



Emigration From Australia Economic Implications

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Foreword

The international economy has become much more open in recent years. Usually this change is seen in the results of new information technology, the declining trade barriers to the movement of goods, the growth of services that are delivered across national boundaries, and the immense fluidity of capital in a world of floating exchange rates.

However, as travel has become cheaper, swifter and more convenient, and as skills are ever more interchangeable between different segments of the international labour market, so the movement of people has increased. Much of this is temporary but a substantial share is permanent. Australia, always looked upon as an immigrant country, is also experiencing increasing emigration. For example, provisional figures for the year 2000 show that there were 41 100 permanent departures, compared with 24 800 in 1983. (In 2000 there were also 92 300 permanent arrivals, making a provisional net permanent gain of 51 200.)

It is of great importance to understand the causes and consequences of rising emigration from Australia, and Professor Hugo's study makes a helpful contribution to knowledge of this subject. Building on earlier work but using new data (including some derived from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs major research initiative, the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, LSIA) and analysis, Professor Hugo reaches several notable conclusions.

Among the most significant of these is a shift in the way the movement of skilled people from one country to another is seen. Previously this was regarded as an advantage only to the recipient country, and a simple depletion of human resources in the source nation. Hugo suggests that there are several reasons why the movement of highly educated Australians as part of transience (that is, hypermobility involving remigration and return) can benefit Australia. Among these reasons are the extended experience that those who eventually return bring back with them, and the beachhead that such departing migrants provide in overseas countries for the expansion of Australian trade there. Furthermore, Hugo points out that there is actually overall a net gain to Australia in many skilled areas, including in ICT migrants.

Australia is inexorably part of the international economy. The movement of people in a planned migration program here has a natural counterpart in a mobile world of Australians leaving to take advantage of opportunities abroad.

Professor Hugo's adds usefully to information and analysis, and, on behalf of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), we are pleased to welcome its publication.

It is also gratifying to note that this publication is one of three in which DIMA and CEDA have co-operated fruitfully to provide independent research on topics of importance in the study of issues relevant to the movement of people into and out of Australia.



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Minister for Immigration and
Multicultural Affairs



Dr John Nieuwenhuysen
Chief Executive,
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Contents

Foreword	3
Tables and figures	6
About the authors	9
Acknowledgements	11
Executive summary	13
1 Introduction	17
2 Trends in permanent and long-term migration to and from Australia	28
3 Settler loss	58
4 Emigration of recent university graduates	80
5 Conclusion	97
Glossary	112
References	113

Tables and figures

Tables

2.1	Program management structure (2000–01) migration (non-humanitarian) program	29
2.2	Migration program visas granted, 1990–91 to 2000–01 (planned)	32
2.3	Growth of population movement into and out of Australia, 1982–83 to 1999–2000	35
2.4	Estimated stock of temporary entrants in Australia by main visa category, June 1998	39
2.5	Temporary entrants to Australia	39
2.6	Temporary entrants to Australia with the right to work by occupation, 1999–2000	40
2.7	Components of population growth, 1977–2000	41
2.8	Components of net overseas migration (000s), 1983–2000	42
2.9	Australia: settlers and long-term migration, 1987–2000	42
2.10	Australia: permanent movement, financial years, 1968–2000	43
2.11	Australia: long-term movement, 1959–60 to 1999–2000	45
2.12	Permanent and long-term out-movement of the Australia-born who went to the UK, 1994–2000	46
2.13	Australia: permanent and long-term out-movement of the Australia-born who went to the US, 1994–2000	46
2.14	Australia: permanent and long-term out-movement of the Australia-born who went to New Zealand, 1994–2000	47
2.15	Australia: permanent and long-term out-movement of the Australia-born to Continental Europe, 1994–2000	47
2.16	Permanent and long-term departures of Australia-born to Asian destinations, 1994–2000	48
2.17	Long-term and permanent departures of Australia-born to the UK and US by occupation, 1994–2000	48
2.18	Long-term and permanent departures of Australia-born to other areas by occupation, 1994–2000	49
2.19	Permanent and long-term departures of Australia-born to the UK and the US, age/sex structure	49
2.20	Permanent and long-term departures of Australia-born to other areas by age structure	50
2.21	Permanent and long-term departures of Australia-born to selected countries aged between 40 and 49 years	50
2.22	Number of course completions in IT by local and full-fee paying overseas students, 1989–93 and 1993–98	53
2.23	Commencements in IT in science, IT and business courses, 1990–99	53
2.24	Australia: arrival and departure of permanent and long-term migrants with IT and T occupations, 1995–2000	54
2.25	Australia: permanent and long-term arrivals and departures of IT personnel, 1997–98 to 1999–2000	55
3.1	Percentage of male and female respondents in Wave 1 not interviewed by Wave 3 by visa category	59
3.2	Percentage of male and female respondents in Wave 1 not interviewed by Wave 3 by birthplace region, LSIA	60
3.3	Reasons why principal applicants in Wave 1 were not interviewed in Wave 3 by sex, LSIA	60
3.4	Reasons why principal applicants in Wave 1 were not interviewed in Wave 3 by visa category, LSIA	61
3.5	Reasons why principal applicants in Wave 1 were not interviewed in Wave 3 by birthplace region, LSIA	62

