

Migrant motivators

- 2.1 The Committee sought to examine what might make one country more attractive or competitive than another, noting that incentives for migration might be considered as “push” and “pull” factors.

Incentives to leave

- 2.2 A small scale commercial survey of intending migrants from the United Kingdom in 2003 illustrated the motivations which might cause people to seek a new life abroad. The major “push” factors which they identified were deterioration of quality of life; escalation of the rat race; and issues associated with the European Community.¹
- 2.3 More generally, the “push” which can prompt individuals to leave their homelands may include local demographic, political and economic hardships.
- 2.4 According to data from DIMIA’s *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia* (LSIA), dislike of the economic or social conditions in their homelands were the most significant incentives for skilled migrants to leave for Australia in 1999/2000.²
- 2.5 This, to the Committee, did not disguise the fact that Australia was, at best, the migrants’ second choice. At least two thirds of the same

1 Deterioration 75%; rat race, 66%; Europe, 45%. “Best of British just not good enough”, in *Emigrate*, Issue no 8, Outbound Publishing, East Sussex, October 2003.

2 Social = 23%, Economic = 15% for the main skilled categories for which large data samples were available (Skilled Independent, Employer Nomination, Skilled Australia Linked, Business Skills). DIMIA, Submission No 25a, Table 23. See also National Institute of Labour Studies, (NILS) *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Table 3.3. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

group considered that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with life in their home country, and more than half were more than able to meet their basic needs.³

- 2.6 This indicated to the Committee that “push” factors were not crucial to the decision of skilled people to move to Australia.

Destination attractions

- 2.7 The “pull” to specific countries may be their attributes, such as their proximity, cultural tolerance, political freedom, higher wages, security, better social safety nets, better working conditions, and more stimulating/challenging work. Relatives and expatriate communities in the new land may also exert a “pull”.⁴

- 2.8 Evidence provided to the Committee argued that Australia was losing potential migrants to other countries. The “pull” factor of material reward, for example, may not have been a factor for those who actually chose Australia, but for others who might be seeking higher earning capacity:

it is accepted wisdom that destinations such as Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany provide greater incentives.⁵

- 2.9 One quarter of temporary skilled workers who chose to move to England, but had considered the USA, maintained that the US standard of living was better; one in five thought that career opportunities were better there, and the same proportion nominated the weather as being better. Of those who had considered Australia, three-quarters thought it had better climate and one quarter believed the standard of living was better. The main attraction of Canada was, for those who considered it prior to moving to the UK, the society’s values. Yet despite those competing attractions, they had chosen the UK.⁶

- 2.10 The Committee acknowledged that the appeal of any one country differed from person to person. Some, for example, might see an

3 NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Tables 3.4, 3.6. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

4 M. Piracha, R. Vickerman, “Immigration, Labour Mobility and EU Enlargement”, University of Kent Discussion Paper No. 02/09. 2002, www.kent.ac.uk/economics/research/1europe/RIIACChapter-final.pdf

5 Migration Institute of Australia, Submission No 26, p. 8.

6 Home Office, *Knowledge Migrants: The Motivations and Experiences of Professionals in the UK on Work Permits*, November 2002, p. 53, www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/knowmigrants.pdf

economy as vast as that of the USA as a source of almost infinite opportunity to reinvent themselves. Others could fear being swamped by its scale.

- 2.11 The challenge for Australia was therefore to identify and promote what Australia offered not only as an alternative to skilled migrants' home countries, but also in comparison with other possible destinations.

Why Australia?

