

# WORKING PAPERS

IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND ISSUES

by

W.P. Hogan

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## IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND ISSUES

### I Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to examine some of the policies and issues bearing upon the acceptance and settlement of migrants in Australia. Some are a reflection of an immigration policy devised in recent years though the practice of those policies is not always clear. Other matters reflect the development of new approaches to the settling of migrants once they have reached Australia. Major changes in approach have been implemented over the past few years; their implications deserve close scrutiny. Much of what is taking place reflects the concept of a "multicultural society." All these features are made the more complicated by a need to devise and implement a standing policy on large-scale refugee intakes. The impact of refugees from Indo-China has been to strip away the insulation of an island continent so exposing the need for co-operation with neighbouring countries to supervise the flow of people.

Immigration questions no longer reflect straightforward concerns about the building up of the Australian population and work force. This reflects domestic worries over unemployment during the past six years while population growth is no longer so much a concern as in the 'fifties and early 'sixties. Postwar migration programmes have only limited significance for contemporary issues and still less for what is in prospect. Recruitment on a permanent basis of foreign workers to expand the total labour supply and fill vacancies for which no local people were available is no longer the dominating feature in migration. The Australian authorities must balance employment possibilities against demands for family re-union from Australian residents born overseas, the challenge of refugee problems in Asia and the long-standing arrangements about free transfer between Australia and New Zealand. Australia has accepted close to 3.5 million people as migrants since the end of World War II. The experiences of these people, most now long resident in Australia, can be drawn upon to determine the significance of longer term problems affecting the settlement and participation of newcomers in Australian society. They provide sources of domestic influence on immigration policies not existing twenty years ago.

Furthermore it is necessary to look carefully at future possibilities and likely pressures about immigration. Refugee problems no longer appear to be occasional experiences such as happened following the Hungarian uprising in 1956. Neighbouring countries hold stocks of refugees whose movements can be dictated by the actions of host governments unless international agreements can be sustained. Any arrangement means international undertakings to accept annual quotas of refugees as well as contribute to the upkeep of camps. Apart from this issue there is the question of Australia's future relations with small neighbouring economies in the South-West Pacific. Burgeoning populations raise problems of employment creation in those societies. Certainly there is every prospect of some of those countries seeking employment outlets for part of their populations in Australia. Whereas New Zealand has provided employment opportunities and assistance during the past thirty years, economic and social problems within that country limit scope for continuing those arrangements. The alternative, not necessarily well founded in economic possibilities, is to finance development programmes in those societies to a much greater extent than has been attempted so far by successive Australian governments; the one exception is Papua New Guinea. Nevertheless even that possibility offers no easy turning away from immigration queries because it carries the likelihood of shorter term employment periods within Australia for "on-the-job" training.

The next section of the paper provides a brief survey of the current migration and population situation. This is followed by an overview of contemporary policy arrangements. The fourth section examines some questions on immigration and employment. The fifth section deals with the "free flow" of people between Australia and New Zealand. Then some problems associated with the settlement of migrants are reviewed. The final section contains an analysis of some policy issues.

## 2 Population Structure and Prospects

The present rate of growth for the Australian population is about 1.25 per cent which is an increase over that some three or four years ago when it was a bare 1.05 per cent. This improvement reflects the expansion of immigration because natural increase is only at the rate of about 0.8 per cent each year.

The main features of the present Australian population are shown in Table 1. These results from the 1976 Census are subject to correction for underenumeration. The revised estimate taking this into account, gives a population of 13,915,500 on 30 June 1976; this represents an understatement of 2.7 per cent. The estimates shown in Table 1 give an estimate of 20.1 per cent of the population as being foreign-born of which some 8.9 per cent, or nearly half, come from New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Eire. Ten years before the comparable percentages were 18.4 and 8.3. Thus at a time when it is fashionable to treat multiculturalism at great length in Australia, the basically British inheritance of the population has scarcely shifted; a reduction of 1.1 per cent in ten years.

The connection with immigrant experiences in a family setting may be described by examining that proportion of the population with one parent at least born overseas. That proportion is 37.5 per cent. But nearly half of that category - 16.9 per cent of the total population - were those with one or both parents born in the United Kingdom and Eire. These estimates suggest a more pervasive influence of the attitudes and responses of migrants to the Australian scene than might be indicated by the data on foreign-born alone. Thus those with some link to non-British origins are no more than 20.6 per cent of the population; the lack of response to some census questions hinders further clarification of this percentage.

The importance of immigration in the population growth of Australia during the past few years can be seen in the estimates recorded in Table 2. The rate of natural increase has fallen steadily throughout the 'seventies so that fluctuations in immigration rates account for the variability in the overall rate of growth in the population. Thus the increase in migration rates over the past three years, now accelerating, explains the resurgence in population growth since the "low" in 1975-76. Even so

TABLE 1: THE STRUCTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION  
(Census, 30 June 1976)