3.6	3.6 Visa category of male and female immigrants identified as being permanently overseas by Wave 3, LSIA	64
3.7	3.7 Percentage of male and female principal applicants identified as emigrants by Wave 3 by birthplace region, LSIA	65
3.8	3.8 Marital status of immigrants at first interview identified as 'stayers' and emigrants by Wave 3, LSIA	67
3.9	3.9 Male and female respondents who had emigrated by marital status and visa category, LSIA	67
3.10	3.10 Education/work status of respondents at the time of Waves 1 and 2 who had emigrated by Wave 3, LSIA	68
3.11	3.11 Occupation of male and female respondents at first interview who had emigrated by Wave 3, LSIA	69
3.12	3.12 Occupation by visa category at time of first interview for emigrants who had left Australia by Wave 3, LSIA	72
3.13	3.13 Educational qualifications by visa category at time of first interview for emigrants who had left Australia by Wave 3, LSIA	72
3.14	3.14 Age distribution by main visa category of immigrants identified as being permanently overseas by Wave 3, LSIA	73
3.15	3.15 Per cent of emigrants saying 'yes' to each of the following reasons for immigrating to Australia by main visa type, LSIA	73
3.16	3.16 Male and female immigrants expressing a wish to emigrate from Australia, LSIA	75
3.17	3.17 Immigrants expressing a wish to emigrate from Australia by age, LSIA	75
3.18	3.18 Immigrants expressing a wish to emigrate from Australia by visa category, LSIA	76
3.19	3.19 Region of birth of respondents expressing a wish to emigrate from Australia, LSIA	76
3.20	3.20 Regions nominated as preferred destinations for emigration from Australia, LSIA	77
4.1	4.1 Recent graduates working overseas	81
4.2	4.2 Recent graduates working overseas by state of their university	81
4.3	4.3 Main fields of study of 1991 graduates employed overseas	85
4.4	4.4 Main fields of study of 1995 graduates employed overseas	85
4.5	4.5 Main fields of study of 1998 graduates employed overseas	86
4.6	4.6 Main jobs of graduates working overseas in the graduate destination survey of 1996	87
4.7	4.7 Hours worked by recent Australian graduates working overseas by nation of destination, 1996	89
4.8	4.8 Main jobs of recent graduates working overseas, 1999	89
4.9	4.9 Hours worked by recent Australian graduates working overseas by nation of destination, 1999	91
4.10	4.10 Main countries of destinations of recent Australian graduates working overseas, 1996	92
4.11	4.11 Main countries of destinations of recent Australian graduates working overseas, 1999	92
4.12	4.12 Income levels of recent Australian graduates working overseas, 1996	94
4.13	4.13 Income levels of recent Australian graduates working overseas, 1998	95
5.1	5.1 Government views on the level of immigration, 1976, 1986 and 1996	98
5.2	5.2 Government views on the level of emigration, 1976, 1986 and 1996	98

Figures

1.1	Incoming passenger card completed by all international arrivals to Australia up to 1997	23
1.2	Outgoing passenger card completed by all international departures from Australia up to 1997	24
1.3	Outgoing passenger card completed by all international departures from Australia after 1997	24
2.1	Categories of immigration to Australia, 1999–2000	31
2.2	Australia: migration program outcomes by stream, 1989–2001	33
2.3	Australia: annual migration, 1850–2000	34
2.4	Australia: long-term arrivals and departures, 1959–60 to 1999–2000	37
2.5	Australia: net permanent and long-term movement as a percentage of total net migration gain, 1983–2000	37
2.6	Non-permanent migration to Australia by category, 1986–2000	38
2.7	Permanent departures of Australia-born and overseas-born persons from Australia, 1959–60 to 1999–2000	44
2.8	Australian resident long-term departures from Australia, 1959–60 to 1999–2000	44
3.1	Per cent of male and female respondents in Wave 1 who were not interviewed in Wave 3 by age, LSIA	60
3.2	Reasons why respondents in Wave 1 were not interviewed in Wave 3 by birthplace region, LSIA	63
3.3	Visa category of immigrants who stayed and those who had emigrated from Australia by Wave 3 of LSIA	65
3.4	Birthplace region of immigrants who stayed and those who had emigrated from Australia by Wave 3 of LSIA	65
3.5	Age distribution of male and female immigrants who stayed and those who had emigrated from Australia by Wave 3 of LSIA	66
3.6	Work status of male and female respondents at first interview identified as 'stayers' and emigrants by Wave 3, LSIA	69
3.7	Occupation of employed male and female respondents at first interview identified as 'stayers' and emigrants by Wave 3, LSIA	70
3.8	Educational qualifications of male and female respondents at first interview identified as 'stayers' and emigrants by Wave 3, LSIA	71
4.1	Age–sex characteristics of 1990 and 1995 graduates employed overseas	83
4.2	Qualifications of 1990 and 1995 graduates employed overseas	83
4.3	Income level of 1990 graduates employed overseas, 1991	93

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Executive summary

The whole issue of emigration now has a much higher profile internationally than was the case when the predecessor to this study was published (Hugo 1994). The increasing tempo of emigration from Australia throughout the 1990s and early 2000s is a function of the globalisation process, together with massive improvements in, and cheapening of, international transport and the proliferation of information flows between nations. Indeed, there has been an unprecedented increase in all forms of population movement between nations, with Australia becoming a favoured destination, as well as a point of departure for persons remigrating elsewhere or returning to their home countries.

Australian immigration policy has recently been transformed. There has been a shift away from immigration being based purely on the permanent settlement model and increasing flexibility in temporary visa entry enabling many workers to enter Australia on a non-permanent basis. This shift has also been accompanied by a shift from family/humanitarian concerns to skill/business migration in line with national goals. These changes are now clearly reflected in movement data and in the nature and significance of departures.

An important change in immigration in the 1999–2000 intake period has been in the net migration gain from long-term movement (period exceeding 12 months) which exceeded that from permanent movement, accounting for over half of the net gains to the nation.

