



Migration in Australia



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Australian Migration Law is complicated. There are a huge number of visa types, all with their own rules. Partner Visas are broken up into ONSHORE and OFFSHORE visas. OFFSHORE means you must be offshore (ie. OUTSIDE Australia) to apply for them. And you must also be offshore (outside of Australia) for the visa to be granted. ONSHORE means you must be onshore (ie. IN Australia) to apply for them. You also need to be onshore (in Australia) for the visa to be granted. For the purpose of our research we will not take this distinction into account (even though data for each category can be found through the Australian national bureau of statistics).

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION IN AUSTRALIA (FROM MIPEX <http://www.mipex.eu/australia>)

Changes in context

- Traditional and growing destination country, with the foreign-born accounting for 23% of the population in 2000 and 27% in 2012
- According to OECD, 2/3 of all arrivals in 2012 were temporary migrants, with at least 1/2 arriving as temporary workers and 1/4 as international students; Half of permanent arrivals were family migrants, 1/4 were labour migrants and just 6% were humanitarian arrivals
- Irregular boat arrivals start to increase in 2009, especially in 2012/3
- Generally most positive attitudes towards immigrants in AU than rest of developed world, alongside other English-speaking countries and Nordics

Changes in policy

Since 2010, the AU federal government has maintained its long-standing commitments to equality and non-discrimination, settlement services and multiculturalism, and its clear well-supported path to citizenship. However, little has been done to remedy its long-standing weaknesses and gaps, for example on consultative bodies, anti-discrimination and the rights of permanent residents and temporary workers. Restrictions on healthcare entitlements and access for detained asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants also raise integration and public health concerns. Complicated and changing provisions to access permanent residence and family reunion may delay or discourage eligible residents from investing in their long-term integration in AU. These changes lost AU -1 point on MIPEX from 2013 to 2014. Looking ahead, 2014's austere federal budget cut several of the governments grants that make settlement work in AU, such as support for multicultural community organisations, human rights education and workplace English training.

Conclusions and recommendations

AU has traditionally welcomed the immigration of close family members and skilled workers and helped these newcomers and their children get the targeted support they need to participate in AU's education system or labour market. Newcomers are encouraged and supported to quickly learn English and become dual nationals, so that immigrants are becoming and seen as equal citizens. Multiculturalism policies and funds encourage the AU public and mainstream institutions to remain open to diversity and to support AU's multicultural communities, from the workplace to

the school, hospital and public sphere. Budget cuts, restrictions to family reunion and permanent residence – and now a government consultation on the ordinary path to citizenship – may bring several unintended consequences, doing more harm than good to AU's integration outcomes.

Labour Market Mobility

Key Findings

AU's restrictions on equal access, general support and rights for temporary workers and newcomers can delay them from investing in pursuing the right career and skills, unlike CA and most Western European countries

Policy Indicators

Do immigrants have equal rights and opportunities to access jobs and improve their skills?

All immigrant workers who choose AU do not immediately have full access, general support, and rights as they would in other leading labour migration countries like CA, Nordics and, to some extent, NZ. Policies are not even slightly favourable for labour market mobility in AU, no better than the average MIPEX country. While most temporary and permanent residents can receive some favourable targeted support and work in most sectors under the same conditions as AU citizens, policies delay newcomers from investing in the right jobs and skills with the same general support as AU citizens. Newcomers face similar restrictions to access general support and social rights in NZ, IE, UK and US, but not in CA or most Western European countries. Because of these restrictions, AU's policies are ranked 19th, alongside CH and UK, and may contribute to newcomers ending up in poor quality jobs.

