

Migrant Employment Patterns in Australia: post Second World War to the present

AMES Vision

Full participation for all in a cohesive and diverse society

Dr Lisa Thomson

Published by AMES Research and Policy Unit

©AMES October 2014

Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Overview of Migration in Australia.....	5
1950s & 1960s.....	7
Government Policy.....	7
Who came?	7
What jobs did they do?	8
1970s to 1999	10
Government Policy.....	10
Who came?	11
What jobs did they do?	11
21 st century	13
Government Policy.....	13
Who came?	14
What jobs did they do?	14
Conclusion.....	16
References	17

Executive Summary

Australia's migration program has evolved since the Second World War in accordance with the political, social and economic priorities that reflect the government policy of the day (Spinks, 2010). Australia has shifted from a mono-cultural society with the majority of migrants being of British origin to one of the most multicultural societies in the world. The White Australia Policy (1901 to 1973) was a significant influence in the first half of the twentieth century in terms of determining migration policy. Preference was given to British and European migrants. The aftermath of World War Two signalled a need to defend the country and to attract workers. During this period Displaced Persons from Eastern and Southern Europe arrived to fill newly created jobs in a rapidly expanding economy. The 1970s and 1980 heralded an era of multiculturalism and the arrival of refugees from war torn South East Asia. In the last 15 years the emphasis has been on skilled migrants driven by the need to address the decline in workers due to an ageing population and skills shortages (NATSEM, 2010). The priority has been to select people with the specific skills (professional, trades, technical) needed to fill job vacancies and thus grow the economy. At the current time skilled migrants make up the bulk of the migration program (OMI, 2012). The majority of people immigrating to Australia in 2013/14 are most likely to come from India and China.

This report looks at three distinct periods in Australian migration history. The post-war period during the 1950s and 1960s that was marked by large scale building projects such as the Snowy River Mountain Scheme and a burgeoning manufacturing sector. The 1970s to 1990s was a period with distinct economic highs and lows – including high levels of inflation, unemployment and recession. This period saw a decline in the numbers of migrants arriving to Australia. The dismantling of the White Australia policy and the shift towards multiculturalism meant that Australia was receptive to migrants from South East Asia and other non-European countries. This period also saw a decline in the manufacturing industry and a move towards white collar and service industries that require a highly skilled and educated workforce. There is a common theme with each wave of migrants that arrive. Even though migrants in each wave have arrived with a variety of skills and qualifications, there is often a transition period during the settlement process where they may not be employed in their chosen field aligned with their skills and expertise. Where this is the case migrants are often forced to take jobs that Australian born workers do not want, often in regional or rural areas. These include cleaning, retail, domestic help, taxi driving and working in “dirty” manufacturing jobs (e.g. abattoirs). Migrants have therefore had a significant role in meeting shortfalls in the secondary labour market (Colic-Peisker, 2011). The third period is the 21st century.

Australia's migration program is based on the economic benefits stemming from migration. The Australian economy has relied on migration flows to help satisfy skill demands, meet skill shortages in the workplace while systematically lifting the nation's long-term productive capacity (Teicher et al, 2000). Migration to Australia is certain to grow in the years ahead. Strong demand for additional labour (both unskilled and skilled), combined with lower fertility, declining numbers of young people entering the labour market and an ageing population means that Australia will have to look overseas for sufficient workers in the future (Castles et al 2013).

Overview of Migration in Australia

Immigration has provided a continuous source of population and labour force growth from the beginning of Australian colonisation in the late eighteenth century until now. For much of the twentieth century the driving force of immigration policy was the perceived need to populate a vast and indefensible continent and to secure a labour force to undertake the associated task of economic development. The decades preceding the Second World War had seen a dramatic fall in the number of births in the 1920s and 1930s. Census data from the 1920s and 1930s indicated that workforce participation rates among males had been severely depleted due to the toll of the First World War and low birth rates. Without immigration there would have been insufficient available labour (Storer, 1984).

The period in which British immigrants were dominant dates back to the early years of colonisation (1788-1945) to the end of the Second World War in which the population was composed largely of convicts and assisted immigrants. At the end of 1945 Australia was a monocultural society with less than 1 million residents born overseas out of a population of almost 7 million (Teicher et al, 2000).