- 2.12 Approximately two thirds of the skilled migrants to Australia in 1999/2000 came because it offered a better future for their families, and a similar proportion identified lifestyle or climate as a reason for migrating.⁷

- 2.13 The importance of these factors may have reflected the previous experience of the migrants, because two thirds of the primary applicants had previously visited Australia. One quarter had come as short-term tourists or visitors, and a further one in six had studied here.⁸ Most skilled migrants to Tasmania had usually visited the state prior to settling, and South Australia encouraged potential migrants to visit prior to making their decision because:

there is no joy in bringing people to the state if they are unsuccessful.⁹

- 2.14 The Committee concluded that an important factor in migrants' decisions to come to Australia was their previous familiarity with the country.
- 2.15 The skilled migrants' focus on Australia as a place offering a better future for their families, and/or an attractive lifestyle and climate was unfortunately replicated in the small study of United Kingdom migrants mentioned earlier. It indicated that they were being "pulled" by perceptions that their destination was a better place to bring up children (54%), had a more relaxed lifestyle (73%), or a better

7 Main skilled categories for which large data samples were available (Skilled Independent, Employer Nomination, Skilled Australia Linked, Business Skills). DIMIA, Submission No 25a, Table 23. See also NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Tables on p. 5 and 47. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

8 Comparable figures for spouses were: 55%, including 30% as tourists/visitors and 7% as students. DIMIA, Submission No 25a, Tables 15, 16, 18, 19. See also NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Table 3.8. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

9 Tasmanian Government, Submission No. 22, p. 3, SA Government, Evidence, p. 95.

- climate (38%). The unfortunate aspect of this close agreement between the two studies was that the migrants from the United Kingdom were talking about Canada and New Zealand as well as Australia.¹⁰
- 2.16 LSIA asked migrants who chose Australia whether they had applied to migrate to other countries. So few said that they had that the Committee could draw no conclusion from their responses. Their answers did, however, suggest that Canada, the USA and New Zealand were seen as alternative destinations to Australia, and that migrants were equally likely to apply to migrate to other countries as well as Australia.¹¹
- 2.17 The Committee had assumed that, for skilled permanent migrants, employment opportunities would be an attraction. Migrants' responses to LSIA, however, ranked job opportunities third in importance, behind their families' future and lifestyle/climate. Generally jobs were given as a reason for migrating only half as often as family prospects and lifestyle/climate reasons.¹² Approximately one migrant in six said that a reason for migrating to Australia was to join family or friends.¹³
- 2.18 The Committee understood these responses to mean that, whatever Australia's perception might be, skilled migration was not primarily about jobs - at least for the migrant.
- 2.19 The LSIA evidence indicated to the Committee that Australia's general attributes weighed heavily in skilled migrants' decision to move, although the specifics of jobs and family and friends in Australia also had a role.

Where in Australia?

- 2.20 Migrants did not arrive in Australia seeking a place to settle - they had already made that decision.

10 "Best of British just not good enough", in *Emigrate*, Issue no 8, Outbound Publishing, East Sussex, October 2003.

11 The NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, reached the same conclusion, pp. 124, 125. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

12 One in three gave employment opportunities as a reason. Estimated from Tables on p. 5 and p. 47 on NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Tables 3.3, 3.6. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

13 Estimated from Tables on p. 5 and p. 47, NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, Tables 3.3, 3.6. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

- 2.21 In 2002/3 nearly two thirds of the 108,000 people who settled in Australia arrived through the various economic entry programs. Most of these 66,050 intended to settle in New South Wales or Victoria, as Table 2.1 (below) indicates. Four in every five who arrived under various skilled regional settlement programs opted to live in metropolitan areas.¹⁴
- 2.22 During the course of the review a new arrangement was introduced, to begin on 1 July 2004, after the Committee concluded its review. It would offer skilled migrants under the age of 45 a temporary three-year visa if they undertook to live and work in a regional area. If they did not do so, the visa would be revoked after three years. If however, they remained, they could apply for permanent residence after two years.¹⁵

Table 2.1 Intended destinations of settlers arriving in Australia 2002/3¹⁶

| | State-specific programs | Skill stream (includes State-specific) | TOTAL settlers | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------|------|
| | | | Number | % |
| New South Wales | 620 | 20,400 | 39,110 | 36.2 |
| Victoria | 4,150 | 14,190 | 24,410 | 22.6 |
| Queensland | 650 | 7,120 | 12,270 | 11.4 |
| South Australia | 1,320 | 2,810 | 4,590 | 4.2 |
| Western Australia | 580 | 9,170 | 12,920 | 12.0 |
| Tasmania | 200 | 350 | 670 | 0.6 |
| Northern Territory | 130 | 200 | 460 | 0.4 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 290 | 1,060 | 1,800 | 1.7 |
| Not known | - | 10,750 | 11,830 | 10.9 |
| TOTAL | 7,940 | 66,050 | 108,070 | 100 |

