

- <sup>2</sup> J. Jupp, A. McRobbie and B. York, *Metropolitan Ghettos and Ethnic Concentrations*, The Office of Multicultural Affairs, Canberra, 1990, 2 vols.
- <sup>3</sup> G. Blainey, 'A critique of Indochinese in Australia: the issues of unemployment and residential concentration', *BIPR Bulletin*, No. 9, July 1993.
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 130.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid*, vol. 2, p. 47.
- <sup>6</sup> Viviani, *op cit*, p. 26.
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid*, pp. 27-28.
- <sup>8</sup> Blainey, *op cit*, pp. 43-44.
- <sup>9</sup> I. Burnley, 'Settlement dimensions of the Vietnam born population in metropolitan Sydney', *Australian Geographical Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1989.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 148.
- <sup>11</sup> Jupp, *op cit*, pp. 56-57.
- <sup>12</sup> Viviani, *op cit*, p. 35.
- <sup>13</sup> J. Collie, 'The young and the voiceless: youth in Cabramatta,' *Migration Action*, July 1993, p. 22.

## NET IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION GROWTH

### ■ Charles A. Price

This article discusses the strange phenomenon whereby the simplest and most reliable measure of net immigration is rarely used. Some persons are less interested in net immigration, and its impact on total population, than in government policy and its effects; they concentrate on totals of Settler Arrivals, that is, the number of foreign-born persons who enter Australia intending to settle permanently, either because they have received visas granting them permanent residence or else because they are New Zealanders, Cocos Islanders, Norfolk Islanders, overseas-born children of Australian citizens, or others able to enter Australia without visas. Statistics of Settlers Arrivals are useful for assessing the effects of government policy on permanent residence and the birthplace, age, occupation and other characteristics of the new settlers.

But this measure says nothing about foreign-born persons who arrive temporarily — for either long-term visits of a year or more or short-term

visits of less than a year — many of whom in fact stay permanently either with or without official permission. In the ten years mid 1981 to mid 1991, for instance, with foreign-born visitors, arrivals exceeded departures by 109,300 in the long-term movement and 368,300 in the short-term; 477,600 in all, equivalent to 40 per cent of the Settler Arrival total.

Nor does the Settler Arrival total say anything about net settler gain; that is, those remaining after some former settlers have changed their minds and left Australia permanently. Some information exists about those who state they are leaving permanently [the Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR) has done good work here, see *Immigration 1991-92*, BIR Statistical Report No 7, Feb 1993]. Almost nothing, however, exists about the number and characteristics of foreign-born residents who say they are leaving Australia for only a temporary visit abroad but who in fact do not return. In the decade 1981 to 1991, foreign-born residents leaving temporarily exceeded those returning by some 318,000, far more than the

the 67,200 who said they were leaving permanently.

In earlier years the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Department of Immigration (DIEA) estimated net immigration from the Net Permanent and Long-Term total; that is, the excess of permanent (Settler) and long-term arrivals over permanent and long-term departures. In the early 1980s, however, ABS realised that a great deal of anomaly arose from the short-term movement; accordingly it started to estimate the number of Australian residents overseas for short periods, of visitors in Australia for short periods and of those 'category jumping' between short, long-term and permanent categories. The result was an estimate of the population usually resident in Australia — residence defined as a year or more — and basically involved modifying the Net Permanent and Long Term total by an estimate of category jumpers. (See ABS Technical Paper No 3104.0 of February 1983 and Explanatory Notes to No 3101.0 of December quarter 1992).

These 'Net Overseas Migration' totals, worked back to 1976, are published in the quarterly ABS Series *Australian Demographic Statistics*, 3101.0, and also in the BIR series *Australian Immigration: Consolidated Statistics*, under the heading 'Net recorded overseas migration gain', see Table 1.3 in issue No. 17). They are supplied to official bodies examining immigration policy, eg. the Stephen Fitzgerald (CAAIP) committee to advise on immigration policies (1987-88) and the National Population Council. They are also used, with statistics of births and deaths, to calculate the intercensal resident population by birthplace, age and sex (see ABS Series 3221.0) and, with estimates of interstate migration, the intercensal

resident population of each state and territory; these are used by such bodies as the Grants Commission when recommending the distribution of Commonwealth monies between the states and territories.

These statistics of 'Net Overseas Migration', though at times very useful, have two major drawbacks. First, they are only estimates and are changed every five years when a new census gives ABS a chance to check its intercensal calculations. So, for the financial years 1987 to 1992 there are differing totals of 'Net Overseas Migration' in the 1992 September and December issues of *Australian Demographic Statistics*, the final census adjustments having been completed between the two issues (see Table 1). Though the changes are not huge — averaging 14,400 a year — they are disconcerting for business firms using such statistics to estimate housing, retail and other needs; (one such firm contacted me recently on this). They are also disconcerting for scholars who have published articles using a set of official statistics which they later find to be no longer official.

Second, though headed 'Net Overseas Migration', or 'Net Recorded Overseas Migration' (BIR), they are, strictly speaking, not statistics of net overseas migration but estimates of the extent to which overseas migration is affecting the resident population. True net migration is the difference between total arrivals and total departure; hence its common name of 'Net Total Migration'. When added to the existing population its records how many are present at any one time — residents or visitors — making demands on Australia's accommodation, transport, media and entertainment services, consuming food, using power, requiring banking facilities, and so on. That

is, it indicates the impact of overseas migration on the Australian economy — a most important topic. It also has the great advantage of being based, not on estimates, but on records of arrivals and departures, does not have to be changed after each census, and automatically takes care of category jumping. Moreover, though seldom in a prominent position, it is readily available in *ABS Australian Demographic Statistics* (Part C, third table) and in earlier BIR publications. With sensible handling of the sampling involved in the short-term movement, it can be analysed in terms of sex, age, marital status and birthplace, so giving a clear picture of the demographic impact of overseas migration on the total Australian population.