Recent Australian governments have recognised not only the economic benefits but also the benefits a multicultural society can bring to Australia. The economy has benefitted from migration flows to help satisfy skill demands, meet skill shortages in the workplace while systematically lifting the nation's long-term productive capacity (Teicher et al, 2000). From a cultural perspective migrants have brought with them new culinary tastes along with new approaches to leisure, arts and society.¹ However, the way in Australia embraces multiculturalism has not always been in place.

The White Australia Policy was introduced in 1901 and constituted a series of legislative and administrative measures aimed at restricting non-European migration to Australia. The Policy was a nationalistic doctrine that enshrined Australia's desire to be a white, British nation. The White Australia Policy had popular support from the community and was underpinned by the notion that Australia's national identity was tied to racial and cultural homogeneity (Tavan, 2004).

Mounting international and domestic pressure after 1945 meant that Australia had to review its position on migration even though there was a great deal of concern about Asia's overpopulation and the perceived risks that this posed to Australia. Immediately after the Second World War, Australia had difficulty attracting British migrants to settle in Australia. Programs like 'Bring out a Briton' failed to achieve planned quotas. Canada and United States had relaxed their immigration restrictions and were seen as a preferred destination over Australia. Improved economic conditions in Britain also meant that would be immigrants were reluctant to leave (Hassam, 2007). The White Australia Policy took almost two and a half decades to dismantle beginning with minor administrative changes in the early 1950s. Initial policy reforms in the mid 1950s included making citizenship available to non-Europeans not born in Australia (Tavan, 2004).

This influx of new migrants and the growing demand for consumer goods in the 1950s and 1960s heralded rapid economic growth in Australia. Working class immigrant labour was used to accelerate economic development and included large scale public works projects, such as the creation of hydro-electric schemes and the modernisation of road and rail systems (Colic-Peisker, 2011). During the 1960s economic growth was more than 5 per cent and unemployment was below 2 per cent (OMI, 2012). Between 1947 to 1971 immigrants contributed significantly to Australia's manufacturing and

¹ <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/changing-face-of-modern-australia-1950s-to-1970s>

building industries (Storer, 1984). Between 1945 to 1975 Australia's population almost doubled from 7.5 million to 13 million people (Teicher et al, 2000).

From late 1996, following the election of the Howard Government, the migration program moved away from family towards skilled migration with stringent eligibility criteria such as high levels of English, educational qualifications and vocational experience. The priority was to select people with the specific skills (professional, trades, technical) needed to fill job vacancies and thus grow the economy. For the last 15 years, skilled migrants have comprised the bulk of the migration program (OMI, 2012).

Castles et al (2013) argue that migration to Australia is certain to grow in the years ahead. Strong demand for additional labour (both unskilled and skilled), combined with lower fertility, declining numbers of young people entering the labour market and an ageing population means that Australia will have to look overseas for sufficient workers in the future.

The next sections of this report will look at migration and employment patterns during three periods:

1. 1950s and 1960s
2. 1970s to 1990s
3. 21st century.

1950s & 1960s

Government Policy

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the White Australia Policy remained a guiding force in determining the make-up of the Australian population. At this time the government was concerned to maintain what it termed 'a balanced intake' that would not threaten Australia's Anglo-Celtic identity and culture. The Australian Government made small but significant changes to the White Australia Policy during the 1950s. In 1956 for the first time non-European residents were allowed to apply for citizenship. In the 1958 *Migration Act* the Dictation Test was abolished. This was a method used by government officials for excluding non-European arrivals (Teicher, 2000).

In the 1960s, public opinion began to openly criticise Australia's restrictive immigration policies. It was also more difficult to justify the White Australia Policy on the international front. In 1966 the government allowed non-Europeans with professional and academic qualifications that were in demand in Australia to apply for entry (Teicher, 2000).

Between 1952 and 1962 Australia offered an Assisted Passage Scheme that allowed applicants almost free passage in return for a commitment to work for the Australian government for two years (Eubal, 2010). One of the primary conditions was that all assisted migrants aged over 16 had to work. Regardless of qualifications men were classified as labourers and women as domestics. Many professionals among the Displaced Persons who arrived during this period never regained their professional status after two years of compulsory labouring (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

Who came?