	Males		Females		Total	Total
	No.	% total	No.	% total	No.	%
1. Growth						
a) 1966 Census	5841588	-	5757910	-	11599498	-
b) 1971 Census	6412711	-	6342927	-	12755638	-
c) 1976 Census	6774948	-	6773501	-	13548448	-
2. Age Distribution						
a) Under 15	1890480	27.9	1799853	26.6	3690334	27.2
b) 16-29	1752018	25.9	1710874	25.3	3462892	25.6
c) 30-44	1271063	18.8	1213679	17.9	2484743	18.3
d) 45-59	1082107	16.0	1053651	15.6	2135759	15.8
e) 60-64	272255	4.0	293488	4.3	565743	4.2
f) 65 plus	507022	7.5	700955	10.3	1208978	8.9
3. By Birthplace						
a) Australia	5353810	79.0	5475806	80.8	10829616	79.9
b) U.K. & Eire	571035	8.4	546564	8.1	1117599	8.2
c) Germany	53820	0.8	53739	0.8	107559	0.8
d) Greece	78667	1.2	74242	1.1	152908	1.1
e) Italy	152886	2.3	127268	1.9	280154	2.1
f) Netherlands	50205	0.7	41905	0.6	92110	0.7
g) Yugoslavia	79185	1.2	64406	1.0	143591	1.1
h) Other Europe	175695	2.6	142201	2.1	316896	2.3
j) New Zealand	45056	0.7	44735	0.7	89791	0.7
k) Other Oceania	12819	0.2	13219	0.2	26038	0.2
l) Asia & Middle East	125102	1.8	115520	1.7	240622	1.8
m) Americas	41767	0.6	38965	0.6	80732	0.6
n) Africa	35720	0.5	34791	0.5	70510	0.5
o) At Sea	181	-	141	-	322	-
4. Birthplace of Parents						
a) Both parents in Australia	3997414	59.0	4097366	60.5	8094780	59.7
b) One parent in Australia	678555	10.0	709137	10.5	1387692	10.2
c) Overseas or not stated	2098979	31.0	1966998	29.0	4065976	30.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population and Dwellings: Summary Tables (1976 Census of Population and Dwellings), 20 November 1979; No. 2417.0.

it is well to note that the natural increase has been sustained by a larger than expected fall in crude death rates which is partly explained by the recent sharp fall in infant death rates. Despite this improvement in infant survival the proportion of the population under fifteen years of age has fallen by nearly 1.8 per cent during the past five years.

TABLE 2: POPULATION GROWTH: LOCAL AND MIGRATION

<u>Year</u> <u>ended 30 June</u>	<u>Population</u> <u>(000)</u>	<u>Percentage Increase in</u>		
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Natural</u> <u>Increase</u>	<u>Net Migration</u> <u>Gain</u>
1974	13599.1	1.63	1.00	0.62
1975	13771.4	1.27	0.92	0.33
1976	13915.5	1.05	0.88	0.15
1977	14074.1	1.14	0.83	0.31
1978	14246.6	1.24	0.84	0.40
1979	14423.6	1.23	0.81	0.42

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),  
Australian Demographic Statistics  
Quarterly, September 1979; Cat. No. 3101.0.

Some indication of future prospects for the population can be taken from gross and net reproduction rates. Both measures have their obvious limitations in view of recent changes in mortality rates. The very recent publication of birth expectations based upon a sample survey of married women casts some light on likely trends. [1] The results imply that average family size is expected to be 2.5 children which is the same as in the initial survey in 1976. The difference in coverage between the two surveys would not affect this conclusion. Married women in the work force expect to have 2.3 children while those not working outside their homes expect 2.7. This is about the extent of variations in major classifications by locally and foreign born, present age, locality and national origin. Only in the cases of married women aged 40 or more and being married fifteen years or more are the estimates higher, at 2.9 and 3.0 respectively. Both are really statements of what has taken

place rather than expectations! However should these expectations be realised then this would suggest some modest recovery in total fertility over what has been recorded during the past five years. When assessing this material one should note that ex-nuptial births as a proportion of all live births rose from 9.6 per cent in 1974 to 11.0 per cent in 1978.

In these circumstances prospects for population growth depend upon the rate of immigration. The estimates shown in Table 3 are based upon some recovery in fertility rates from the low levels of the past five years. Present immigration policies are producing a net immigration flow which is moving towards 70,000 per year. Should that be sustained then the direct and indirect effects of immigration will produce nearly as big a gain in population during the rest of this century as that from natural increase in the existing population. Thus skills and capacities for dealing effectively with the recruitment and settlement of migrants are central to the application of a population policy in Australia.

TABLE 3: POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 1981-2001

(000s)

30 June of Year shown	Net Immigration			
	Nil	50,000	70,000	100,000
1981	14565	14720	14783	14876
1986	15155	15596	15772	16037
1991	15735	16488	16789	17241
1996	16262	17347	17781	18432
2001	16705	18141	18716	19577

Source: Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Statistical Brief, April 1980; p.3. (Based upon ABS projections, refer Cat. No. 3204.0).

3 Present Immigration Arrangements

The main features of present arrangements on immigration were stated by the then Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar, in June 1978 [7]. Nine principles were listed and may be summarised in the following way:

- i) National sovereignty means that Australian Government alone determining who should be admitted to Australia. Only citizens have a basic right to enter the country.
- ii) Apart from people admitted as refugees and for family reunion, migrant entry criteria should be developed on the basis of benefit to the Australian community, and the social, economic and related requirements within Australia.
- iii) Size and composition of migrant intakes should not jeopardise social cohesiveness and harmony within the Australian community.
- iv) Immigration policy should be applied on a basis which is non-discriminatory. The principle of non-discrimination means that policy will be applied consistently to all applicants regardless of their race, colour, nationality, descent, national or ethnic origin, and sex.
- v) Eligibility and suitability standards for migrants should reflect Australian social mores and Australian law. Polygamous unions will not be accepted, nor the entry of child fiancés. The concept of immediate family, for eligibility purposes, will be derived from the Australian norm; that is the unit consisting of husband, wife and minor unmarried children.
- vi) Policies governing entry and settlement should be based on the premise that immigrants should integrate into Australian society. Migrants will be given every opportunity, consistent with this premise, to preserve and disseminate their ethnic heritage.

