

Letters to the Editor
The Australian
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Expats not pushed

Neither your news story, nor your excellent editorial "Expatriates are a great national asset" (11-12/8), distinguishes between the the major classes of Australians living abroad: tourists and travellers, including business travellers; overseas workers and their families; retirees and their spouses. The motivations of each are substantially different. It is primarily the second group that constitutes the "brain drain". In principle, they are reclaimable. My only other quibble is your use of the term "diaspora". The dispersions of history's diasporas all had a "push factor". The Australian dispersion is that of a mature country, with a large two-way traffic in people. Yes, expats can act as honorary ambassadors, but they are also a no-charge export, except for football club transfers which attract a transfer fee. Finally, what are the consular service or political parties doing about informing temporary expats that they are eligible to register to vote at our elections?

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