51 386	12 617	95 678
1969	183 416	38 308	26 867	248 591	33 631	59 027	15 602	108 260
1970	185 325	42 099	31 194	258 618	37 294	64 215	18 727	120 236
1971	155 525	47 782	30 500	233 807	41 122	67 699	21 433	130 254
1972	112 468	54 278	26 559	193 305	45 881	66 853	24 251	136 985
1973	105 003	65 021	27 370	197 394	43 430	64 964	21 506	129 900
1974	121 324	63 320	26 984	211 628	33 751	66 228	24 401	124 380
1975	54 119	58 354	19 858	132 331	29 084	66 406	23 326	118 816
1976	58 287	59 881	23 312	141 480	26 732	68 527	20 631	115 890
1977	75 640	57 701	27 472	160 813	22 762	64 088	19 181	106 031
1978	68 419	57 938	28 390	154 747	24 961	58 519	19 644	103 124
1979	72 236	61 441	33 450	167 127	23 420	54 266	20 422	98 108
1980	94 503	58 760	31 025	184 288	20 843	50 713	19 306	90 862
1981	118 735	59 401	34 552	212 688	19 852	46 738	19 013	85 603
1982	107 171	53 766	34 265	195 202	22 493	46 892	22 956	92 341
1983	78 392	47 806	27 376	153 574	25 870	48 182	26 455	100 507
1984	73 108	51 556	28 868	153 532	22 311	50 780	23 266	96 357
1985	82 000	55 669	34 883	172 552	18 620	51 027	23 793	93 440
1986	103 326	55 307	38 049	196 682	18 817	48 358	25 269	92 444
1987	128 288	53 590	39 737	221 615	20 415	49 977	27 377	97 769
1988	151 549	54 986	47 327	253 862	20 320	54 118	30 326	104 764
1989	131 064	53 442	53 543	238 049	24 829	59 218	35 993	120 040

Arrivals				Departures				
Year	Permanent Settler Arrivals (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-	Permanent departures (a)	Long term: more than one year		TOTAL: Permanent and Long-
1990	121 563	56 365	56 120	234 048	30 365	66 296	40 807	137 468
1991	116 647	61 259	59 326	237 232	29 898	66 127	47 684	143 709
1992	94 246	66 155	60 052	220 453	28 135	66 984	48 540	143 659
1993	65 675	73 428	58 829	197 932	28 074	64 301	48 051	140 426
1994	77 937	78 064	65 912	221 913	27 020	66 365	48 291	141 676
1995	96 969	78 794	78 172	253 935	27 873	69 083	52 406	149 362
1996	92 503	80 004	88 826	261 333	28 479	70 964	58 820	158 263
1997	78 229	81 797	100 191	260 217	30 343	77 181	69 039	176 563
1998	81 065	75 318	112 000	268 383	33 433	81 057	65 112	179 602
1999	88 010	76 133	125 731	289 874	38 225	83 428	64 011	185 664
2000	97 178	80 306	140 076	317 560	43 824	88 087	74 208	206 119
2001	100 888	85 127	170 393	356 408	47 600	93 457	75 074	216 131
2002	89 348	92 396	180 244	361 988	49 081	89 992	83 867	222 940
2003	103 887	98 835	185 727	388 449	54 119	83 986	86 780	224 885
2004	117 473	98 240	196 851	412 564	61 853	87 626	94 189	243 668
2005	128 753	103 909	209 618	442 280	64 398	94 084	93 302	251 784
2006	133 879	107 035	238 565	479 479	69 399	101 211	94 933	265 543
2007	141 645	108 513	285 569	535 727	74 963	102 250	113 698	290 911
2008	161 520	113 750	358 820	634 090	79 410	100 120	142 070	321 600
2009	148 410	117 120	377 250	642 780	82 710	76 010	180 430	339 150

(a) Prior to 1959, overseas arrivals and departures were classified as either permanent or temporary. Revised questions for travellers were introduced in 1958 which enabled arrivals and departures, previously classified as permanent, to be sub-divided (as from 1 January 1959) into two categories: permanent movement; and long-term movement.

