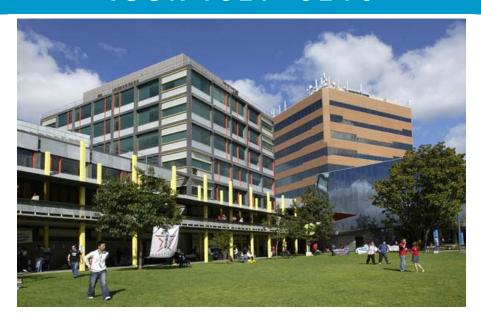MONASH University
Business and Economics

TALENT FLOW: WHY IS LIFE ELSEWHERE FOR SO MANY AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONALS?

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Abstract

This research investigates the factors that contribute to the decisions made by Australian professionals to live and work in other countries. We explore the factors that 'pull' professionals to work outside Australia and those that would 'push' them to return home. This research has implications for employers and government policy with regard to the management of global talent flows.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, as nations have integrated into the world economy, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of organisations that have internationalised their operations. The movement of labour occurring with such expansion of international business has meant that issues around the management of a global workforce have become more critical to the international and strategic planning and operations of firms.

The main aim of this research project is to investigate the factors that contribute to the 'brain drain' phenomenon, or the decision of talented people, in this case knowledge workers, who are educated and trained in one country, to choose to develop their career elsewhere (Australasian Research Management Society, 2004). Despite the apparent complexity and importance of the issue, scant Australian research has been conducted. Our research has significant implications for policy development in areas such as immigration, education and global human resource management.

Australia and the Global Knowledge Economy: Implications for Talent Flow

The saying 'knowledge is power' has never been more applicable to Australian managers and policy-makers. The global knowledge economy has emerged as a challenging competitive environment for business and management (Considine, Marginson, & Sheehan, 2001; Doz, Santos & Williamson, 2001). Since the 1970s, successive Australian governments have implemented various support schemes for Australian businesses to internationalise and to participate in the global knowledge economy to improve their international competitiveness (*The Australian Government's Innovation Report, 2003-04*; Vaile, 2000). These initiatives have been necessary because of Australia's small domestic base and a past focus on commodities-based international operations. While Australian managers have been slow to invest in knowledge development in their international operations and networks (Considine et al., 2001), these managers are increasingly realising that, to become or remain world class, they need to attract, motivate and retain knowledge workers (Council for Economic Development in Australia [CEDA], 2003).

A globally mobile workforce has long been associated with internationalisation, and participation in the global knowledge economy involves a talent flow of knowledge workers. The term 'talent flow' is a broader conceptualisation than brain drain or gain, as it transcends the "acquired connotations of scientific and technological brain power" (Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005: 388). Talent flow has been defined as "the migration of skilled people between countries. Talent flow is governed by human choice and is constituted from boundaryless global careers" (Carr et al., 2005: 387). This flow can benefit countries provided it is reciprocal and at least balanced in terms of brain gain and drain. That is, there is talent exchange or talent circulation (CEDA, 2003).

At the national level, the term 'diaspora' has been used to describe the "'scattering of a people' beyond their homeland" who continue to identify with and cultivate connections between themselves and that homeland (Fullilove & Flutter, 2004: 3). Fullilove and Flutter (2004) note that considering an Australian diaspora requires a shift in perspective because, unlike the home countries of other noted diasporas like the Chinese and the Irish, Australia is a developed economy that has not been characterised by conflict and or adverse economic or political conditions. Anecdotal evidence suggests the main reason for the Australian diaspora is the motivation of Australians to gain international experience. Not surprisingly, because the main impetus to leave has been a subtle one, Australia has been slow to recognise its diaspora (Fullilove & Flutter, 2004). Recently, concern for attracting and retaining skilled workers, including knowledge workers, has attracted the attention of the popular press (see for example, Beer, 2004 and Nancarrow, 2004). It

is also becoming the focus of research and discussion at the public policy development level (CEDA, 2003; Fullilove & Flutter, 2004:2).

