

# The Settlement Experiences of New Migrants

A comparison of Wave One of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2

Report prepared for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia - August 2002

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[www.immi.gov.au/research/publications](http://www.immi.gov.au/research/publications)

or in hardcopy from the Department's Research Section,  
Tel: 02 6264 3395 or email: [research@immi.gov.au](mailto:research@immi.gov.au).

A more detailed presentation of information contained in this report is available in *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA1 and LSIA2*, which is also available online.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

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## Executive Summary

### E1. Background

Despite the significance of migration in the Australian story, it is not until recently that we have had the information that enables us to obtain a good appreciation of the experience of recent migrants in settling into their new country of residence. Nor has there been good evidence from which to assess the consequences for successful settlement of changes in migration policy and services. For the first time we are now able to trace in detail the early settlement experience of two different cohorts of migrants. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs commissioned two world class surveys of recent migrants. The first was conducted in 1993/4 (Cohort 1) and the second in 1999/2000 (Cohort 2). Migrants were interviewed about six months after arrival. Further waves of interviews were conducted 12 months and 24 months after the first wave for Cohort 1 and 12 months after the first wave for Cohort 2.

The information collected in this Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) provides a unique insight into a number of important questions. These include the extent to which people who migrate under different visa categories have different outcomes; the impact of personal attributes such as English language proficiency, age, country of origin, formal education, prior work status and gender on economic independence; and the role played by Australian migrant services in assisting settlement. It is also possible to investigate whether changes in the overall state of the economy and in government policy have had a substantial effect on the early integration of migrants into life in Australia.

In this report we use information from the first waves of both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 to describe and compare the characteristics and experience of these two groups of recent migrants. This report is a summary of a more detailed presentation of information from the two surveys. It is a companion to an earlier report, *The Labour Force Experience of New Migrants*, published by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs in 2001. The earlier report covered the topics of labour force outcomes, English language proficiency,

qualifications and levels and sources of income. Only passing reference is made to these topics in this report. The full report on which this abbreviated version is based, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, is available from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and can be found on their website at [www.immi.gov.au/research/publications](http://www.immi.gov.au/research/publications). All of these reports have been prepared for DIMIA by the National Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University, which is solely responsible for the opinions expressed.

### E2. Characteristics of Migrants

There are substantial differences in the main characteristics of migrants from the two cohorts, produced in part by changes in migrant selection criteria. Compared with Cohort 1, Cohort 2 had a higher proportion of people who were highly educated, fluent in English, employed, and reliant on their own wage earnings. The other side of the coin was that Cohort 2 had a smaller proportion who had little education, spoke little or no English, were unemployed and reliant on social welfare support. These differences were large. For example, the proportion who were employed about six months after arrival in Australia rose from 33 to 50 per cent, while the proportion who had less than Year 12 education fell from 23 to 14 per cent (these figures refer to both primary applicants and migrating spouses).

### E3. Labour Market Experience

Finding a job is a crucial step in successful settlement into Australian life for migrants who are not dependent family members. Migrants who are able to find employment are able to establish financial independence, to contribute their talents to Australia's productive effort, and to integrate more readily into Australian society via the contacts they make at work. Key indicators of this experience include participation in the labour force, employment and unemployment. These have been discussed in an earlier report (*The Labour Force Experience of New Migrants*), published by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs in 2001. Here we give a brief summary of the conclusions of that earlier report.

**Table E3.1: Labour Force Status of Primary Applicant and Migrating Unit Spouse, Cohorts 1 and 2 (per cent)**

Labour Force Status	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Employed	33	50
Unemployed	21	14
Not in labour force	46	31

On all measures, the labour market outcomes six months after arrival in Australia are substantially better for Cohort 2 than they were for Cohort 1. This is true for each of the visa categories other than Humanitarian and Business Skills/ENS, and is true for men and women, Primary Applicants and spouses of Primary Applicants. For the Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked, the Independent and the Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants (84% of all Cohort 2 migrants), those in Cohort 2 had higher employment, lower unemployment and lower non-participation in the labour force. Table E3.1 shows the labour force status, six months after arrival, of the two cohorts (Primary Applicant and migrating unit spouse).

One reason for the good employment outcomes of Cohort 2 is the high level of their educational qualifications. Not only do they come highly qualified, but increasingly they are able to find jobs which use their qualifications. Thus Australia, and the migrants themselves, are better off in two ways in terms of the human capital that has been acquired with the migrants of Cohort 2. The first is that the total level of human capital is very high. The second is that greater use is being made of that human capital in the workplace.

#### E4. Immigration Choices and Satisfaction with Life in Australia

Soon after arrival, migrants in both cohorts expressed a high level of satisfaction with life in Australia. For most visa groups and both cohorts, 90 per cent or more said they were either satisfied or very satisfied. Further, when asked specifically about whether the decision to migrate was the right one, both cohorts responded very positively, indeed over 90 per cent said it was.

The two cohorts of migrants are remarkably alike in their immigration motivations and their stated likes and dislikes about Australia. Overall, negative aspects of life in the former home country in respect to the social, political and economic conditions, as well as employment, were not given as important reasons for migrating. Where they were, it was the context of people's lives—the climate, the political system, the pollution and overcrowding, with which migrants expressed dissatisfaction. The overall opinions of migrants regarding their former country of residence show that only a small percentage were dissatisfied with life in their former home country. Indeed two-thirds of respondents in Cohort 2 reported they were satisfied with their former life: some 18 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Generally, migrants (other than Humanitarian migrants) thought that educational opportunities in their former country were satisfactory. They were, however, more worried about high levels of crime and violence.

The attraction of Australia and its opportunities, natural environment and lifestyle, together with family who had already migrated or Australian spouses, were the predominant reasons for migration, with the so-called 'push' factors much less important. Most migrants come to Australia as an active choice rather than because their circumstances at home are bleak. It is encouraging for Australia that people who feel that they have satisfactory options nonetheless choose to migrate here.

The dominant response to the request to nominate the things they dislike about Australia was that there were none. This was the view of 37 per cent of Cohort 1 and 29 per cent of Cohort 2. Of the specific dislikes that were nominated, services and facilities, climate, crime and lack of discipline and employment difficulties were the most frequently cited. Only 3 per cent of migrants said that they disliked racism in Australia and only 3 per cent thought Australians were unfriendly.

When asked to nominate what they liked about Australia, migrants most frequently mentioned the lifestyle, quiet/peaceful environs and friendly people, together with physical attributes, such as climate, environment and the natural beauty of Australia.

It is important that we do not presume that economic factors drive immigration. Employment or economic-led migration does not feature prominently here as a considered response from those interviewed in the LSIA surveys.

Perhaps the most pleasing result from this section is the high levels of satisfaction that migrants express about their life in Australia. Very few report being dissatisfied. This general contentment is reinforced by the fact that most intend to become citizens and those who do not, say it is because they cannot have dual citizenship. Most would also encourage others to migrate as they have done.

#### E5. Location

Australia is not indifferent as to where new migrants choose to settle. Some areas of Australia have quite rapidly growing populations, some have slow or no growth and some have falling populations. Population growth or decline has substantial social and economic effects.

It is interesting to ask whether new migrants go disproportionately to the same places that are net gainers from internal movement. The answer is 'no'. While residents were flocking to Queensland, offshore migrants were less likely to head north than they were to head west: whereas 13 per cent of migrants in Cohort 2 settled in Western Australia, only 11 per cent settled in Queensland. As a

corollary of the different location patterns of internal and offshore migrants, the latter have not gone predominantly to those States with the fastest population growth. In recent years, New South Wales has had relatively slow overall population growth (1.1% in 2000) while the fastest growing State has been Queensland (1.7% in 2000). It is true, however, that South Australia and Tasmania, with low growth or falling populations, have received a relatively small share of offshore migrants. The internal and offshore migration patterns have reinforced each other for these two small States (and for the Territories).

Relative to their population shares, New South Wales received substantially more than its share of migrants, Western Australia received slightly more, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had migration proportions that matched their populations and the other States/Territories received less than their share. Where New South Wales has 34 per cent of the Australian population, it received 44 per cent of the migrants. Queensland, by contrast, with 19 per cent of the population received only 11 per cent of migrants.

The main reasons given by migrants for their choice of State, vary by State. For all States and both cohorts, the majority of migrants chose their destination to be near family or friends (the one exception being Western Australia for Cohort 2). Given that, there are some variations in motive between the States. If we compare the motivation for choosing a particular State with the overall percentage who give that motivation, we find that a relatively high proportion of migrants:

- chose New South Wales for its job opportunities;
- chose Victoria to be near family and friends;
- chose Queensland and Western Australia for their climate/lifestyle;
- had 'other' reasons for choosing South Australia and Tasmania.

Most migrants make up their minds where they want to settle before they arrive in Australia. They then carry out their intentions. Family and friends already resident in Australia are the main source of information and influence on the decision where to locate. People who migrate under the more economic visa categories of Independent and Business Skills/ENS are more likely to choose locations on the basis of jobs and lifestyle. Quite large numbers now use the internet, other media and official sources to find out about places to live. But family and friends are still the most important source of information, even for the 'economic' migrants, and also for Humanitarian migrants. If there is any opportunity to influence the places of settlement of new migrants,

it occurs before arrival, and mainly for Independent and Business Skills/ENS migrants.

## E6. Health

Overall, migrants had very good health on arrival in Australia. A little over 90 per cent of both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 respondents reported having no long-term health conditions that restrict them in physical activity or work. The same proportion reported believing their health over the last month was either good or very good—about 10 percentage points more than the Australian population.

In addition to inquiring about physical health, LSIA also investigated the psychological well-being of migrants. Some 26 per cent of the migrants indicated symptoms of significant psychological distress. This contrasts with 8 per cent for the Australian population.