- vii) Applicants should be considered for migration as individuals or individual family units, not as community groups. An exception will be people in designated refugee situations though even in such circumstances the criteria for selection will be related to the characteristics of individual applicants.
- viii) While migrants have the same rights as other Australian residents to choose their place of residence individually or collectively, enclave settlement will not be encouraged. Immigration policy will not consider communities for mass movement to Australia in situations where enclave settlement would occur.
- ix) Migration to Australia should be for permanent settlement though no barrier should prevent persons departing. Guest-worker migration, until recently popular in the industrialised countries of Western Europe, will not be adopted by the Australian Government.

In essence, the workings of immigration policies mean that it has *four* main components: the recruitment of people suitable for the current economic circumstances and foreseeable needs of the country, this being the general eligibility component; the entry of dependents and the elderly along with some other members of family groups, this being the family reunion category; the acceptance of refugees and others on humanitarian grounds; and a fourth group covering special entry mainly reflecting the free entry of residents from New Zealand who are New Zealand, British or Irish citizens. Each poses problems for implementation; for example, the basic concept of family reunion rests upon the so-called nuclear family being the customary arrangement in Australian society.

The new scheme for assessing the suitability of most potential migrants, introduced from the beginning of 1979, does not alter these broad categories. What the numerical multifactor assessment system

(NUMAS) attempts is a codifying of those qualities which experience indicates, are important to the successful launching of new residents in Australian society. The system is divided into two parts; Part A deals with economic factors while Part B treats personal and settlement factors. Immediate family nominees, namely spouses, dependent children and children adopted overseas, are exempt as are refugees and New Zealand residents. Some special family nominees are also exempt from the assessment while all the others are assessed in terms of Part B only. With a few minor exceptions, the remaining applicants must pass both parts. An advantage of this technique is the way the "cut-off" on the points assessment can be adapted to the overall requirements of the immigration programme should the authorities adopt a more expansive or restrictive general stance at any time; or wish to adapt the structure of the immigration flow. For example, in June 1980 the authorities relaxed the pass mark under Part A of NUMAS for relatives and friends of Australian citizens and residents, not qualifying under family re-union provisions, so that they might more readily enter under general eligibility provisions.

How far the authorities can control the flow of immigrants in relation to some annual target intake, currently around 85,000 to 90,000 gross, is a matter of conjecture. Claims for entry on grounds of family reunion are a reflection of the "stock" of relatively recent migrants in the country. Flows across the Tasman are free so that the relative economic and social attractions of the two countries bear upon the net impacts of population transfer. Moreover, the distinction between intending migrants and visitors from New Zealand is doubtful when assessing the influences on additions to the work force as well as unemployment. Thus the two categories, general eligibility and refugees, are the only ones responsive to determinations by the Federal Government.

#### 4 Immigration and Employment

The connections between immigration and employment possibilities are contained largely within the general eligibility category of the migrant intake. Co-ordination between the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs and Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is designed to ensure an

understanding of employment needs within the Australian work force while not exacerbating unemployment problems within the country. The significance of this co-operation may be exaggerated because of the high levels of entry in other categories. Economic criteria, exemplified by Part A of NUMAS, apply to only a small proportion of the annual migrant intake.

The recent patterns of migrant intake, divided amongst the main categories, are shown in Table 4. The special category includes those with special skills associated with Australia's needs as well as general humanitarian. The unvisaed group comprises an overwhelming proportion of people from New Zealand. This set of estimates for July to December 1979 represents a period when the classification of skills was pursued to minimise the proportion not recorded by one level of skill or another. However, the levels of skill for the unvisaed group is based upon personal declarations, unlike the other categories, so that some "inflation" of real attainments may be present.

The family reunion group has a high proportion of relatively skilled amongst those joining the work force; in rows 4 and 5 the percentage is nearly 50 per cent. But a high proportion of the total intake, over 71 per cent, are shown as not entering the work force. Thus the apparent impact on the annual increase in the work force is not as important as the refugee category where skills are negligible. The unvisaed (New Zealand) group has much fewer relatively unskilled while the proportion of dependents not in the work force suggests relatively fewer younger people than is usually assumed. The influence of specific selection is clear in the general category where the intake is heavily committed to professional, technical and skilled people. They comprise more than half of the intake in these levels of skill; see rows 1 and 3 in Table 4. Thus the general category provides 26 per cent of the total intake, 28 per cent of the entrants to the workforce and 51.4 per cent of these two most skilled categories.

TABLE 4: SETTLER ARRIVALS, JULY-DECEMBER 1979, by skill categories

Level of Skill	Eligibility Category											
	Family		General		Refugee		Special		Unvisaed		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1. Professional & Technical	477	17.1	1426	31.9	82	1.9	44	24.0	850	21.5	2879	18.4
2. Clerical, Administrative, etc.	519	18.7	610	13.6	208	4.8	45	24.6	662	16.8	2044	13.0
3. Skilled	217	7.8	1457	32.6	93	2.2	16	8.7	944	23.9	2727	17.4
4. Semi-skilled	666	23.9	710	15.9	1228	28.6	57	31.2	1135	28.8	3796	24.2
5. Unskilled	708	25.4	100	2.2	2416	56.2	15	8.2	301	7.6	3540	22.6
6. Not Classified	196	7.1	168	3.8	269	6.3	6	3.3	55	1.4	694	4.4
7. Total in Workforce - No.	2783	100.0	4471	100.0	4296	100.0	183	100.0	3947	100.0	15680	100.0
% Total	28.9	-	43.8	-	46.0	-	43.9	-	41.9	-	40.2	-
8. Not in Workforce - No.	6859	-	5727	-	5042	-	234	-	5466	-	23328	-
% Total	71.1	-	56.2	-	54.0	-	56.1	-	58.1	-	59.8	-
9. Total Arrivals - No.	9642	-	10198	-	9338	-	417	-	9413	-	39008	-
% Total	24.7	-	26.1	-	23.9	-	1.1	-	24.1	-	100.0	-