The Lowy Institute for International Policy, an "independent international policy think tank" , recently researched and reported on the Australian diaspora, analysing it from demographics, economics and public opinion perspectives; and suggesting "ways in which public and private institutions in Australian can exploit [it] to further the national interest" (Fullilove & Flutter, 2004: 2). The Institute's scope spans the economic, political and strategic dimensions of international policy debate within Australia, and it has links to several Australian government departments.   In particular, its report focused on a sub-group of Australians residing overseas to provide an update on recent trends in emigration from Australia. This sub-group represents around 860 000 people, along with an additional 265 000 'visiting citizens' or those overseas for shorter terms. Its size and age, education, skill and income were main reasons cited by the report for the importance of "tapping into" the Australian diaspora. The other compelling reason is that Australia's residents and expatriates have the will to "turn the diaspora to positive national ends" (Fullilove & Flutter, 2004: 6), In particular, two categories of this sub-group are important in terms of their value to the national interest: those at the peak of their successful international careers and "gold collar workers", or highly skilled professionals.

In a separate report, CEDA noted that "[o]ver two-thirds of all Australian-born permanent departures and Australian resident long-term departures are managers, administrators, professionals and para-professionals" (2003: 11). There have been preliminary efforts in some Australian states and in New Zealand, with which Australia has close economic ties, to encourage highly skilled expatriates to return.

At the group and individual levels, as global mobility of human resources increases, concern about a net loss of talent has intensified with the on-going re- interpretation of the psychological contract between employers and employees. According to Rousseau, a psychological contract forms when "an individual perceives that contributions he or she makes obligate the organization to reciprocity (or vice versa)" (1989: 124). The contract deals with the pattern of unwritten and implied beliefs held by the employee and organization about what each should offer, and what each is obligated to provide.   A traditional view of the shared expectation includes a linear sequential, career progression within a single organization.   Such a career structure results in higher salary, increased status and greater responsibility (Sullivan, 1999). More contemporary interpretations of the psychological contract, however, include career structures that are anchored internally, within the individual, and assume that career advancement will occur as a result of self development rather than reliance on loyalty to a particular company (Parker & Inkson, 1999). The result of this shift in career structuring has been that employees are increasingly choosing to manage their own career by moving between organizations, acquiring a portfolio of skills from different employers to strengthen employability (Arthur & Rousseau 1996; Handy, 1995).

For organisations trying to sustain competitive advantage through the development of a global pool of human capital, this group of "internally" driven employees pose a significant challenge. The extent of this challenge is highlighted by Drucker (1999) who has proposed that, whereas the most valuable asset of a 20th century company was its production equipment, the most valuable asset of a 21st century institution is its knowledge workers. Knowledge workers are unlike previous generations of worker, not only because of their access to educational opportunities, but because in knowledge organisations they own the means of production, that is, their knowledge (Blackler, 1995; Drucker, 1993). As a consequence, productivity is now, more than ever, dependent on the contributions and retention of these specialist workers (Tovstiga, 1999).

Knowledge work involves the acquisition, creation, packaging or application of knowledge. It is characterised by variety and exception rather than routine, and it is performed by professional workers with a high level of expertise (Davenport, Jarvenpaa & Beers, 1996). Drucker (1999) explains that knowledge workers must be able to determine the focus of their task, and have autonomy and responsibility for their own productivity. Their tasks have to include a commitment

to continuing innovation, and provide for continuous learning. When these factors are not an integral part of the organisational context, the productivity of the knowledge worker is at risk. More importantly there is a strong possibility that they may leave the organisation.

Pittinsky and Shih (2004) have used the term 'knowledge nomads' to characterise the tendency of these workers to move on in a search of internal career enhancement. Knowledge nomads are defined as highly mobile workers who like nomadic people move frequently from place to place (2004: 793). Pittinsky and Shih (2004) stress that this pattern of movement does not mean that these workers are not motivated to work hard and commit themselves strongly to the organisation in which they sojourn. In line with Drucker's (1999) description of knowledge workers, however, once these workers have exhausted the potential for learning and innovation within a particular environment, there is strong possibility that they will move on.