It is not surprising that migrants experience higher levels of psychological distress than do the general population, considering the major changes occurring in the lives of the migrants. Their high level of psychological distress is likely to be a result of the stress of moving to a new country and leaving their family, friends and the familiarity of home behind. In fact, a change in residence or living conditions is considered by psychologists to be one of the most stressful and disruptive events that can occur in one's lifetime. It therefore can be expected that a significant number of the migrants would be depressed and stressed only three to six months following arrival in Australia. Furthermore, Humanitarian migrants are likely to have experienced a range of stressful events, in the factors that qualified them for such a visa. In Cohort 2, Humanitarian migrants are much more likely to display psychological distress than are the other groups. This difference was much more muted in Cohort 1.

Overall, there was no difference in the prevalence of psychological distress between Cohorts 1 and 2. This conceals the fact that in Cohort 2 the significantly higher levels of psychological distress in the Humanitarian visa group was offset by the significantly lower levels in the Business Skills/ENS group. Among the Humanitarian migrants from the Balkans and the Middle East, psychological distress was much higher among those who came in Cohort 2 than for the same group in Cohort 1.

## E7. Housing

The speed and ease with which migrants are able to find decent accommodation is an important dimension of the settlement experience.

Overall, the quality of housing that recent migrants are able to find is reassuringly high. The migrants themselves say this, and evidence on crowding and value of residence supports their judgement. An important reason for this is the crucial role played by family and friends who are already resident in Australia. They clearly provide an initial secure base for many new migrants, especially those who do not have substantial private income. Those who are close family members, such as parents, are likely to continue to share in the housing of their resident family members. Others will have an opportunity to establish themselves in independent accommodation as they are able to earn an adequate income.

The Humanitarian migrants were the ones who were least happy with the quality of their accommodation, only half describing it as good and 12 per cent saying it was poor. The other less-than-content group was, surprisingly, the Independent migrants. Over one-third of this group thought that the standard of their housing was at best 'moderate' and another six per cent thought it was poor. More than any other group, Independent migrants in Cohort 2 reported difficulty in finding a place to rent.

## E8. Income and Expenditure

### E8.1 Income

Migrants in Cohort 2 were asked whether the migrating unit had a) more than enough, b) enough, or c) not enough income to meet all basic needs. Overall, 82 per cent of recent migrants in Cohort 2 felt that they had enough (30 %) or more than enough (52%) income to meet their basic needs. The 'economic' migrants (Independent and Business Skills/ENS) were the most financially comfortable: Humanitarian migrants the least. None of this surprises. Most Humanitarian migrants had social welfare payments as their principle source of income, and had to rent their houses on the private market. It is therefore not surprising that they felt financially squeezed.

The presence of family already in Australia remains an important drawcard for migrants. The family is a major source of support—providing help with housing, finances, employment and information. They contribute a great deal to the ease of settlement and the initial standard of living of new migrants. The income of the migrating unit is often much smaller than the income of the household in which they initially live. For example, while one-quarter of migrating families report income of less than \$309 per week, only 10 per cent of the households in which they live do so.

Migrants in Cohort 2 had considerably higher personal incomes than did the earlier group, especially if they came under the more 'economic' visa categories of Independent or Business Skills/

Employer Nomination Scheme. These groups were the least likely to have active support from family already in Australia.

There are large differences in degrees of financial comfort depending on where people have migrated from. People from the high income English speaking countries overwhelmingly feel their incomes are adequate to meet their basic needs. In contrast, people from Oceania, the Middle East, Africa and Central and South America, some of whom will be Humanitarian migrants, are having quite a struggle six months after arrival.

Cohort 2 migrants have substantially higher incomes, in most of the visa groups, than do Cohort 1 migrants. The exceptions are the Humanitarian and Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants. One reason for the higher incomes is undoubtedly because a much higher proportion of the second cohort was employed, including in jobs that generated a substantial weekly income. Many others were living in families where others were the prime income earner. By Cohort 2, very few migrants were relying on government payments as their principal source of income (Humanitarian migrants excepted). The Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked and Independent migrants have seen a large rise in their typical income—indeed almost a doubling. Much of this is attributable to their relative success in finding adequate employment. The big change in the distribution of income between the cohorts is the fall in the proportion of Primary Applicants and spouses who received small amounts of income and a rise in the proportion who received over \$672 per week.

### E8.2 Expenditure

In a surprise result, we find that on selected items of expenditure, Cohort 2 spends very little more than Cohort 1. This is true when expenditure (adjusted for inflation) is calculated for each Primary Applicant, and when it is calculated for each member of the migrating unit. This result contrasts with the systematically and substantially higher incomes reported by Cohort 2. The higher incomes have translated into only slightly higher combined expenditure on food, clothing, child and health care and transport, and lower recorded expenditure on food. Expenditure on the four items combined is 5 per cent higher for Cohort 2 than for Cohort 1, whereas the median income of Primary Applicants and migrating unit spouses was 37 per cent higher. This difference between income and expenditure outcomes for the two cohorts may be reflecting the difficulty of capturing accurate income and expenditure data.

The second surprise is that for both cohorts, spending on the selected items is less than the expenditure of low income



Australian families, and much less than the Australian average. Cohort 2 spends only 90 per cent of the amount spent by the bottom quintile of Australian families on the four items, and 57 per cent of the amount spent by the average Australian family. The significance of this apparent low level of spending on essentials warrants closer investigation.

## E9. Support Services

With Australian immigration policy clearly shifting towards taking larger proportions of skilled migrants, sponsorship has become even more important to those less skilled migrants wishing to settle in Australia. Fifty-eight per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2 were sponsored (45 per cent of males and 73 per cent of females). Virtually all of Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants, and 20 per cent of Humanitarian migrants were sponsored.

Sponsors are obliged to assist those they sponsor for the first two years of their settlement. When asked, sponsored migrants reported that 96 per cent of them received help from their sponsor. Eighty-three per cent of sponsored migrants received assistance with general information and advice and help using services, 70 per cent received help with food, clothing or household goods, 75 per cent received help concerning accommodation, 56 per cent received financial assistance, and 30 per cent received help with employment matters.

Sponsors were not the only source of assistance to new migrants. There is a wide network of services provided by government and non-government agencies. The services that migrants used most frequently were help looking for work, help with financial matters, help learning English, help finding housing and accommodation, and help concerning health services and health insurance. With the exception of health services, Cohort 2 made much less use of the main services than did Cohort 1.

The most widely used services are those provided by the core Commonwealth Government agencies—Medicare, employment services, Centrelink, the Australian Tax Office and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. While they may be of great value to individual migrants, community services such as religious and ethnic groups, and the embassies of the former countries of residence, were used by small numbers of people.

Most migrants were satisfied with the assistance they received from the different organisations listed in the questionnaire. For the majority of services, the percentage satisfied was in the high eighties to low nineties.

## E10. Conclusion

This overview of many aspects of the migration experience provides a generally optimistic and positive view of the outcomes of Australia's contemporary migration program. In reflecting on the findings, we need to be cognizant of the fact that we are here looking at migrants who have been in Australia for only about six months. On almost all measures, outcomes can be expected to improve as the period of settlement extends. We know from earlier work that this is especially true for Humanitarian migrants.

Migrants come to Australia for positive reasons that are related mainly to the desire to join family already here, or to enjoy the greater opportunities, the uncrowded, unpolluted, attractive environment and the delightful climate. They appreciated also the peaceful, friendly and democratic civil life. Overwhelmingly, they were happy with their decision to migrate and would encourage others to do so.

Recent migrants have done extremely well in obtaining jobs and earning an adequate income. This is reflected in the generally satisfactory standards of living that they report. They are generally well housed, helped in this by the ability to stay with family who were already here. This happy story does not apply to Humanitarian migrants, who in many respects have a different experience from other migrants.

Humanitarian migrants clearly come with many disadvantages. They have relatively low levels of education and English language proficiency and quite high levels of psychological distress. Initially, they find it hard to obtain employment and as a result have low levels of income and relatively poor housing. They rely, early on, mainly on government social welfare benefits. Despite these outward signs of hardship, they are overwhelmingly happy to be in Australia, and are the most likely to say that they intend to take out Australian citizenship.

What has Australia gained from its recent migrants? We here do not canvass the many non-economic benefits that migrants may bring.

Australia, and the migrants themselves, are better off in two ways in terms of the human capital that has been acquired with the migrants of Cohort 2. The first is that the total level of human capital is very high. The second is that substantial use is being made of that human capital in the workplace. In addition, recent migrants were physically very healthy, if suffering quite high levels of stress from the experience of migration. Many

migrants with lower levels of economic independence were supported after arrival by family and friends already here. This support unquestionably helps their adjustment to their new country, and reduces the need for support from government or not-for-profit organizations.

Finally, migrants do not tend to go to parts of Australia that already have fast-growing populations. Their settlement patterns

to some extent counter, rather than aggravate, internal population flows.

Australia has carefully tailored its migration program to meet the twin goals of providing economic benefit and assisting family re-union. From the evidence of this report, it has been very successful in this.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Background to the Report

Modern Australia is a migrant country and it has a fine history of overall successful settlement of its new arrivals. Despite its significance in the Australian story, the experience of recent migrants in settling into their new country of residence has not been well understood. Nor has there been good evidence from which to assess the consequences for successful settlement of changes in migration policy and services. For the first time we are now able to trace in detail the early settlement experience of two different cohorts of migrants. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs commissioned two world class surveys of recent migrants. The first was conducted in 1993/4 (Cohort 1) and the second in 1999/2000 (Cohort 2). Migrants were interviewed about six months after arrival. Further waves of interviews were conducted 12 months and 36 months after the first wave (although for Cohort 2 only a second wave is currently planned).

The information collected in this Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) provides a unique insight into a number of important questions. These include the extent to which people who migrate under different visa categories have different outcomes; the impact of personal attributes such as English language proficiency, age, country of origin, formal education, prior work status and gender on economic independence; and the role played by Australian migrant services in assisting settlement. Since the LSIA has recently completed interviews with a second cohort of migrants, it is also possible to investigate whether changes in the overall state of the economy and in government policy have had a substantial effect on the early integration of migrants into employment.