Source: Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

In contrast the family reunion and refugee categories provide some 68.4 per cent of the semi-skilled and unskilled entering the workforce. This is the harsh reality of the conflicting demands on immigration programmes. These people join a labour market challenged by the problems of providing work for the unskilled and new entrants to the work force from amongst the locally born. It is little wonder that unemployment amongst recent arrivals is so much higher than the average for the population. In short, the economic criteria in migrant selection bear upon a relatively small proportion of the total migrant flow. The reasonably satisfactory distribution of skills amongst those settling from New Zealand is fortuitous. However, many New Zealanders listed as visitors, and hence not recorded in Table 4, appear to shift into the work force so that the overall impact is more difficult to judge. Somewhat similar reservations may be held about the participation of migrants listed as dependents not in the work force; 150,000 migrant women were listed as part-time members of the civilian labour force in February, 1980.

Recent estimates of the work force and unemployment bear witness to the marked variations in the experiences of migrants depending upon the duration of residence. Some features of recent unemployment estimates are shown in Table 5. Migrants who arrived in Australia prior to 1961 record an employment experience akin to that of the established workforce over the age of 35; they amount to nearly 650,000 being 37.5 per cent of the foreign born workforce. They weigh heavily in explanation of the close relation between unemployment rates of the locally and foreign born. Subsequent arrivals do not fare so well. Comparisons of age groups and time of arrival point to experience in the Australian setting as being important when explaining unemployment rates. It seems reasonable to compare unemployment rates amongst newly arrived migrants with those for the locally born who are seeking entry to the work force, mainly those aged 15 to 19 years of age. All the available material on migrant unemployment suggests that experience with local conditions is most important for success when searching for stable employment. Some worry attaches to opportunities for migrant women seeking work; a circumstance which reflects upon linguistic skills as much as ties to households, families and limited mobility. However, careful scrutiny of the data suggests that this handicap may be exaggerated.

TABLE 5: UNEMPLOYMENT; LOCAL AND FOREIGN BORN,  
FEBRUARY, 1980

(% Unemployed, by categories)

		<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Labour Force - Total	4190.6	2428.0	6618.6
	(000s)			
	Local	3054.7	1831.3	4886.0
	Foreign Born	1135.9	596.7	1732.6
2.	Total Unemployed - Total	5.5	8.8	6.7
	(%)			
	Married	2.8	5.8	3.8
	Other	11.2	13.3	12.1
3.	Age Groupings - <u>15-19</u>	16.5	21.0	18.6
	(%)			
	Local	15.8	21.0	18.3
	Foreign Born	20.9	21.5	21.2
	- <u>20-24</u>	9.2	10.1	9.6
	Local	8.6	9.4	8.9
	Foreign Born	12.2	13.3	12.7
4.	Birthplace - Local	5.4	8.7	6.7
	(%)			
	Foreign Born	5.7	9.0	6.8
	Arrived before '61	2.9	5.5	3.7
	1961-65	6.4	7.1	6.6
	1966-70	7.6	11.3	8.9
	1971-78	6.7	11.0	8.3
	1979 +	19.6	24.3	21.4
5.	Countries - Italy	3.5	n.a.	4.7
	Greece	n.a.	n.a.	7.4
	Yugoslavia	n.a.	n.a.	8.2
	U.K. & Ireland	5.2	8.0	6.2
	New Zealand	8.3	n.a.	9.0
	Other	6.4	9.8	7.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6203.0,  
The Labour Force, Australia, February 1980  
(1 May 1980).

Limited data about the performance of national groups nonetheless points to marked differences in employment experience. The Italian community, admittedly of long-standing amongst the major groups, shows a distinct superiority in the workforce. They represent 10.6 per cent of all foreign born in the work force and 2.8 per cent of the total work force. However, the Italian community compares favourably with those born in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Paucity of data restricts analysis of the working experiences of migrants. Yet it is important for linking performance on settlement in Australia to the future possibilities when planning migration arrangements. At least the economic performance of different migrant groups bears upon the basis for selecting different countries from which to actively seek migrants. This feature calls into question an easy acceptance of bland policy prescriptions about non-discriminatory arrangements for entry to Australia and its workforce. Is it not discriminatory to bring migrants whose prospects for economic betterment are limited?

Questions about the level of skills amongst migrants in relation to employment possibilities are important not only for the prospects of successful settlement but also in relation to the Australian community's economic needs. In terms of the postwar experience, Australia has been consistently short of skilled tradespeople and, in light of major development projects now being implemented, this shortage has every prospect of worsening. The confusion of the data on this aspect is treated in the Appendix. Whatever might be argued about failure to expand training in skills during recent years, these shortages cannot be relieved in the shorter term other than by recruiting in the skilled trades overseas, given present institutional arrangements for training in the skilled trades. Furthermore, in the longer term, the bringing in of skilled people will expand the opportunities for employing those less skilled in the population. If projects are delayed or frustrated by shortages of skilled personnel then there will be fewer job opportunities for the relatively unskilled, in construction and fabrication as well as in machinery making.