The first wave of post war migration was mainly drawn from displaced persons (DPs) from Eastern Europe as a source of migrant intake. These people had fled their countries due to war, dislocation and the redrawing of national borders. Between 1947 and 1953, over 170,000 DPs came to Australia, many from Poland, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where they had suffered during the war and were fleeing persecution in Soviet Bloc countries².

After British immigrants, the Department of Immigration preferred Dutch, West Germans, Danes and other western and northern Europeans. The least preferred were Southern Europeans (Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs). However after a number of campaigns to attract English speaking migrants, the UK and Ireland could only provide 40 per cent of migrants. In order to make up the shortfall, migrants from Eastern Europe and Southern Europe were recruited. Of the Southern Europeans who qualified for assisted passage, most were likely to be young single men, generally unskilled, whose labour was thought likely to benefit Australian industry (Teicher, 2000). Southern Europe provided a third of the migrant intake in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The largest number of migrants to arrive from Southern Europe was between 1954 and 1965. After 1965 Southern Europeans tended to migrate to Western European countries in the European Economic Community (EEC). The decline in numbers from Southern Europe meant that Australia took migrants from the Middle East, SE Asia and South America (Storer, 1984). Immigration from Asia during this period was initially small, but rose to 10 per cent by the late 1960's (Webber, 1990).

² <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/objectsthroughtime-history/1945-1965/>

As described by Jones (2002) “one of the most curious and exotic instances of government policy” was the migration of German scientists under the “Employment of Scientific and Technical Enemy Aliens Scheme”. This scheme coincided with the end of World War II. German scientists and technicians were bought out to Australia and contracted to government departments, universities and private industry. Much of the work undertaken by these migrants was industrial research for private and government industry.

What jobs did they do?

At the time of the 1947 Census, Australia was a large country with a small population. Its economy was primarily agrarian. Agricultural products were traded with Britain for manufactured goods. In 1947 Australia’s manufacturing industry and secondary industry had developed only on a limited scale and had been operating well below capacity during the pre-war depression. The second wave of post-war immigration arrived in the 1950s and 1960s and consisted of those seeking employment and better living conditions. These included migrants from Italy, Greece, Malta, Croatia and Turkey

The Australian economy at this time was characterised by policies that supported high tariff protection and the use of quotas on overseas imports. Unemployment levels were low, union membership was high and people’s conditions of employment were determined by industry awards (Storer, 1984).

Many of the people who migrated from Southern Europe were small businessmen or small farmers. Not surprisingly when they arrived in Australia many of these migrants started small businesses within in their own communities such as milk bars, delicatessens, cafes and newspapers. In the early 1950s nearly half of all Greek, Italian and Yugoslav born males were employers and / or self employed compared to only 20 per cent of Australian born (Storer, 1984).

The requirement for low skilled labour was high, and new migrants from Southern and Western Europe provided the necessary labour to fill these jobs to meet the rapidly growing economy of Australia. Some moved into manufacturing and construction providing manual labour in steelworks, mines, factories and on the roads. The demand for consumer items such as refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and cars was a large driver of manufacturing. The Australian car industry was a symbol of Australia’s success during the 1950s and 1960s. Food processing in factories and the textile and clothing and footwear industries were dependent upon migrant labour. In order to house the expanding population, new suburbs were built. Migrants were involved in building roads, schools, hospitals and buildings (Teicher, 1990).

Manufacturing was at its peak development from the mid 1950s to the late 1960s. The manufacturing workforce in Australia grew from 0.83 million in 1947 to 1.22 million in 1971. One-third of manufacturing workers were born overseas (Webber et al, 1990).

Many migrants in low paid factory work took on a second job like office cleaning or worked extra shifts to improve their financial circumstances for themselves and their families. This meant that they could purchase their own homes and focus on their children’s education ³.

³ <http://www.greekcare.org.au/advice-and-information/the-migration-experience/migration-to-australia/>

Farm labourers also employed a significant number of migrants in developing new fruit orchards, market gardens and in the sugar cane fields in Northern Australia. Many regional areas across Australia were home to migrant families who revitalised these communities.

