

**Submission to House of Representatives
Joint Standing Committee on Migration's
Inquiry Into Multiculturalism in Australia**

by

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INTRODUCTION

This Inquiry is a timely and important one. With half of its population a migrant or the child of a migrant, Australia has been influenced by international migration more than any other middle size or large country in the world. For much of the postwar era it has developed a complex set of policies and programs on immigration and settlement which have in most cases been informed by empirical evidence and research. However, in recent years the ability to develop new policies and modify existing ones has been hampered by a lack of timely and relevant research. The abolition of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR) in 1996 resulted in a progressive parametric reduction in the amount and breadth of policy relevant research on immigration and settlement in Australia. There is a pressing need for the creation of an independent national think-tank/ research institute to carry out, facilitate, fund and coordinate high quality research on international migration and settlement and to interpret the policy implications of that research. Such an initiative is necessary if the effectiveness of the existing research capacity is to be maximised and we are to build the resources necessary to provide a sound basis for evidence-led decision making in these important areas. The patchiness of current research and knowledge means that our ability to promote comprehensive and authoritative answers to each of the seven Terms of Reference of this Inquiry is ample testament to this pressing need to enhance and focus research capacity.

The overall objective of the Inquiry is to ‘inquire into economic, social and cultural impacts of migration in Australia and make recommendations to maximise the positive effects of migration’. The difficulty involved in such a task was manifest in a recent study of the *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of Refugee Humanitarian Entrants* for DIAC (Hugo *et al.*, 2011) which was completed by the APMRC team. While the report was very well received it was significantly hampered by the limited amount of appropriate and timely research which was available. Accordingly, we urge that the Committee considers carefully a recommendation to create an independent research facility aimed at having as significant an impact on immigration and settlement research as the BIR did 15 years ago.

Rather than deal with each of the Terms of Reference separately this submission addresses a number of topics which are of relevance across several of the Terms of Reference and which build on the contemporary research of the APMRC. While a more comprehensive listing of publications is included as an appendix we’d draw attention especially to:

1. Hugo, G. and Young, S. (eds.), 2008. *Labour Mobility in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
2. Hugo, G. (Chair), Demographic Change and Liveability Panel, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, 2010. *A Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia: Issues Paper and Appendices*, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Canberra.
3. Hugo, G., Vas Dev, S., Wall, J., Young, M., Sharma, V and Parker, K., 2011. *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Migrants*. Report for Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Canberra.
4. Hugo, G., 2011. *The Changing Dynamics of the Australia/Asia-Pacific Migration System and Its Implications for Australian International Migration Policy*. First Draft of Working Paper for Department of Immigration and Citizenship, July.
5. Hugo, G. and Pincus, J. (eds.), 2012. *A Greater Australia: Population, Policies and Governance*, The Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Melbourne

MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

In 2008, the Social Inclusion as a policy framework was adopted nationally and since then the Australian Government has had a vision to ensure that it creates a socially inclusive society. The core aims of the Australian Social Inclusion Agenda are to reduce disadvantage

by ensuring that there is funding and service delivery that promotes equitable access to universal benefits and services for all Australians. This includes making sure that investments are made more intensively for those at risk of experiencing disadvantage. The Social Inclusion Agenda also aims at increasing the social, civic and economic participation of all by ensuring that everyone has the skills and support they need to participate actively in the labour market and their communities. A third aim of Social Inclusion Agenda is to promote the active involvement of the entire community in identifying the needs and shaping services of the community (Australian Government, 2011).

There can be no doubt that immigrants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds have been one of the subgroups in Australia most subject to social exclusion. Yet they have been neglected in much of the discourse and intervention associated with social inclusion in Australia nationally and in the states and territories. This is in part a function of the lack of relevant research in this important area. A recent (Hugo, Njuki and Vas Dev, 2012) study by the APMRC has critically assessed the relationship between social inclusion and multiculturalism in Australia. It argues that there is strong synergy between the Government's Multiculturalism (DIAC, 2011a) and Social Inclusion (Australian Government, 2009a and b) agendas. It examines social inclusion in four areas of migrant settlement in Australia:

- improving employment outcomes for migrants especially recent humanitarian migrants;
- interventions for migrant children and youth who are at risk;
- dealing with racism and discrimination;
- locational disadvantage and regional migrant settlement.

It also identifies some other key critical areas that need more attention in the area of international migrant settlement in Australia.

In the 1970s, Australia adopted a policy of Multiculturalism following the recommendations of the Galbally (1978) Report. The latter enunciated a set of principles which have formed the basis of that policy over the subsequent period in which multiculturalism has survived a number of challenges, albeit not unscathed (Jupp, 2002, 87).

