Australia's Migration Trends 2011–12 at a glance

Intrinsic to Australia's national identity is its migrant heritage. Migration increases Australia's workforce participation, productivity and boosts economic growth. It also plays a significant role in reuniting families and helping Australia fulfil its international humanitarian obligations. According to the latest Scanlon Foundation social cohesion survey, almost two-thirds of Australians think migration from a diverse range of countries makes us stronger.

Australia's Migration Trends 2011–12, is an annual publication providing a detailed collection of information and statistics about the department's initiatives and activities. This document provides a brief overview of the publication's main findings.

The full version of *Australia's Migration Trends* is available at www.immi.gov.au.

Recent changes in migration

- The online skilled migration selection register, SkillSelect was introduced in July 2012. SkillSelect allows Australia to invite the best and brightest migrants by facilitating their ranking and selection on the basis of their qualifications, work experience and language abilities.

- The department has implemented more than half of the 41 Knight Review recommendations from the Strategic Review of the Student Visa Program. This includes the introduction of streamlined visa processing, where eligible students, regardless of their country of origin, are assessed as though they are lower risk and have reduced evidentiary requirements.

- Reforms to the Business Skills visa program commenced in July 2012. These reforms are designed to better attract people with entrepreneurial talent and a successful business history to Australia. Included in the reforms are a reduction in the number of different business skills visas, which is intended to provide a clearer pathway to permanent residence and an innovation points test which includes points for financial metrics, registered patents, trademarks and evidence of export trade experience.

- The department's visa simplification project, an initiative designed to reduce the number of visas, simplify the visa application process and improve program integrity continued through 2012. As a result the number of different skilled visas has decreased from 27 to 11 and the number of temporary visas has gone from 17 to 8.

- In August 2012 the Government announced that Australia's Humanitarian Program would be increased to 20 000 places in 2012–13. This followed the release of the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Asylum seekers, which the Government has agreed to in principle. Among the report's recommendations were applying a 'no advantage' principle to ensure that no benefit is gained through circumventing regular migration arrangements, advancing co-operation on asylum issues with Indonesia and Malaysia and improving regional processing capacity by re-establishing facilities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Australia's Population

According to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, almost half of Australia's population people were either born overseas or had a migrant parent.

Migration continues to be the major component of population growth in Australia. Between June 1996 and June 2011, Australia's overseas-born population grew by 41.6 per cent to 6.0 million people.

Table 1: Main birthplaces of our migrants

Country of birth	Estimated resident population at 30 June 2012
United Kingdom	1 180 160
New Zealand	564 920
People's Republic of China	391 060
India	343 070
Vietnam	212 070
Other countries	3 337 790
Total	6 029 070

Source: ABS Migration, Australia (3412.0)

The substantial growth in overseas-born residents is changing Australia's ethnic composition. In the past 15 years the number of China-born Australian residents has more than tripled. This growth rate was surpassed by the number of India-born residents which increased fourfold over this same period.

Since September 2005 Net Overseas Migration (NOM) has overtaken natural increase as the main component of Australia's population growth. For the year March 2011 to March 2012, NOM added 197 200 people to Australia's population, or 59.5 per cent of total growth for that period.

The Migration Program

The Migration Program is the main pathway to permanent residence in Australia. It has two main categories—the Family Stream which enables the migration of immediate family members and the Skill Stream, which targets migrants who have skills, proven entrepreneurial ability or outstanding capabilities that will contribute to the Australian economy.

In 2011–12, the Migration Program delivered 184 998 places, 125 755 of these places went to Skill Stream migrants. The Family Stream outcome for 2011–12 was 58 604 places, a 7.4 per cent increase on the 2010–11 level of 54 543.

India, the People's Republic of China and the United Kingdom were the top three source countries for the Migration Program visa places, comprising 43.1 per cent of the total places in 2011–12.

Table 2: Main source countries of Australia's Migration Program

Country of Citizenship	Migration Program visa places 2011–12
India	29 018
People's Republic of China	25 509
United Kingdom	25 274
Philippines	12 933
South Africa	7 640
Other countries	84 624
Total	184 998

Source data: Migration Programme Management System (MPMS) and Immigration Management Information Reporting System (IMIRS), DIAC

The planning level for the 2012–13 Migration Program is 190 00 places. This is an increase of 5000 places from 2011–12 and the highest figure on record for Australia. Of the additional 5000 places, there are 3400 Skill Stream places, 1585 Family Stream places and 15 more places planned for Special Eligibility.

New Zealanders in Australia

Under the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement citizens of New Zealand can enter and leave Australia freely.

In 2011–12, there were 3093 New Zealand citizens granted a permanent visa through this process and a further 44 304 permanent settlers under the Trans-Tasman agreement. This was an increase of 34.6 per cent and 28.2 per cent respectively on the previous year and meant that New Zealand was the largest source of new migrants to Australia in 2011–12.