'Statistics on overseas arrivals and departures (OAD) relate to the number of movements of travellers rather than the number of travellers. Care should be taken when using permanent and long-term movements data as it is known that some individuals who travel multiple times in a year are counted each time they cross Australia's borders. Permanent and long-term movements in this release are not an appropriate source of migration statistics'. For further information see ABS, [Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia](#), cat. no. 3401.0, 2010.

Source: ABS, [Overseas Arrivals and Departures](#), cat no. 3401.0, June 2010.

Table 7: Top 10 countries of birth for the overseas-born population since 1901

Birthplace	1901 Census		Birthplace	1911 Census	
	No.	%		No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	495 074	57.7	1. United Kingdom (b)	451 288	59.6
2. Ireland (b)	184 085	21.5	2. Ireland (b)	139 434	18.4
3. Germany	38 352	4.5	3. Germany	32 990	4.4
4. China	29 907	3.5	4. New Zealand	31 868	4.2
5. New Zealand	25 788	3.0	5. China	20 775	2.7
6. Sweden & Norway	9 863	1.2	6. Italy	6 719	0.9
7. India	7 637	0.9	7. India	6 644	0.9
8. USA	7 448	0.9	8. USA	6 642	0.9
9. Denmark	6 281	0.7	9. Denmark	5 663	0.7
10. Italy	5 678	0.7	10. Sweden & Norway	5 586	0.7
Top ten total	810 113	94.5	Top ten total	707 609	93.5
Other	47 463	5.5	Other	49 256	6.5
Total overseas born	857 576	100	Total overseas born	756 865	100.0
Total population (a)	3 788 123		Total population (a)	4 455 005	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		<i>22.6</i>	<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		<i>17.0</i>

Birthplace	1921 Census		Birthplace	1933 Census	
	No.	%		No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	568 370	67.7	1. United Kingdom (b)	633 806	70.2
2. Ireland (b)	105 033	12.5	2. Ireland (b)	78 652	8.7
3. New Zealand	38 611	4.6	3. New Zealand	45 963	5.1
4. Germany	22 396	2.7	4. Italy	26 756	3.0
5. China	15 224	1.8	5. Germany	16 842	1.9
6. Italy	8 135	1.0	6. China	8 579	0.9
7. India	6 918	0.8	7. Greece	8 337	0.9
8. USA	6 604	0.8	8. India	6 774	0.7
9. Denmark	6 002	0.7	9. South Africa	6 179	0.7
10. South Africa	5 408	0.6	10. USA	6 066	0.7
Top ten total	782 701	93.2	Top ten total	837 954	92.8
Other	56 878	6.8	Other	65 319	7.2
Total overseas born	839 579	100.0	Total overseas born	903 273	100.0
Total population (a)	5 455 136		Total population (a)	6 629 836	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		<i>15.4</i>	<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		<i>13.6</i>

1947 Census		
Birthplace	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	496 454	66.7
2. Ireland (b)	44 813	6.0
3. New Zealand	43 610	5.9
4. Italy	33 632	4.5
5. Germany	14 567	1.7
6. Greece	12 291	1.1
7. India & Sri Lanka	8 160	0.9
8. Poland	6 573	0.9
9. China	6 404	0.8
10. USA	6 232	0.8
Top ten total	672 736	90.4
Other	71 451	9.6
Total overseas born	744 187	100.0
Total population (a)	7 579 358	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		9.8

1954 Census		
Birthplace	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	616 532	47.9
2 Italy	119 897	9.3
3. Poland	56 594	4.4
4. Netherlands	52 035	4.0
5. Germany	50 855	4.0
6. Ireland (b)	44 673	3.5
7. New Zealand	43 350	3.4
8. Yugoslavia	22 856	1.8
9. Greece	25 862	2.0
10. Malta	19 988	1.6
Top ten total	1 052 642	81.8
Other	233 824	18.2
Total overseas born	1 286 466	100.0
Total population (a)	8 986 530	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		14.3