Dimension 1: Access to labour market

- Newcomers' access to the AU labour market is more restricted than in 14 out of the 37 other MIPEX countries
- Most temporary migrant workers cannot freely change jobs or sectors in AU, as is the case in most countries (see instead US, ES/PT/IT, Nordics)
- Immigrants arriving as permanent residents and family members can work in any job or sector, including self-employment
- They are not guaranteed equal access to federal and some state-level public sector

Dimension 2: Access to general support

- In AU, newcomers largely have equal access to the same general support as citizens in CA, US, UK, JP and most Western European countries

- While newcomers can access well-established procedures to recognise their foreign academic and professional qualifications and skills, many have limited rights and access to general support like Job Services Australia and study loans/grants

Dimension 3: Targeted support

- Immigrants may find that their specific problems as newcomers trained abroad are addressed on the labour market, with average targeted support provided in AU as in Northern Europe and CA and NZ
- Public servants are to be trained on migrants' needs and diversity (e.g. Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society)
- The Settlement Grants Program and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provide needs-based EN courses
- Further training is offered through SLPET, 200 hours of vocation-specific language courses and 80 hours of work placements, although workplace language courses (WELL) closed in 2014 after 23 years due to federal budget cuts
- Specific bridging/work placement programmes in private and public sector (see also Nordics, DE, CA, NZ)
- Workers who want their overseas qualifications recognised can access some information, top-up courses and subsidies to cover procedural costs (ASDOT)
- Still, there is no central authority to guarantee equal and fair procedures (instead, see Trade Recognitions Australia, VETASSESS and AEI-NOOSR, OQUs)

Dimension 4: Workers' rights

- Non-naturalised workers are entitled to the same working conditions and access to trade unions as AU citizens, but not to the same benefits and support from the state
- Temporary workers cannot use some social security benefits, including housing benefits, while many permanent residents must wait two years; Those exempt are refugees, humanitarian entrants, people in severe financial hardship beyond their control

Family Reunion

Key Findings

2014 government changes start to undermine AU's traditionally family-friendly immigration policies

Australia family reunification policy

Australian immigration law provides for family members of permanent residents and citizens to obtain visas to migrate to Australia. Family stream visas^[4] are currently available to partners (including married and de facto partners) and fiancés, dependent children, and “contributory” parents of citizens and permanent residents.^[5] The contributory parent visa rules require that the applicant pay a higher application fee “as a contribution to the cost of their health and welfare in Australia.”^[6] Applicants for family stream visas must be sponsored by an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Planning levels for this stream are set at 60,885 visas for the 2014–15 year, representing 32% of the total migration program planning level for the year.^[7]

The following family visas have recently been closed to new applications: parent visa, aged parent visa, aged dependent relative visa, remaining relative visa, and “carer” (caregiver) visa. [\[8\]](#) Persons that had applied for these visas before June 2, 2014, will still have their applications processed; however, the current wait time for parent and aged parent visas is up to thirteen years, sixteen for aged dependent relative and remaining relative visas, and four for a carer visa. [\[9\]](#)

Policy Box

Families who meet all the legal conditions may still confront excessive processing times in AU, AT, CA, NZ and US. The AU system maintains quotas and complex family visa categories that can delay family reunion. Immigrants in nearly all MIPEX countries benefit from lower fees and legal procedural time limits of 9 months. In June 2014, government closed applications for the visa subclasses for dependent adult parents/parents (subclass 114/838, 115/835, 116/836, 103, 804) under the Migration Amendment (Repeal of Certain Visa Classes) Regulation 2014. This move was then disallowed by the Senate on 25 September 2014. In response, government reduced the cap on 'other family visas' (not including parents) by more than half, from 1285 to 500 in 2014/15. These caps are so much lower than demand that waiting times for several of these visas are counted in decades. The opportunities are much greater for parents who are not dependent but instead 'contributory', meaning that each parent is willing and able to pay \$43,600 AUS.

Policy Indicators

How easily can immigrants reunite with family?

In 2014, the AU government picked up on certain international trends to restrict the definition of the family for immigrants. These types of restrictions expect immigrant families to live up to standards that many national families could not, such as higher incomes and no need for social benefits. AU's policies still remain slightly favourable for families to reunite and integrate in society, ranked 11th similar to NZ and US though behind CA. Most AU residents have favourable chances to secure their family life as the starting point for their integration in AU. With few exceptions, temporary and permanent migrants who meet an ‘average’ set of conditions can reunite with their full family who then enjoy equal and slightly secure rights. Traditionally, both family and labour immigration have been promoted by traditional destination countries like AU, CA, NZ and US. CA recognises many types of families and gives them equal rights as their sponsor.