This report uses information from the first waves of both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 to describe and compare the characteristics and experience of these two groups of recent migrants. This report is a companion to an earlier report (The Labour Force Experience of New Migrants) written by the National Institute of Labour Studies and published by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in 2001. The earlier report covered the topics of overall labour force outcomes, unemployment, proficiency in English, qualifications and levels and sources of income. In addition it sought to explain why migrants in Cohort 2 had much better employment and income outcomes than those in Cohort 1. In this report, we examine the remaining topics that were covered in the LSIA surveys.

A comprehensive report that covers all the topics in detail, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, is available from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' website at [www.immi.gov.au/research/publications](http://www.immi.gov.au/research/publications).

## 1.2 Background to the Data

Table 1.1 shows the main characteristics of each of the two cohorts. It includes the primary applicants, and any spouses who migrated with them.

There are some noticeable differences in the visa categories of the two cohorts. Cohort 2 has a higher proportion who migrated as Independent (30% compared with 20%) or Business Skills/Employer Nomination Scheme (8% compared with 5%); and a lower proportion who migrated as Preferential Family/Family Stream (41% compared with 49%) or Humanitarian (8% compared with 16%). Since the experiences of the different visa categories vary systematically (eg, the Independent and Business Skills/ENS categories have the highest rates of employment and the lowest rates of unemployment and conversely for Humanitarian), the changing composition will affect the overall performance of the two cohorts.

Cohort 2 had a higher proportion (38% as compared with 31%) of people who were fluent speakers of English, and commensurately fewer who did not speak English well or at all. Cohort 2 migrants also had distinctly higher levels of formal education. The proportion with post-graduate qualifications has risen from 12 to 19 per cent while those with less than Year 12 has almost halved to 14 per cent.

The most striking difference between the two cohorts is, however, apparent in their employment experience. As Table 1.1 shows, the proportion employed rose from 33 to 50 per cent. Most of the increase in employment is matched by a fall in the proportion who are unemployed, although there is also a higher participation rate among Cohort 2.

The higher employment levels for Cohort 2 are reflected in the proportions who are wage and salary earners (which rose from 28% to 50%). There is a more than commensurate fall in the dependence on government payments for people's main source of income. For Cohort 1, more people depended on government payments than earned a wage. For Cohort 2, there were more than four wage earners for every person whose main source of income was government payments.

**Table 1.1: Major Characteristics of Primary Applicants and Migrating Unit Spouses (% in each category)**

	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
<i>Primary applicant or spouse, males, females</i>		
Male, Primary Applicant	41	39
Female, Primary Applicant	38	38
Male, spouse	4	7
Female, spouse	17	17
<i>Visa Category</i>		
Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked	10	12
Independent	20	30
Preferential Family/Family Stream	49	41
Business Skills/TNS	5	8
Humanitarian	16	9
<i>Age</i>		
Average years	35	35
<i>Labour Force Status</i>		
Employed	33	50
Unemployed	21	10
Not in labour force	46	41
<i>Region of Birth</i>		
Oceania	2	3
UK, Ireland	16	15
Other Europe	18	14
Middle East, Nth Africa	10	10
SE Asia	20	16
NE Asia	14	16
South Central Asia	11	13
Nth America	3	3
Central South America	2	1
Other Africa	5	10
<i>Current Main Activity</i>		
Wage, salary earner	28	43
Own business	3	5
Other employed	2	2
Unemployed	21	10
Student	15	14
Home duties	23	21
Retired, pensioner	6	4
Other	2	3
<i>Duration of Stay</i>		
Up to 3 months	14	3
>3 months < 6 months	75	55
> 6 months	12	42
<i>How well speak English</i>		
English only language or best language	31	38
Other language -Speak English very well	10	13
Speak English well	21	20
Speak English, not well	26	22
Not speak English	12	8
<i>Major source of income</i>		
Government payment	36	11
Wage, salary	31	50
Business	2	4
Investment	8	10
No income	23	26
<i>Level of highest qualification</i>		
Higher degree, post-graduate diploma	12	19
Bachelor degree	20	24
Diploma, certificate, trade	27	27
Year 12	17	16
Less than Year 12	23	14
<i>Total number</i>	<b>6961</b>	<b>4181</b>

*Notes* (1) Cohort 1 arrived in Australia between September 1993 and August 1995

(2) Cohort 2 arrived in Australia between September 1999 and August 2000

## 2. Choice of Australia as a Migration Destination

### 2.1 Choice of Australia

The two cohorts of migrants are remarkably alike in their immigration motivations. Overall, negative aspects of life in the former home country in respect to the social, political and economic conditions, as well as employment, were not given as important reasons for migrating. It is apparent that the attraction of Australia and its opportunities, natural attributes and lifestyle, together with family who had already migrated, were the predominant reasons for migration, with the so-called 'push' factors much less important.

The responses of migrants to the question of why they wished to migrate to Australia are set out in Table 2.1.

It shows that a higher proportion of respondents in Cohort 2 indicated that Australia represented a better future for the family or favoured other aspects such as lifestyle or climate (over half of Primary Applicants gave each of those reasons). Joining family or friends in Australia was the next most frequently identified motivation. The small fall for Cohort 2 in the fraction who were motivated to join family may simply reflect the lower percentage of people migrating under the family stream in Cohort 2.

'Better employment opportunities' was not a major motivation in either cohort, being a reason given by some 22 per cent in Cohort 1 and 27 per cent in Cohort 2. Overall, negative aspects of life in the former home country in respect to the social, political

and economic conditions, as well as employment, were not signalled as important reasons for migrating. The overall pattern is similar for both cohorts, though there are significant differences in the precise reasons. Cohort 2 migrants were more likely to nominate the positive attractions of employment, lifestyle and better prospects for family, and less likely to nominate joining family, getting married or escaping hostilities.

The motivations for migrating varied substantially according to visa category, for both cohorts. The political conditions in the former home country were of prime concern to those in the Humanitarian stream, with the response to 'better future for the family' also given high priority, increasing from 46 per cent of Primary Applicants in Cohort 1 to 68 per cent in Cohort 2. Not surprisingly, the majority of Primary Applicants in the Preferential Family/Family Stream category stated that the reason for migrating was to join family in Australia, some 59 per cent for both cohorts. Independent migrants consistently said they were motivated by 'better employment opportunities' (38%), but also indicated that a 'better future for the family' and other aspects such as lifestyle were important for Cohort 2.

These reasons were also important for the Business Skills/ENS group, however there was a reduced proportion of them nominating 'better employment opportunities' in Cohort 2, a low 21 per cent compared to a relatively high 41 per cent in Cohort 1. However it should be noted that there was a dramatic shift in the composition of this group - in Cohort 1 the Business Skills/ENS group was dominated by ENS migrants, whereas the situation

**Table 2.1: Reasons given by Primary Applicants for Migrating to Australia, Cohorts 1 and 2 (%)**

Reasons for migrating to Australia <sup>1</sup>	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Significance <sup>2</sup>
Better employment opportunities	22	27	(***)
To join family/relatives in Australia	46	41	(***)
To get married	19	15	(***)
To undertake studies	8	9	(n.s.)
Better future for family in Australia	42	52	(***)
Other aspects, e.g. lifestyle, climate	36	50	(***)
Lack of employment in former country	6	7	(n.s.)
Dislike of economic conditions in former country	13	17	(***)
Dislike of social conditions in former country	14	16	(*)
Escape war or political situation	16	12	(***)
Other	4	8	(***)

*Note:* (1) More than one reason could be given.

(2) Pearson Chi-square test measures whether the observed difference in response between the cohorts is likely just to be a matter of chance, or whether it reflects a real difference in the underlying population from which the sample is drawn: n.s. = not significant, \* = probability < 0.05, \*\*\* = probability < 0.001.

was reversed by Cohort 2. It is this difference in composition, and the lower propensity of Business migrants to cite 'better employment reasons' that accounts for much of this difference between cohorts.

For both cohorts, the reasons for migrating were significantly different between male and female Primary Applicants. Females were much more likely to give family reasons and males were more inclined to state employment or better opportunities. There was a notable shift to joint decision-making in respect to Primary Applicants and Spouse, increasing from 31 per cent of respondents in Cohort 1 to 47 per cent in Cohort 2. A small part of this difference could be accounted for by the fact that more Primary Applicants migrated with their spouse in Cohort 2 than in Cohort 1 (47 % compared with 42%).

## 2.2 Views of Country of Origin

The conclusion that migrants were more motivated by the attractions of Australia than by the hostile conditions of their home country is reinforced by the response of migrants to questions about perceptions of life in their country of origin. The migrant opinions regarding their former country of residence show that only a small percentage was dissatisfied with life in their former home country. Indeed two-thirds of respondents in Cohort 2 reported they were satisfied with their former life: some 18 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Generally, migrants (other than Humanitarian migrants) thought that educational opportunities in their former country were satisfactory. They were, however, more worried about high levels of crime.

Migrants were asked to comment on their standard of living in the 12 months before they left their former country of residence to establish the extent to which they were able to meet basic needs. Table 2.2 shows that some 44 per cent of migrants in Cohort 2 compared to 38 per cent in Cohort 1 indicated that they were more than able to meet all basic needs. The difference was most evident for migrants in the Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked category, where 42 per cent in Cohort 1 compared to 51 per cent in Cohort 2 claimed that they were more than able to meet needs. By contrast, migrants in the Humanitarian stream showed an increase from 52 per cent in Cohort 1 to a high 62 per cent in Cohort 2 in the proportion claiming that they were unable previously to meet all basic needs.

The significantly higher proportion of Cohort 2 migrants who responded that they were more than able to meet their material needs in their country of origin reinforces earlier information that suggests pull factors of lifestyle and opportunity were of greater importance for Cohort 2.