In addition to an expanding manufacturing sector, Australia's service industries also grew. In the early 1960s Australia was becoming more middle class with an increasing number of white collar workers (Storer, 1984).

One of the largest employers to use migrants was the Snowy Mountain Scheme. This was one of Australia's largest post war projects. This project diverted the course of the Snowy and Tumut Rivers to provide irrigation and generate hydro-electricity. The work was hard and meant men lived for months in isolated and primitive camps. The Snowy Mountain Scheme employed more than 100,000 people from over 30 countries. Seventy per cent of all of the workers employed on the scheme were migrants. The work conditions were dangerous and required the building of tunnels through solid granite rock. Many of the men were single who saved money to bring their families out to Australia when they could afford it ⁴.

Migrant women were a significant presence in the workforce, particularly in the textile clothing and footwear industries. However, many migrant women were not in the paid workforce and stayed at home to raise their families. These women were often isolated and did not have the opportunity to learn English, unlike their husbands who often had the chance to learn English informally on the job. Their school-aged children became their teachers and helped them negotiate the wider community. The workforce participation of married women increased from 8 per cent in 1954 to 42 per cent by 1971 (Storer, 1984).

⁴ <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/snowy-mountains-scheme>

1970s to 1999

Government Policy

By the 1970s migration had changed the nature and shape of Australian society. Cities had grown exponentially with new suburbs. The economy had moved from being largely driven by primary industry to one where secondary industry and manufacturing was firmly embedded (Storer, 1984). Post war economic migration had become synonymous with the post war boom (OMA, 2012).

During this period there was a shift in immigration policy. The remnants of the White Australia Policy were abolished in 1973 by the Whitlam Labour Government, which implemented a Universal Migration Policy which stipulated that anyone could apply to migrate to Australia regardless of race, colour, gender, ethnic origin, religion, or nationality.

The last of the assisted passage schemes ended in 1975, except for refugees. Immigration agreements with Britain and European countries were abandoned. The number of British and European immigrants declined dramatically and arrivals began to come from countries closer to Australia like South East Asia. During this period the numbers of people immigrating to Australia declined due to unfavourable economic circumstances that were driven by rising inflation, recession and rising unemployment (Storer, 1984). As a result, migration declined from 170,000 in 1970 to 52,000 in 1975-76, the lowest intake since 1945 (OMA, 2012).

Following a major review in 1973, the government decided that immigration was an essential component of population policy. It also declared its commitment to the preservation of a culturally diverse but cohesive society⁵. However, there was a shift in focus with the government stipulating that potential migrants must have skills or professional expertise required to fill gaps in the Australian work force, or business experience and investment capital that would directly benefit the Australian economy. Although family reunion remained a cornerstone of the migration program, quotas and limits were applied to the number people who could migrate particularly during the years marked by high unemployment and slow economic growth.

High unemployment and slow economic growth, particularly in the 1980s, eroded political and community support for immigration. Supporters of immigration believed that a strong immigrant intake created economic growth through demand for goods and services while opponents argued that immigrants took jobs from Australians (Storer, 1984). Australia was also undergoing structural changes within the labour market with improved technology automating many jobs. Australia's manufacturing sector was declining while at the same time there was an increase in jobs in the community sectors, finance and business sectors and whole sale and retail (Storer, 1984)

Until the 1970s migration policy was directed at population growth and economic development. Although some attempt was made to select migrants to fill gaps in the domestic labour market there was no systematic method of selecting migrants to meet labour market demands until the 1980s and early 1990s. Migrants during this period entered Australia under three broad categories: skilled, family, reunification or humanitarian. Each year the Minister for Immigration announced the number of visas to be granted in each category. Within the skill stream there were five categories, independent, employer, nomination, skilled Australian sponsored, business skills and distinguished category (Webber et al, 1990).

⁵ <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/federation/timeline2.pdf>

After the election of the Howard Coalition Government in 1996, the government shifted targets decisively in favour of the skills in demand category. It also introduced a new visa category (457 visa) to allow temporary migration of skilled workers.

Who came?

Australia became much more culturally diverse during the seventies and eighties. By the 1990s the proportion of people migrating to Australia from mainly English speaking countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the United States) had dropped to 28 per cent.