Dimension 2: Conditions

- One reason AU attracts migrant workers is that most residents can sponsor their families if they have basic means to support them
- Eligible families must meet a few basic criteria in AU, ranking 9th alongside CA, NZ, US
- Applicants must be able to cover the family's basic needs in terms of accommodation and financial support
- However they must pay rather high fees by international standards, as in the other traditional destination countries

Dimension 3: Security of status

- Residents are slightly secure about their chances to reunite with family in AU, similar to the average for Western Europe

- Family members can be denied or lose their permit based on a few discretionary grounds depending on their sponsor's status
- The major weakness is the backlog, which has applicants waiting for years without knowing when they will be reunited with their family (similar problem in CA, NZ, US)

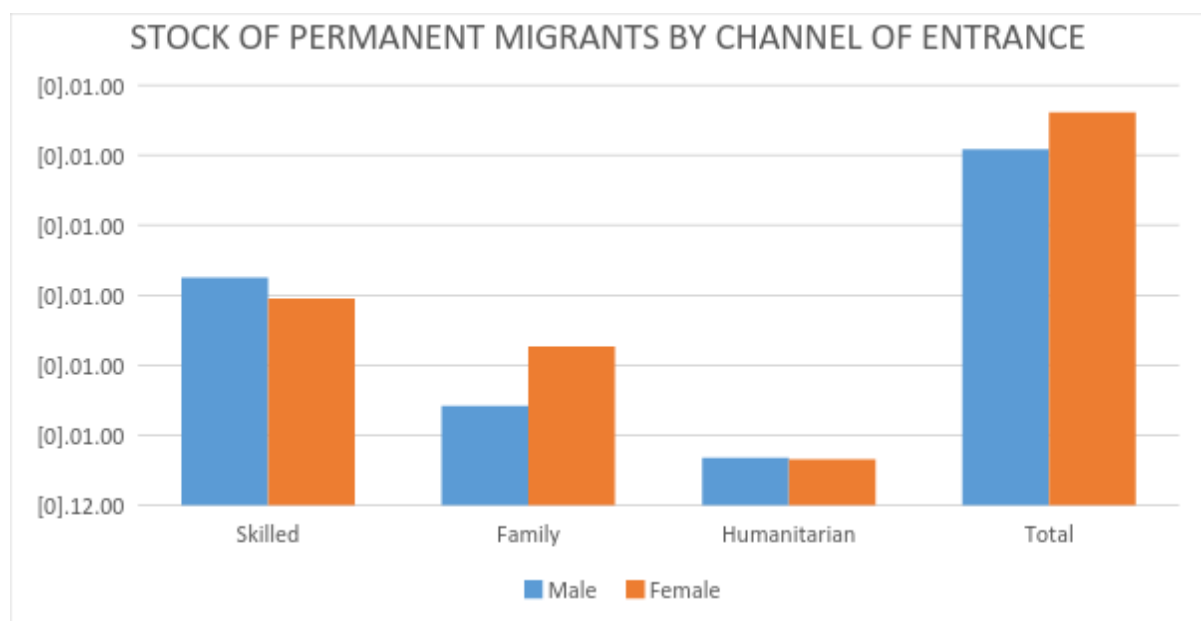
Dimension 4: Rights associated

- Once reunited, families and sponsors have access to the labour market immediately and autonomous residence depending on their sponsor's status (special benefits available for emergency situations e.g. in case of sponsor's death/abandonment/violence)
- However their access to social rights and programmes is still restricted, depending on their sponsor's status
- In contrast, families have the same access to the labour market, education/training and social benefits as their sponsor in the majority of MIPEX countries