Migrants were asked how they felt about the job that they had in the 12 months prior to migration. Only a small percentage actually disliked their jobs with no significant differences between cohorts. Two thirds of Cohort 2 respondents really liked the job they held in their former country of residence. Business migrants liked their former job best and Independent migrants were the least enthusiastic. This supports the response reported earlier that employment was not a dominant reason for migrating to Australia.

While migrants were not mainly motivated by 'push' factors, when asked, they were willing to identify what they least liked about their country of origin. This gives some insight into the reasons behind migration, especially when contrasted with what they most like about Australia. Table 2.3 reports their views.

It is interesting to observe that material standard of living (including poverty and poor public services) was not high on the list of reasons for leaving. Much more significant were the context of people's lives - the climate, political system, pollution and overcrowding.

Most migrants come to Australia as an active choice rather than because their circumstances at home are bleak. It is encouraging for Australia that people who feel that they have satisfactory options nonetheless choose to migrate here.

## 2.3 Prior visits to Australia

Migrants were asked questions about any previous visits to Australia before formally migrating, the length of time spent in the country and the type of visa that was used if visits had been made. Just on half of migrants in Cohort 2 spent time in Australia prior to migration, which was significantly more than the 42 per cent of Cohort 1 who had done so. Of particular note, migrants in the Business Skills/ENS stream were very much more likely than others to have spent time in Australia, 82 per cent of Cohort 1 and 87 per cent of Cohort 2. It is probably not coincidence that, for Cohort 2, the two groups with the least family connections in Australia—Independent and Business Skills/ENS—were the ones that were most likely to have made a visit prior to emigrating (Humanitarian migrants, having little choice, are an exception). A high 31 per cent of Cohort 2 Independent migrants came as students, and consequently stayed for a long period. Most others used a tourist or visitor visa. The largest difference between the cohorts was evident for migrants in the Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked and Independent categories, where prior visits increased to 55 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. Migrants in the Humanitarian stream had virtually no prior experience of Australia, which was consistent for both cohorts.

**Table 2.2: Migrant Opinions regarding, their Standard of Living and Employment in the 12 months before leaving the Former Country of Residence by Visa Category, Cohorts 1 and 2 (%)**

Opinions regarding former country of residence	Cohort	Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked	Independent	Preferential Family/Family Stream	Business Skills/ Employer Nomination Scheme	Humanitarian	Total
<i>Standard of living in 12 months before leaving</i>							
More than able to meet all basic needs	1	42	50	39	74	11	38
	2	51	54	38	70	8	44
Able to meet all basic needs	1	47	43	48	25	38	44
	2	45	41	50	29	31	43
Less than able to meet all basic needs	1	10	17	13	+	52	18
	2	4	6	13	+	62	13
(Significance)		(***)	(n.s.)	(n.s.)	(n.v.)	(**)	(***)
<i>Employment in last 12 months before leaving</i>							
Loved it, best job ever had	1	27	17	26	30	34	25
	2	23	19	25	36	25	24
Liked it, really good job	1	43	48	46	47	31	44
	2	44	45	46	44	30	44
The job was OK	1	26	30	23	20	23	25
	2	24	30	22	20	22	25
Didn't really care	1	3	3	3	+	?	3
	2	3	4	5	+	9	4
Disliked job	1	1	2	2	+	6	3
	2	1	2	2	+	13	2
(Significance)		(n.s.)	(n.s.)	(n.s.)	(n.v.)	(*)	(n.s.)

Notes: (1) Pearson Chi square test, n.s. = not significant, \* = probability < 0.05, \*\* = probability < 0.01, \*\*\* = probability < 0.001.

**Table 2.3: What Migrants Disliked about their Former Country of Residence, Cohorts 1 and 2 (per cent of people who nominated this response)**

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Pollution/overcrowded	34	39
Political system	24	23
Poverty, economy	22	19
Lifestyle/social	19	18
Poor standard of living	16	17
Climate	14	17
Crime/vandalism/terrorism	14	25
Poor services, education	11	17
Other	11	10
War	10	6
Nothing	9	7

Notes: (1) Responses have been grouped into general categories to establish comparability between Cohorts 1 & 2.  
 (2) Responses have been grouped together for multiple response analysis - up to 5 responses could be given in Cohort 1, and up to 9 responses in Cohort 2 could be given (causing the total percentage of cases to be more than 100 per cent).

### 3. Satisfaction With Life In Australia

#### 3.1 Likes and Dislikes

Migrants were asked to indicate what the most liked about Australia. They could nominate up to 9 different aspects that they liked (5 for Cohort 1). Table 3.1 reports the percentage of migrants who included that topic in their list. In a complement to what people most disliked about their country of origin, what they most liked about Australia was again the context of life—the social environment, the friendly people and the fact that it is quiet and peaceful were the most frequently nominated likes for Cohort 2. Also important for them was education and employment, more so than for Cohort 1. It is interesting to note that while 40-50 per cent of migrants said they migrated to Australia because they believed it held a better future for their families (see Table 2.1), only 9-16 per cent nominated better opportunities as one of the things they liked about Australia (soon after arrival).

When asked what they most disliked about Australia (see Table 3.2), about one third said 'nothing', although this was a less frequent response for Cohort 2. There was no single aspect that was predominant in the minds of those who did nominate something they disliked. No option was selected by more than 13 per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2, although 14 per cent of Cohort 1 migrants said they did not like the climate. It is interesting to note that only 3 per cent of migrants said that they disliked racism in Australia and only 3 per cent thought Australians were unfriendly.

This general pattern varied by birthplace region, with those migrants from Asia more likely to express there was nothing that they disliked about Australia. For migrants from South-East Asia job difficulties were a more common dislike. It is interesting that employment and access to services and facilities, and even language barriers, were not high on the list of major dislikes about Australia as expressed openly by respondents.

Soon after arrival, migrants in both cohorts expressed a high level of satisfaction with life in Australia. For most visa groups and both cohorts, 90 per cent or more said they were either satisfied or very satisfied.

The majority (51% in Cohort 1 and 53% in Cohort 2) responded that they were satisfied, with over one-third in both cohorts indicating that they were very satisfied. There was a significant difference between the cohorts of Independent migrants with 29 per cent of them very satisfied in Cohort 1 increasing to 38 per cent in Cohort 2. However, this was still below the high level of satisfaction expressed in Cohort 2 by Preferential Family/Family Stream entrants (41%) and Business Skills/ENS migrants (43%), which had remained relatively consistent over cohorts. It is interesting that the higher levels of employment and income that were achieved by Cohort 2 do not translate directly into reported higher levels of satisfaction.

**Table 3.1: What Migrants Liked about Australia, Cohorts 1 and 2  
(per cent of people who nominated this response)**

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Country/environment	48	25
Friendly people	36	38
Lifestyle/social	35	48
Services and facilities	32	12
Climate/weather	31	31
Political freedom/no war	28	12
Good living/costs	26	14
Education/employment	24	38
Quiet and peaceful	21	49
Better opportunities	9	16
Family here	5	6
Everything	4	3
Other	4	10

*Notes:* (1) Responses have been grouped into general categories to establish comparability between Cohorts 1 & 2  
(2) Responses have been grouped together for multiple response analysis - up to 5 responses could be given in Cohort 1, and up to 9 responses in Cohort 2 (causing the total percentage of cases to be more than 100 per cent).



**Table 3.2: What Migrants Disliked about Australia, Cohorts 1 and 2  
(per cent of people who nominated this response)**

	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
Nothing	37	29
Climate	14	11
Services and facilities	13	13
Other	11	17
Employment difficulties	11	9
Crime, lack of discipline	8	11
Economy, expensive	7	10
Geographic isolation	6	5
Lifestyle, social	5	10
Language barrier	5	5
People racist	4	3
Politics, government	4	3
People unfriendly	3	2

*Notes:* (1) Responses have been grouped into general categories to establish comparability between Cohorts 1 & 2  
(2) Responses have been grouped together for multiple response analysis – up to 5 responses could be given in Cohort 1, and up to 6 responses in Cohort 2 (causing the total percentage of people reporting each option to be more than 100 per cent).

When asked specifically about whether the decision to migrate was the right one, both cohorts responded very positively, indeed over 90 per cent said it was. The (Cohort 2) Business Skills/ENS and Humanitarian streams were the most enthusiastic, with 94 and 97 per cent respectively saying that they had made the right decision in migrating to Australia. Of the least enthusiastic group—Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked—still 86 per cent of Cohort 2 believed that they had made the right decision. Independent migrants had the biggest increase in those believing their decision was the right one, increasing from 83 per cent in Cohort 1 to 92 per cent in Cohort 2. An additional question relating to whether they would encourage others to migrate to Australia showed that Cohort 2 was more likely to say ‘yes’ – some 77 per cent compared with 73 per cent for Cohort 1. The Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked category in Cohort 2 were (with Humanitarian migrants) the most likely (85%) to encourage others to migrate: this was a large increase from the case in Cohort 1 (76%).

It may be that, so soon after arrival, migrants are not generally prepared to conclude that they have made a mistake in coming to Australia. But on the face of it, the efforts of the migrants and of their host country are combining to produce very commendable outcomes for the migrants. This is no doubt greatly assisted by the generally high levels of information about Australia that

migrants have before arrival. This information is obtained either from family and friends already resident here, over the internet, or by visiting Australia for a short period prior to permanent arrival.

### 3.2 Intention to Apply for Citizenship

The intentions of migrants to apply for Australian citizenship provide further support to the high levels of satisfaction expressed by respondents with life in Australia, with about 80 per cent intending to do so. Almost all the migrants in the Humanitarian stream intended to apply for citizenship with the Business Skills/ENS migrants the least likely to do so – only 64 per cent in Cohort 2. They and the Independent migrants were the most unsure. This probably reflects the fact that these two groups have more choices available to them than many other migrants.