The evidence does not support a judgement that present immigration programmes are substantially oriented to economic needs and employment opportunities in Australia. In so far as immigration is adding to the relatively unskilled in the workforce at an annual rate of between 14,500 and 19,000, depending on interpretations of estimates in Table 4, then bottlenecks for skilled people in Australia may require an even greater recruitment in the general category than present commitments indicate. Structure of the immigrant intake bears upon its size in this respect. Moreover, sources of immigrants *may* be more important than proponents of non-discrimination have so far been prepared to admit.

Nevertheless the shortages of jobs for the unskilled, or those whose skills are not recognised formally in Australia, raise other questions on migration policy. Much is made of the need for pursuing a non-discriminatory policy. Yet employment problems besetting the Australian economy show how difficult the non-discriminatory goal is to attain. Skills required in Australia will be possessed by a higher proportion of the population in northern Europe than elsewhere. In other countries, governments may strongly oppose Australian efforts to recruit their nationals who have the necessary qualifications. The mere specification of job opportunities may be interpreted as discriminatory in some sense even where it is done to ensure the best available circumstances for residents and newcomers within Australia.

#### 5 The Trans-Tasman Employment Market

What ever the formal arrangements on trade and investment flows between Australia and New Zealand, there can be no doubt about the ease of access of residents in each country to the other. Historically, this can be traced back to early colonial times. Many of the contemporary questions about the recent shift of people from New Zealand to Australia have been explored in a thorough set of papers [9]. Yet even when the balance of movement has shifted in favour of one country, there are still significant flows of people possessing a wide variety of skills in the opposite direction. This hints at the ways participants search out opportunities in both economies.

Flexibility in travel and working arrangements typifies the movement of people to and fro across the Tasman. As was seen in the previous section, those from New Zealand declaring themselves as settlers in Australia showed similar ratios of participants in the workforce to dependents as other migrant categories apart from entrants under family reunion provisions. Levels of skill would suggest a higher than average component in the New Zealand intake. However, this is a relatively small proportion of the total flow, long and short term, to Australia from New Zealand in recent times. That this proportion is low is hardly surprising because people from New Zealand do not have to declare their intentions.

Some part of the explanation for the recent sharp rise in the *net* flow of people to Australia may be found in the estimates of relative current and real wages between Australia and New Zealand shown in Table 6. In this table estimates of money wage rates in New Zealand and weekly earnings in Australia are expressed in real terms by deflating each series by the respective consumer price indices. A foreign exchange index expressing the Australian dollar in terms of one New Zealand dollar is also estimated and then applied to the money and real wage rate indices for New Zealand to express those New Zealand rates in Australian dollars. Then the two wage series for each country are expressed as a ratio of New Zealand to Australian wage series. The set of estimates is expressed as indices with a base 1975 = 100.

These estimates should be interpreted cautiously. Foreign exchange rates may not be a very satisfactory guide to the relative strength of the two currencies because the monetary authorities manage short-term intervention. But New Zealand has more extensive import and exchange controls than Australia. Similarly, the two wage series may not be strictly comparable. Thus it would be foolish to interpret short-term movements as having much accuracy. What is possible is an indication of trends in relative earnings between the two countries. The series makes no provision for relative tax rates between the two countries so permitting an assessment of after-tax income. Similarly, no account is taken of the extent of quantitative restrictions on imports in the two economies. On balance such restraints would appear the more severe in New Zealand.

TABLE 6: EXCHANGE RATE AND WAGE CHANGES, AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

1962 - 1978

(Index 1975 = 100)

Year	Exchange Rate: \$A = \$NZ 1.	N.Z.: Wage Rates		N.Z.: Wage Rates		Aust.: Weekly Earnings		Relative Wages	
		Current \$N.Z.	Real \$N.Z.	Current \$A	Real \$A	Current \$A	Real \$A	Current NZ/A	Real NZ/A
1962	1.339	35	78.8	46.9	105.5	30.6	62.2	1.53	1.70
1963	1.339	36	79.6	48.2	106.6	31.8	64.2	1.52	1.66
1964	1.339	37	79.1	49.5	105.9	33.7	66.6	1.47	1.59
1965	1.339	39	80.6	52.2	107.9	35.9	68.1	1.45	1.58
1966	1.339	40	80.5	53.6	107.8	37.7	69.6	1.42	1.55
1967	1.317	42	79.5	55.3	104.7	40.2	71.8	1.38	1.46
1968	1.079	44	79.9	47.5	86.2	42.7	74.4	1.11	1.16
1969	1.079	46	79.6	49.6	85.9	46.4	78.5	1.07	1.09
1970	1.079	54	87.9	58.3	94.8	50.3	81.9	1.16	1.16
1971	1.081	64	94.3	69.2	101.9	56.6	86.9	1.22	1.17
1972	1.081	70	96.4	75.7	104.2	61.2	88.7	1.24	1.17
1973	1.033	79	100.6	81.6	103.9	69.0	91.4	1.18	1.14
1974	1.049	88	100.8	92.3	105.7	84.4	97.1	1.09	1.09
1975	1.000	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	1.00
1976	.877	114	97.5	100.0	85.5	114.5	100.9	.87	.85
1977	.944	128	95.7	120.8	90.3	126.1	99.0	.96	.91
1978	.978	143	95.5	139.9	93.4	137.4	99.9	1.02	.93

Source: International Monetary Fund, International Financial Statistics, Yearbook 1979.

- Notes: i) The exchange rate index is based upon the average market rate for the year.  
 ii) The real earnings or wage rate is derived by deflating money values by the consumer price index in each country.