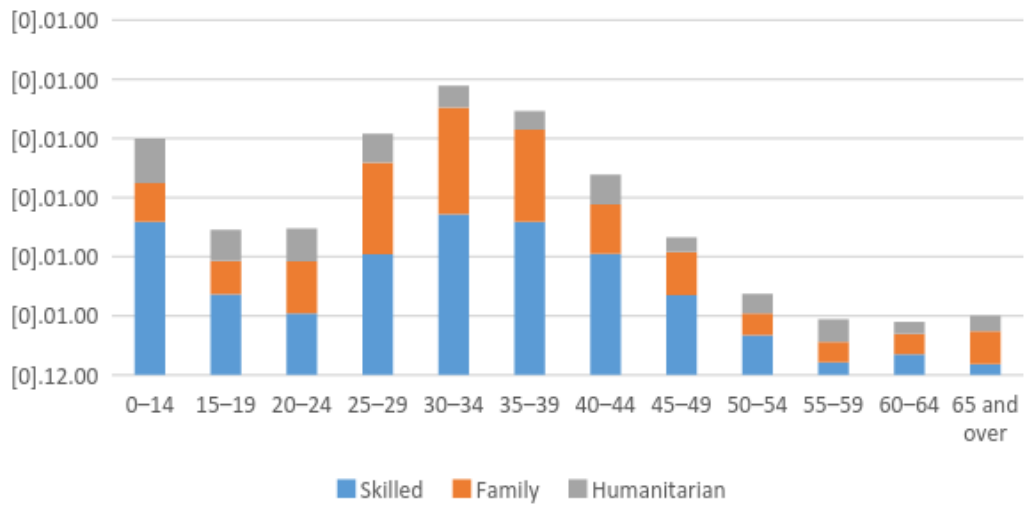
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS

34170DO001_2011 Understanding Migrant Outcomes - Enhancing the Value of Census Data, Australia, 2011

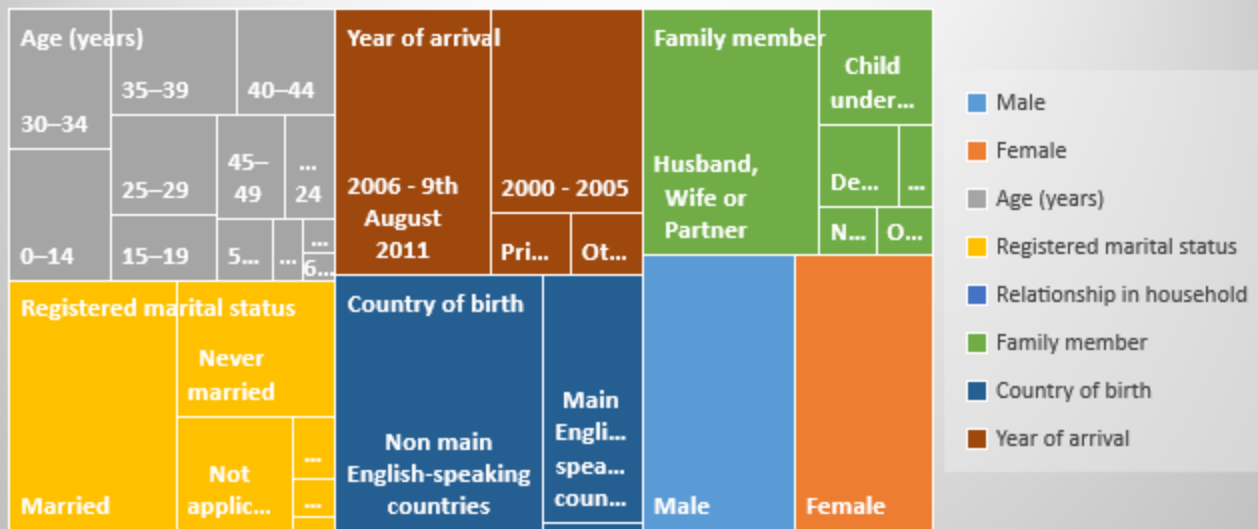
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PERMANENT MIGRANTS BY AGE AND CHANNEL OF ENTRANCE