For the migrants not intending to apply for Australian citizenship, the overwhelming reason was that they wished to retain the citizenship of their former country, 49 per cent in Cohort 1 increasing to 54 per cent in Cohort 2. Similarly, a desire to retain their current passport received a relatively high response, 20 per cent in Cohort 1 and 32 per cent in Cohort 2. Others thought that citizenship was not really necessary. Only a small percentage had yet to make up their minds whether they would stay permanently in Australia.

When asked specifically about whether they intended to leave Australia permanently, in Cohort 1 it was clear that those migrants in the Independent and Business Skills/ENS streams were most likely to indicate that they may emigrate, although the numbers were a small six per cent and seven per cent respectively. However, a high percentage of both groups stated that they were unsure – 29 per cent of Independent migrants and 27 per cent of Business Skills/ENS migrants.

### 3.3 Overall Findings about Likes and Dislikes

It is interesting that difficulties associated with employment and access to services and facilities and even language barriers were not high on the list of major dislikes about Australia as expressed openly by respondents. Such things were also notably not high on the list of dislikes about the former country of residence of migrants. It is clear that family, friends and their social life were the most favoured things for migrants when asked about their

former home country. By contrast, the physical attributes, such as climate, environment and the natural beauty of Australia, together with lifestyle, quiet/peaceful environs and friendly people were the most popular things about Australia. The negative aspects of life in the former home country were much more closely associated with the political system, pollution and overcrowding and climate than with the economy or living standards, which remained very much the same for both cohorts. It is important that we do not pre-judge what drives immigration, as employment or economic-led migration does not feature prominently here as a considered response from those interviewed in the LSIA surveys.

Perhaps the most pleasing result from this section is the high levels of satisfaction that migrants express about their life in Australia. Very few report being dissatisfied. This general contentment is reinforced by the fact that most intend to become citizens and those who do not say it is because they cannot have dual citizenship. Most would also encourage others to migrate as they have done.

**Table 3.3: Main Reasons given by Migrants for wanting to be an Australian Citizen (per cent of those intending to apply who gave reason)<sup>1</sup>**

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
To stay here permanently	48	47
I like/love Australia/better life here	8	34
To bring children up here	9	27
Belong to/feel Australian	31	23
Spouse is Australian/family here	6	19
To have all the rights of an Australian	18	18
Feel safer in Australia/more secure	3	15
Job opportunities	5	14
A natural step/commitment to country	7	13
Feel safer on Australian passport	8	8
Easier to travel on return visits to former country	9	8
To be able to vote	10	7

Note: (1) More than one reason could be given.

## 4. Comparison With Life In Former Country

We are able to provide a brief look at how migrants were faring soon after arrival in Australia, compared with their assessment of their circumstances in the 12 months prior to migration. We have seen above that most migrants had few complaints about their country of origin. While 70 per cent of Cohort 2 migrants were able to identify something about Australia that they did not like, these dislikes were quite varied.

In Table 4.1 below we compare the opinions of Cohort 2 migrants on their circumstances before and after migration, in three separate arenas. These are a) the adequacy of their current income, b) the quality of their housing and c) their use of qualifications and enjoyment of their job.

The circumstances of migrants six months after arrival in Australia were mostly similar to those they left behind. They were less likely to love their job but hardly more likely to dislike it and they were a bit more likely not to use their qualifications in their job. The standard of housing was judged to be very similar (on a crude three-grade scale). Their income was a bit less adequate to meet their needs in Australia than it was before their migration. Overall, it appears that the majority of migrants of Cohort 2 quickly established for themselves a standard of living in Australia that was not much below that which they left behind. We expect that they will build on this solid foundation as their period in Australia lengthens.

**Table 4.1: Migrant Opinions regarding, their Standard of Living, Employment and Housing in the 12 months before and 6 months after migration: Cohort 2 (per cent)**

Opinions regarding	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Quality of job		
Love or really like job	68	53
Dislike job	2	4
Rarely use qualifications on job	21	30
Standard of current housing		
Good	61	64
Moderate	32	30
Poor	7	6
Adequacy of income		
More than enough to meet basic needs	44	30
Just enough to meet basic needs	43	52
Not enough to meet basic needs	13	18

## 5. Location

### 5.1 Location choices

Australia is not indifferent as to where new migrants choose to settle. Some areas of Australia have quite rapidly growing populations, some have slow or no growth and some have falling populations. Population growth or decline has substantial social and economic effects. In any year, there is much internal movement by the Australian population, within localities, between metropolitan, urban and rural areas, and across State boundaries. This human flow is not random and the net flows have large consequences for both the recipient and the source areas. New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania have experienced net outflows from interstate migration over most of the past decade, while Queensland is the only State to have experienced continuous gains over this period. Victoria changed from a net loss to a net gain in 1997-98.

It is interesting to ask whether new migrants go disproportionately to the same places that have net gains from internal movement. The answer is 'no'. While residents were flocking to Queensland, offshore migrants were less likely to head north than they were to head west: whereas 13 per cent of migrants in Cohort 2 settled in Western Australia, only 11 per cent settled in Queensland. As a corollary of the different location patterns of internal and offshore migrants, the latter have not gone predominantly to those States with the fastest population growth. In recent years, New South Wales has had relatively slow overall population growth (1.1% in 2000) while the fastest growing State has been Queensland (1.7% in 2000). It is true, however, that South Australia and Tasmania, with low growth or falling populations, have received a relatively small share of offshore migrants. The internal and offshore migration patterns have reinforced each other for these two small States (and for the Territories).

Relative to their population shares, however, New South Wales received substantially more than its share of migrants, Western Australia received slightly more, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had migration proportions that matched their populations and the other States/Territories received less than their share. Where New South Wales has 34 per cent of the Australian population, it received 44 per cent of the migrants. Queensland, by contrast, with 19 per cent of the population received only 11 per cent of migrants.

Once they arrive in Australia, migrants tend to stay in the place of first settlement. If there is any policy interest in altering the pattern of location of migrants soon after they arrive, it is necessary to focus on where they first live. Indeed, it would be necessary to try to alter intended destination, since overwhelmingly migrants live where they intended to live before they arrived. Over 88 per cent of migrants intended to live in the capital city where they did live at the time of interview. A further seven per cent intended to live in the non-metropolitan area where they did actually live. Together, therefore, 95 per cent of migrants were, six months after arrival, living in the place where they had intended to live before they arrived. In saying this, we should note that migrants who did move were harder to track to include in the survey, and so may be under-represented.

### 5.2 Location influences

Table 5.1 shows, for each cohort, the main reason given by Primary Applicants for their choice of place to live. For all States and both cohorts, the majority of migrants chose their destination to be near family or friends (the one exception being Western Australia for Cohort 2). Between 54 per cent (Cohort 2) and 71 per cent (Cohort 1) were joining family (a high proportion of

**Table 5.1: Main Reason for Choice by Primary Applicant of Current Location (%)**

Primary Applicant's main reason for choosing this location	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Significance <sup>2</sup>
Spouse/partner lived here	39	22	(***)
Employer is located here	4	6	(***)
Job opportunities	8	3	(***)
Family living here	32	32	(ns)
Friends living here	7	10	(***)
Preferred climate	2	1	(ns)
Preferred lifestyle	4	10	(***)
Other	4	17	(***)

*Notes:* n.s. - not significant, \* - probability < 0.05, \*\*\* - probability < 0.001.

whom were a spouse). It is interesting to note that for Cohort 2, many more chose their location because they preferred the lifestyle than for the general job opportunities. We note here that the question for Cohort 2 refers to the locality, rather than the State of choice.

Given that, there are some variations in motive between the States. If we compare the motivation for choosing a particular State with the overall percentage who give that motivation, we find that a relatively high proportion of migrants:

- chose New South Wales for its job opportunities;
- chose Victoria to be near family and friends;
- chose Queensland and Western Australia for their climate/lifestyle;
- had 'other' reasons for choosing South Australia and Tasmania.

Migrants were asked what sources of information they used in order to come to a view about where in Australia to go.

For both cohorts, the most common source of information was from relatives and friends who live in Australia. The second most common source was from sponsors. Government embassy/agencies were quite important, as were the media and family/friends who had visited Australia. Most other sources were used by only a small number of migrants.

Friends and relatives are also the most important source of information for people in each of the visa categories, but especially so for Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked, Business

Skills/ENS and the Humanitarian migrants. It is interesting that even for the non-family categories of Independent, Business Skills/ENS and Humanitarian, more than one-third obtained information about the State in which they settled from family and friends resident in Australia.

The family categories of Preferential Family/Family Stream (46%) and Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked (63%) relied heavily on a combination of sponsor and family and friends resident in Australia. The Independent and Business Skills/ENS migrants made quite a lot of use of non-personal sources, especially the internet (both in general and the DIMIA site), Government agencies and private travel/migration agencies. It is clear that quite a wide range of sources are used, with differing emphasis according to the visa category of the migrant (in particular, whether they have family or friends already resident in Australia).

Most migrants make up their minds where they want to settle before they arrive in Australia. They then carry out their intentions. Family and friends already resident in Australia are the main source of information and influence on the decision where to locate. People who migrate under the more economic visa categories of Independent and Business Skills/ENS are more likely to choose locations on the basis of jobs and lifestyle. Quite large numbers now use the internet, other media and official sources to find out about places to live. But family and friends are still the most important source of information, even for the 'economic' migrants, and also for Humanitarian migrants. If there is any opportunity to influence the places of settlement of new migrants, it occurs before arrival, and mainly for Independent and Business Skills/ENS migrants.

## 6. Health

### 6.1 Physical Health

Overall, migrants had very good health on arrival in Australia. A little over 90 per cent of both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 respondents reported having no long-term health conditions that restrict them in physical activity or work. Six out of the eight per cent of Cohort 1 (408 cases) with such a health condition reported that they had the condition before immigrating to Australia, compared to eight out of the nine per cent with such conditions in Cohort 2 (322 cases).