- 2.23 As the New South Wales Government submission emphasised, the settlers were unlikely to move from these locations:

recent analysis based on data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) suggests that “most

14 B. Birrell, “Redistributing migrants: the Labor agenda”, *People and Place*, Vol 11, No.4 2003, p. 20.

15 Minister for Immigration... *Plan to Attract more Migrants to Regional Australia*, VPS 004/2004, 12/1/04. www.minister.immi.gov.au/media_releases/media04/v04004.htm

16 **State-specific**, DIMIA, *Annual Report 2002/3*, p. 26. **Skill; Total** DIMIA, unpublished data. Excludes approx 12,000 settlers under Humanitarian program. Minister for Immigration... *Over 12,000 refugees and humanitarian entrants resettled in 2003*, VPS 001/2004, 1/1/03, www.minister.immi.gov.au/media_releases/media04/v04001.htm

migrants make up their minds where they want to settle before they arrive in Australia".¹⁷

- 2.24 Reinforcing this, South Australia reported that all of its skilled migrants under the State and Territory Nominated Independent program for skilled had remained in the State.¹⁸
- 2.25 Canada also reported similar findings. Only one in ten of its migrants did not state a destination prior to arriving, and:
- three-quarters of the immigrants who had stated a destination at the time of admission... actually settled where they had intended to. The remaining quarter ...generally,... originally planned to settle in a smaller metropolitan area, but subsequently decided to live in one of the... largest¹⁹
- 2.26 Table 2.2 highlights the comparable tendency of skilled migrants to Australia to congregate in the urban areas of the most populous States.

Table 2.2: Skilled Migrant visas - settlement patterns - 1/7/1996 – 30/6/2001²⁰

| | Metropolitan (%) | Non-metropolitan (%) | Not stated (%) | Total (%) |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| New South Wales | 37.8 | 2.2 | - | 40.1 |
| Victoria | 18.6 | 0.9 | - | 19.4 |
| Queensland | 9.2 | 3.8 | - | 13.0 |
| South Australia | 4.9 | 0.2 | - | 5.1 |
| Western Australia | 15.8 | 1.0 | - | 16.8 |
| Tasmania | 0.3 | 0.2 | - | 0.5 |
| Northern Territory | 0.4 | 0.1 | - | 0.5 |
| Australian Capital Territory | - | - | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Not stated | - | - | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| TOTAL (%) | 87.0 | 8.4 | 4.5 | 100 |

- 2.27 The message for the Committee from these findings, and from the Australian National Institute of Labour Studies (NILS) findings in its

17 NSW Government, Submission No. 37, p.9, referring to NILS *The Settlement Experiences of New Migrants*, p. 23.

18 SA Government, Submission No. 24, p. 4.

19 Statistics Canada, *Highlights of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada*, www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-611-XIE/free.htm

20 162,814 visas. B. Birrell, V. Rapson, "Two Australias: Migrant Settlement at the End of the 20th Century", *People and Place*, Vol 10, No.1 2002, p. 15. 78,000 skilled migrant visa holders in 2001/2-2002/3 continued this pattern. B. Birrell, "Redistributing migrants: the Labor agenda", *People and Place*, Vol 11, No.4 2003, p. 17.

reports *Life in a New Land...* and *The Settlement Experiences of New Migrants*, was that:

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.²¹

- 2.28 It was therefore in the interests of the State, Territory and local governments to seek out potential migrants and provide them with more options prior to them deciding on their destination within Australia.