Put in bald terms the relative money-wage position of income earners in New Zealand has, in the past few years, deteriorated by about 33 per cent or more compared with their Australian counterparts, when looked at from a position of *relative* comparability in the early sixties. The contrast is even more dramatic when expressed in real terms; the relative decline appears to have been in the order of 40 per cent and more.

This comparison should not be pressed too hard. But there is a significant aspect worth noting. When the relative position deteriorated sharply, as between 1967 and 1970 and then after 1975 to the present, there was a sharp rise in the net flow to Australia. Hence there is evidence for the sensitivity of New Zealand residents to income possibilities and career opportunities. Lack of information on the qualifications of Trans-Tasman travellers limits the scope for more detailed studies.

Yet there are other indications about the participation of New Zealand-born people in the Australian workforce. Unlike the estimates on declared settlers shown in Table 5, the estimates based upon surveys of the Labour Force conducted monthly by the ABS show a very untypical group of participants in the workforce. The February 1980 estimates indicate a New Zealand born population in Australia over the age of fourteen amounting to 118,514. This would be the number exhibiting some commitment to participation in the Australian economy by seeking work, if not actually holding a job. However, there is no way of distinguishing the permanent settler from the New Zealand resident taking a working holiday in Australia.

In Table 7 the position of the New Zealand born in the workforce is examined for their employment and unemployment performance. They comprise 1.33 per cent of the workforce and 1.78 per cent of the unemployed. The estimates on the participation rate, which is the proportion of the total population fifteen years of age or older seeking work or working, show just how different this New Zealand component is compared with the total workforce and major migrant groups. While it is true that this estimate of the participation rate is subject to a sampling error much above the overall estimates, the New Zealanders are in a class

of their own. The extraordinarily high participation rate suggests a very youthful workforce with relatively few dependents. This hints at a strong itinerant component seeking a working holiday. Similarly, the unemployment rate is much higher than for other groups.

This seems to suggest that a significant number of those recorded in the series are younger people in Australia for relatively short periods. Their performance is akin to that of new entrants to the work force, whether locally born or migrants, and the relatively young, say up to the age of 24.

TABLE 7: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF NEW ZEALANDERS  
IN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE  
FEBRUARY 1980

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Persons</u>
1. Labour Force - Total	4190.6	2428.0	6618.6
(000s)			
Locally Born	3054.7	1831.3	4886.0
Foreign Born	1135.9	596.7	1732.6
of which: New Zealand	56.7	31.1	87.7
2. Participation Rates - Total	78.8	44.5	61.4
(%)			
Locally Born	79.2	44.7	61.4
Foreign Born	80.8	46.7	64.6
of which: New Zealand	89.6	56.1	74.0
Italy	83.1	43.4	64.8
Greece	85.4	54.4	70.7
U.K. & Eire	77.1	45.1	61.6
Yugoslavia	84.8	49.1	68.1
3. Unemployment - Total	5.5	8.8	6.7
(%)			
Locally Born	5.4	8.7	6.7
Foreign Born	5.7	9.0	6.8
of which: New Zealand	8.3	n.a.	9.0
Italy	3.5	n.a.	4.7
Greece	n.a.	n.a.	7.4
U.K. & Eire	5.2	8.0	6.2
Yugoslavia	n.a.	n.a.	8.2

Source: ABS, The Labour Force Australia, February 1980  
(Cat. No. 6203.0).

Despite the scant evidence on this question of New Zealand participation in the workforce, there are grounds for judging that it comprises two dissimilar elements. There are those who make longer term, if not permanent, shifts from New Zealand to Australia. They exhibit superior qualifications on balance to the average migrant intake in any one year. Then there is a larger grouping in any one year who have few commitments to permanency in location or job. But their position is aided by ready access to social services in Australia because of reciprocity between the two countries. The scale of the population movements between the countries and the suggestions on how participation in the workforce takes place, point to an increasing interaction of the labour markets in the two countries. Information on the duration of employment would help to clarify some features of this interchange.

There are other aspects to the trans-Tasman "free flow" than the employment issue. At a time when "non-discrimination" and "multiculturalism" are much in vogue for discussions on immigration arrangements and migrant settlement, this provision for free entry stands out as exceptional. But that description might also be read as discriminatory. Hence it should not be taken for granted as a right conferred for all time on New Zealand residents. A survey of married women in Melbourne in 1971 showed that only 24 per cent thought that New Zealanders should be allowed to enter Australia freely. [6] This aspect should be understood not for the complications it brings to planning migrant intakes or the added burdens passport and visa requirements would bring. Rather it bears upon that proportion of the Australian population having no ties with the British inheritance in the Pacific. Questions can be asked about the grounds for New Zealanders being a privileged group.

A separate matter is whether or not this open access can be manipulated against Australian security and the application of immigration policies. Clearly, as New Zealand finds greater difficulty in matching the whetted appetites of small economies in the Pacific for assistance and access to jobs and training in more advanced industrial societies, attention must turn to Australia. There is the potential for a greater "leakage" through this open access by claiming New Zealand citizenship in the years ahead. However, information derived from those seeking permanent residence under the current Regularisation of Status Programme (ROSP) for illegal residents may indicate the significance of this means of entry. From an Australian

view this may lead to two questions:

- i) What distinguishes New Zealanders from other Pacific Islanders for this favourable open access not shared by the others?
- ii) If New Zealand wishes to preserve this privileged position, should it not seek to apply similar techniques of migrant selection and administration to the Australian provisions?