In 1999–2000 permanent departures from Australia reached the highest level since 1972–73 and the proportion of Australia-born was the highest ever recorded, indicating an accelerating trend for the Australia-born population to emigrate. There were also similar upward trends in the long-term outmovement of Australian residents departing overseas for more than a year with intentions to return, and in the number of residents travelling overseas for periods of less than a year.

The socio-economic and demographic profiles of those departing, especially the Australia-born, tend to show that those leaving are younger and more educated than the population of the nation as a whole – so the spectre of a ‘brain drain’ has resurfaced as an area of government concern with counter-arguments that such movement may ultimately signal a ‘brain gain’.

Immigrants coming to Australia in all skill groups significantly outnumber those leaving. For example, in the information technology sector there have been major increases in the numbers coming into Australia on a permanent or long-term basis, but this has been matched with an increase in departures of such workers although they fail to outnumber those arriving. This points to a large degree of *turnover* and *circulation* in this sector, reflecting the globalisation of labour markets in the area.

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The long-term and permanent outmovement of the Australia-born not only reached record levels in the 1999–2000 period, but it should be noted that one-third went to the UK, with the number doubling over the last six years. The second-most popular destination of the Australia-born was the US, with the numbers going to Europe also increasing and yet relatively small. The levels of movement of the Australia-born to Asia varied considerably between countries due to the effects of the Asian Economic Crisis.

Skilled Australia-born emigrants were overwhelmingly concentrated in the young adult age groups.

Skilled Australia-born emigrants were overwhelmingly concentrated in the young adult age groups. Some 60 per cent of workers emigrating to the UK, the largest single destination, were drawn from managerial, administrative, professional and associate professional occupations. This compared with 72.3 per cent of emigrants moving to the US, a group overall slightly older. By contrast, only 37.7 per cent of all employed persons in Australia were in these occupational categories.

The 'brain drain' phenomenon is also evident from the analysis of settler loss.

The 'brain drain' phenomenon, which is highly selective of young, highly skilled and well-educated groups, is also evident from the analysis of settler loss in the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA). Principal applicants from the UK, Europe and North America were the most likely to have left Australia to live permanently overseas. Those who had emigrated had predominantly gained entry through the Independent Points Assessment Scheme or Skill-Business provisions.

Some 5.6 per cent of young Australians graduating in 1998 were working overseas in the year after their graduation.

Unfortunately, the LSIA study does not provide information on destination countries for those who had migrated elsewhere, so we cannot establish whether the settlers return to their home countries or seek other countries in which family and/or better employment opportunities exist. It would be useful to trace those principal applicants who had left so soon after settlement to obtain information relating to their decision to remigrate and to establish their situations in the destination countries.

The Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) on graduates from Australian universities who go overseas to work within a year of graduating, found that some 5.6 per cent of young Australians graduating in 1998 were working overseas in the year after their graduation. The most favoured destination was by far the UK, increasing its dominance between the 1996 and 1999 surveys from 24.2 per cent to 31.3 per cent. Recent graduates working overseas were divided between those on some form of working holiday evidenced by relatively high proportions in service, sales and clerical occupations, and those in more professional types of employment linked to their qualifications.

Australia is one of the few nations in the world to collect comprehensive data on emigration, unlike most of the other major immigration countries. It is vital that we continue to collect arrival and departure data to monitor settler loss and



increasingly to gauge the loss of the Australia-born. At the same time it is crucial that new initiatives in data collection methods are taken to adequately study the nature and extent of emigration. Emigrants are by definition outside the nation from whose perspective they are being studied. Hence, conventional population censuses do not provide any information on the emigrants themselves and studies based in the country of emigration can only survey them before they leave, or in the case of some, after they return. In a globalising world it may be necessary that in future Australian censuses we include Australian citizens living outside Australia or gain access to relevant data from censuses carried out in other countries.

The introduction of a liberalised temporary worker entry policy has increased the intake of skilled workers into Australia in recent years and also increased the out-movement. However, in 1999–2000 13.1 per cent of persons accepted in Australia for permanent settlement in the skill category were ‘onshore applicants’ who had entered Australia on a temporary visa. Recent changes to immigrant regulations are favouring this process. This is also applicable to overseas students completing degrees who can now stay on and apply for permanent residence, where previously they had to return to their home country before applying to immigrate. The impact of these changes needs serious research attention as they will clearly influence the nature of immigration and emigration in the future.

Another important group is the unprecedented departures of Australia-born on both a permanent and long-term basis, especially skilled young persons. This is largely due to young Australians travelling overseas on extended working holidays made more possible by programs such as the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program, especially in respect to the UK. Another important element is the internationalisation of labour markets in which skilled Australians seek work beyond Australia’s shores, or alternatively get jobs in Australia with employers who are themselves multinationals and they can often find themselves transferred to offices overseas.

A major priority of government is to ensure that a substantial proportion of these Australia-born emigrants are in fact *circulators* rather than emigrants. If the majority return to Australia after a period working overseas, their value to Australia is likely to be greater than if they stayed in Australia. This will be largely due to their international experience, substantial overseas networks and contacts, and their ability to bring back with them capital as investment from their larger employers. We need to provide high-quality opportunities within Australia for skilled new graduates who wish to stay in the country, and for those venturing overseas for work to ensure that the way is open for them to return to Australia at a later stage. We also need policies to maximise the advantages to Australia of its skilled workers in highly paid pivotal positions in companies in overseas nations.

The 1999-2000 13.1 per cent of persons accepted in Australia for permanent settlement in the skill category were ‘onshore applicants’ who had entered Australia on a temporary visa. Recent changes to immigrant regulations are favouring this process.

Another important group is the unprecedented departures of Australia-born both a permanent and long-term basis especially skilled young persons.



One group among the settler loss of major concern is the substantial number of returnees to Asian countries, especially Hong Kong.

