

Australia



Permanent immigration to Australia has continued to grow. Entries under the 2006-07 migration programme were 148 200, the largest in more than a decade. The shift towards skilled migration,

which began in the second half of the 1990s, continued, resulting in the largest number of skilled migrants (including accompanying family) ever admitted to Australia.

In 2006, Australia undertook the most extensive review of its skilled migration programme since 1988, at a time of unprecedented emphasis on the skill category (66% of the total migrant intake of 148 200, or almost 98 000 people). In spite of high employment figures for this group (82-83% of Principal Applicants in the two main categories employed within six months of arrival), changes were introduced from September 2007 designed to further enhance employment outcomes. In particular the threshold level of English competence was increased, additional bonus points were provided for applicants with high level English (reflecting employer demand), and greater emphasis was placed on work experience related to field of qualification (in particular for former students).

These points test changes were underpinned by a simpler visa structure, greatly enhanced speed of processing (three weeks for on-shore applicants compared to three months for those off-shore), and a capacity for applications to be electronically lodged anywhere in the world. Accountants dominated 2006-07 skilled migration flows (27% of the category), followed by business and computing professionals (16%). The top five source countries were the United Kingdom (18%), India (15%), China (11%), Malaysia (4%) and the Philippines (3%).

International students represent a primary resource for skilled migration, their numbers expanding in response to migration opportunities. In 2006-07 a record number of almost 230 000 visas were granted, a 20% increase over the previous year. India (about 29 000) had overtaken China (almost 25 000) as the most important origin country, followed by the Republic of Korea (almost 13 000). Rapid growth in

demand was evident in the vocational study sector – enrolments rising from below 30 000 in 2005-06 to more than 43 000 in direct reflection of the growing range of trade occupations scoring points for skill migration. Large numbers of international students become permanent residents and stay, the skill migration review demonstrating this applies to 66% of all Indian students, compared to 38% of those from China.

A growing number of migrants were also selected for entry under regional nomination schemes – a programme resulting, for example, in more than doubling the proportion of migrants settling in the previously under-subscribed state of South Australia between 2003-04 and 2006-07, supported by a substantial discount of the number of the points required for skill migration (100 compared to 120).

In terms of other migration categories, 10% growth occurred in 2006-07 in the admission of family members.

A further 1 300 visas were allocated in 2006-07 to Refugee and Humanitarian entrants, with 16% of refugees women at risk. Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq and Afghanistan were the main sources of refugees.

Important changes to the Citizenship Act were approved, extending the period of residence required from two to four years (though in the case of international student applicants, the period of formal study in Australia can be counted). A mandatory test of English ability and knowledge of Australian culture and history for citizenship purposes was introduced in October 2007 (20 questions randomly chosen from a pool of 200), with special arrangements catering to people with low literacy. In addition, about AUD 14 million are available over four years to assist new migrants in the preparation for the test.

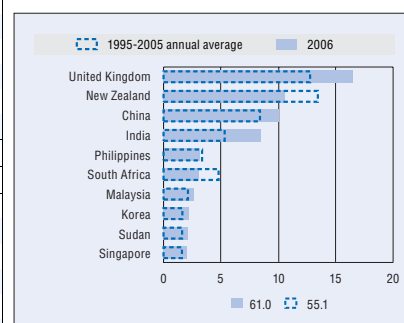
Finally, the capacity for employers to recruit international temporary workers has grown strongly in recent years. More than 104 000 persons with such long-stay business visas were present in Australia by the end of June 2007, compared to 58 000 people with this visa in Australia three years earlier.

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Flow data on foreigners

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Inflows	..	5.8	8.2	8.7	5.6	7.3	179.8
Outflows	0.9	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.0	1.4	33.6
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type Permit based statistics (standardised)	Thousands		% distribution				
	2005	2006	2005	2006			
Work	45.1	49.6	25.1	25.9			
Family (incl. accompanying family)	92.4	98.0	51.4	51.1			
Humanitarian	17.0	14.2	9.4	7.4			
Free movements	23.8	28.3	13.2	14.8			
Others	1.6	1.8	0.9	0.9			
Total	179.8	191.9					
Temporary migration	2000	2005	2006	Annual average 2000-2006			
<i>Thousands</i>							
International students	74.4	116.7	129.2	104.2			
Trainees	7.1	7.0	6.3	6.8			
Working holiday makers	71.5	104.4	113.9	90.6			
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..
Intra-company transfers	..	..	..	..
Other temporary workers	54.5	71.6	98.9	64.8			
Inflows of asylum seekers	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	3.5

Inflows of top 10 nationalities
as a % of total inflows of foreigners

Macroeconomic, demographic and labour market indicators

Macroeconomic indicators	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
Real GDP (growth, %)	4.1	1.9	2.8	2.5	3.9	3.0	
GDP/capita (growth, %) – level in US Dollars	2.7	0.7	1.5	1.1	2.7	1.8	30 467
Employment (growth, %) – level in thousands	4.3	2.7	3.2	2.1	1.6	2.3	10 210
Unemployment (% of labour force)	8.2	6.3	5.0	4.8	7.6	5.7	
Components of population growth	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	13.1	12.1	13.2	13.5	11.8	12.3	
Natural increase	7.2	6.3	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.1	
Net migration	5.9	5.8	6.7	7.1	5.2	6.2	
Total population	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
<i>(Annual growth %)</i>							
Native-born	1.0	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.9	15 648
Foreign-born	1.9	1.0	2.2	2.4	1.2	2.0	4 957
National	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Naturalisations	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
<i>As a percentage of foreign population</i>							
	..	..	..	..	..	..	103 350
Labour market outcomes	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>							
Native-born men	78.0	78.7	80.5	81.0	78.1	79.4	
Foreign-born men	73.4	73.8	74.3	76.1	72.9	74.6	
Native-born women	61.7	64.0	68.3	68.7	62.3	66.4	
Foreign-born women	53.1	54.4	58.6	58.9	52.7	56.7	
<i>Unemployment rate</i>							
Native-born men	8.4	6.6	4.7	3.8	7.8	5.7	
Foreign-born men	10.7	6.6	5.0	4.3	9.0	5.8	
Native-born women	7.3	6.2	5.0	4.5	7.1	5.6	
Foreign-born women	9.2	7.6	5.2	5.2	8.7	6.2	

Notes and sources are at the beginning of the Chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/433843281180>