Within a decade over 100,000 settlers had arrived from Asia, Africa and the Pacific (Teicher, 2000). Asian immigration rose to 20 per cent in the 1970s (Webber et al, 1990). Australia had signed a United Nations agreement to accept refugees (Jupp et al, 2001) and in the 1970s and 80s many settlers came from the war torn countries of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. By 1985, 70,000 refugees from Southeast Asia, mostly Vietnam had settled in Australia. By the late 1980s there were fewer arrivals from Vietnam and most Vietnamese since this period have come through family reunion migration (Jupp et al, 2001).

What jobs did they do?

During the 1970s to 1990s migrants from Non-English Speaking backgrounds continued to be concentrated in semi-skilled and unskilled labour and production line jobs, particularly in manufacturing and construction. In contrast, migrants from mainly English speaking countries had similar labour market experiences to Australian born and were concentrated in white collar service sector or in skilled manufacturing jobs (Webber et al, 1990). Overall during the mid-1970s to early 1980s there was a growth in the proportion of males employed as professional and technical workers, while at the same time there was a reduction in the numbers employed in process work, labourers and farmers.

Migrant women workers in the 1970s and 1980s were seen by employers in the manufacturing sector as a cheap source of labour. They were concentrated in a narrow range of poorly paid and low status positions where the work tended to be monotonous and repetitive with little or no job security and a high risk of occupational injury. In 1981 76 per cent of Yugoslav born women, 73 per cent of Turkish women and 74 per cent of Vietnamese women worked in the trades or process work occupations compared with 36 per cent of the Australian born population. Other women not employed in the textile clothing and footwear industry worked in food, beverages and tobacco, metal products, electronics and electrical components, plastics, rubber and paper products industries (Alcorso, 1989). The research indicates that recently arrived migrants during this period were more likely to work in relatively "dirty" industries such as the meat and cold storage industries. By contrast, women who were residents for a longer period of time worked in "cleaner" industries such as clothing, food and electrical industries (Alcorso, 1989). Women from non-English speaking backgrounds earned lower wages than women from English speaking countries. These jobs provided very little opportunity for upward occupational mobility (Webber et al, 1990). In 1986 the decline in manufacturing had a significant impact on the employment of women from some communities. For example in 1971 18,000 Greek and 20,000 Italian women were employed in manufacturing, in 1986 these numbers had halved (Webber et al 1990). Migrant women moved into self-employment in greater numbers between the 1950s (10%) and late 1980s (33%) (Webber et al, 1990). Self-employment offered an alternative to low paid boring and dead-end jobs (Misztal, 1991).

The number of women born in Australia and the UK working as professionals had increased during the 1970s to early 1980s, there were also high numbers working in sales, clerical and service sectors. In contrast, only a small number of women born in Southern Europe worked in clerical, sales and service sectors (Storer, 1984). Educated migrant women tended to be over-represented in traditional feminine occupations such as nurses, teachers, librarians, social workers and medical doctors. In many instances it was difficult for them to have their professional qualifications recognised which meant that they had to work in unskilled jobs (Misztal, 1991).

Data indicates that both males and females from non-English speaking backgrounds were more likely to be either an employer or self-employed than those from English speaking backgrounds. Analysis of labour force data in 1981 indicates that men born in Southern Europe were more likely to be employers (8%) or self employed (15%) compared to the general male population who were employers (6%) or self employed (10%). Many of the Asian immigrants from Indo-China, particularly those from Vietnam were concentrated in low skilled jobs like manufacturing when they arrived in the 1970s and 1980s.

Storer (1984) notes that in the early 1980s Melbourne's industry and labour market was highly segmented according to the birthplace of employees. During this period migrants comprised 51% of all workers in manufacturing and 51% of workers in the construction industry. In other areas of the labour market people from CALD backgrounds were underrepresented. For example in the finance and administration sector, overseas born comprised only 25% and 21% of the workforce respectively.