Admittedly Net Total Migration is more influenced than is the ABS 'Net Overseas Migration' by short-term changes — new travel concessions, Bicentennial celebrations, etc. — but the effects of these soon cancel out; over the longer term — five or ten years or more — Net Total Migration gives a very clear picture of migration trends. It certainly matches census results, after allowing for census undercount, far more closely than other net measures; the only discrepancy arises from illegal entries — stowaways, canoeists from PNG, and so on — who are not recorded on arrival, and these seem few in number. Over the long run, too, it is a good measure of the way migration affects the resident population, because over time the true circular movement cancels out while short-term migrants who in fact stay long-term, or permanently, are at once taken into account. In this sense Net Total Migration has much less trouble than does 'Net Overseas Migration' with over stayers applying for refugee status, with Tiananmen

Square Chinese, with Tamils, Lebanese and Bosnians receiving repeated extensions of stay, and other short-term visitors who may well stay indefinitely; also with the many resident who depart for short visits abroad but who in fact do not come back.

Table 1 sets out the principal measures discussed above. It shows how much, by all measures, immigration was cut back by the Whitlam government from the high coalition intakes of earlier years. In the Fraser years, 1976 to 1981, target usually exceeded outcome while Net Total Migration was a little above settler intake and well above the 'Net Overseas Migration' total; the latter was misleadingly low because it took too little account of foreign-born visitors overstaying for long periods. In the 1981 to 1986 period, mainly the early Hawke years, things were the other way around, with Net Total Migration well below Target, Settler Arrivals and 'Net Overseas Migration'. In the second Hawke period, 1986 to 1991, Net Total was again below other measures (except the old Net Permanent and Long-Term measure) largely because Australian-born and former settler loss was increasing — especially through the short-term movement — more rapidly than was the number of short-term visitor arrivals staying on. Over the whole 15 year period, 1976 to 1991, Net Total Migration totalled 1,422,000, 'Net Overseas Migration' 1,455,500, and 'Net Overseas Migration Revised' 1,439,000 (here using the original figures for 1976 to 1981). In other words, Net Total Migration was the lowest of these three measures, mainly because over the long-term it was more faithfully allowing for long-term loss in the temporary resident movement.

Altogether, Net Total Migration gives a very satisfactory picture of Australia's long-term migration trends. It is simple to obtain, does not have to be changed after each census, and throws valuable light on long-term population increase and economic activity. I have used it regularly, with much profit, for more than forty years and strongly advocate its wider use.

**Statistical Note:** I have not discussed 'statistical lag', caused by long-term trends of increase or decrease in the various migration categories. It is a complex matter and affects all measures of net migration, though much less so in the long period.

**Table 1: Australian overseas migration (000s)**

Year	Target	Settler Arrivals	Net Perm.& Long-Term	'Net Overseas Migration'	Post-census revision	Net Total Migration	Australian-born Net	Foreign-born Net
1969-70	175.0	185.1	136.7			112.6	-26.1	138.7
1970-71	170.0	170.0	119.1			101.4	-17.3	118.7
1971-72	140.0	132.7	75.7			41.7	-22.0	63.7
1972-73	110.0	107.4	56.6			28.0	-22.1	50.1
1973-74	110.0	112.7	82.9			73.2	-12.1	85.3
1974-75	80.0	89.1	44.7			38.7	-12.5	51.2
1975-76	50.0	52.7	21.2			20.3	-17.1	37.4
Average	119.3	121.4	76.7			59.4	-18.5	78.9
1976-77	70.0	70.9	43.1	57.9		56.3	-8.6	64.9
1977-78	90.0	73.2	56.1	62.7		56.9	-7.7	64.6
1978-79	90.0	67.2	58.3	55.1		60.6	-6.3	66.9
1979-80	90.0	80.8	76.9	75.9		97.5	13.4	84.1
1980-81	120.0	110.7	118.7	119.2		147.5	-17.3	164.8
Average	92.0	80.6	70.6	74.2		83.8	-5.3	89.1
1981-82	100.0	118.0	123.9	129.1	128.1	107.7	-8.1	115.8
1982-83	95.0	93.0	75.5	71.2	73.3	80.1	4.4	75.7
1983-84	74.0	68.8	46.5	47.5	49.1	22.5	-18.5	41.0
1984-85	84.0	77.5	68.0	74.8	73.7	61.0	-8.1	69.1
1985-86	95.0	92.6	93.9	100.4	100.4	121.4	4.2	117.2
Average	89.6	90.0	81.6	84.6	84.9	78.6	-5.2	83.8
1986-87	120.0	113.5	103.7	118.3	125.7	129.3	-17.5	146.8
1987-88	140.0	143.5	143.2	149.1	149.3	191.2	-4.8	196.0
1988-89	140.0	145.3	137.2	163.6	157.4	126.1	-22.8	148.0
1989-90	126.0	121.2	103.9	119.8	124.6	96.7	-29.7	126.4
1990-91	111.0	121.7	94.8	109.2	86.4	67.2	-22.7	89.9
Average	127.4	129.0	116.6	132.0	128.7	122.1	-19.5	141.6
1991-92	80.0	107.4	89.9	102.0	63.8	34.9	-32.0	66.9

Notes: Target = official target for new settlers.  
The Australian-born and Foreign-born nets together make up Net Total Migration.