Promoting Australia

- 2.29 In addressing how to improve Australia's attractiveness, the Tasmanian Government proposed a concession:

offering relaxed entry requirements to migrants who settle in defined areas of Australia... [for] a period of time... making it less likely they will leave once the nominated time period is completed.²²

- 2.30 The Tasmanian Government's submission then emphasised the need to provide relevant infrastructure to attract and support skilled migrants, as did many of the submissions to the Committee.²³ The requirements included:

"on the ground" resettlement support and assistance given the absence of established ethnic communities, with their informal support networks. Access to health services, English language lessons, orientation services, social services and information would be vital.²⁴

- 2.31 The Committee considered these aspects of settlement in the chapter *Settling Well?* because it wished to focus on what was being done to encourage migration.

21 NILS, *The Settlement Experiences of New Migrants*, p. 23. See also Chapter 2 of their *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA1 and LSIA2*. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/lsia/index.htm

22 Tasmanian Government, Submission No. 22A, p. 5.

23 E.g. Queensland Government, Submission No. 27, pp 2-3; NSW Government, Submission No. 37, p. 9.

24 Tasmanian Government, Submission No. 22A, p. 5.

2.32 The New South Wales Government:

recognised that no one agency or tier of government can realistically implement all the changes required to achieve a significant shift in...settlement patterns. A whole-of-government approach is required, including appropriate input from regional and community interests.²⁵

2.33 In Canada, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration reached a similar conclusion in its report on the Provincial Nominee Program:

all levels of government and... business need to be at the table.²⁶

2.34 Both the New South Wales and the Tasmanian Governments urged more coordination:

information on the various types of visas is available from these [DIMIA Business] centres, there may be potential to streamline contact and procedures with these centres to make it more of a "one stop shop" for liaison with other agencies that are integral to the settlement and job seeking process;²⁷

providing information to potential migrants in one location, for example the internet, outlining health care, taxation and other domestic considerations.²⁸

2.35 The Committee noted that there was already a range of coordination bodies in existence and that DIMIA's key roles were managing and providing advice on migration and humanitarian policy.²⁹ These activities related less to promotion and recruitment than to:

contributing to Australia's society and its economic advancement through the lawful and orderly entry and stay of people.³⁰

2.36 DIMIA did, however,

conduct training sessions with what are called our regional certifying bodies.... in terms of our requirements but

25 NSW Government, Submission No. 37, p. 1.

26 Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Press release 7/5/03, www.parl.gc.ca/InfoCom/PubDocument.asp?Language=E&DocumentID=1031

27 NSW Government, Submission No. 37, p. 9.

28 Tasmanian Government, Submission No. 22A, p. 7.

29 DIMIA, *Review by the Secretary*, Annual Report 2002/3, p. 2.

30 DIMIA, *Business Directions 2002-2005*, www.immi.gov.au/departments/directions2002.htm

secondly in terms of how we can work with them to increase promotion in regional Australia.³¹

- 2.37 In examining how Australia might maximise its pulling power, the Committee had to look beyond DIMIA to the activities of State, Territory and local authorities. This presented the Committee with an opportunity to pursue the review's term of reference covering "settlement patterns for new arrivals including the role played by State and local authorities".

Guiding migrants

- 2.38 States and Territories actively sought out potential migrants abroad at migration seminars and expos and through print media.³² Positioning themselves against the other migration destinations covered in *Emigrate* magazine – New Zealand, Canada, USA, South Africa and Europe – were South Australia (*Special Deal for Migrants*), Victoria (*Your Business. Your Career. Your Family. Your Lifestyle. Your Future*) and Western Australia (*Business migrants now is the time...*).³³

Destination States and Territories

- 2.39 In the competition for skilled migrants New South Wales was the most popular destination in 2002/3, continuing a well established pattern in which Victoria and Western Australia were the next most popular destinations. These three States attracted some three quarters of skilled migrants between 1996/7 and 2000/1.³⁴
- 2.40 **New South Wales**, with one third of Australia's population, received 40 per cent of skilled migrants between 1996/7 and 2000/1. This was despite the State not actively encouraging skilled migrants because of concerns about the environmental and infrastructure impact of the number of migrants settling in Sydney.³⁵ The growing pressure of migration on New South Wales was the subject of a State-Federal Working Party on Migration to Sydney and Regional NSW which had yet to report when the Committee finalised its review.³⁶

31 DIMIA, Evidence, p. 16.

32 WA attracted 84 skilled migrants from attending a UK expo. *Expo business migration boost*, Wanneroo Times, 16/9/03.

33 *Emigrate*, Issue No. 8 October 2003, Outbound Publishing, UK.