There has been no development of a clear national policy on emigration.

A crucial question is how such potential returnees can be identified. Australia could follow other countries and investigate maintaining registers of skilled workers overseas to facilitate programs targeted at bringing back people with particular skills and expertise. One with a great deal of potential is the alumni lists maintained by Australia's tertiary institutions, which tend to be electronic data bases, that could be used to set up networks.

One group among the settler loss of major concern is the substantial number of returnees to Asian countries, especially Hong Kong, which had an emigration rate of 31 per 1000 in 1999–2000. There is a need to study in depth this backflow since it may have some implications for the future retention of Asian business migrants in Australia. It can be suggested that more intensive programs of providing information and advice to business migrants to overcome problems of adjusting to the Australian business environment are needed if we wish to curtail this out-movement.

There has been no development of a clear national policy on emigration and little public debate about it. The attraction and retention of highly skilled workers and business migrants is now seen as a key to success in the new economy. It can be argued that the issue of 'settler loss' has attracted a disproportionate amount of attention over time but it seems that levels in Australia are similar to or lower than those in comparable countries. Future policies must take account of the operation of international labour markets and acknowledge that more settlers (like their skilled Australia-born counterparts) will operate in international labour markets when they change jobs. Australia must ensure that it develops policies that meet the demands of all immigrants (whether permanent or long-term) and provides opportunities for Australia-born emigrants to return.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The last two decades have seen an unprecedented acceleration in the flows of goods, information, ideas, money and, most importantly, people, between nations. The globalisation process, together with massive improvements in, and cheapening of, international transport and the proliferation of information flows between nations has seen an unprecedented increase in all forms of population movement between nations. Whereas in the immediate post-war period only a handful of nations were substantially affected by international migration, virtually all nations are now influenced by it. One indication of this was a reduction in the proportions of nations who were satisfied with their levels of immigration between 1976 (86 per cent) and 1996 (75 per cent) and with their levels of emigration (from 83 to 72 per cent) (United Nations 1998, p. 9). While Australia was one of the few countries in which international migration has been of longstanding importance, the pattern, level and composition of international movement affecting it has been transformed in recent years (Hugo 2000).

Australia has long been characterised as emphatically an immigration country, especially in the post-war period. Yet it is frequently overlooked that Australia is a significant emigration nation with some of the world's highest rates of out-movement of people on a permanent and long-term basis. These losses comprise the following components:

- A substantial settler loss whereby former immigrants leave Australia to return to their home country or to settle in a third nation.
- An outflow of Australia-born persons intending to settle more or less permanently elsewhere.
- An outflow of overseas-born persons who entered Australia on a long-term (not a settler) visa and have subsequently left the country.
- Australia-born persons leaving Australia on a long-term basis (greater than one year) but intending to eventually return to the country.

The numbers in most of these flows have increased in the 1990s and they raise a number of questions of considerable practical significance to the private sector in Australia, as well as to the federal government. Among such questions are the following:

- To what extent does the pattern of movement represent a 'brain drain' from Australia whereby highly skilled individuals, trained in Australia, are lost to the local economy and society?
- To what extent does the out-movement represent an opportunity for Australian business to link with Australians working in businesses in Asia and elsewhere and for Australian companies to expand their businesses and other networks overseas?
- To what extent does the national economy benefit from funds remitted by the Australians overseas and Australians returning with skills and networks of benefit to Australia?
- To what extent is the settler loss element of the emigration a significant loss to Australia's economy? Are there ways in which the loss can be reduced and the Australian immigration program made more effective in its rate of retention of settlers?



The pattern, level and composition of international migration affecting Australia has been transformed in recent years.

Australia is a significant emigration nation with some of the world's highest rates of out-movement on a permanent and long-term basis.

To what extent does this pattern of movement represent a 'brain drain' from Australia or an opportunity for Australian business to link with Australians working in Asia and elsewhere?



The increase in emigration from Australia also raises a number of questions that relate to international population movement as it is being rapidly and profoundly shaped by forces of globalisation.

Hugo (1994) found emigration had reached high levels; the Australia-born component had reached an unprecedented proportion of the outflows; the outflow of Australia-born people on a long-term (rather than permanent) basis had been even greater and an increasing proportion of the flow was directed towards Asia.

- To what extent should there be any government policy attempts to influence the levels and composition of out-movement? If so, what types of interventions are likely to be effective?
- To what extent can the long-term but temporary stays of overseas-born persons be utilised for better linking Australian businesses with overseas markets?

These and other questions and issues are important but neglected issues in the study of Australian population movement. However, the increase in emigration from Australia also raises a number of questions that relate to the extent of our understanding of international population movement as it is being rapidly and profoundly shaped by forces of globalisation. Among these questions the following are especially important:

- To what extent is the shift in the pattern of movement to Australia from a paradigm dominated by more or less permanent settlement of overseas-born persons to one in which there is a much greater element of non-permanent settlement of newcomers in Australia and substantial out-movement of the Australia-born? To what extent is this a function of global changes in the international migration system and to what extent is this a distinctive system to Australia?
- To what extent is there a linkage between this new pattern of movement and changing patterns of global and regional social and economic networking? The relevance of network theory (Massey et al. 1994) to this pattern needs to be examined.
- To what extent is this pattern being influenced by changing patterns of recruitment in companies both Australian and multinational, and to what extent are particular labour markets becoming international and regional rather than a national or sub-national?
- To what extent are there linkages in the patterns of movement with other linkages between Australia and other countries? For example, are there links between the movements and trade linkages? Are there particular areas where Australians have particular advantages; for example, Australian mining engineers and vigneroners are in great demand internationally.