The Humanitarian Program

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Australia consistently ranks in the top three resettlement countries in the world, along with Canada and the United States of America.

Australia granted 13 759 humanitarian visas in 2011–12. For the first time since 2002–03, the onshore component of the program outweighed the offshore component at 51.2 per cent of the total program. Approximately half of the offshore recipients were migrants from Myanmar (1860 grants) and Iraq (1472 grants).

The onshore component of the program comprises people seeking protection who were either irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs), or people who arrived by air (non-IMAs).

Nationals from Afghanistan (2020 grants) and Iran (1623 grants) were the main recipients of Protection visa grants, accounting for more than two-thirds of the 7038 Protection visas issued in 2011–12.

The Government has increased the size of Australia's humanitarian visa program from 13 750 places to 20 000 places in 2012–13, in line with the recommendation of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. This represents a 45.5 per cent increase and the biggest boost to Australia's refugee intake in 30 years.

Temporary entry

Depending on the purpose and duration of their visit, people can come to Australia on either a Visitor visa or a temporary resident visa. Visitor visas are mostly used by people visiting Australia for holidays, tourism, recreation, or to see family and friends. The Temporary Residents Program allows people to come here on a temporary basis for specific purposes that result in a benefit to Australia.

Table 3: Visitor and temporary resident visas issued

Category	Grants 2011–12
Visitors	3 537 651
Working Holiday Makers	222 992
Students	253 047
Business (Long stay)	125 070
Skilled Graduate	39 943
Other temporary visas	38 281
Total	4 216 984

Source data: Immigration Management Information Reporting System (IMIRS)

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program is a cultural exchange program, which enhances people-to-people links and furthers Australia's social, cultural and international relations with arrangement countries. The program continued to grow strongly. In 2011–12, 214 644 Working Holiday visas were granted, which represented an increase of 15.7 per cent on the previous year and is the highest number on record.

In 2011–12, 253 047 visas were granted to international students. This was the first increase in Student visa grants since 2008–09, when 319 632 visa were granted, and is a 1.0 per cent increase on the 2010–11 figure. The decreases in Student visa numbers in 2009–10 and 2010–11 followed 11 consecutive years of growth in the Student visa program.

The Skilled temporary resident category is dominated by the Temporary Business (Long Stay) (subclass 457) visa. There were 125 070 subclass 457 visas granted in 2011–12, an increase of 38.8 per cent on the previous year.

Labour market outcomes for migrants

Migrants in Australia have very similar unemployment rates to the Australia-born as well as a relatively low rate compared to migrants in other countries. With an unemployment rate of just 5.2 per cent, Australia's migrants have the second lowest rate of unemployment of all OECD countries after Israel. Recent migrants, with their younger and more educated profile, are the main contributing factor to Australia's increased labour force participation rate.

According to the department's Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants, recently arrived skilled migrants have strong employment outcomes. At the six month stage of settlement, the unemployment rate for skilled migrants was 5 per cent, six months later the unemployment rate for this group had fallen to less than half this rate.

The participation rate for skilled migrants six months after arrival was 96 per cent, far higher than the national rate of 65 per cent. At the 12-month settlement stage, around 8-in-10 skilled migrants were working in a full-time job, and almost three-quarters of skilled migrants were working in a skilled job.

Multiculturalism in Australia

Since its launch in February 2011, the Australian Government has significantly progressed the key initiatives in Australia's multicultural policy, *The People of Australia.* This includes the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy that was launched in August 2012. The Strategy aims to promote a clear understand in the Australian community of what racism is, and how it can be prevented and reduced.

In November 2011, an independent panel undertook an inquiry into the responsiveness of Australian Government services to Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse population. The panel delivered its final report and 20 recommendations to Government in June 2012.

The independent, non-partisan Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) was launched in August 2011. Since its establishment, the AMC has provided advice to Government in various ways, including as a partner in the development and implementation of the National Anti-Racism Strategy and a member of the independent Access and Equity Inquiry panel.

Settlement services

In 2011–12, 14 512 people were assisted under the Humanitarian Settlement Services program, an increase of 12.3 per cent on the previous year. Services are tailored and packaged to meet the needs of each client.

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provides basic English language tuition to eligible adult migrants and humanitarian entrants. AMEP services were provided to 54 154 clients in 2011–12.

In 2011–12, Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) provided over one million telephone interpreting services, 18.0 per cent more than were provided in 2010–11.

Citizenship

Australia has one of the highest citizenship rates in the world, with approximately 8-in-10 eligible migrants acquiring citizenship. In 2011–12, 84 183 people were conferred as Australian citizens, a decrease of 11.6 per cent compared to the previous year (95 284 conferrals).

The United Kingdom remained the largest provider of new citizens to Australia (16 401 conferrals), yet now is more closely followed by India and the People's Republic of China with 10 076 and 6876 conferrals respectively.