The most commonly reported pre-existing health condition in Cohort 1 was arthritis or rheumatism. In Cohort 2, the most common condition was nerves or stress problems. The majority of people with stress or nervous problems in both cohorts were from the Humanitarian visa category. Pre-existing health conditions were more prevalent among older migrants, female migrants, and migrants entering Australia on a Humanitarian visa.

Overall, migrants in both cohorts believed that they were in good health over the month prior to the interview. A high 91 per cent of Cohort 1 and 92 per cent of Cohort 2 reported believing their health over the last month was either good or very good. In comparison, findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1995) National Health Survey indicate that only 83 per cent of the general Australian population reported feeling their health was either good, very good, or excellent ('excellent' was not a response category in the LSIA survey). Recent migrants to Australia are more likely to believe they are in good health than are Australians in general. Two per cent of both LSIA cohorts reported that their health was poor or worse. Overall however, there was a significant difference between Cohorts 1 and 2 on their level of self-assessed health status. Cohort 2 migrants were significantly more likely to report their health was 'very good' than Cohort 1, and Cohort 1 migrants were slightly more likely to report their health was 'fair'.

### 6.2 Psychological Well-Being

In addition to inquiring about physical health, LSIA also investigated the psychological well-being of migrants. The widely used 12-item General Health Questionnaire was administered to participants. Seventy four per cent of the migrants in both cohorts were found to have normal psychological health. This means that 26 per cent of the migrants indicated symptoms of significant

psychological distress. In comparison, in the general Australian population eight per cent have been found to have psychological distress at this level.

It is not surprising that migrants experience higher levels of psychological distress than do the general population, considering the major changes occurring in the lives of the migrants. Their high level of psychological distress is likely to be a result of the stress of moving to a new country and leaving their family, friends and the familiarity of home behind. In fact, a change in residence or living conditions is considered by psychologists to be one of the most stressful and disruptive events that can occur in one's lifetime. Moving to a different country would involve at least 19 of the 43 life changes considered to be the most stressful, such as changes in job, financial state, and family contact. It therefore can be expected that a significant number of the migrants would be depressed and stressed only three to six months following arrival in Australia. Furthermore, Humanitarian migrants are likely to have experienced a range of stressful events, in the factors that qualified them for such a visa. In Cohort 2 Humanitarian migrants are much more likely to display psychological distress than are the other groups. This difference was much more muted in Cohort 1.

Overall, there was no difference in the prevalence of psychological distress between Cohorts 1 and 2. This conceals the fact that in Cohort 2 the significantly higher levels of psychological distress in the Humanitarian visa group was offset by the significantly lower levels in the Business Skills/ENS group. The presence of greater psychological distress in Cohort 2 Humanitarian migrants compared to Cohort 1 could not be explained as being a result of living in Australia for a shorter period of time, or by differences in the presence of relatives in Australia for support. However, the difference between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 in psychological distress could be explained at least in part by a combination of differences in gender, age, poorer English proficiency, and particularly region of birth.

Humanitarian migrants from the Middle East and the Balkans had especially high levels of distress. Since a higher proportion of Humanitarian migrants came from the Balkans in Cohort 2 (45 per cent as compared with 39 per cent for Cohort 1), the change in origin of Humanitarian migrants is part of the story. But it is only a part. No matter which way the Humanitarian group is disaggregated, the psychological distress of Cohort 2

Humanitarian migrants was significantly greater than that in Cohort 1. Male Primary Applicants, male migrating unit spouses, and female migrating unit spouses from Cohort 2 all had significantly higher levels of psychological distress than those in Cohort 1. So did those aged 25-34, 45-54 and 55-64, those

originating from the Balkans or the Middle East and those who did not speak English well. Duration of stay in Australia and the presence of non-resident family in Australia did not influence the outcome. The major source of higher levels of distress is a rise in the levels of distress within specific groups.

## 7. Housing

### 7.1 Housing Choices

The speed and ease with which migrants are able to find decent accommodation is an important dimension of the settlement experience. In this report we are not able to provide a comprehensive account of the success or otherwise of migrants in finding satisfactory housing, and what may determine that success. But we are able to give an overall picture of how recent migrants are housed and whether this has changed between the cohorts.

What constitutes decent housing is complex. Australia has a very high quality housing stock and little in the way of sub-standard housing. Therefore migrants are not likely to end up living in slums. But they may be forced to live in crowded conditions, such as sharing with relatives when they would rather not. They may also be forced to pay a high proportion of their income in rent or mortgage payments, so that not enough income is left for other essential purchases.

Almost 50 per cent of migrants lived in separate houses and a further 13 per cent lived in semi-detached dwellings. One-third lived in a flat. A small minority of migrants own their own houses (six months after arrival in Australia): over half rent privately and one-fifth live rent free with family or friends. This pattern of housing is the same for the two cohorts. This is true even when we disaggregate by visa category. We know that migrants in Cohort 2 (compared with Cohort 1) had on average better English skills, more education, considerably more employment and less unemployment and higher incomes. Fewer were Humanitarian migrants and more were Independent migrants. Despite these differences, the types of housing that they lived in were indistinguishable.

Table 7.1 shows the migrants' own estimation of the quality of the housing they occupy. The Humanitarian migrants were the ones who were least happy with the quality of their accommodation, only half describing it as good and 12 per cent saying it was poor. The other less-than-content group was, surprisingly, the Independent migrants. Over one-third of this group thought that the standard of their housing was at best 'moderate' and another six per cent thought it was poor. Of course, judgements about the quality of housing are subjective, and it may be that Independent migrants have higher expectations than some other groups. But we note that more than any other group, Independent migrants in Cohort 2 reported difficulty in finding a place to rent.

### 7.2 Housing and Income

Are migrants forced to spend a large part of their income in order to acquire this generally good level of housing? In order to understand the capacity of migrants to afford housing, it is necessary to know the extent to which they share their living arrangements with others. Housing is a collective resource. In Table 7.2 below, we show with whom primary applicants were living at the time of interview. Note that more were living with a spouse who was resident in Australia before their arrival than were living with a spouse who migrated with them. The former group would move straight into established housing.

We would expect there to be a strong correlation between income and housing status, and income and value of dwelling or level of weekly housing payment. The income that is relevant to the capacity to pay for housing is that of the family or the household, not just that of the Primary Applicant (many of whom had a spouse, some already resident in Australia). For the purpose of calculating income, the family is defined to comprise the Primary Applicant plus the migrating unit spouse or a spouse already resident in Australia, if any. Only a small number of migrating children had independent incomes and these have been excluded. The household is defined to comprise the family plus any other person aged over 14 who resides in the same house. It includes parents of the migrant, children over the age of 14, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces and people who have no family relationship.

There is, of course, a difference between the Primary Applicant, the migrating unit, the family and the household. It is the last of these that is most relevant to understanding the nature and quality of housing. The migrating unit will differ from the family in the case where the Primary Applicant is joining a spouse who already lives in Australia. The migrating unit will differ from the household in the many cases in which new migrants live with family who were already in Australia (or, less likely, with friends) soon after arrival. (Only 2% of recent migrants lived on their own.) We can construct good measures of income for the Primary Applicant, adequate measures for the family, and useable but not exact measures for the household.

In Table 7.3 we compare (for Cohort 2) the level of family income with the type of housing tenure that they have. We find that the general pattern is as one would expect, with substantial differences in housing status that are associated with differences in income.



The highest income families are more likely to own their own house outright or be buying (as a quarter of families with incomes of over \$961 per week are). Most of the high-income families who are not buying are renting privately. The low-income families are more likely to be living rent-free with family or friends or renting privately. The acceptance of rent-free accommodation is strongly linked to family income: the higher the income, the less the propensity to live rent-free. Those who rent from the government are almost entirely low (but not zero) income families. Despite the expected overall pattern, the correlation between family income and housing status is not a tight one.

Fourteen per cent of migrating units who report a family income of zero or less than \$309 per week say they have bought or are buying their own home. Indeed, the proportion that is buying shows no systematic relation with income until the highest income bracket is reached. Conversely, the proportion that live rent-free with family falls systematically with income, but still 10 per cent of families with incomes over \$961 per week are in this situation.

Table 7.4 gives an interesting perspective on the quality of housing of migrating unit families. It compares the weekly rent paid by the migrating unit with the weekly income of the household

**Table 7.1: Standard of Current Housing by Visa Category, Cohort 2 (%)**

Standard of Current Housing	Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked	Independent	Preferential Family/Family Stream	Business Skills/Employer Nomination Scheme	Humanitarian	Total
Good	73	58	65	71	53	64
Moderate	25	36	29	26	35	30
Poor	3	7	6	3	12	6

**Table 7.2: Composition of Households of Primary Applicants, Cohort 2**

Relation to Primary Applicant	Number	Per cent
Spouse (migrating)	974	17
Spouse (already resident)	1144	20
Son/daughter (own or in-law)	1090	19
Parent (own or in-law)	757	13
Sibling (own or in-law)	833	15
Aunt/Uncle/Nephew/Niece	225	4
Grandparent/child plus other relative	251	4
Not Related	469	8
Total	5743	100

**Table 7.3: Housing Status by Family Income, Cohort 2 (%)**

Housing Status	Estimated Gross Weekly Family Income				
	Zero	< \$309	\$309-\$577	\$578-\$961	> \$961
Own or paying off	4	10	14	13	26
Renting privately	28	41	57	61	59
Rent from government	-	8	3	1	+
Rent free family/other	59	26	16	16	10
Other	9	15	9	9	5
(number)	(212)	(560)	(653)	(791)	(908)

in which they reside. In some cases the migrating unit and the household are the same. But in many cases recent migrants live with others who were already in Australia: recall that only two per cent of recent migrants live alone. About half of the households in which recent migrants lived had weekly incomes in excess of \$961. It is in these households that two-thirds (65%) of those new migrants who pay no rent are to be found. Only 20 per cent of the migrant families who paid no rent or mortgage themselves had incomes in excess of \$961 per week. Thus two-thirds of the new migrants who paid no rent or mortgage had much better housing than they could have afforded themselves, because they lived with family or friends who had quite high incomes.