Hugo (1994) undertook a study of emigration from Australia in the early 1990s based upon analysis of secondary data derived from passenger cards completed on arrival to and departure from Australia. Among the findings of that study were the following:

- Emigration had reached high levels.
- The Australia-born component had reached an unprecedented proportion of the outflows.
- The outflow of Australia-born people on a long-term (rather than permanent) basis had been even greater.
- An increasing proportion of the flow was directed towards Asia.

The present study uses these findings as a point of departure for a new examination of Australian emigration. The following are ways in which the planned study extends and differs from the earlier study:

- The study updates the previous one, which is of particular significance in that both the levels and structure of the movement have been substantially changed in the 1990s.



- The study is more comprehensive in that it analyses both permanent and long-term emigration separately and is able to examine the policy implications of both types.
- The study incorporates some detailed analysis of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) on settler loss.

The study also provides an insight into the increasing loss of young recent graduates from Australian universities to overseas destinations by analysing data from the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS).

In the 1960s a considerable literature developed on the issue of the 'brain drain' – a process whereby the most talented and highly educated people were being drawn from less-developed and powerful countries to the large dominant metropolitan countries of North America and Europe, because they could command much better incomes, education opportunities for their children, and so on, in those countries (for example, see Adams 1969). Although their numbers were relatively small the impact on the sending area was disproportionately great because it was losing precisely those people who were most likely to take crucial roles in achieving economic development and social change. Moreover, the loss was doubly disadvantageous to the origin nations in that they had invested scarce resources in the education, training and rearing of the emigrants, and then not been able to capitalise upon that investment. On the other hand, the developed economies receiving the highly qualified immigrants accrued a double benefit not having to have invested in the training and bringing up of the migrants but immediately gaining from their productivity. This 'brain drain' movement was seen as a barrier to development in origin areas and exacerbating already substantial international inequalities. There have been some case studies of 'brain drains' from Australia such as Pure's (1988) examination of the movement of Australian scientists and engineers overseas between 1983 and 1987. However, the global international migration system with respect to highly skilled labour has been transformed since the 1960s when the early brain drain research was undertaken.

Thus the current situation tends to be one characterised by *transilience* of such groups; that is, hypermobility involving remigration and return (Richmond 1991, p. 4). Seen in this context it is somewhat unrealistic to expect that Australia will be isolated from this process and have its international migration of skilled groups dominated by traditional settler emigration movements. The greatly increased significance of transilience in skilled labour movements has been encouraged by a number of developments over the last decade or so:

- The internationalisation of many highly skilled regional and national labour markets in some highly skilled areas have been usurped by labour markets that overlap international boundaries.
- The internationalisation of capital.
- The exponential development of information exchanges of all types through the development of communications.
- The reduction of real time and money costs of travel.
- The development of multinational corporations.

In the Australian context then, the increasing tempo of emigration of Australia-born professionals may to some extent be due to Australia's increasing incorporation into these international migration systems of transilients, as well as a function of economic conditions within Australia.

In the 1960s a considerable literature developed on the issue of the 'brain drain' This movement was seen as a barrier to development in origin areas and exacerbating substantial international inequalities.

The current situation tends to be characterised by transilience of such groups; that is, hypermobility involving remigration and return.

The increasing tempo of emigration of Australia-born professionals may to some extent be due to Australia's increasing incorporation into international migration systems of transilients.



The movement of highly educated Australians could result in benefits to Australia ... Such migrants can become beachheads for penetration of overseas markets for Australian skills, goods and services.

The linkages established between Australians and Australian companies and their Asian counterparts and markets will assist in embedding Australia's economy in the global economy.

The 1990s is seeing significant changes in the destination of highly qualified Australians moving overseas on a long-term basis. There are some indications that Asian destinations are becoming of great significance.

Indeed it is possible to hypothesise that the movement of highly educated Australians could result not only in benefits to the movers themselves but also in Australia more generally for the following reasons:

- If these Australians eventually return to their homeland they will bring with them the new skills and extended experience they have acquired to contribute towards Australian economic growth.
- The linkage that these movers establish between their destination and Australia could become conduits for flow of information and goods. Such migrants can become beachheads for penetration of overseas markets for Australian skills, goods and services.
- To the extent that the migrants are remitting significant amounts of hard currency foreign exchange to Australia-based families and bank accounts they are having positive balance of payments effects.
- The extension of the skills and experience of the Australian workers involved.
- The linkages that this is establishing between Australians and Australian companies and their Asian counterparts and markets will further assist in embedding Australia's economy in the global economy.
- It is productively absorbing skilled Australian workers at a time of lack of opportunities in Australia.
- It may be creating opportunities for Australian companies to supply goods and services to other countries because the Australian expatriate workers will be most familiar with Australia-based suppliers.

For example, much is spoken and written about Australia's need to 'become part of Asia'. Perhaps the networks created by Asians settling in Australia and by Australians living for at least three or four years in Asia can play significant roles in forging such links. In this respect it is clear that the 1990s is seeing some significant changes in the destination of highly qualified Australians moving overseas on a long-term basis. Traditionally, such movements have been directed towards North America and Europe (especially the UK-Ireland), but there are some indications that Asian destinations are becoming of great significance in the 1990s. Some of the world's most dynamic economies are located in the Asian region and in several countries there are shortages of skilled labour of certain kinds. Hence, in Hong Kong there has been an increase in movement of Australian expatriate professionals (Sharma 1991). Even in a labour surplus nation like Indonesia, economic growth is outpacing the capacity to supply professions in areas such as engineering and management.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The present report is part of a larger study on the scale and impacts of emigration from Australia that seeks to shed light on many of the issues raised above. The more detailed objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1 To accurately establish and analyse the scale of permanent and long-term movement of Australia-born and overseas-born persons to other countries over the last decade.