1961 Census		
Birthplace	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	718 345	40.4
2. Italy	228 296	12.8
3. Germany	109 315	6.1
4. Netherlands	102 083	5.7
5. Greece	77 333	4.3
6. Poland	60 049	3.4
7. Yugoslavia	49 776	2.8
8. New Zealand	47 011	2.6
9. Malta	39 337	2.2
10. Ireland	37 057	2.1
Top ten total	1 468 602	82.6
Other	310 178	17.4
Total overseas born	1 778 780	100.0
Total population (a)	10 508 186	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		16.9

1971 Census		
Birthplace	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	1 046 356	40.6
2. Italy	289 476	11.2
3. Greece	160 200	6.2
4. Yugoslavia	129 816	5.0
5. Germany	110 811	4.3
6. Netherlands	99 295	3.8
7. New Zealand	80 466	3.1
8. Poland	59 700	2.3
9. Malta	53 681	2.1
10. Ireland	41 854	1.6
Top ten total	2 071 655	80.3
Other	507 663	19.7
Total overseas born	2 579 318	100.0
Total population	12 755 638	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		20.2

Birthplace	1981 Census	
	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	1 086 625	36.5
2. Italy	275 883	9.3
3. New Zealand	176 713	5.9
4. Yugoslavia	149 335	5.0
5. Greece	146 625	4.9
6. Germany	110 758	3.7
7. Netherlands	96 044	3.2
8. Poland	59 441	2.0
9. Malta	57 001	1.9
10. Lebanon	49 623	1.7
Top ten total	2 208 048	74.2
Other	765 786	25.8
Total overseas born	2 973 834	100.0
Total population (b) (c)	17 752 824	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		16.8

Birthplace	1991 Census	
	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	1 107 119	30.0
2. New Zealand	264 094	7.2
3. Italy	253 332	6.9
4. Yugoslavia	160 479	4.4
5. Greece	136 028	3.7
6. Viet Nam	121 813	3.3
7. Germany	111 975	3.0
8. Netherlands	94 692	2.6
9. China	77 799	2.1
10. Philippines	73 144	2.0
Top ten total	2 400 475	65.1
Other	1 288 653	34.9
Total overseas born	3 689 128	100.0
Total population (c) (d)	16 770 635	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		22.0

Birthplace	2001 Census	
	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	1 036 261	25.2
2. New Zealand	355 762	8.7
3. Italy	218 722	5.3
4. Viet Nam	154 818	3.8
5. China	142 807	3.5
6. Greece	116 431	2.8
7. Germany	108 214	2.6
8. Philippines	103 915	2.5
9. India	95 445	2.3
10. Netherlands	83 290	2.0
Top ten total	2 415 665	58.8
Other	1 689 803	41.2
Total overseas born	4 105 468	100.0
Total population (c) (d)	18 769 249	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		21.9

Birthplace	2006 Census	
	No.	%
1. United Kingdom (b)	1 038 162	23.5
2. New Zealand	389 467	8.8
3. China	206 593	4.7
4. Italy	199 124	4.5
5. Viet Nam	159 848	3.6
6. India	147 111	3.3
7. Philippines	120 534	2.7
8. Greece	109 989	2.5
9. Germany	106 528	2.4
10. South Africa	104 132	2.4
Top ten total	2 581 488	58.5
Other	1 834 548	41.5
Total overseas born	4 416 036	100.0
Total population (b) (c)	19 855 288	
<i>% of Australian born overseas</i>		22.2

- (a) Excludes full-blood Indigenous persons
- (b) Prior to the 1954 Census persons born in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are recorded together under Ireland
- (c) Excludes overseas visitors
- (d) Includes birthplace not stated

Sources: ABS, *Australian Historical Population Statistics*, cat no. 3105.0.65.001, 2008.

ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1971, 1981, 2001, 2006.

DIAC, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End 1901–2000*, October 2001

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