34 Tables 2.1, 2.2.

35 Institution of Engineers Australia, Submission No. 10, para 7.2; DIMIA, Submission No. 25, para 2.21.

36 Government of New South Wales, Evidence, p. 70.

- 2.41 **Victoria** targeted:
marketing and matching of migrants to opportunities,
including to international students [and] ...regional
stakeholder engagement.³⁷
- 2.42 The outcome was that over the five years up to and including 2000/1
Victoria attracted one fifth of all skilled migrants to Australia.
Victoria expressed its intention to improve on this and implemented
continuing strategies to:
increase Victoria's share of Australia's skilled migrants to at
least its share of Australia's population (25%).³⁸
- 2.43 **Western Australia** was the third most popular destination for skilled
migrants and had attracted 17 per cent of the skilled migrant intake to
Australia between 1996/7 and 2000/1. Its Small Business
Development Corporation supported skilled migration to Western
Australia through the Business Skills Migration Program and the
State Government had also begun to develop a network of overseas
offices to promote Western Australia to potential migrants.³⁹
- 2.44 Thirteen per cent of skilled migrants to Australia between 1996/7 and
2000/1 settled in **Queensland**.⁴⁰ In its submission the Queensland
Government stated that:
the attraction and retention of skilled migrants plays an
important role in assisting Queensland to meet emerging skill
shortages and improve the overall effectiveness of the State's
labour force.⁴¹
- 2.45 DIMIA's submission noted that Queensland was involved in overseas
promotion in countries such as Taiwan.⁴²
- 2.46 Like Queensland, **South Australia** also promoted itself overseas and
in 1998 the Government had launched a \$1.6 million, 3 year migration
campaign *Immigration SA*. It included initiatives to attract potential
skilled migrants through developing stronger ties with migration
agents and promoting State-sponsored migration schemes. In the
period 1996/7 – 2000/1 the State attracted five per cent of the skilled

37 Victorian Government, Submission No. 58, p. 2.

38 Victorian Government, Submission No. 58, pp 1-2.

39 Table 2.2. Institution of Engineers Australia, Submission No. 10, p. 18.

40 Table 2.2.

41 Queensland Government, Submission No. 27, p. 1.

42 DIMIA, Submission No. 25, Appendix 13.

migrants arriving in Australia.⁴³ South Australia used the DIMIA Skill Matching Database to identify prospective migrants, even if they did not meet the State's immediate skill requirements:

we do a mail-out to say that South Australia exists and we have a program for skilled migrants that includes a meet and greet package when you arrive at the airport... we promote the jurisdictional difference between the cost of housing in Sydney and the cost of housing in Adelaide, and the cost of living generally here—both costs are lower in Adelaide than in Sydney. We want to bring to the attention of people that South Australia exists and that it has some elements which they might find attractive. Ultimately, it is for them to decide where they choose to settle. We are not about forcing people to come here, but we want people to be informed that South Australia is a location that they might wish to come to.⁴⁴

- 2.47 The **Australian Capital Territory** considered itself a “very small jurisdiction”, attracting approximately one per cent of the migration program, as tables 2.1 and 2.2 indicated. It promoted itself through an internet site and worked with New South Wales to position Canberra as part of the Australian capital region.⁴⁵
- 2.48 **Tasmania** was the chosen destination of fewer than one in 200 skilled migrants. The Department of State Development focussed on the business stream migrants.⁴⁶
- 2.49 The **Northern Territory's** skilled migration was mainly driven by identified employer need and attracted 0.5 per cent of skilled migrants.⁴⁷ The Territory Government's submission emphasised that it was difficult for it to:

compete on an equal footing with jurisdictions such as Victoria, South Australia and the ACT. Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra can all take advantage of the regionally oriented skilled schemes and accordingly attract a considerable proportion of the skilled migrants who enter Australia under regional programs.... The Northern Territory's size and distances, its demography and population spread present challenges in competing with