Despite the fact that emigration levels have been consistently high in Australia during the post-war period, it has not been monitored closely ... It represents a significant and important gap in international migration knowledge in Australia ... It is apparent that movement of the Australia-born has become of much greater significance in recent years.

- 2 To establish the demographic, economic, educational and social characteristics of the people involved in that movement.
- 3 To establish the causes of this movement and relate this to migration theory. In particular it is hoped to embed this explanation within a migration systems theory framework (Mabogunje 1970; Kritz and Zlotnik 1992; Fawcett and Arnold 1987; Fawcett 1989; Zlotnik 1992; Gurak and Caces 1992; Borjas 1989, 1990). This framework incorporates full consideration of context and elements at origin and destination but places particular emphasis on the linkages established between origin and destination and the inter-relationship between different types of movement.
- 4 To establish the nature, extent and significance of links developed and maintained by Australians living on a long-term basis overseas.
- 5 To investigate the extent to which networks established by Australians could be utilised to increase Australian trade, business and other linkages with those countries. This would involve considering the extent to which policy intervention could facilitate the development, maintenance and strengthening of those linkages.
- 6 To explore the longer term possibilities for increased international migration of Australians to Asia. This would involve an assessment of the evolving human resources situation in key Asian countries in relation to that of Australia and the future role of linkages established by the current generation of Australian expatriate workers.
- 7 To develop an improved set of methods to monitor the scale and impact of Australian long-term and permanent movement outside the country and the impacts of those movements.
- 8 To establish the extent to which the pattern of emigration is advantageous or disadvantageous to Australian companies' recruitment activities.

The present report is focused largely on the first three of these objectives, although some of the other objectives will be discussed. A later report will deal in detail with the other objectives.

1.3 Data sources and concepts

Woodrow and Passel (1989, p. 1) of the US refer to emigration as remaining the 'stepchild of the immigration statistical system'. Such a statement is also true, though to a lesser extent, of Australia. Despite the fact that emigration levels have been consistently high in Australia during the post-war period, it has not been monitored closely or analysed in anything like the detail that has been the case with immigration. It represents a significant and important gap in international migration knowledge in Australia. The bulk of Australian research on emigration (for example, Appleyard 1962a, b; Commonwealth Department of Immigration 1966; Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council 1967; Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1978; Fortey 1978; Immigration Advisory Council 1973; Lukomskyj and Richards 1986; NPC 1990; Price 1973; Rampa 1988) has focused on settler loss rather than emigration of the Australia-born. It is apparent that movement of the Australia-born has become of much greater significance in recent years (Hugo 1994). Most of these studies have been based on the analysis of data from departure cards completed by



People entering Australia under its Migration Program are only one component of the contribution made by international migration to Australia's population growth.

The rate of population growth will be influenced by the extent to which permanent settlers eventually leave Australia and Australia-born people leave the country on a long-term or a permanent basis; and category jumping. This report analyses these three factors.

people leaving the country. The present report is also based on the analysis of data derived from the arrival and departure cards filled out by all people entering and leaving Australia.

Australia recognises the following categories of international population movement for statistical purposes:

- Permanent movement – persons migrating to Australia and residents departing permanently.
- Long-term movement – visitors arriving and residents departing temporarily with the intention to stay in Australia or abroad for twelve months or more, and the departure of visitors and the return of residents who had stayed in Australia or abroad for twelve months or more.
- Short-term movement – travellers whose intended or actual stay in Australia or abroad is less than twelve months.

It is clear, however, that:

- This depends upon the *intentions* of movers and it is clear that these intentions change over time so that there is significant 'category jumping'.
- There are, in fact, visa categories for entry into Australia that overlap these categories. For example, holders of *Temporary Business Entrants* visas may stay in Australia for periods of up to four years and hence overlap the short-term and long-term movement categories.

It is important to realise that people who enter Australia under its *Migration Program* are only one component of the contribution made by international migration to Australia's population growth. The other elements that can add to population growth are as follows:

- New Zealand migration, which refers to the arrival of New Zealanders under the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement.
- Long-term visitors to the country.
- Category jumping of short-term and long-term movers to become permanent settlers.

On the other hand, the rate of population growth will be influenced by:

- The extent to which people who settle in Australia as permanent movers eventually leave Australia.
- Australia-born people who move out of the country on a long-term or a permanent basis.
- Category jumping whereby former categories indicate they are leaving Australia on a short-term or long-term basis but in fact leave permanently.

The present study is focused largely on analysing patterns of the last three factors. It is important to stress that focusing only on people who indicate on their passenger departure card that they intend to leave Australia permanently is only one element in the total emigration picture.



Each person entering or leaving Australia is required to complete an arrival or departure card. The data, however, are somewhat limited in that only a small amount of information is collected.

Some persons moving abroad on a temporary basis may change their minds and never return.

At the outset it is important to make some comments about the arrival and departure card information upon which a large part of this paper is based. Each person entering or leaving Australia is required to complete an arrival or departure card. These data are now computerised by DIMA and used as the basis for the estimates of population growth and loss resulting from international migration provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The cards also collect information on a range of characteristics of persons arriving and leaving the country. The ABS and DIMA have made considerable use of this data source in their work, but access by outside researchers has been extremely limited. The data, however, are somewhat limited in that only a small amount of information is collected (age, sex, marital status, birthplace, citizenship, occupation, intended place of residence, and so on). The arrival card that was used in Australia until 1997 is reproduced as Figure 1.1. We are especially concerned here with the cards completed by people departing from Australia. The card used up until 1997 is presented as Figure 1.2. However, a new card was introduced in 1997 and is presented as Figure 1.3. It can be seen that details of sex, age and marital status have been dropped from the card. However, additional data are captured electronically from the passports of arrivals and departures.