Generally speaking migrants from Southern European countries, the Middle East and South America were concentrated in manufacturing and construction industries while those born in Western Europe, the Indian Sub-continent, Africa or North America were most likely to work in finance and community services. Sixty per cent of German born men worked as professional employees, while only 20% worked as service personnel (for example cleaners). This compares with 46% of Southern Europeans who works as service personnel and 27% worked as professionals. This period saw a growth in males born in Southern Europe working in retail and sales (Storer, 1984).

Since the mid-1980s there has been a decline in the number of people employed in manufacturing. In 1997 there were still a significant number of people born in non-MESC employed in manufacturing (23%). A larger proportion of people born in these countries worked as labourers and related workers and as intermediate production and transport workers when compared with Australian born or those born in Main English Speaking Countries (MESC) (ABS Labourforce June 1997: Catalogue 6203.0).

21st century

Government Policy

The twenty-first century migration to Australia has continued to focus on attracting skilled migrants to fill labour market shortages in professional, trades and technical jobs improve the nation's long term productive capacity (OMA, 2012). Australia's migration program has 3 streams; Skilled, Family and Humanitarian.

Since 1996 skilled migrants have been required to be proficient in English and be qualified with relevant vocational experience. There is now more attention on being job ready and for migrants to gain employment. The primary applicant for a Skilled Visa to Australia may also bring immediate family members including partner and children. While not essential, higher English and qualifications of family members also contribute positively to the visa application. In the late 1990s skilled migration made up 47 per cent of the Migration Program – by 2008-09 that figure had increased to 67 per cent (Spinks 2010).

Priority has been given to applicants in this stream with skills where there are shortages such as medical, IT professionals, engineers and construction trade workers identified on the Skilled Occupation List which is regularly updated by the government. Rather than being demand-driven the skilled migration program has been devised to be supply driven (Spinks, 2010).

There are four main categories under the skilled component of the Migration Program:

- **General skilled migration**, for skilled workers who do not have an employer sponsoring them. Migrants are selected on the basis of their nominated occupation, age, skills, qualifications, English language ability and employability
- **Employer nomination**, for those who have an employer willing to sponsor them
- **Business skills migration**, which encourages successful business people to settle in Australia and develop new business opportunities, and
- **Distinguished talent**, a small category for 'distinguished individuals with special or unique talents of benefit to Australia' such as sports people, musicians, artists and designers, who are internationally recognised as outstanding in their field (Spinks, 2010)

A significant proportion of people on temporary visas (e.g. 457 visa) and those on student visas make the transition to permanent resident status (Colic-Peisker, 2011). Although temporary migrants are not part of the Migration Program, they have increasingly become the first step towards permanent settlement in Australia for many people (Spinks, 2010).

Family stream migration has decreased relative to the skill stream over the last two decades, a reflection of the move towards more closely targeting migration to meet the labour market needs of the Australian economy. The family stream of the Migration Program provides for the migration of immediate family members of Australian citizens, permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens. Family members admitted under this stream include partners or fiancées, dependent children, parents, orphan relatives, aged dependent relatives and carers. Family stream migrants must be sponsored by an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. There is no skills test or language requirement for family migration as there is for skilled migrants, however applicants must meet the necessary health and character requirements (Spinks, 2010).

Australia also has a humanitarian program for people seeking protection after being forced to leave their homes by armed conflict and/or human rights abuse. In 2012/13 13,750 places were offered under the humanitarian program. This includes people selected from overseas as part Australia's obligations under UNHCR conventions and those who sought asylum after arrival in Australia.

Who came?

Australia is one of the world's top three culturally diverse nations where almost 45 per cent of the population have one or both parents born overseas (DIAC, 2008).

Beginning at the turn of the twenty-first century, the birthplace of migrants to Australia has been changing. In the 1996 Census the majority of people born overseas were from non-Main English Speaking countries (non-MESC) including Italy, Vietnam and Greece. Now in 2014 the top four countries of birth for non-MESC shifted to China, India and Vietnam and the Philippines (ABS Census). The UK still remains the largest source of migrants from Main English Speaking countries. Overall 18% of migrants come from the UK (DIAC, 2008).

In terms of humanitarian and refugees the top five countries of birth are Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar/Burma, Bhutan and Congo (DRC). Significant numbers also come from the Horn of Africa.

What jobs did they do?