In summary, an emerging source of sustainable competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy is embedded in information and knowledge creation and the resultant elevation of these intangible resources has led to a focus on the retention of key knowledge workers at the organisational level (Barney, 1991; Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001). For the purposes of this research, the impact and importance of these stores of accumulated knowledge is considered at the national level, as countries similarly strive to retain standards of global economic growth and productivity.

Global Career Management and Talent Flow

From an international business and international management perspective, international experience has been associated with the development of international management knowledge, skills and careers (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Vance, 2005). Inkson, Arthur, Pringle and Barry (1997) define and distinguish two types of international experience, 'expatriate' and 'overseas', in terms of their relative value in the way international experience is gained and used to develop career, organisational and national competencies both inside and outside the country in which the experience is gained. Expatriate experience is usually organisation-mediated and linked to an organisation-bound career, while overseas experience is usually characterised as an "individual odyssey", associated with a boundaryless career (Inkson et al., 1997: 352). Careers may be considered as "repositories of knowledge" (Bird, 1996, cited in Inkson et al., 1997: 353). These authors argue that overseas experience might be more important than expatriate experience as a means of acquiring knowledge, enriching individuals and national human resource management than expatriate experience because its strength is that it allows individuals to derive their own learning and knowledge from the experience.

Further, more recent research on New Zealand's talent flow by Inkson and colleagues (Inkson, Carr, Edwards, Hooks, Jackson, Thorn & Allfree, 2004), explored the motivations of highly qualified members of New Zealand professional associations who left New Zealand to live and work elsewhere. Included in this study were questions about reasons why some who left returned or intended to return and others did not. The study concluded that those who opted to stay away did so because of career development and advancement opportunities while those who returned or intended to return did so because of family and friendship networks back home.

While Australian research is scant on this issue, related research by Tharenou (2003) involved a longitudinal study of graduating business students. She sought to understand how receptivity to working outside Australia initially developed. Time 2 sample consisted of 6% expatriates and 58% of the sample worked in organizations where expatriation was possible and 48% considered they were likely to be offered expatriation. The study revealed that, two years from graduation, receptivity to international careers increased compared with when they were students for young males and females with high outcome expectancies, no partner and little family influence, and who were employed by organisations with career opportunities reflecting an international focus. She noted that outcome expectancies and organisational international focus were not so relevant for the older graduate employees. Further, receptivity to working outside Australia was developed

initially from "a combination of personal agency, home barriers, and work environment opportunities" (Tharenou, 2003: 509).

The major reasons for taking international assignments were to gain cross-cultural experiences; personal growth (including skill use and development); career prospects; excitement and meeting new and different people. The major reasons for refusing to live and work outside Australia were loss of significant social relationships; country danger and standards, cultural differences, uncertainty and fear; financial costs and losses; and career problems. In terms of likely preferred destinations, Tharenou concluded that employees who preferred 'easy' destinations, those that were safe, stable, economically well developed and not corrupt, and with low self-efficacy would be less receptive to working in developing compared with developed countries.

As the above research and Carr et al.'s (2005) recent case study of New Zealand illustrates, understanding talent flow is of major importance in international business and its management. At the very least this is because the staffing strategies of multinational enterprises usually involve a mix of locals, expatriates and or immigrants.

The preceding research has provided some insights at the global, national, organisational and individual levels, but still more questions remain about the flow of talented knowledge workers from Australia. Given the relatively recent acknowledgement at the public policy level, that the loss of highly skilled, gold collar Australian talent might be reason for concern (CEDA, 2003; Fullilove & Flutter, 2004), a more focussed study of this group is justified. Specifically, the present research focuses on Australian professional knowledge workers and addresses the following research questions:

1. What factors influence the decisions of Australian professionals to live and work overseas?
2. What factors and conditions influence the decisions of Australian professionals to repatriate?

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and procedure

The questionnaire was a replication and extension of the survey developed by Inkson et al (2004). Following consultation with the New Zealand researchers, minor amendments were required to suit the Australian context. The survey was divided into themes. The first section included items that reviewed the length of respondents' OE assignment, national identity and intention to return to Australia. The second set of items sought to identify the "push/pull" factors – the motivating influences which affected decisions regarding returning to Australia or staying overseas. The aim of the third section was to explore the nature of the people currently living and working abroad and the relative importance of different factors to them. In the final section respondents were asked to provide demographic data.