Figure 1.1 Incoming passenger card completed by all international arrivals to Australia up to 1997

The form is titled 'INCOMING PASSENGER CARD' and is divided into several numbered sections:

- 1. FULL NAME**
- 2. CITIZENSHIP OR RESIDENCE**
- 3. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP**
- 4. AIRPORT OF ENTRY**
- 5. DATE OF ENTRY** (with fields for Day, Month, Year)
- 6. SEX** (Male, Female)
- 7. AGE** (with fields for Years, Months, Days)
- 8. PURPOSE OF VISIT** (Tourist, Business, Other)
- 9. Intending to Reside in Australia** (Country of Intention)
- 10. Intending to Reside in Australia** (Temporary or Permanent)
- 11. Intending to Reside in Australia** (Date when arrival in Australia)
- 12. Main reason for coming to Australia** (Please tick ONLY ONE box):
 - Business
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Other
 - Visiting relatives
 - Family
 - Other
- 13. Country of birthplace**
- 14. Country of birthplace** (with field for State/Territory)
- 15. Country of birthplace** (with field for State/Territory)
- 16. Country of birthplace** (with field for State/Territory)

Source: DIMA

The data from these cards have been computerised and are currently being analysed as part of this project. Our main concern is with the people who completed sections E and F of these cards, although we are also interested to some extent in those that complete section D. Clearly, section F does not provide a totally faithful reflection of emigration from Australia because:



Some people going overseas on a 'long-term movement' basis may be intending to spend a very substantial period overseas.

There will also be people leaving Australia who indicate that they are leaving permanently but who subsequently decide to return to Australia.

- Some persons moving abroad on a temporary basis may change their minds and never return.
- Some people going overseas on a 'long-term movement' basis may be intending to spend a very substantial period overseas (even their entire working life).

In the latter context a strong theoretical case could be made for considering this emigration. On the other hand, there will also be people leaving Australia who indicate that they are leaving permanently but who subsequently decide to return to Australia.

Figure 1.2 Outgoing passenger card completed by all international departures from Australia up to 1997

The form is titled 'OUTGOING PASSENGER CARD' and is divided into several sections:

- PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Fields for name, country of birth, country of residence, sex, marital status, and date of birth.
- TRAVEL DETAILS:** Fields for passport number, date of issue, and flight information (number, name, airport).
- DEPARTURE TYPE:** A choice between 'Temporary departure' and 'Permanent departure'. The 'Temporary' section includes fields for intended stay duration, reasons for travel (e.g., holiday, business, education), and intended future residence.
- RESIDENCE:** Fields for usual occupation and country of residence.
- DECLARATION:** A section for the passenger to sign and date.

Source: DIMA

Figure 1.3 Outgoing passenger card completed by all international departures from Australia after 1997

This modernized form is titled 'Outgoing passenger card - Australia' and features a more organized layout:

- PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Fields for name, date of birth, and country of residence.
- TRAVEL DETAILS:** Fields for flight number, name, and airport.
- DEPARTURE TYPE:** A choice between 'Temporary departure' and 'Australian resident departing permanently'. The 'Temporary' section includes fields for intended length of stay, country of future residence, and reasons for travel.
- RESIDENCE:** Fields for usual occupation and country of residence.
- DECLARATION:** A section for the passenger to sign and date.
- TURN OVER THE CARD:** A prominent instruction at the bottom right.

Source: DIMA



We do not have a great deal of information about the accuracy of responses on the departure cards. This leads to 'category jumping' whereby departees mark a category of departure on their outgoing passenger card inconsistent with either their actual status or their future intentions.

Category jumping is of crucial significance in measuring emigration and in estimating settler loss and the net loss or gain of various categories of people.

We do not have a great deal of information about the accuracy of responses on the origin and departure cards. However, a 1978 study of departures from Australia's major airports and the Port of Fremantle provides some important insights since some 12 594 departures were surveyed and their answers compared with those on the outgoing passenger card (OPC), and it was found that there was a substantial degree of misstatement on the latter. The problems identified were as follows:

- Of 1109 people classifying themselves on the OPC as visitors to Australia or temporary entrants departing, 15 per cent were found in fact to be residents departing permanently or temporarily.
- Of passengers who were residents of Australia, most ticked the right box but many gave conflicting responses to the question regarding how long they intended to stay abroad. For example, of 2500 residents stating on the OPC that they were departing for a period between one and two years, almost 20 per cent told the interviewer that they would be returning in less than a year. A similar number of those indicating on the OPC that they were going abroad for less than a year in fact intended staying more than a year.
- Of major significance was the degree of uncertainty revealed by departing residents about their intention to return to Australia to live. Less than half of the permanent departures on the OPC told the interviewer that they had no intention to return to Australia to live. On the other hand, there were an even greater number of temporary departures (according to the OPC) but were undecided about whether they would return to Australia to live.

It is useful to quote Fortey's (1978, p. 2) conclusions regarding these discrepancies:

It is to be expected that a number of travellers will be undecided about their future plans. Many journeys are made at a time of stress, others on a trial basis by one or more members of a family unit. The outcome of other migration plans will depend upon career opportunities and economic conditions ... Taken in isolation the annual passenger card statistics can be accepted as no more than [an] approximation of the size of the permanent departure movement.