The beginning of the twenty-first Century heralds the changing nature of work. There has been a move away from manufacturing to the service, business administration and care industry. This is reflected in the types of skill shortages including the areas of health, medicine, school teachers, childcare workers, nurses, engineers (DIAC, 2008). The emphasis on skilled migration means that there have been a larger number of people entering Australia with post-school qualifications. The number of people arriving in Australia in 2006 with a Bachelor Degree (44%) on arrival has increased three fold since 1991(15%).

International students, people on working holidays and temporary migrants employed in regional areas are also contributing to the labour market and the Australian economy. Working holiday makers for example, participate in casual, seasonal and low skilled labour markets, while employer sponsored migrants can be found within the health-care and social assistance, construction and ICT industries. Temporary migration visas are also used to fill skill shortages within the mining sector, agriculture, manufacturing and construction industries (AWPA, 2012). The Australian Workforce & Productivity Agency (2102) has identified a shortage in the hospitality industry in regional areas.

The taxi industry has been an area that has attracted new migrants. Over the past 18 years the demographic profile of taxi drivers has changed. The 1996 Census indicates that 65% of taxi drivers were Australian or UK born. Ten years later in 2006, the demographic profile has shifted and fewer than 40% of drivers were Australian or UK born. Taxi drivers born overseas were from a wide range of countries including India (9%), China (5%) and Lebanon (5%). By 2011 two out of three taxi drivers were overseas born⁶.

The health care industry is one of Australia's largest industries and employs approximately 1.2 million people. The demand for health care workers is a result of an increasing burden of disease within our community and due to an ageing population. Most health care workers (nurses, GPs, allied health professionals) are highly educated with 77% of workers holding a post school

⁶ <http://www.victaxi.com.au/media/34361/kpmg%20analysis.pdf>

qualification. Skill shortages in this area mean that there will be a need to turn to migrants to help fill the gaps. This situation is similar in other migrant receiving countries and Australia will need to compete in an international market for health care workers⁷.

Migrants with low skills still continue to fill low status jobs in the labour market. Although the number of jobs in manufacturing has declined dramatically, there is still a need for low skilled jobs in many service occupations such as retail, domestic help, care of the aged, catering and cleaning. As in the past migrants with low skills tend to have lower levels of education and English which means that they have limited choices in the jobs available to them. They can be found in low skilled service occupations such as cleaning, aged care, transport (taxi driving) and the security and building industry (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury: 2006).

Recent migrants are still more likely to be employed as employees rather than business operators or independent contracts. The proportion of recent migrant employees from non-MESC backgrounds (89%) is higher than those from MESC backgrounds (87%) and Australian born population (81%)(ABS, 2010). Manufacturing still employs a high proportion of both recent and long term non MESC arrivals. So too does the retail trade, accommodation, food services industries. In the professional, scientific and technical services industry, where mostly skilled labour is employed, there were higher proportions of both recent MESC (12%) and non-MESC (10%) migrants compared with the Australian born population (6%). A greater number of long term migrants were employed in health care and social assistance industry (14% for MESC) than recent arrivals (11% non-MESC) or Australian born persons (11%) (ABS, 2010).

Similar to skilled migrants who came to Australia in the past, many highly educated refugees and migrants arrivals like doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants experience downward occupational mobility and significant decline in the recognition of their human capital. Many do not have the experience in Australia and references which are often preferred by Australian employers. The more years a person works in in low skilled and low paid jobs the more difficult it is to maintain professional skills and networks to improve job opportunities (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury: 2006).

7

<http://www.ahwo.gov.au/documents/NHWT/The%20health%20workforce%20in%20Australia%20and%20factors%20influencing%20current%20shortages.pdf>

Conclusion

Migration has had a positive economic, social and cultural impact on Australia. Migrants have built Australia with their labour, skills and traditions. They have demonstrated their resilience and adaptability to new challenges and surroundings and shown a disposition for hard work and sacrifices in order to establish themselves in a new country. As has been illustrated in this report with each successive wave of migrants the skills they bring may not be fully utilised on arrival. Many are compelled to take on low skilled jobs when first settling. For a significant number it is not until they have been in the country for some time that they move into their chosen field, if ever. For others, particularly those who are employer sponsored on 457 visas, these migrants generally move into skilled positions commensurate with their experience and qualifications⁸.