We approached 44 professional associations and asked them to promote our website survey to their members. Within this research knowledge workers were accessed via professional associations. The choice of these associations was made for several reasons. First, in view of the often mobile career path taken by knowledge workers, professional bodies provide important networking opportunities and become critical arenas through which individuals can connect and access recent technical information. Professional bodies also play an important role in providing legitimacy, identity and role definition (See Greenwood et al., 2002; Lounsbury, 2002). Second, for the purposes of this research, as these workers are likely to stay in touch with professional bodies for networking and information transfer reasons, this link provided effective access to a potentially wide group of respondents. However, as noted previously, it was not possible to determine the exact size of the target population.

As this was a web-based survey, respondents were assured anonymity and that their responses would be aggregated in data analysis and reporting. Although the response rate could not be determined, a total of 591 useable surveys were received, providing a statistically viable sample size.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample characteristics

The sample characteristics, shown in Table 1, indicate a reasonable spread across age with a slightly higher representation in the younger age category: 25% of respondents were in the 20-29 age group, 43% were in the 30-39 age group, 17% within the 40-49 age range, 10% in the 50-59 age group and 5% were over 60 years old. Consistent with the Lowy Report findings (Fullilove & Flutter, 2004), over half the respondents were in their prime working ages of 25-44 years. Thirty-six percent of respondents were female. The majority of the respondents had family responsibilities: 58% were married and 36% were overseas with dependants. Within the group of respondents who identified that they were travelling with dependents, 65% reported that they had 2 or more children. Consistent with the professional status of this group, the cohort was highly educated, with 50% reporting a bachelor's degree and 44% holding some form of post-graduate qualification. Fullilove and Flutter (2004) noted that the Australian diaspora is comprised of some of the most highly employable citizens. Moreover, Australian expatriates are highly valued participants in the international labour market; and this survey indicated that Australians may be well aware of their value internationally. One respondent noted that "I'm worth more than Australian companies can pay me". When asked to self rate the value of their qualifications, skills and experience, 92% rated themselves as valuable, with 68% rating themselves as highly or exceptionally valuable. Typical of this self-rating is the comment by one respondent elsewhere in the survey that "Australians work harder/longer hours".

Insert Table 1 about here

Many respondents were working in the capacity of accountants, auditors, corporate treasury and finance related (20.4%). This category was followed by miscellaneous business and information professionals (14.6%), which included project managers, human resource professionals, actuaries and business analysts. About fourteen percent of respondents were working as Managers, CEOs and Directors, followed closely by Building and Engineering professionals.

Collectively these features of the group indicate that the respondents are young, well qualified, highly-skilled and quite a number of them have family responsibilities. This profile may present potential work-life balance issues for these professionals whilst they are overseas as they manage early career stage development alongside young family responsibilities (Harris, 2005; Poelmans, 2005). This is an issue that will be developed later when considering 'push' and 'pull' factors with respect to their decision to return to Australia.

National identity and future intentions

As a preamble to the discussion about the factors that influence the decision of Australian professionals to live and work overseas, Table 2 provides data about the national identity of those within the sample, as well as reporting their intentions to stay overseas or return home to Australia. Forty per cent of respondents identified their national identity as Australian; another 49% described their national identity as partly Australian. However, 38% of respondents described themselves as "permanently settled overseas".

Table 2 also provides specific data about where the respondents are currently located and the characteristics of their overseas experience (OE). The most popular destinations for this group of Australians are the UK, USA and Asia. With respect to the length of the stay overseas and destinations chosen, 61% had been away for less than 5 years on the current assignment but for 31% this was a second or subsequent OE, whilst 38% considered themselves as "permanently settled overseas". Overall, these data indicate that the cohort has had quite a substantial amount of travel experience; this highlights the issue of how likely it is that the group will return to Australia. In response to a question related to their future plans, respondents indicated that, despite the aforementioned commitment to future overseas experiences, there seem to be quite a high likelihood that the group would return to Australia: 53% indicated that they would either be returning or be likely to be returning to Australia and another 28% were undecided.