It is not clear to what extent the accuracies in reporting demonstrated by Fortey have been maintained over the subsequent two decades. Certainly, the card design has not been changed to any great extent and the volume of movement is many times greater. There is no reason to anticipate that the situation described by Fortey has improved much in the intervening period. The major difficulty created by this as Lukomskyj and Richards (1986, p. 608) point out is that it leads to:

... what is termed 'category jumping' whereby departees mark a category of departure on their outgoing passenger card inconsistent with either their actual status (such as settlers who leave Australia indicating they are only visitors or temporary entrants) or their future intentions (such as settlers who indicate they are leaving temporarily and never return and others who indicate they are departing permanently and later return to Australia to live).

Category jumping is of crucial significance in not only attempting to measure emigration but especially in estimating settler loss and in attempting to arrive at estimates of net loss or gain of various categories of people (birthplace, occupation groups, and so on).



This study will focus on the emigration of two groups: Australia-born and the overseas-born. Of particular interest is the settler loss element. Arriving at an estimate of settler loss is extremely difficult.

Attention will be focused on the increasing emigration of the Australia-born... There are also problems in interpreting the departure card data.

The Australia-born emigration data tend to exaggerate the total permanent outflow of this group.

The study by Lukomskyj and Richards (1986, p. 609) squarely addressed the problem of category jumping. They define this problem as follows:

Every person who departs Australia must complete an outgoing passenger card. Below the space provided to enter information such as the departee's name, country of birth, passport number and date of birth are three boxes which identify departure category; box 'D' for visitors or temporary entrants to Australia and boxes 'E' and 'F' for Australian residents departing temporarily and permanently, respectively. Departees must complete only one box. This is a self-description exercise and some people complete the wrong box (in terms of their actual status or future intentions), becoming 'category jumpers'.

In their study they make adjustments by matching their group of departures (those leaving in 1980) with arrivals over the next four years so that three types of category jumpers were detected:

- 1 Settlers who complete box 'D' ('Visitor or Temporary Entrant Departing') on departure and have not returned to Australia after an absence of at least 12 months (12 months was considered a sufficiently long period to indicate that the migrant had departed Australia permanently).
- 2 Settlers who indicated on departure they were 'Residents Departing Temporarily' (box 'E') and have not returned to Australia after at least 12 months of absence.
- 3 Migrants who indicated they were leaving permanently (ticked box 'F') but subsequently returned to Australia.

In the present report we do not make any of the adjustments for category jumping and this in fact will be carried out in the next stage of the work.

In Australia there are three important elements in emigration (NPC 1990, p. 1):

- The Australia-born.
- Overseas-born former settlers and their Australia-born children.
- Overseas-born residents who do not indicate they were former settlers when leaving Australia.

In much of the study we will be focusing on the emigration of two groups: Australia-born and the overseas-born. Of particular interest to immigration policy matters and immigration program officials is the settler loss element. Yet, actually arriving at an estimate of settler loss is extremely difficult.

Price (1996) has developed a sound methodology to make these estimates and these will be adopted in later work on the project. Price's estimates of settler loss will be updated to the year 2000 and separate estimates made for all major birthplace groups. Attention will be focused here on the increasing emigration of the Australia-born. It is apparent, however, that there are also problems in interpreting the departure card data. Again to quote the NPC (1990, p. 2):

Australia-born loss is more complex, mainly because many Australia-born, though saying they are leaving permanently, in fact return later on. During the period 1978–88, for instance, the number of Australia-born indicating that they were leaving Australia permanently was 55 970 but the loss of Australia-born persons by total net migration was only 25 060.



One issue of importance relates to the second-generation emigrants – that of the Australia-born children of former settlers.

The proportion of Australia-born emigrants aged less than 20 years has been declining in recent years.

Hence, the Australia-born emigration data tend to be an exaggeration of the total permanent outflow of this group. Nevertheless it is not sufficient to counterbalance the understating of emigration of the overseas-born so that according to the NPC (1990, p.2):

the permanent departure statistics remain too low as a measure of population loss caused by emigration. This must be remembered when relating emigration to population growth.

One issue of importance relates to the second-generation emigrants – that of the Australia-born children of former settlers. Data on the Movements Data Base do not include birthplace of parents so they can not be separated from other Australia-born groups. Obviously, when young dependent children are involved the bulk of such emigrants will be leaving Australia to accompany their parents and, hence, would more realistically be considered in the 'settler loss' category. Unfortunately, the data source does not make this possible. However, the age structure of second-generation Australians is changing (Hugo 1989–92, Chapter 5) as more of the children of post-war migrants reach adulthood and as a result of the likelihood of them making independent emigration decisions increasing. Indeed it is noticeable that the proportion of Australia-born emigrants aged less than 20 years has been declining in recent years (for example, from 46.3 per cent in 1986–87 to 40.3 per cent in 1990–91) (BIPR 1993). Some trouble may be encountered in analysing these patterns because the age question has not been included on the departure cards since 1997.

1.4 Outline of the report

There are three main components in this report:

- Chapter 2 updates the analyses of emigration from Australia in Hugo (1994) and highlights developments in international migration in Australia over recent years. From the analysis of population movement data it is clear that there have been some substantial changes in emigration relating to the increase in the skill profile of those leaving. It also focuses in some detail on the emerging issue of the increase in the departures of Australia-born residents who are going overseas on a long-term basis.
- Chapter 3 presents results of a new analysis made of the settler loss part of emigration from Australia utilising the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia (LSIA) conducted by DIMA of principal applicants arriving in Australia between 1993–95.
- Chapter 4 focuses on the loss of young Australian university graduates through emigration. Data analysis is based on the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), which is conducted annually by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia. Young graduates who work overseas within a year of graduating are of special interest as they provide an insight into the preferred destination countries and the type of work in which they are engaged.

We conclude with a general discussion of the limitations of the analysis of secondary data sources and outline research and policy directives that need further consideration if emigration is to receive the attention that it increasingly deserves.