

Australia

In 2009-10, permanent migration to Australia decreased by 7%, the first decline in seven years. Still, with about 207 000 permanent migrants (excluding returning Australian citizens), it was the second largest intake ever and more than twice the level of a decade earlier. 82% of the permanent migrants were admitted under the migration program – around two-thirds through the skill stream (including accompanying family) and one-third through the family stream – and 7% through the humanitarian programme. Within the skill stream, the proportion of employer-sponsored places has continued to increase from 33% in 2008-09 to 39% in 2009-10. In addition, 24 300 New Zealanders entered Australia under the 1973 Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement. For 2010-11, the overall size of the permanent migration and humanitarian programmes is maintained at 2009-10 levels, but with an additional 5 800 places in the skill stream and offsetting reductions in the family stream.

Although the downturn affected Australia less than most other OECD countries – Australia was among the few OECD countries to record positive GDP growth during 2008-09 – the slowdown in the Australian economy was associated with a decline in the number of temporary long-stay business visas granted in 2009-10, one-third less than in the previous year. Working holiday visas also decreased by 6% from the record high in 2008-09, when at the height of the global economic downturn some were probably seeking to avoid a more severe downturn in their home country. Inflows of international students also fell by 16% compared with the record high of 2008-09. This is attributable to several factors, including tightened integrity checks on applications from selected student caseloads, increased requirements to establish financial security while in Australia and the appreciation of the Australian dollar. In addition, changes in skilled migration policy tightened the pathway to permanent residence for former students. As a result, only 30 000 visas were granted to Indian students, a drop of more than 50% compared with the previous year. The main contingent of new students is now Chinese, with 54 400 entries recorded in 2009-10.

The number of asylum seekers arriving in Australian waters by boat has increased. Their number totalled more than 5 600 in 2009-10, compared with about 1 000 in 2008-09 and only 30 in 2007-08.

Net overseas migration has declined from a peak of 320 300 for the year ending March 2009, when it comprised two-thirds of population growth. This decline has been driven by falls in international students, skilled temporary workers and New Zealand citizens. In April 2010, the government appointed Australia's first-ever Population Minister, charged with developing a Sustainable Population Strategy by mid-2011.

In February 2010, the government revoked the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) and provisional Critical Skills List that favoured the migration of those with certain skills. These lists were subsets of the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) which determines occupations eligible under skilled independent and state sponsored skilled migration. Since the introduction of the MODL in 1999, there were often long lags between identifying an occupation as being in shortage, and migrants coming through in this particular occupation. Also, temporary skilled visas are seen to be a much more efficient means of adjustment to skill shortages. Since July 2010, there is a new SOL, which cuts the number of eligible occupations by more than half. The new list contains occupations which fulfil three criteria. First, the skills needed take a long time to learn; second, there is evidence of high skills matching (*i.e.* the skills acquired were deployed as intended); and third, the costs of the skills being in short supply are high to the economy or to the respective local communities.

In November 2010, the government announced some significant changes to the points test for general skilled migration, effective from July 2011. The age eligibility range will be extended, qualifications obtained from recognised overseas institutions will be treated as equivalent to Australian qualifications, Australian work experience will attract more points than experience gained overseas, and English proficiency will be given greater importance.

State migration plans were also introduced in 2010, to ensure that state-sponsored migrants are satisfying local needs. This includes the possibility for state-sponsorship in certain skilled occupations not on the SOL but in short supply locally.

For further information:

www.immi.gov.au

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

AUSTRALIA

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Inflows	5.6	7.9	9.5	10.1	6.3	9.0	222.6			
Outflows	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	16.8			
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners					
Permit based statistics (standardised)	2008	2009	2008	2009						
Work	52.3	51.7	25.4	23.4						
Family (incl. accompanying family)	105.8	111.6	51.4	54.1						
Humanitarian	11.7	14.9	5.7	6.7						
Free movements	34.5	33.0	16.7	14.9						
Others	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.8						
Total	205.9	221.0	100.0	100.0						
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average 2005-09						
<i>Thousands</i>										
International students	116.7	198.4	227.9	167.9						
Trainees	7.0	5.4	5.3	6.1						
Working holiday makers	104.4	154.1	187.7	138.9						
Seasonal workers	..	0.1	0.1	0.1						
Intra-company transfers	..	6.9	6.0	4.9						
Other temporary workers	71.6	140.6	126.7	110.9						
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	2000-04	2005-09	2009			
					0.4	0.2	6 206			
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>										
Total	12.3	14.3	21.7	19.8	2000-04	2005-09	2009			
					12.4	18.0	435			
Natural increase	6.3	6.5	7.4	7.2	6.0	6.9	157			
Net migration	5.8	6.7	14.0	12.7	5.8	10.5	278			
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)			
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>										
Foreign-born population	23.0	24.2	25.8	26.5	2000-04	2005-09	2009			
					23.4	25.2	5 817			
Foreign population	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>										
	..	..	..	..	2000-04	2005-09	2009
					..	..	99 221	
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>										
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
Native-born men	..	79.9	80.7	78.8	..	80.1				
Foreign-born men	..	74.6	77.0	75.1	..	75.7				
Native-born women	..	67.0	69.1	69.0	..	68.4				
Foreign-born women	..	58.0	60.5	59.5	..	59.1				
<i>Unemployment rate</i>										
Native-born men	..	4.9	4.0	5.6	..	4.7				
Foreign-born men	..	5.2	4.2	6.5	..	5.0				
Native-born women	..	5.2	4.4	5.0	..	4.8				
Foreign-born women	..	5.5	5.2	6.9	..	5.7				
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level			
<i>Annual growth in %</i>										
					2000-04	2005-09	2009			
Real GDP	2.0	3.1	1.1	1.2	3.2	2.6				
GDP/capita (level in USD)	0.7	1.6	-0.8	-0.9	1.9	0.8	31 845			
Employment (level in thousands)	2.6	3.5	2.8	0.7	2.0	2.5	11 011			
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>										
Unemployment	6.2	5.0	4.2	5.6	6.1	4.8				

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

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