Push to Australia or pull from Australia

In order to address the first and second research questions, participants were asked to respond to 26 items that may either 'pull' Australians to remain overseas or 'push' them to return to Australia, was derived from an analysis of the literature (Inkson et al, 2004). Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale, where +2 represents a strong attraction to Australia and -2 represents a strong attraction towards remaining overseas. The results enabled us to construct a Push/Pull score for each item, ranging from a possible +2 where everyone in the sample said the factor drew them strongly back to Australia, to -2 where everyone said the factor drew them strongly to remain overseas.

The findings, shown in Table 3, support common understandings of determinants relevant to talent flow (CEDA, 2003; Fullilove & Flutter, 2004; Inkson et al., 1997). Safety and security, bringing up children, parent/older relations and being close to relatives are items that push expatriates back to Australia. This may reflect the value placed on safety and security, particularly since the US September 11 2001, London and Bali bombings. Safety and security concerns are relevant to our respondents, given the majority of Australians living overseas are located in UK, USA and Asia. Career opportunities, salaries, challenge and the [Australian] tax system are items that tend to keep them overseas.

In order to establish more clearly the themes within the data, exploratory factor analysis was performed and results are reported in Table 4. Four main factors are identified. The first, labelled *cultural/personal experiences* comprised of exposure to cultural and cosmopolitan opportunities and personal growth. The second, *career/finances,* focuses on career and business opportunities and financial matters (salaries, tax system and cost of living). The third, *support network,* emphasises access to social relationships with family and friends. The fourth factor, *lifestyle*, includes raising children, sports and recreational opportunities, home ownership, safety and security and educational opportunities. The following items: partner, *tall poppy syndrome* and *paying off student loan* did not load significantly onto any of the factors. Overall, it appears that cultural and career factors pull respondents away from Australia. Network and lifestyle factors push them towards Australia. The internal consistency of the scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha, with reliability coefficients of 0.70 or higher considered to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). In the present study coefficients ranged from 0.57 to 0.78 (see Table 4).

As noted previously when commenting on the cohort's profile, this is a well qualified, valuable and highly skilled group of employees. From the literature, it would be expected that, as professionals and knowledge workers, these employees are likely to seek out employment opportunities that build on their employability and further their 'internally' structured careers (Arthur & Rousseau 1996; Parker & Inkson, 1999; Sullivan, 1999). Results shown in Tables 3 and 4 confirm Drucker's (1999) assertion that knowledge workers perform best and are most motivated when they are challenged by the task and they are exposed to opportunities for growth and learning. Aspects of the overseas experience that pull Australians overseas do indeed include some of these issues: career opportunities, challenge and learning for life are identified as key 'pull' factors. Drucker (1999) stresses that these workers also like to be both seen and treated as assets and this may be reflected in the 'pull' of the higher salaries offered overseas.

Having identified the career opportunities and the recognition that the OE offers this cohort, data presented in Table 2, however, indicated that a large section of respondents have plans to return to Australia: as mentioned previously 53% indicated that they would be returning and another 28% were still making the decision. Tables 3 and 4 indicate that the reasons for the decision to return home seem to be associated more with the need to be related to others, rather than achievement concerns. The 'push' home issues include a number of references to connections with family and friends. This is also quite consistent with the family profile of this group, with 58% married and 36% overseas with dependants.

Overall, the results of this study indicate some interesting work life balance issues for knowledge workers. It seems that, in line with this group's desire to fully realise their internal capital potential, they have made the decision to explore opportunities and experiences overseas. There are boundaries to this, however, for those who also seek to temper the need to achieve with the need to be related and affiliated with others. This tension between professional career progression and personal family lifestyle is an issue that has been dealt with in the work-family conflict literature. Our findings are consistent with Campbell Clark (2000) and Kasper, Meyer and Schmidt's (2005) arguments, for example, who review prototypes of managers and reveal that it is rare to find a pure family person or an exclusively profession/career oriented person. Managers and professionals move between the two poles. Our research reflect this movement between work and family priorities and despite the reported need for knowledge workers to explore self development and career progression at a point in time, the balance between work/career and family may tip in favour of their social network connection in Australia. This is not to say that the returned traveller will experience a greater commitment to work-life balance within Australian organisations (see Pocock 2005) but the returning traveller is more likely to re-connect with their broader family network and the familiarity of the Australian lifestyle.