PERMANENT MIGRANTS (ALL INDICATORS CONSIDERED IN THE CENSUS DATA ELABORATION)



	Skilled	Family	Humanitarian	Total
Male	390.44.00	170.26.00	80.56.00	610.46.00
Female	354.09.00	272.27.00	78.39.00	673.55.00
Age (years)				
0–14	124.25.00	31.20.00	36.08.00	191.54.00
15–19	65.37.00	26.49.00	25.23.00	86.29.00
20–24	49.48.00	42.22.00	26.52.00	87.42.00
25–29	97.57.00	74.31.00	23.27	180.15.00
30–34	130.33.00	86.36.00	17.45	219.14.00
35–39	124.11.00	75.00.00	15.13	198.44.00
40–44	98.19.00	40.12.00	24.13.00	147.05.00
45–49	64.38.00	35.08.00	12.05	96.11.00
50–54	32.09.00	17.42	16.06	50.17.00
55–59	10.07	16.41	18.36	29.44.00
60–64	16.37	16.53	9.30	27.20.00
65 and over	8.52	26.37.00	12.38	32.27.00
Registered marital status				
Married	389.33.00	280.17.00	57.26.00	727.16.00
Separated	15.20	20.26	10.26	30.32.00
Divorced	24.27.00	24.39.00	16.21	49.47.00
Widowed	5.39	15.26	18.37	24.02.00
Never married	201.09.00	86.24.00	51.58.00	308.11.00
Not applicable (a)	124.25.00	31.20.00	36.08.00	191.54.00
Relationship in household				
Family member				
Husband, Wife or Partner	403.01.00	292.36.00	62.15.00	742.11.00
Lone parent	25.02.00	18.56	15.28	43.46.00
Child under 15	121.08.00	37.53.00	28.46.00	187.46.00
Dependent student	61.20.00	15.38	19.02	80.20.00
Non-dependent child	25.01.00	19.40	13.57	58.39.00
Other related individual	25.00.00	27.07.00	20.28	41.15.00
Non-family member				
Unrelated individual living in family household	22.44	10.58	9.38	27.40.00
Group household member	47.43.00	18.33	6.28	57.04.00
Lone person	34.02.00	17.42	10.15	61.59.00
Non-classifiable	8.23	7.10	17.46	33.19.00
Not applicable (b)	18.30	7.59	2.32	29.01.00
Country of birth				

Main English-speaking countries	227.40.00	98.11.00	804	307.56.00
Non main English-speaking countries	494.02.00	331.49.00	146.43.00	956.54.00
Other (c)	7.31	12.52	15.09	19.51
Year of arrival				
Prior to 2000 (d)	47.27.00	32.41.00	6.35	71.03.00
2000 - 2005	288.05.00	180.19.00	68.33.00	536.57.00
2006 - 9th August 2011	382.32.00	200.43.00	79.59.00	647.35.00
Other (e)	42.29.00	29.09.00	20.08	60.25.00
Total	729.13.00	427.13.00	143.55.00	5.44.41