## 6 Settlement Themes

In recent years attention has shifted from migration alone to the issues of settlement in Australia. This development cannot be surprising. The heavy migration flows over three decades have created a significant proportion of the total population born outside Australia; this is just over 20 per cent of the total population. But the proportion with family connections through one or more parents being born overseas, to past migrant flows is much greater; something more like one-third of the population according to the estimates in Table 1, section 2. Migrant experiences permeate society. This in turn has meant a greater awareness than ever of some of the problems generated by participation in economic and social life. Reviews of migrants' experiences point to the handicaps encountered and the difficulties in surmounting them [3]. Yet the Government's aim is integration in Australian society; the preservation and dissemination of migrants' ethnic heritages must be consistent with this premise.

This issue is not discussed with any real sense of purpose or direction. It has been avoided by the shift of discussion to the concept of "multiculturalism" or "Australia as a multicultural society". In this respect the Federal Government has been as willing to foster the switch as much as any other group in the community. Yet it is exceptionally difficult to know what the term means. Its substance lies in a diversity of cultural and racial backgrounds reflecting beliefs, customs, morals and the like. But there is no certainty of a socially cohesive outcome in a diverse society. Hence the proponents of multiculturalism cannot

specify bounds to the range and scale of diversity. A recent effort jointly sponsored by the Australian Population and Immigration Council and the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council to appraise the meaning and implications of multiculturalism only shows the ephemeral quality of the concept [5]. That commentary has great difficulty in coming to grips with the *operational meanings* of the term for policy purposes.

Nonetheless the Federal Government has embraced the multicultural theme. The recent report "Migrant Services and Programs," familiarly referred to as the Galbally Report, provided the basis for a new programme [8]. What this involves is a substantial fiscal commitment amounting to more than \$50 million per year, to the expansion of migrant programmes in health, welfare and language training involving co-ordination between Federal and State authorities. Many of these proposals were familiar and some long over-due for implementation. These activities have been extended to separate television transmission in Sydney and Melbourne and a greater use of radio than hitherto.

The Galbally Report had as its terms of reference a general review of existing provisions of welfare and other services to migrants, the means by which they could be improved to ensure equality of access and treatment for all migrants, and the role of government and non-government services and organisations. In pursuing its investigations and then recommendations, the review committee adopted guiding principles which included,

- "(b) every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures."  
[8, p.4]

No mention is made or hint of awareness of this being consistent with integration in Australian society. So no bounds were set to the range and scale of diversity. However, the judgement is made much later, "that hostility and bitterness between groups are often the result of cultural repression." [8, p.105] Yet, the Galbally Report does not wish to see ethnic identity stressed at the expense of society at large.

However, it reveals little idea of what might be done in this regard. There is, for example, no recognition of the political role for single interest groups.

In light of the listing of the principles of immigration policy in Section 3 of this paper, there are strains between those items and the approach in the Galbally Report over questions of cohesion and integration. Nor did the Report pay much attention to questions raised in the Green Paper on population and immigration matters some two years before [4].

The Federal Government accepted and rapidly implemented the Galbally Report. Undoubtedly the greater emphasis on language training and related educational services for migrants was long overdue. The most contentious issue was the recasting of the organisational arrangements for providing services. The longstanding Good Neighbour Councils were abandoned as agencies for integrating migrants and providing services with government financial support. Whatever may have been the grounds for severe criticism of these councils in the various states and localities, they did bring together both locally-born and migrants within one organisation. These are to be replaced by ethnic community organisations and official migrant services units as well as existing voluntary organisations in the handling of services. Virtually all of these organisations, other than official bodies at Federal and State levels of government, are specific to single migrant groups.

The importance of this shift deserves close scrutiny. Important questions must be asked about this departure from an organisational form stressing cohesion and the meeting together of people with differing backgrounds and origins. Critically, there is the issue of who and what constitutes a migrant or ethnic organisation? The real risk in these activities is that formal recognition and fiscal support at Federal and State levels encourages the maintaining of separateness of these organisations. What significance is to be attached to the number of members? Leadership in these organisations will rest in part on the ability to foster the sense of dependence among members and separateness from others in the community. Furthermore, with provision of separate television and radio facilities at public expense, claims of various organisations for access will enhance political contests amongst ethnic groups.

Contests between different groupings on political and religious grounds within an ethnic group are not unfamiliar. Social cohesiveness and harmony do not mark some of the societies from which migrants are drawn. The extreme example of this position is the refugee problem. But other examples are to be found; familiar for many years is the strife in Northern Ireland and the Lebanon. Other societies such as Yugoslavia have revealed a distinct lack of cohesion from time to time in recent decades. If substantial intakes of migrants from any of these societies risk cohesion and harmony in Australian society, should recruitment from these sources be halted? There are no easy answers to this challenge. Nonetheless, any government would wish to avoid the perpetuation of communal strife inherited from the social strains originating in other lands. If these questions are set aside for long enough then they may be dismissed as irrelevant to the conduct of immigration policy. Where they bear directly upon the stated purposes of immigration policy, then the conduct of policy must rest upon administrative fiat and precedent rather than principles, generally applicable.

But what of social circumstances which may dictate marked differences in attitude to major features of Australian society. What attitude should be adopted to potential migrant sources with markedly different customs towards women? At a time when Australian society, all too belatedly, is moving towards a wider public role for women, it would surely be incongruous to pursue a migration programme which had as its outcome quite the opposite effect. This circumstance cannot be divorced from concerns about settlement and participation problems encountered by women migrants.

Misgivings about the current directions in migration and settlement policies are well founded. Organisational and political arrangements have shifted the balance away from cohesion and integration. There are political implications in the fostering of separate ethnic groups supported in many instances by public funds. The risk is the greater focus they give to single interest themes associated with the efforts of those people strongly opposed to migration in the 'eighties.