43 Table 2.2. Institution of engineers Australia, Submission No. 10, p. 18.

44 SA Government, Evidence, p. 89.

45 ACT Government, Submission No. 21, p.2; Evidence, p. 50.

46 Table 2.2; Institution of engineers Australia, Submission No. 10, p. 19.

47 Table 2.2. NT Government Submission No. 40A, p. 1.

other States and Territories for an equitable share of skilled migrants...smaller jurisdictions such as the Northern Territory, that rely heavily upon skilled migration to address skills shortages, are restricted in their ability to respond to the opportunities because of the size of their budgets. The Northern Territory Government, as part of a broad approach to population growth and social development, is developing a Population Policy.⁴⁸

Regional destinations

- 2.50 Regions within the States competed with each other and other regions in Australia for skilled migrants. The regional settlement pattern for new arrivals was affected by the popularity of their State or Territory, by the State and Territory Governments' approaches to migration, and by the Commonwealth regional migration programs.
- 2.51 Under the Commonwealth arrangements which permitted the States and Territories to identify target "designated areas" for migrant settlement under the *Skilled Designated Area Sponsored* and *Regional Established Business in Australia* visas, only New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia had chosen to do so.⁴⁹ New South Wales excluded Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong; Queensland excluded Brisbane; and Perth was excluded in Western Australia. In contrast, Victoria chose to include Melbourne by identifying all the State as a "designated area".⁵⁰
- 2.52 A study of the settlement pattern of skilled migrants in the period 2001/2 – 2002/3 revealed that few took up residence outside the capital cities.⁵¹ Ninety five per cent of those who settled in New South Wales chose Sydney. The New South Wales government indicated, however, that there was a commitment to better marketing of regions of the State to prospective migrants.⁵²

48 NT Government, Submission No. 40A, pp. 1-2.

49 Under the *Skilled Designated Areas Sponsored* arrangements (1,597 visas 2001/2), sponsors of skilled relatives migrating to Australia must live in these. Under REBA (40 visas 2001/2) businesses have to be doing business in such areas. DIMIA, Fact Sheet 26 *State/Territory Specific Migration*; Submission No. 25, Table 9.

50 Victoria excluded Melbourne under the *Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme* (1,092 visas 2001/2) for employer-nominated skilled migrants. New South Wales again excluded Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Queensland excluded Brisbane and the Gold Coast; Western Australia excluded Perth. DIMIA, Fact Sheet 26 *State/Territory Specific Migration*. DIMIA, Submission No. 25, Table 9.

51 B Birrell, "Redistributing migrants: the Labor agenda", *People and Place*, Vol 11, No. 4, 2003, p. 17.

52 NSW Government, Submission No. 37, p. 2.

- 2.53 In Western Australia, 95 per cent of skilled migrants chose to live in Perth. Western Australia's South West Development Commission had launched an overseas:
- push to promote the South West Region offshore as a great place to live, work and invest... aimed at firstly raising awareness of what we have to offer, and secondly at creating important networks.⁵³
- 2.54 Fewer than three in four of the skilled migrants to Queensland chose to live in Brisbane, but most of the State's overseas-born population was still concentrated the south-east corner of the State.⁵⁴
- 2.55 In most of the remaining States and Territories which had not divided their jurisdictions for regional migration purposes, skilled migrants settled in the capital cities.
- 2.56 The only exception was Victoria, where four per cent of skilled migrants chose to settle outside Melbourne. A Commonwealth - Victorian working party on migration was established late in 2003 to explore policy options to attract more migrants to Victoria, particularly regional Victoria. The State Government was also implementing a 2003/04 - 2006/07 Regional Migration Action Plan for Victoria incorporating a range of strategies to increase dispersal of skilled migrants to regional Victoria. These included improved marketing; matching of migrants to opportunities; building regional stakeholder and community engagement through identifying settlement resources; and providing settlement support.⁵⁵
- 2.57 In its review of skilled migrant destinations, the Committee examined the conclusions of the Birrell study of migrant distribution. In particular it noted that both New South Wales and Victoria considered that, if business skill migrants were required to live in a regional area, they would not come and that:
- most 'regional' migrants are settling in capital cities (mainly Melbourne and Adelaide).⁵⁶