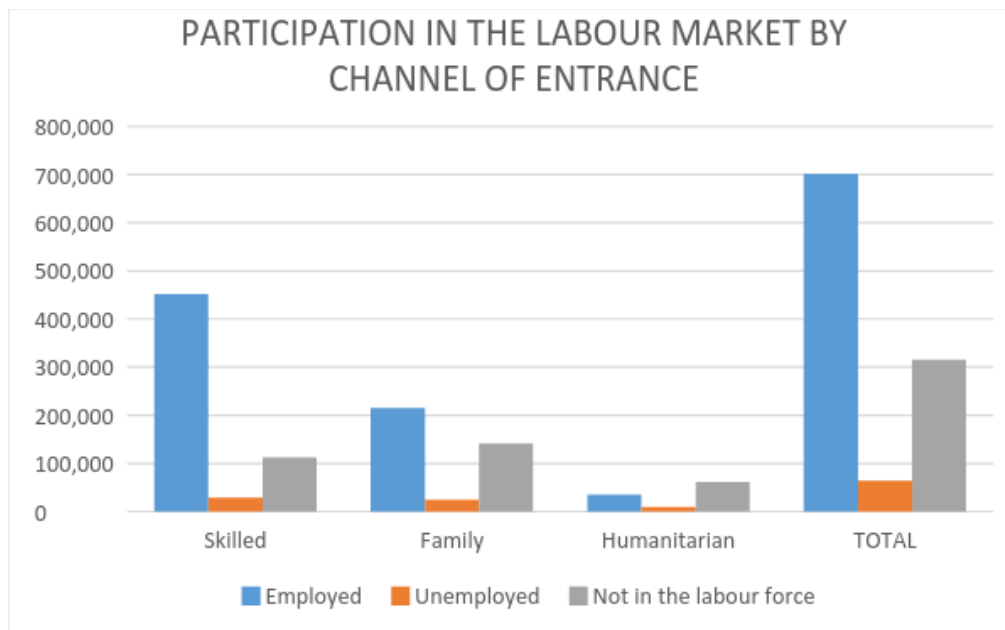
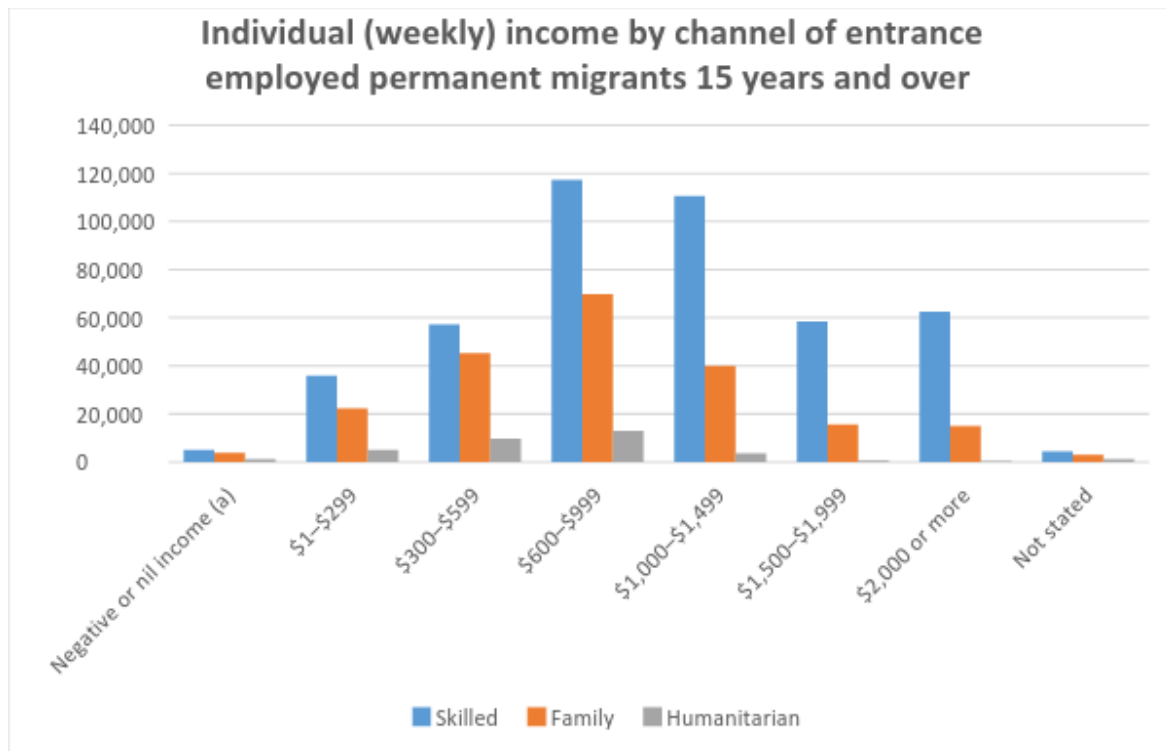