## 7 Literacy and Community

One important question for migration policy is the standard of literacy required of migrants. Various studies have shown the importance of literacy in relation to job opportunities as well as to establishing a basis for participation in society. Most work on migrant settlement and experiences stresses the importance of fluency in English for employment and social opportunities [3]. Work on problems of low income families suggest that there are long term effects from language difficulties which may permanently handicap efforts of migrant families to improve their material well-being. Recognition of this problem has led to the expansion of programmes for the teaching of English to migrants.

Yet the question remains as to the capacity of the resident migrant population, hampered by this lack of fluency in English, to learn the language. What if the migrant is not literate in his own language? Serious doubts on this issue led the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council to suggest,

"Although it is extremely difficult to assess the capacity of non-English-Speakers to learn English, to the best of our judgement literacy in the individual's mother tongue is a better predictor than any other criterion that can be realistically applied in the selection of migrants. All adult migrants, *both men and women*, of working age should therefore be literate among intending migrants". [2, p.15]

Thus the present NUMAS procedure incorporates provisions which weigh this aspect of a potential migrant. Yet the provision does not apply to family reunion or refugee categories.

If the test were extended to all migrants then present arrangements would have to be thoroughly recast. What this would mean for refugee policies is clearly a reduction in intake. But the judgement expressed by this Council does throw light on what is a longer term cost of existing arrangements, namely the need to provide language training for new, and perhaps not so new, arrivals in this country. Migrant communities in Australia have not been willing to face this issue when demanding the retention and extension of family reunion arrangements. Responsibility cannot be thrust on governments, Federal and State, for the provision of

training when questions of capacity and access rest as much with the families and communities as the authorities. In this respect migrant groups are seeking, perhaps unwittingly, to transfer costs to the community which they are unwilling to contemplate as their responsibility.

Commitments to a sustained refugee programme have clear implications for public spending in support of language training and social adjustment. But this implies no commitment to equal treatment for other migrant groups. Their circumstances do not have the same origins in political and economic distress. Advantages would be secured under the guise of claims for non-discriminatory access to services.

#### 8 Policy Choices

Postwar migration has conferred substantial net benefits, economic and social, on the Australian community. [4, 10] Nor should migrant communities ignore the substantial material gains they have enjoyed as a result of locating in Australia. But economic circumstances have changed in this decade with much greater emphasis on skill than hitherto. The unskilled are less likely to prosper than in earlier years. In this situation social adaptation should prove more difficult and lengthy for unskilled migrants than has been the case in the past. Past failures in settlement policies are now generating higher fiscal costs for at least the next decade. Should the lessons of this experience be set aside?

Need for greater care in selection also stems from growing external pressures on migrant flows to Australia. A long term refugee problem confronts Australian society in which the Federal Government, whatever its political stripe, will only be one amongst a number of participating governments seeking solutions. Neighbouring governments can affect Australia's position simply by fuelling and provisioning boats seeking passage to this country. It has happened already. Australia cannot turn away refugees whether they reach our shores by boat or await settlement in camps elsewhere. There are fiscal implications in this situation as there are in general settlement programmes. But the refugee problem

challenges our general foreign policy stance because of its implications for co-operation with neighbouring countries in East Asia and the Pacific. In these circumstances the remainder of immigration policy should be directed towards selection procedures which minimise costs of recruitment and settlement. In this respect literacy amongst intending migrants *must* be an important test. Whatever might be said about cultural diversity the only real basis for participation in Australian society will be by common usage and understanding of the local version of the English language.

Any examination of migration issues should distinguish between policies appropriate to those people who have been accepted into Australia and policies applicable to future migrants. *This distinction is rarely made. Yet it is central to any analysis of what directions are appropriate for Australian immigration programmes.* Obligations have been incurred requiring extension of services to some migrants who have not succeeded in establishing a secure participation, economically and socially. The lessons of these experiences, now extending over three decades, should be used to enlighten the methods used for determining the numbers and sources of new migrants.

Appendix

Vacancies, Unemployment and Relative Job Scarcity

There are two series on unemployment and vacancies in the Australian economy. There are monthly collections on unemployment provided by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs using data compiled by the Commonwealth Employment Service (C.E.S.), and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Information is provided each month on vacancies by the CES while the ABS provides a quarterly collection.

Thus in February 1980 the ABS recorded 37,800 vacancies while the CES showed 21,309. Unemployment that month was 444,500 for the ABS and 462,821 for the CES. Thus the major discrepancy rests with the vacancies estimates. The ABS data does not permit any classification by levels of skill so that comparisons between unemployment and vacancies is only possible for the CES series. In Table A1 estimates of these vacancies, *for adults only*, in February 1980 are shown by occupational group. Those groups with skills look much better placed. However, the confusions of the data make for serious handicaps when estimating job opportunities. This complicates an already troublesome handicap for estimating the mobility of the labour force.

TABLE A1: UNEMPLOYMENT AND VACANCIES, FEBRUARY 1980

Occupational Group	Unemployed (1)	Vacancies (2)	Ratio (2-1)%
1. Rural	8218	1058	12.87
2. Professional & Semi-Professional	19764	1936	9.80
3. Clerical and Administrative	26116	2962	5.28
4. Skilled-building, construction	10557	650	6.16
5. Skilled-metal and electrical	10659	2220	20.83
6. Other Skilled	4573	557	12.18
7. Semi-skilled	77627	2615	3.37
8. Unskilled	47394	909	1.92
9. Service occupations	36325	1836	5.05
10. Total	271233	14743	5.44

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