53 South West Development Commission, *SWDC targets offshore markets* Media release.10/09/2003. www.swdc.wa.gov.au/html/06a2.php?section=moreinfo&id=47

54 Queensland Government, Submission No. 27, p. 1.

55 Victorian Government, Submission No. 58, pp. 1-2.

56 B. Birrell, "Redistributing migrants: the Labor agenda", *People and Place*, Vol 11, No. 4, 2003, pp. 24-26.

2.58 This reinforced the importance of the remark in the submission from the Gulf Savannah Region that:

one would expect that new settlers attracted to a region... would probably originate from a similar area and have an affinity with the environment... and lifestyle.⁵⁷

2.59 The Committee was not able to explore whether this approach to targeting potential migrants in similar overseas areas was being pursued because only a few local authorities made submissions. The Northern Grampians Shire Council reported an initiative in seeking skilled migrants:

a CD... to stimulate interest in the shire from potential employees. We know that selling employment opportunities in rural areas is not just a matter of matching city pay rates but also promoting lifestyle.⁵⁸

2.60 The Council also maintained a website, a potentially very productive investment in information provision because it was in the migration market place "24 hours a day, seven days a week",⁵⁹ and one in twenty of the migrants arriving in Australia in 1999/2000 had used the internet for information on job prospects.⁶⁰

2.61 The difficulty faced by all levels of government in promoting themselves was that official sources of information about settlement prospects in Australia did not appear to have been used widely by migrants. According to LSIA, approximately one in ten skilled migrants who obtained information about the State/Territory in which they intended to settle had used the DIMIA website. This might have been one of a number of sources of information. Approximately one in ten had used the internet, and the same proportion reported acquiring information from Australian or State government departments or agencies or embassies.

2.62 But the dominant source, referred to by approximately two in every five skilled migrants when seeking information about where they settled, was friends or relatives in Australia. One in ten mentioned consulting friends or relatives who had visited Australia.⁶¹

57 Gulf Savannah Region, Submission No. 39, p. 1.

58 Northern Grampians Shire Council, Submission No. 35, p. 2.

59 www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/index.asp?h=-1

60 The NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, reached the same conclusion, p. 141, www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

61 DIMIA, Submission No. 25a, Table 24. See also - NILS, *Life in a New Land: The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA1 and LSIA2*, p. 25. www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/lsia/index.htm

- 2.63 The implication which the Committee drew from these figures was that communities seeking to promote migration to their areas might profitably engage with their migrant populations and their informal overseas links.
- 2.64 Nevertheless, in view of the limited hours of access at Australia's overseas DIMIA posts,⁶² ("calls would often be on hold in a queue for up to 45 minutes")⁶³ and the increasing global access to the internet, the Committee considered that the DIMIA web site would be an increasingly important settler resource. A Google internet search for "Migrate to Australia" or "Migration to Australia" brought up the DIMIA website as the first item on the list of sites.
- 2.65 The Committee was pleased to see that the DIMIA site was highly visible to search engines, as it had recommended this in its Review of State-specific Migration Mechanisms.⁶⁴
- 2.66 By using the links *Life in Australia - Basic Facts about Australia* on the DIMIA website a menu option for "Australia's States and Territories" emerged which provided hyperlinks to the relevant web portals. Table 2.3 summarises what an internet user might then have found.⁶⁵