Table16 Labour force status by age, by main/secondary applicant status, by visa stream, permanent migrants 15 years and over					
	Skilled	Family	Humanitarian	Total	
TOTAL					
Employed					
Age (years)					
15-24	40.241	17.597	7.282	65.120	
25-34	165.791	93.614	12.401	271.807	
35-44	163.059	68.477	9.442	240.977	
45-54	72.542	24.956	4.699	102.196	
55-64	9.611	8.499	985	19.095	
65 and over	673	1.898	59	2.631	
Total	451.916	215.042	34.868	701.826	

Unemployed					
Age (years)					
15-24	7.444	4.459	3.127	15.030	
25-34	9.428	10.037	2.835	22.299	
35-44	8.324	5.765	2.189	16.278	
45-54	3.489	2.917	1.083	7.489	
55-64	540	1.412	303	2.255	
65 and over	43	259	13	315	
<i>Total</i>	<i>29.268</i>	<i>24.848</i>	<i>9.551</i>	<i>63.667</i>	
Not in the labour force					
Age (years)					
15-24	40.480	23.536	20.993	85.009	
25-34	28.812	45.903	13.313	88.028	
35-44	26.917	27.329	11.505	65.751	
45-54	11.012	11.330	7.682	30.024	
55-64	3.562	12.338	4.893	20.793	
65 and over	1.655	21.286	3.375	26.316	
<i>Total</i>	<i>112.439</i>	<i>141.721</i>	<i>61.762</i>	<i>315.922</i>	
Not stated					
Age (years)					
15-24	540	859	873	2.272	
25-34	1.438	2.054	1.183	4.674	
35-44	1.170	1.222	850	3.242	
45-54	543	628	447	1.618	
55-64	112	445	204	760	
65 and over	42	714	130	885	
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.845</i>	<i>5.921</i>	<i>3.686</i>	<i>13.452</i>	
Total					
Age (years)					
15-24	88.705	46.451	32.275	167.431	
25-34	205.470	151.607	29.732	386.809	
35-44	199.470	102.793	23.986	326.248	
45-54	87.587	39.830	13.911	141.328	
55-64	13.824	22.694	6.385	42.903	
65 and over	2.412	24.157	3.578	30.147	
Total	597.468	387.532	109.867	1.094.867	



OECD

OECD's annual publication analysing recent developments in migration movements and policies in its countries. Each edition provides the latest statistical information on immigrant stocks and flows, immigrants in the labour market, and migration policies. Country Reports provide detailed policy information for each OECD country and special reports look at current issues in immigration.

Australia is in 2nd place in the OECD in terms of the share of immigrants in its population, with the foreign-born accounting for 26% of the total population. 15% of them arrived in the last 5 years compared with 22% on average across OECD countries. The foreign-born population is on average more educated than across OECD countries, with 38% of highly educated compared with 31% across OECD countries. 44% come from an OECD high-income country and 51% from a country with the same official language.

The immigrant household median income in Australia is in the top half of OECD countries but its level is 14% lower than the native-born one (compared with -21% across OECD countries). 20% of persons living in an immigrant household live with income below the poverty line, compared with an average of 17% across OECD countries.

OECD DATA 2013-2015

TABLE 1. Permanent immigrant inflows in Australia

Permanent immigrant inflows cover regulated movements of foreigners considered to be settling in the country from the perspective of the destination country. They cover regulated movements of foreigners as well as free movement migration. The data presented are the result of a standardisation process that allows for cross-country comparisons. This indicator is measured by numbers of permanent inflows.