Migrants with higher incomes are more likely to be able to live independently, either renting or buying their own home, and they have better housing. There are no surprises here. Indeed the relationship between income and cost of housing is quite robust. Low-income families live rent-free or in low rent accommodation. As income rises, the proportion that lives rent-free falls and the propensity to pay higher rent/mortgage rises. The relationships are not exact, however—for example 18 per cent of families with incomes in excess of \$961 per week live rent-free and 10 per cent of families with income of less than \$309 per week were paying \$200-300 per week in rent/mortgage. The modal (most frequently occurring) housing cost for new migrant families in 2000 was zero (rent or mortgage). One-quarter of families paid no rent/mortgage. The next most frequent category, covering one-fifth of families, was a payment of \$150-\$200 per week. The families that benefited from the provision of low or no cost

housing by relatives and friends were predominantly those who had both low family incomes and family/friends already resident in Australia who had comfortable incomes.

### 7.3 Overall Findings

Overall, the quality of housing that recent migrants are able to find is reassuringly high. The migrants themselves say this, and evidence on crowding and value of residence supports their judgement. An important reason for this is the crucial role played by family and friends who are already resident in Australia. They clearly provide an initial secure base for many new migrants. Those who are close family members, such as spouses and parents, are likely to continue to share in the housing of their resident family members. Others will have an opportunity to establish themselves in independent accommodation as they are able to earn an adequate income.

Despite this optimistic overall conclusion, some migrants do struggle to find adequate and affordable housing. This is most clear for Humanitarian migrants. They are less able than many 'family' migrants to draw on the support of family who are already here. This is manifest in the relatively small proportion who are able to live rent-free. Instead they rely heavily on the private rental market and to a lesser extent on renting of public housing. Many have significant levels of financial stress, as indicated by having to pay a high proportion of their income in rent. They also have the highest level of dissatisfaction with their housing.

**Table 7.4: Migrating Unit Rent or Mortgage Payment by Household Income, Cohort 2 (%)**

Weekly Rent or Mortgage Payment	Estimated Gross Weekly Family Income					
	Zero	< \$309	\$309-\$577	\$578-\$961	> \$961	>17.30
Zero	20	21	17	17	32	40
< \$100	17	23	10	7	8	6
\$100 to \$149	13	15	24	27	11	8
\$150 to \$199	15	24	35	27	19	8
\$200 to \$299	30	16	13	11	19	16
\$300 or more	5	2	2	6	10	22
(number)	(55)	(2,38)	(517)	(616)	(706)	(617)

Note: (1) (1) = number of observations very small (n=5).

Perhaps surprisingly, the other group to show some signs of difficulty with housing is the Independent migrants. They have a relatively high level of unhappiness with the quality of their housing, and reported increasing difficulty in finding satisfactory

rental accommodation, on which they rely very heavily. They are the least likely of any of the visa categories to be in rent-free accommodation, and thus must fend for themselves. They have virtually no access to public housing.

## 8. Material Standard of Living

### 8.1 Income

A major indicator of successful settlement in Australia is the extent to which recent migrants are able to earn an income sufficient to support themselves and their families. We show in Table 8.1 the median income received by people in each visa group and compare this across the cohorts. The higher incomes of Cohort 2 are clearly apparent. So too are the higher incomes of migrants who came under the two more economic visas—Independent and Business Skills/ENS.

Table 8.2 shows where the income came from. The switch from government payments to earned income is clearly seen in this table.

When we look at the distribution of income to see why median income has risen, we find that the proportion of people in Cohort 2 who had zero income is the same as that in Cohort 1. The big change between the cohorts is the growth in people who received incomes in the top bracket of \$674 per week or more (and in the second top bracket). This fraction grew from nine (eight in the second top bracket) per cent for Cohort 1 to 22 (14) per cent for Cohort 2.

These figures do not allow for the impact of inflation (of 15 per cent over the interval between the two cohorts). If the distribution of income within the income band of \$482-673 is uniform, then inflation would not account for more than two to three percentage points in the shift from the lower income interval to the highest one.

We conclude that Cohort 2 migrants have substantially higher incomes, in most of the visa groups, than do Cohort 1 migrants. The exceptions are the Humanitarian and Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants. One reason for the higher incomes is undoubtedly because a much higher proportion of the second cohort was employed, including in jobs that generated a substantial weekly income. One-third of Primary Applicants were earning \$482 per week or more within six months of arrival in Australia. Many others were living in families where others were the prime income earner. By Cohort 2, very few migrants were relying on Government payments as their principal source of income (Humanitarian migrants excepted). The Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked and Independent migrants have seen a large rise in their typical income—indeed almost a doubling. Much of this is attributable to their relative success in

**Table 8.1: Median Personal Weekly Income of Primary Applicants and Spouses by Visa Category and Cohort (Year 2000 dollars)**

Visa Category	Cohort 1, 2000 prices (1)	Cohort 2
Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked	193	383
Independent	309	544
Preferential Family/Family Stream	79	51
Business Skills/ENS	375	483
Humanitarian	166	177
Total	154	211

Note: (1) 1994 values updated to 2000 values, using change in CPI, weighted average 8 capital cities, March 2000.

**Table 8.2: Sources of Income, Primary Applicants and Spouses, Cohorts 1 and 2 (%)**

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Govt. Unemployment Benefit	25	5
Govt. Family Payment	15	6
Other	11	5
Earned income	33	51
Investment income	20	22

finding adequate employment. The big change in the distribution of income between the cohorts is the fall in the proportion of Primary Applicants and spouses who received small amounts of income and a rise in the proportion that received over \$672 per week.

## 8.2 Adequacy of Income

Primary Applicants were asked, "Thinking about your household income and expenses, how would you describe the amount of money you (and your spouse/partner/family who migrated with you) have available each week?" (This question was only asked of Cohort 2) The options given were:

- (1) More than enough to meet all basic needs
- (2) Enough to meet all basic needs
- (3) Not enough to meet all basic needs.

As shown previously in Table 4.1, eighteen per cent of recent migrants in Cohort 2 felt that they did not have sufficient weekly income to meet the basic needs of their family. Almost twice as many felt that they had more than enough money to meet their basic needs. The majority felt they had just enough. The 'economic' migrants (Independent and Business Skills/ENS) were the most financially comfortable: Humanitarian migrants the least. None of this surprises. Overall, 82 per cent of recent migrants in Cohort 2 felt that they had sufficient income to meet their basic needs. The group having the biggest struggle was the Humanitarian migrants. Most had social welfare payments as their principle source of income, and had to rent houses on the private market. It is therefore not surprising that they felt financially squeezed.

There are large differences in degrees of financial comfort depending on where people have migrated from. Specifically, people from the high income English speaking countries overwhelmingly feel their incomes are adequate to meet their basic needs: only four per cent do not, and 60 per cent feel that they have more than enough income to meet basic requirements. In contrast, people from 'other' regions, some of whom will be Humanitarian migrants, are having quite a struggle. Thirty-one per cent say they do not have enough income to meet their basic needs, and only 20 per cent feel that they have more than enough. These people come from Oceania, the Middle East, Africa and Central and South America. People from Asia and Continental Europe look very similar to each other on this variable, with over 80 per cent saying they had sufficient income and a quarter saying they had more than enough.

## 8.3 Expenditure

In principle, information on expenditure gives a preferred measure of material standard of living. Perhaps with this in mind, the LSIA includes a number of questions on levels of expenditure. For two reasons, these questions do not enable robust estimates of relative living standards to be derived. The first reason is that the expenditure information is only partial. The second reason is that Primary Applicants were asked to answer the question with respect to expenditure by the migrating unit. In many cases the migrating unit is living with family who were already resident in Australia, and it is hard to know how the respondent took account of any expenditure by this family from which the migrating unit benefited. It is important, therefore, to be cautious in the conclusions that we draw from the expenditure data.

We restrict much of the analysis to those migrants who were not living with other family or friends, in order to make valid comparisons across the cohorts. There are two main conclusions. The first is that average expenditure (in Year 2000 dollars) of Cohort 2 migrants on food is less than that of Cohort 1 migrants and their expenditure on clothes is virtually the same. Recall that Cohort 2 has substantially higher incomes on average than does Cohort 1. This higher income does seem to result in higher expenditure on medical care and on transport. Expenditure on the four items combined is 5 per cent higher for Cohort 2 than for Cohort 1, whereas the median income of Primary Applicants and migrating unit spouses was 37 per cent higher. It is beyond the scope of this report to tease out why the pattern of spending for Cohort 2 differs from Cohort 1 and includes a fall in spending on food, but such an enquiry would clearly be of interest. The expenditure comparison suggests that Cohort 2 are not obviously better off than Cohort 1, whereas a comparison based on income concludes that they clearly are. It is possible that we are here just seeing the results of the limitations of the data.

The second finding is that for both cohorts, spending on the selected items is less than the expenditure of low income Australian families, and much less than the Australian average. Cohort 2 spends only 90 per cent of the amount spent by the bottom quintile of Australian families on the four items, and 57 per cent of the amount spent by the average Australian family.

As expected, there is a distinct pattern of difference in expenditure by age and by region of birth. The prime age respondents report higher expenditure levels than the rest, even when they say they do not have enough to meet basic needs. However, people do not differ systematically by age in terms of their ability to meet their

basic needs. This clearly suggests that the lower spending by younger and older Primary Applicants reflects the smaller number of people who are dependent on them. People from the main English speaking countries spend substantially more on average than do migrants from other regions. People who do not speak English well, and Humanitarian migrants, report quite high levels of inability to meet all their basic needs.