Table 2.3: State/Territory Government internet portals⁶⁶, searched for "migration" (7/1/04)

| State/Territory | Result when using "migration" in the site's Search function |
|--------------------|---|
| New South Wales | <i>Business Skills Migration</i> |
| Victoria | <i>Skilled Migration Unit</i> |
| Queensland | <i>Business Migration Scheme</i> plus another menu panel <i>Narrow Search</i> mentioning "skilled migration" |
| South Australia | <i>South Australia Central - Migration Services</i> with <i>Immigration SA</i> on the resulting menu |
| Western Australia | South West Development Commission listing - the first item on its list, when opened, was <i>Skilled Migration</i> |
| Tasmania | List with option to select <i>Government only</i> which identified <i>Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS): Business and skilled migration to Tasmania</i> ; and <i>Migrating to Tasmania</i> |
| Northern Territory | <i>Business and Skilled Migration</i> is a menu option on the home page. |
| ACT | <i>DIMIA website</i> |

62 In the main settler source countries (UK, China, South Africa, India, Indonesia), DIMIA personal service to the public access is generally limited to 3 or 4 hours counter service and 2-4 hours telephone response. www.immi.gov.au/wwi/index_u.htm

63 Dr S. Wearne on contact with London High Commission, Submission No. 47, p. 3.

64 Recommendation 19, Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *New Faces, New Places: Review of State-specific migration Mechanisms*, September 2001.

65 www.immi.gov.au/settle/states/state_and_territories.htm#states

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- 2.67 The Committee considers that the relevant State and Territory sites should be able to be more readily discovered on the Australian government's prime migration website than is currently the case, perhaps through the existing link *Information and contact details*>>*Useful related website*>>*Government websites*.

Recommendation 1

- 2.68 **The Committee recommends that DIMIA improve the visibility of the existing hyperlinks from its website to those of State and Territory governments.**

- 2.69 It occurred to the Committee that the States and Territories might profitably use a similar hyper-link system on their own portals to give their preferred settlement areas a higher profile. It would also be aligned with the desires of the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland for:

closer cooperation between the Commonwealth and State/local authorities in marketing regions/job shortages to potential migrants prior to settlement decisions...Where settlement takes place in a regional/remote area... Government and other service providers must be involved at an early stage... to adequately consider resource implications... provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in government schools, and adequate reach of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) services.⁶⁷

and for

all levels of government to work closely with industry to develop regional opportunities that will encourage and better match voluntary settlement of migrants in regional areas.⁶⁸

- 2.70 Similarly, Northern Grampians Shire Council urged:
a "whole of Government" approach as skilled migrants are intertwined with business development and growth, research

⁶⁷ NSW Government, Submission No. 37, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁸ Queensland Government, Submission No. 27, p. 3.

and development along with improving infrastructure and support facilities such as rural health services.⁶⁹

Recommendation 2

- 2.71 **The Committee recommends that the Minister present to the next meeting of the Commonwealth/State Working Party on Skilled Migration a proposal that States and Territories identify on their websites their preferred settlement areas to assist potential skilled migrants.**

Conclusion

- 2.72 The Committee, in accordance with its terms of reference, limited its observations to the roles of the various levels of government in settlement patterns. As the material from LSIA demonstrated, official information might not be a major factor in migrant's decision-making.
- 2.73 The Committee therefore endorsed the conclusion of the Australian NILS *Life in a New Land* that:
- overseas recruitment by firms... is more likely to be successful.⁷⁰
- 2.74 The Committee reflected that the ongoing collection of data under LSIA represented an important source of feedback on migration arrangements and provided the migrants' perspective of their motivations and aspirations. Currently DIMIA publish reports of LSIA analysis in hard copy and on the internet, and have also released a CD-ROM of some data. This, in the Committee's opinion, should be an important tool for governments at all levels wishing to tailor their migration promotions to the needs of migrants.

⁶⁹ Northern Grampians Shire Council, Submission No. 35, p. 1.

⁷⁰ The NILS, *Life in a New Land : The Experience of Migrants in Wave 1 of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2*, reached the same conclusion, p. 19, www.immi.gov.au/research/publications

Recommendation 3

- 2.75 **The Committee recommends that DIMIA continue its practice of analysing and publicising LSIA data and release more promptly updated, de-identified, unit record data.**
- 2.76 In the next section the Committee examines the migration policies and practices of a number of countries in order to identify aspects from which Australia might draw useful conclusions about its own programs.