PERMANENT IMMIGRANT INFLOWS (AUSTRALIA)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	167 319	179 807	191 905	205 939	220 981	208 489	219 478	245 080	253 492
WORK	41 154	45 057	49 648	52 323	51 650	46 491	56 180	59 734	61 262
FREE MOVEMENTS	22 379	23 781	28 307	34 491	33 034	24 447	34 567	44 304	40 311
FAMILY	22 379	23 781	28 307	34 491	33 034	24 447	34 567	44 304	40 311
FAMILY ACCOMPANYING WORKERS	40 739	46 444	49 268	55 145	63 127	61 377	57 545	66 021	67 711
HUMANITARIAN	17 528.0	16 964.0	14 158.0	11 729.0	14 854.0	14 553.0	13 976.0	13 759.0	20 019.0
OTHER	1 772.0	1 618.0	1 755.0	1 571.0	1 839.0	2 168.0	2 502.0	2 658.0	4 004.0

Table 2. Native-born employment

The native-born employment rate is calculated as the share of employed native-born persons aged 15-64 in the total native-born population (active and inactive persons) of that same age. Employed people are those who worked at least one hour or who had a job but were absent from work during the reference week. This indicator is measured in percentage of native-born population of the same age by gender.

NATIVE-BORN EMPLOYMENT	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	73.50	74.10	74.80	75.00	73.90	73.90	73.90	73.60	73.30
WOMEN	67.10	68.10	68.80	69.20	69.00	68.50	68.80	68.80	68.60
MEN	79.90	80.20	80.80	80.70	78.80	79.20	78.90	78.40	78.00

Table 3. Foreign-born employment

The foreign-born employment rate is calculated as the share of employed foreign-born persons aged 15-64 in the total foreign-born population (active and inactive persons) of that same age. Employed people are those who worked at least one hour or who had a job but were absent from work during the reference week. This indicator is measured in percentage of foreign-born population of the same age by gender.

FOREIGN-BORN EMPLOYMENT	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	67.40	67.90	68.60	69.80	68.30	69.20	70.50	69.90	69.80
WOMEN	58.40	58.70	59.60	61.20	60.10	60.70	61.90	61.40	62.00
MEN	76.70	77.10	77.80	78.60	76.70	78.00	79.30	78.50	77.80

Table 4. Native-born unemployment

The native-born unemployment rate is calculated as the share of unemployed native-born persons aged 15-64 in the native-born labour force (the sum of employed and unemployed native-born) of that same age. Unemployed persons consist of those who report that they are without work during the reference week, are available for work and have taken active steps to find work during the four weeks preceding the interview. Immigrant workers are affected to a greater extent by unemployment than native-born workers in European countries that have traditionally received migrants. This indicator is measured as a percentage of native-born labour force.

NATIVE-BORN UNEMPLOYMENT	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	5.00	4.80	4.30	4.20	5.40	5.20	5.20	5.30	5.70
WOMEN	5.20	4.90	4.60	4.40	5.00	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.60
MEN	4.90	4.70	4.10	4.00	5.60	5.30	5.20	5.40	5.90

Table 5. Foreign-born unemployment

The foreign-born unemployment rate is calculated as the share of unemployed foreign-born persons aged 15-64 in the foreign-born labour force (the sum of employed and unemployed foreign-born) of that same age. Unemployed people consist of those persons who report that they are without work during the reference week, are available for work and have taken active steps to find work during the four weeks preceding the interview. Immigrant workers are affected to a greater extent by unemployment than native-born workers in European countries that have traditionally received migrants. This indicator is measured as a percentage of foreign-born labour force.

FOREIGN-BORN UNEMPLOYMENT	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	5.300	5.100	4.900	4.600	6.700	5.500	5.200	5.400	5.900
WOMEN	5.50	5.40	5.50	5.20	6.80	6.10	6.00	6.00	6.10
MEN	5.200	4.800	4.300	4.200	6.500	5.100	4.600	4.900	5.800

Table 6. Stocks of foreign-born population in OECD countries (Australia)

This indicator presents the stock of foreign-born population in OECD countries, in this case in Australia, that is the size of immigrant populations as measured in number of persons. Data on immigrant populations may be collected through registers, residence permits, statistical surveys, or censuses, depending on the country.

STOCK OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	4 877 270	5 031 900	5 233 480	5 478 220	5 730 090	5 881 620	6 018 410	6 209 810	6 410 180