Changes needed to make Australia more attractive

Table 5 enables further exploration of the factors that may encourage Australians to repatriate. In an open-ended item, participants were asked to indicate three changes that would make it more attractive for them to return to Australia. These were coded according to key themes, that is, recurring views in the data. Those responses that could not be coded due to insufficient information to allow unambiguous interpretation were discarded. The most frequently listed required change was business and career opportunities (23.7%), which included a range of general statements such as "greater career opportunities", "increase in global business opportunities", "more 'world-class companies' in Australia, and less 'branch office syndrome'. This theme of career advancement supports the findings of the factor analysis reported in Table 4. Unfortunately, career advancement prospects in Australia are more restricted than in the major overseas locations for our participants. Small to medium sized firms make up the bulk of firms in Australia representing 85.5 per cent of all firms or around 96 per cent of all private sector, non-

agricultural firms (ABS 2000). These smaller businesses are less likely to have as many management levels or associated opportunities for global placement as larger organisations. Career advancement, therefore, is inevitably restricted.

Insert Table 5 about here

The second largest required change reported by respondents was an increase in salary and a decrease in the cost of living in Australia (16%). This was closely followed by a change in the tax system (14%). The importance of money can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, money clearly has transactional value and is an important source of wealth creation. It is possible that the overseas opportunities for wealth accumulation are highlighted for Australians when they are exposed to earning potential and tax benefits in other countries (e.g. a 15% tax rate in Singapore). It is also possible that in the same way that knowledge workers view their overseas experience "as a rite of passage" (Inkson et al., 1997) perhaps it is also becoming equally common to work overseas for a period of time in order to accumulate funds to support an aspired lifestyle. These professionals (knowledge workers) can earn high salaries, pay lower taxes and work in more challenging positions within overseas firms. This combination of variables may make working overseas a critical success factor for a generation of professionals that is finding it harder to get ahead in life.

A second factor associated with a salary driven motivation to stay overseas are the perquisites that are often associated with higher paid positions. These added benefits, which may include assisted education, extensive health care, travel and home care allowances, reinforce the attractiveness of remaining in higher level positions (see Dowling & Welch 2004). Finally money represents important symbolic recognition of ability and personal market value. As mentioned previously, with respect to this group of knowledge workers recognition of their worth as an asset to the company is a strong motivator (Drucker, 1999) and, although there may be opportunities for this recognition in Australia, these possibilities are less plentiful than in Europe or Asia.

CONCLUSION

This research identifies the factors that pull Australians away from their home base as well as the factors that encourage these travellers back home to Australia. Consistent with the profile of the knowledge worker to be interested in the acquisition of knowledge and the tendency to be nomadic, overseas career and cultural opportunities provide a strong lure for Australian professionals to travel overseas, explore their full potential and accumulate financial assets. It seems, however, that this may come at a cost as many Australians living overseas report a strong need to return home in order to re-connect with family and enjoy the lifestyle benefits that Australia offers. This tension between career advancement and personal life priorities has been discussed in the work life literature as a generalised experience for people working at the management level (Campbell Clark 2000; Kasper et al., 2005). For the cohort within the current research, however, the attainment of work-life balance may be complicated by the decision to either stay overseas or return home.