Migrants have been integral in meeting demand for labour particularly during the post-war boom period which was marked by rapid industrialisation with large scale building projects and a burgeoning manufacturing sector. Migrants have also demonstrated their entrepreneurialism by contributing to the development and expansion of small businesses. In recent years they have been critical in filling gaps in labour market shortages with skilled migrants and meeting workforce deficits. Migrants who arrive in Australia are generally of prime working age, and have high levels of labour market participation. They tend to be more highly educated than Australian born residents (Productivity Commission, 2006). Overall, the net benefit to Australia has been a “brain gain”⁹.

Employment has always been and continues to be an important way for migrants to participate in Australian society. Without migrant labour Australia would not be the modern, vibrant, advanced economy it is today.

⁸ <http://newsroom.melbourne.edu/news/migrant-employment-rise>

⁹ <https://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2005-6/Ch6pt3.pdf>

References

- Alcorso, C (1989) *Newly Arrived Immigrant Women in the Workforce*, Wollongong University.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) *Perspectives on Migrants*, Catalogue 3141.0.
- Australian Workforce & Productivity Agency (2012) *Australia's Skills and Work Development Needs: Discussion Paper for the 2012 National Workforce Development Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia.
- Castles, S, Hugo, G & Vasta, E. (2013) 'Rethinking Migration and Diversity in Australia: Introduction', in *International Journal of Multicultural Studies*, Vol 10. No. 2: 115-121.
- Colic-Peisker, V & Tilbury, F (2006) "Employment Niches for Recent Refugees: Segmented Labour Market in Twenty-first Century Australia" in *Journal of Refugee Studies*: 19(2) 203-229.
- Colic-Peisker, V (2011) 'Ethnics' and 'Anglos' in the Labourforce: Advancing Australia Fair, in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 32(6): 637-654.
- DIAC (2008) *Report on Migration Program 2007-08*, Australian Government, Canberra.
- Eubal, S (2010) "'Flying Fräuleins': the construction of single migrant women in discourses on migration in Australia and West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s" in *Gender, Place and Culture* 17(6) :743–758.
- Hassam, AC (2007) The 'Bring out a Briton' Campaign of 1957 and British Migration to Australia in the 1950s" in *History Compass*; 5(3): 818-814.
- Hugo, G (2011) *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- Jones, E (2002) The Employment of German Scientists in Australia after World War II in *Prometheus*, 20(4): 3-5-321.
- Jupp, J (ed) (2001) *The Australian People: An encyclopedia of a nation, its people and their origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Khoo, S, McDonald, P, Voigt-Graf, P & Hugo, G (2007) "A Global Labor Market: Factors Motivating the Sponsorship and Temporary Migration of Skilled Workers to Australia" in *International Migrant Review*, 41(2): 480-510.
- Khoo, S, Hugo, G & McDonald, P (2010) Skilled Migration from Europe to Australia" in *Population, Space & Place*, 17: 550-556.
- Misztal, B (1991) "Migrant Women in Australia", in *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12(2): 15-34.
- NATSEM (2010) *Calling Australia Home: The characteristics and contributions of Australian migrants*, AMP/NATSEM Income and Wealth Report, The University of Canberra.
- Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI)(2012) *The Economic and Social Contribution of Migrants to Western Australia*, Department of Local Government, Government of Western Australia.

Productivity Commission (2006) Economic Impacts of Migration and Population Growth: Productivity Commission Research Report, Final report, April.

Spinks, H (2010) *Australia's Migration Program*, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, Canberra.

Storer, D (1984) Migrant Workers in Victoria: Trends in Employment and Segmentation in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 5(3): 5-35.

Tavan, G (2004) The Dismantling of the White Australia Policy: elite conspiracy or the will of the Australian people? in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 39(1): 109-125.

Teicher, J Shah, C & Griffin, G (2000) *Australian Immigration: Triumph of Economic Over Prejudice*, Centre for Economics of Education & Training, Monash University, Clayton.

Webber M, Campbell , I & Fincher, R (1990) "Ethnicity, gender and industrial restructuring in Australia, 1971–1986" in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 11 (1): 1-48.