#### 8.4 Remittances

Migrants leave behind family in their home country. It can be expected that at least some migrants will want to send income back to their families to support their family of origin. Any income sent overseas in this way will not be available to support the standard of living of the migrant in Australia.

Remittances are defined for our purposes as the transfer of any asset by an immigrant, from Australia to their country of origin.

The remittance ratio is the percentage of migrants from the sample who had made remittances any time since their arrival up until the time of their interview – approximately six months.

The big story on remittances is that they are sent by only a very small proportion of migrants, at least early on in their life in Australia. In total, a mere three per cent of respondents in each cohort said that they had sent anything back to their countries of origin since arriving in Australia. The spread of remittance ratios over the visa groups for Cohort 1 was between 2 per cent (Preferential Family/Family Stream) and five per cent (Independent). For Cohort 2 the spread was from two per cent (Humanitarian) to three per cent (Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked). There was no significant difference between the remittance ratios over the two cohorts when controlling for visa groups. Such remittances as there were, were almost entirely sent as cash.

## 9. Use of Support Services

### 9.1 Sponsors

With Australian immigration policy clearly shifting towards taking larger proportions of skilled migrants, sponsorship has become even more important to those less skilled migrants wishing to settle in Australia. Settling in a foreign country is not easy. The main avenue through which new migrants find the necessary assistance to help ease the burden of moving to a new country is from their sponsor - in most cases, members of their family who are already resident in Australia. We here explore the role of sponsors, and of other support services.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) describes the role of a sponsor as providing support for the person being sponsored in their first two years in Australia. This assistance is to make the settlement process an easier one. DIMIA defines support as providing accommodation, financial assistance, and information and advice - including employment information.

Fifty-eight per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2 were sponsored, 45 per cent of males and 73 per cent of females. If we look at the visa categories individually it is not surprising to find that no migrants in the Business Skills/ENS visa group and less than one per cent of the migrants making up the Independent visa class were sponsored. As for the remaining visa categories, 57 per cent of Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked migrants, 97 per cent of Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants, and 20 per cent of Humanitarian migrants said they were sponsored. (The migration rules require that all Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants are sponsored).

Table 9.1, shows that as a cohort in total and on average, 92 per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2 had at least one sibling living overseas. The percentage of migrants who had any parents overseas was also high - 87 per cent of respondents said that they had at least one parent outside of Australia. The percentage

of migrants who had children or a spouse overseas was a lot lower. Only two per cent of migrants reported having a spouse living overseas while the figure for children was slightly higher at nine per cent. These relationships give an indication of the potential of new migrants to sponsor family in the future.

Overall, husband or wife was by far the most common relationship between the migrant and their sponsor. Fifty-five per cent of respondents said that their relationship with their sponsor was either husband or wife. The next most common relationship was fiancé, with 15 per cent of the migrants choosing this option. This pattern is common to both men and women Primary Applicants.

There is a difference in the pattern of family relationships, however, for the different (relevant) visa groups. Table 9.2 shows that the Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked group had their 'relationship with sponsor' figures spread quite evenly across the brother (38%), sister (30%), and uncle/aunt (26%) options, with the other figures being too small to report. The Humanitarian migrants had as sponsors mainly husband/wife (14%), brother (23%), sister (16%), and uncle/aunt (14%) options. The Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants were mainly sponsored by husband/wife (63%) and fiancé (17%). Because the majority of sponsored migrants have come from the Preferential Family/Family Stream, the pattern we see in this visa category dictates the pattern we see in the overall results obtained for the entire cohort.

As noted above, sponsors are obliged to assist those they sponsor for the first two years of their settlement. When asked, sponsored migrants reported that 96 per cent of them received help from their sponsor. Eighty-three per cent of sponsored migrants received assistance with general information and advice and help using services, 70 per cent received help with food, clothing or household goods, 75 per cent received help concerning

**Table 9.1: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 with Relatives Overseas, by Sex of Primary Applicant**

Type of Relative	Male	Female	Total
Spouse(s)	2	2	2
Child/Children	9	9	9
Brothers/Sisters	92	91	92
Parents	87	87	87

Note: 11 This was a multiple response question, if the respondent could have answered 'yes' to all types of relative

**Table 9.2: Primary Applicants' Relationship with their Sponsor, by Visa Category (%)**

Relationship	Concessional Family/Skilled Australian-linked	Preferential Family/Family stream	Humanitarian	Total
Husband/Wife	+	63	14	55
De facto Partner	+	6	+	5
Fiancé	+	17	+	15
Son/Daughter	+	5	+	4
Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law	+	1	+	1
Mother	+	1	+	1
Father	+	2	+	2
Brother	38	1	23	6
Brother-in-law	+	1	+	1
Sister	30	1	16	4
Your Uncle/Aunt	26	+	14	3
Other relative	+	2	+	2

Note: (+) = number of observations very small (n<5)

accommodation, 56 per cent received financial assistance, and 30 per cent received help with employment matters.

Women were more likely to receive help than were men. The largest difference between the sexes concerned financial assistance, 35 per cent of males received financial assistance from their sponsor while the figure for females was more than double with 71 per cent receiving financial assistance. Men, however, were more likely to be given help to find a job.

## 9.2 Other Sources of Support

There are a number of government and non-government organisations that offer support for new migrants to help ease the difficulties associated with settling in an unfamiliar country. These support services have the potential to play an important role in the successful integration of new migrants into the Australian community. We provide some insight into whether or not they in fact do so.

The most important services to migrants across both cohorts were help looking for work, help with financial matters, help learning English, help finding housing and accommodation, and help concerning health services and health insurance. With the exception of health services, Cohort 2 made much less use of the main services (finding work, financial matters, finding

accommodation, social welfare) than did Cohort 1. Indeed, aside from the increase between cohorts in help received with health services and health insurance, there was a decline in the proportion of migrants who received assistance in all other forms of support listed. This was true across all visa categories and both sexes. The difference between the cohorts was in many cases large, and was statistically significant over the visa categories, gender and in total.

The results reported above are for those respondents who actually received help. There remains a proportion of the migrating population who may have sought help and not received it or may have needed help but did not know where to find it. We are unable to establish a figure for this sub-group for Cohort 1 since they were simply asked if they had received support or not. In Cohort 2 the percentage of migrants who required assistance yet did not receive it, for whatever reason, ranged from 11 per cent for help looking for work to less than one per cent for torture and trauma counselling.

The most widely used services are those provided by the core Commonwealth Government agencies—Medicare, employment services, Centrelink, the Australian Tax Office and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. While they may be of great value to individual migrants, community services such as religious and ethnic groups, and the embassies



of the former countries of residence, were used by small numbers of people. Welfare, employment and training related organisations like Centrelink and DEST/CES were more likely to be used by people who migrated under less economic visa categories, while those who migrated under more economic visa groups were more likely to use income related organisations like the ATO.

Most migrants were satisfied with the assistance they received from the different organisations listed in the questionnaire. As shown in Table 9.3, the fraction of satisfied respondents ranged from just over three-quarters for the employment agencies to 100 per cent for the torture/trauma counsel services. For the majority of other organisations, the percentage satisfied was in the high eighties to low nineties.

**Table 9.3: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 Satisfied with Help Received from Support Services Used, by Sex**

<b>Satisfied with Services Provided by</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Ethnic Club	87	100	91
Ethnic Welfare Agency	100	83	93
Voluntary Welfare Agency	89	100	92
Migrant Resource Centre	89	92	90
DVMA	91	82	87
Centrelink	88	81	86
Employment Agency	77	75	76
Medicare	97	94	96
Embassy of Former Country of Residence	98	92	96
Torture/Trauma Counsel Services	100	100	100
Australian Tax Office	98	99	99
Other Government Agency	90	83	87

## 10. Conclusion

This overview of many aspects of the migration experience provides a generally optimistic and positive view of the outcomes of Australia's contemporary migration program. In reflecting on the findings, we need to be cognizant of the fact that we are here looking at migrants who have been in Australia for only about six months. On almost all measures, outcomes can be expected to improve as the period of settlement extends. We know from earlier work that this is especially true for Humanitarian migrants.

Migrants come to Australia for positive reasons that are related mainly to the desire to join family already here, or to enjoy the greater opportunities, the uncrowded, unpolluted, attractive environment and the delightful climate. They appreciated also the peaceful, friendly and democratic civil life. Overwhelmingly, they were happy with their decision to migrate and would encourage others to do so.

Recent migrants have done extremely well in obtaining jobs and earning an adequate income. This is reflected in the generally satisfactory standards of living that they report. They are generally well housed, helped in this by the ability to stay with family who were already here. This happy story does not apply to Humanitarian migrants, who in many respects have a different experience than other migrants.

Humanitarian migrants clearly come with many disadvantages. They have relatively low levels of education and English language proficiency and quite high levels of psychological distress. They find it hard to obtain employment and as a result have low levels of income and relatively poor housing. They rely, initially, mainly

on government social welfare benefits. Despite these outward signs of hardship, they are overwhelmingly happy to be in Australia, and are the most likely to say that they intend to take out Australian citizenship.

What has Australia gained from its recent migrants? Here we do not canvass the many non-economic benefits that migrants may bring.

Australia, and the migrants themselves, are better off in two ways in terms of the human capital that has been acquired with the migrants of Cohort 2. The first is that the total level of human capital is very high. The second is that substantial use is being made of that human capital in the workplace. In addition, recent migrants were physically very healthy, if suffering quite high levels of stress from the experience of migration. Many migrants with lower levels of economic independence were supported after arrival by family and friends already here. This support unquestionably helps their adjustment to their new country, and reduces the need for support from government or not-for-profit organizations.

Finally, migrants do not tend to go to parts of Australia that already have fast-growing populations. Their settlement patterns to some extent counter, rather than aggravate, internal population flows.

Australia has carefully tailored its migration program to meet the twin goals of providing economic benefit and assisting family re-union. From the evidence of this paper, it has been very successful.