Appendix 1 – Changes Participants Require before Returning to Australia

Code	Category	Examples - I would return if:
1	Financial and cost of living	I had better pay/salary was comparable to overseas earnings Cost of living was lower I had a financial windfall (lotto, inheritance) Transfer funds/benefits without financial penalty
2	Tax	I had tax breaks and/or lower taxes Overhaul of Australian tax system
3	Business/Career	I had greater business or career opportunities Greater research funding
4	Safety and security	I had access to a better health system Security issues abroad worsened Australia remained free of terrorism/conflict
5	Family responsibilities	I had the agreement of my children I has access to quality children's education I had responsibilities for family such as ill parents I started a family
6	Home ownership	The house prices were lower
7	Lifestyle	I have access to high culture There was improved media coverage I had more support with children/childcare There was a change in work practices that encouraged great work-life balance
8	Partner	There was a job for my partner My partner want to live in Australia There were reduced immigration regulations A change in marital status
9	Cultural concerns	Australia had greater diversity Less Americanised Less discrimination Change in migration process
10	International mobility	Faster planes Easy access to the rest of the world There were cheaper flights/air fares Ease to move frequently between countries
11	Attitudes	Australians had better attitudes (tall poppy)
12	Economic conditions	Change in economic conditions (exchange rate, interest rates) Greater critical mass
13	Government	There was a change in leadership/political party There was a change in government policy/attitude
14	Miscellaneous	Australia had better infrastructure Better public transport system Different climate, geographic landscape Relaxed dog quarantine rules
15	Education	Pursue study without debt Australia had a better education system Australian universities were restructured
16	Retirement	It was time to retire
17	Appreciation/ Recognition	Australia valued my overseas experience Greater respect/recognition of experience and industry
18	Not sure	
19	Support	Support with relocation

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Table 1: Sample Characteristics (n = 591)

		%
Age	20 – 29	25
	30 – 39	43
	40 – 49	17
	50 – 59	10
	60 and over	5
Sex	Male	64
	Female	36
Marital status	Married	58.4
	Single	36.9
	Separated	.3
	Divorced	4.4
Dependants	Respondents without dependants	64
	Respondents with dependants	36
Number of dependants	1 dependant	34
	2 dependants	40
	3 dependants	18
	4 dependants	5
	5 dependants	1
	6 dependants	.5
Ethnic Group	Australian/Aboriginal/Oceania	74
	European	7
	North African/Middle Eastern	1
	Asian	14
	The Americas, other	4
Highest Educational Qualification	Doctorate	14
	Master's degree/MBA	21
	Post-graduate certificate or diploma	9
	Bachelor's degree	50
	Other tertiary diplomas and certificates	3
	Secondary college	1.5
	Missing	1.4
Occupational group/ classification…	Accountants, Auditors and Corporate Treasury, Finance	20.4
	Miscellaneous Business and Information Professionals	14.6
	Managers, CEOs, Directors	13.9
	Building and Engineering Professionals	13.8
	University lecturers/researchers, post doctoral researchers	9.5
	Other*	23.5
	Not working	1.7
	Student	1.2
	Did not specify	1
	Retired	1
Self rating of qualifications, skills and experience	Exceptionally valuable in Australia	24
	Highly valuable in Australia	44
	Valuable in Australia	24
	Moderately valuable in Australia	7
	Of little value in Australia	1

*'Other' includes computing professionals, artist and related professionals, school teachers, natural and physical science professionals, sales, marketing and advertising professionals, health professionals, social professionals, government officials.

Table 2: National Identity and Future Intentions (n = 591)

		%
Sense of National Identity	Mainly an Australian	40
	Mainly a citizen of another country	4
	Mainly a citizen of the world	4
	Australian and a citizen of another country	27
	Australian and a citizen of the world	22
	Citizen of another country and a citizen of the world	2
Country/region of residence	UK	28
	USA	29
	Asia	21
	Europe	8
	Canada	3
	Dubai/Middle East	3
	New Zealand	2
	Other*	4.5
Current Situation	On first OE (less than 12 months intended)	2
	On first OE (more than 12 months intended)	25
	On second or subsequent OE (less than 12 months intended)	2
	On second or subsequent OE (more than 12 months intended)	29
	Now permanently settled overseas	38
	Other	4
Time away on current OE	Less than 6 months	6.1
	6 to less than 12 months	9.1
	1 – 5 years	45.9
	6 – 10 years	22.2
	11 – 15 years	7.3
	16 – 20 years	4.2
	Over 20 years	5.2
Time away on previous OE	Less than 6 months	10.3
	6 to less than 12 months	8.5
	1 – 5 years	27.2
	6 – 10 years	3.7
	11 – 15 years	.5
	16 – 20 years	.5
	Over 20 years	1
	NA	48.2
Future Plans	I will be returning to Australia permanently	16
	Likely to return to Australia permanently	37
	Undecided whether to return to Australia permanently	28
	Likely to remain overseas	17
	Will remain overseas permanently	2

*Other includes (Africa, Pacific, Russia, split between multiple locations and temporarily back in Australia).

