



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs



Australian Government

Settlement Data Reports

Frequently Asked Questions



This Booklet was created by the Settlement Data Team, Department of Home Affairs. If you have any queries regarding this Booklet please contact settlement.data.request@homeaffairs.gov.au

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What is the Settlement Database (SDB)?

The Settlement Database provides statistical data on permanent arrivals to Australia. It brings together data from various sources to assist government and community agencies involved in the planning and provision of services to migrants. It may also be of use to researchers or members of the public. The SDB is a repository of information on **permanent**, and **certain temporary**, settlers who have arrived in Australia since 1 January 1991. Settlement data held on the SDB is updated monthly and extracted on the 4th of each month.

What does 'certain temporary migrants' refer to?

The SDB collects data on certain temporary visa subclasses. These subclasses are likely to lead to the grant of a permanent visa subclass.

More information about the subclasses held on the SDB can be found in the [Settlement Data Dictionary](#)

What information is available from the SDB?

A range of visa, geographic and demographic information on permanent and certain temporary migrants is available for reporting from the SDB. This includes:

- Visa Stream (also referred to as Migration Stream)
- Country of Birth
- Visa Subclass
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Main Language
- Gender
- Year of Arrival
- Age
- Age Band (e.g. 00-05 etc.)
- Marital Status
- State/Territory
- Local Government Area

For further reference on available SDB information, please see [Settlement Data Dictionary](#)

What information is not available from the SDB?

Settlement geographical data **cannot** provide information on settlement patterns or trends. For example, the SDB cannot produce answers to the following types of questions:

- How many skilled migrants arrived in Tasmania over the past five years?



- The SDB can report on all permanent arrivals over the past five years that **now** reside in Tasmania.
- How many Burmese migrants settled in Brisbane over each of the past five years?
 - The SDB can report on the number of Burmese permanent migrants that **currently** reside in Brisbane who have arrived over the past five years.
- How many migrants of Samoan background were living in Sydney between 2005 – 2010?
 - The SDB can report on the number of Samoan permanent migrants who are **now** living in Sydney who arrived between 2005-2010.

Any settlement data that includes geographic information will only report on the number of settlers who are **currently recorded** as residing in a particular location. For example if a migrant arrived in Queensland in 1991 and moved to Victoria in 2000 they will be reported as a 1991 arrival residing in Victoria (their historical Queensland residence will not be reported).

What can Settlement Data be used for?

Settlement data can be used to analyse the characteristics of different groups of settlers, both Australia-wide and in specific geographical locations.

The data can be used to support policy making, program planning and program management across a range of contexts, including:

- settlement services to particular settlers by countries of birth or ethnicities;
- education services to settlers and their children;
- health services for vulnerable client groups;
- languages for translation of information and for targeted mail-outs/handouts.

What is the Date Type?

In the SDB there are two 'Date Type' options that arrivals can be reported against:

- 'Arrival Date'; and
- 'Settlement Date'.

Arrival Date uses data captured in the 'Arrival Date' field of various IT systems that assists in selecting settler records within specific date range.

Settlement Date uses a combination of either arrival date or visa grant date to report on, depending on where the settler was when their current visa was granted. If a settler was offshore when their current visa was granted then arrival date is used. If a settler was onshore when their current visa was granted then the current visa grant date is reported.

By using either 'Arrival Date' (default when extracting data) or 'Settlement Date', the number of records can be limited for the report. The SDB holds data from 1991 and currently holds over 4.3 million settler records.



Location-specific data

Settlement data can only ever provide a 'snapshot' of settlers **currently recorded** as residing in requested location/s as at the date of the most recent SDB data extract (the 4th of each month). Settlement data is unable to show historical migration or settlement patterns for specific areas as it cannot report on numbers of settlers living in locations in previous years.

Location reports can answer the following types of enquiries:

- How many Sudanese migrants, arriving in Australia after 01/01/1991, are **currently recorded** as living in Liverpool LGA?
- How many skilled migrants, arriving in Australia after 01/01/1991, are **currently recorded** as residing in the Gold Coast (C) area, and what are their countries of birth?
- How many refugee children are **currently recorded** as residing in Queensland, and what are their age bands and ethnicities?

Data which uses geographic locations should be interpreted with care as settlement data is based on each settler's most recently recorded address. For some settlers the address details recorded may be out-of-date and for others, no address details may be present.

Location specific data can be provided by State/Territory, Local Government Area or nationally.

The geographical standard used in the SDB is [Australian Standard Geographical Classification 2011](#).

How complete is the Settlement data?

Due to differences in the way source data is collected and the non-compulsory nature of its collection, some migrants' data may not be complete. Certain data may be more complete for certain migration streams. For example, data on 'Ethnicity' and 'Main Language' is collected more often for Humanitarian entrants than for the Skilled or Family visa holders. As such, interpretation of reports with a high proportion of 'not stated', 'invalid' or 'not recorded' values should be approached with care.

In addition, some criteria, such as 'English Proficiency', may be self-assessed or self-reported (i.e. 'Main Language' and 'Religion') during the visa application process, while other data may be collected by government officials. As a result, this type of data cannot be considered as a standardised measure of the criteria.

A level of inaccuracy should be assumed in reports which report on the numbers of migrants in specific geographical areas, particularly smaller areas such as Statistical Local Areas, Statistical Divisions or Local Government Areas. This is due to the difficulty in sourcing current address information (i.e. migrants may not report their move).



It is important that when interpreting data from the Settlement Reports consideration is given to the points outlined in the Caveats. The Settlement Data Caveats are available online at [Settlement Data Caveats](#).

What does an Australian ‘Country of Birth’ record mean?

If a migrant’s Country of Birth is recorded as ‘Australia’, it indicates that the individual was born in Australia from parents who arrived in Australia prior to the birth while they were not permanent residents.

Since 1987, Australian citizenship is gained when a child has either one citizen parent, a permanent resident parent or a parent that has been in Australia for ten consecutive years since their birth.

Where a child is born to parents holding temporary visas, that child is granted the same visa as the parents and added to any permanent visa application at the request of the parent. If that permanent visa is granted, the child is granted the same type of permanent visa, is deemed a dependent and considered a permanent ‘migrant’ as part of the family.

Interpreting Humanitarian migrant information

Care should be taken when interpreting Humanitarian migrant information. For example the ‘country of birth’ record may not necessarily indicate the ethnicity of the Humanitarian migrant as some Humanitarian migrants may have been born in foreign refugee camps. While the SDB cannot identify all ‘country of birth’ groups which may contain significant proportions of Humanitarian migrants with different foreign ethnicities, the following ‘country of birth’ groups are known to be affected:

- Thailand (most migrants are of Burmese ethnicity);
- Bhutan (most migrants are of Nepalese ethnicity); and
- Kenya (most migrants are of Dinka ethnicity).

For further assistance:

To request information please send your queries to settlement.data.request@homeaffairs.gov.au