Table 3:   **Items Pushing Professionals to Australia and Pulling Them from Australia Ranges from -2 (maximum pull from Australia) and +2 (maximum push to Australia) (n = 591)**

Items	Mean	s.d
Safety and security	0.83	1.07
Bringing up children	0.82	0.96
Parents/older relations	0.77	1.15
Being close to relatives	0.77	1.18
Sports and recreation opportunities	0.67	1.10
Friends	0.61	1.21
Lifestyle	0.59	1.24
Sense of identity	0.57	1.13
Educational opportunities	0.26	1.20
Home ownership	0.23	1.14
Cost of living	0.22	1.27
Having fun	-0.00	1.16
Ethnic mix	-0.02	1.04
Developing new relationships	-0.10	0.99
Freedom to do what I like	-0.19	1.17
Paying off student loan	-0.14	0.67
Partner (long-term)	-0.21	1.20
Art opportunities	-0.30	1.04
Learning for life	-0.41	1.10
Tall poppy syndrome	-0.44	0.85
Cultural opportunities	-0.63	1.07
Business opportunities	-0.64	1.07
Tax system	-0.66	1.12
Challenge	-0.86	0.97
Salaries	-0.97	1.13
Career opportunities	-1.12	1.11

Table 4: Factor Analysis for 'Push' and 'Pull' Items (n = 591)

Factors and Items	1	2	3	4
Cultural opportunities	**.80**	-.01	.10	-.19
Art opportunities	**.71**	-.17	-.14	-.02
Learning for life	**.63**	.11	-.11	.01
Having fun	**.57**	.01	.03	.14
Ethnic mix	**.56**	.05	.23	-.08
Challenge	**.54**	.29	-.04	-.09
Developing new relationships	**.50**	.04	.05	.07
Freedom to do what I like	**.40**	.18	-.07	.30
Partner (long-term)	.19	.05	.10	.19
Salaries	-.03	**.75**	-.25	-.05
Career opportunities	.10	**.68**	-.17	-.03
Tax system	-.10	**.66**	.25	-.20
Business opportunities	.25	**.54**	.10	-.12
Cost of living	-.13	**.45**	.23	.26
Tall poppy syndrome	.16	.34	-.09	.14
Paying off student loan	.06	.18	-.06	.06
Parents/older relations	-.04	-.04	**.84**	-.11
Being close to relatives	-.06	-.08	**.81**	-.03
Friends	.13	-.01	**.51**	.21
Sense of identity	.33	-.05	**.50**	.12
Bringing up children	-.03	-.13	.03	**.65**
Sports and recreation opportunities	.01	-.14	-.07	**.64**
Home ownership	-.24	.31	.03	**.51**
Safety and security	-.15	.01	.18	**.50**
Educational opportunities	.15	-.03	-.24	**.48**
Lifestyle	.26	-.07	.15	**.46**
Cronbach alpha for factor (significant items only)	.78	.59	.69	.57
Sum of squared loadings	4.60	2.45	1.91	1.47
Cumulative percent of variance explained	17.67	27.08	34.45	40.09

(Significant loadings shown in bold)

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation

Table 5: Perceptions of Changes Required in Australia (n = 591)

Perceptions about changes needed in Australia	Number	% of responses
Business and career	317	23.7
Pay and cost of living	214	16.0
Tax	189	14.2
Government	66	4.9
Family responsibilities	63	4.7
Lifestyle	57	4.3
International mobility	16	4.2
Culture concerns	52	3.9
Home ownership	51	3.8
Appreciation/recognition	48	3.6
Australian attitudes	46	3.4
Partner	45	3.4
Economic conditions	35	2.6
Miscellaneous	32	2.5
Safety and security	33	2.4
Education	13	1.0
Retirement	10	.7
NA	8	.6