- all members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services;
- every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures;

- needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision;
- services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly.

These principles clearly have a strong social inclusion basis and have been important in facilitating most migrants settling successfully in Australia. The most recent enunciation of Australia's Multicultural Policy (DIAC, 2011a) continues this focus. Nevertheless despite what has in many respects been a successful policy, not all migrants have fared well in Australia. This is especially so for recent groups of humanitarian migrants who have been struggling to find employment and have been identified at great risk of poverty and social exclusion (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007; Ministerial Advisory Committee on Victoria Communities, 2007). Some migrants experience multiple barriers to inclusion in Australian society and this paper seeks to adopt a social inclusion approach to examining disadvantage among migrant communities. One advantage of such an approach is that it comprises a broader definition of disadvantage than focussing only on poverty (Hayes, Gray and Edwards, 2008). Silver (2010) suggests this framework is especially appropriate in considering migrant settlement because it accommodates social, cultural, or national 'differences' in plural or multicultural societies like Australia more readily than one-dimensional redistributive frameworks insofar as it acknowledges and accommodates specific needs and rights of groups.

ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS: THE EXAMPLE OF REFUGEES

The displacement of people as a result of persecution is one of the world's most persistent and pressing issues. Australia has been one of the few countries in the world which has accepted substantial numbers of refugees for resettlement – more than 750,000 thus far. In Australia humanitarian migration and settlement is an important and continuing element in national political discourse. Part of this discussion centres around the issue of the costs and benefits of refugee resettlement for the Australian economy and society. By definition, refugees are persons who have left their homes unwillingly, have not planned their migration to Australia and been unable to bring resources with them in their migration. Inevitably there must be greater costs involved in their resettlement than is the case for other immigrants.

They are people who have not had the opportunity to plan and prepare for their migration and bring with them the resources they accumulated in their homeland. Against the considerable costs involved in resettling refugees, however, there is little attempt to consider the benefits that refugee resettlement brings to Australia. The prime motivation for the refugee-humanitarian program has always been, and must remain, a humanitarian one with Australia accepting its responsibility as an international citizen and a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention for the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, this section summarises some of the findings of a report which demonstrates statistically that humanitarian settlers have also made important contributions to Australia's economic and social development (Hugo, *et al.*, 2011). In some ways it provides a template for assessing the contribution of other migrant groups.

There is a substantial body of case study and qualitative evidence of the substantial contribution of refugee settlers in Australia (RCOA, 2009). Quantifying this contribution however has been rendered difficult by the fact that our standard data collections such as the Population Census do not differentiate migrants by the visa category under which they entered Australia. This is an issue which confronts any attempt to assess the contribution of other migrant groups. Where there has been some research to investigate the participation of this group in the Australian economy it has focussed specifically on the early years of settlement in Australia (Cobb-Clark and Khoo, 2006; Australian Survey Research, 2011).

Inevitably the early years of settlement are more difficult for refugee humanitarian settlers than other migrant groups. It is argued here that it is necessary to assess their contribution over a longer time span if it is to be accurately determined.

The Three Ps: Population

The Department of Treasury's Third Intergenerational Report (Swan, 2010) argues that maintenance and growth of the Australian economy over the next two decades in the face of population ageing will depend on our performance in three 'P' processes – population, participation and productivity. Accordingly we will consider the contribution of refugee-humanitarian settlers in these three areas.

From a population perspective refugee-humanitarian settlers since World War II have numbered around three quarters of a million, a tenth of the national migrant intake and a twentieth of national population growth. However there are some distinctive aspects of the demography of these settlers which mean that they contribute, albeit in a small way, to the improvement of the ratio of working age to non working age populations.

Refugee-settlers coming to Australia are not only younger (mean age 21.8 years) than the Australian population as a whole (36.7) but also than other migrants arriving under the skill (26.4) and family (31.4) categories. Some 40 percent of humanitarian arrivals are aged less than 15 years while this group make up only a quarter of all arrivals. Hence many spend their entire working years in Australia maximising their economic contribution. Moreover while there is some variation between different birthplaces several humanitarian groups have higher fertility levels than the Australia-born. These include women born in Lebanon, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.

The continuity of contribution to the economy of refugee settlers compared with other migrant groups is also enhanced by the fact that they are twice as likely to remain in Australia than other migrants. The probability of a refugee settler leaving Australia is 11 percent compared with 26 percent for other groups.

A final 'population' contribution of the group is that they are increasingly settling in regional areas where there is a shortage of workers. The proportion settling outside the capitals increased to 20 percent in 2011. These groups have been recognised as meeting labour shortages but also through offsetting the outmigration of young Australia-born groups and helping retain important services in rural communities.

Participation

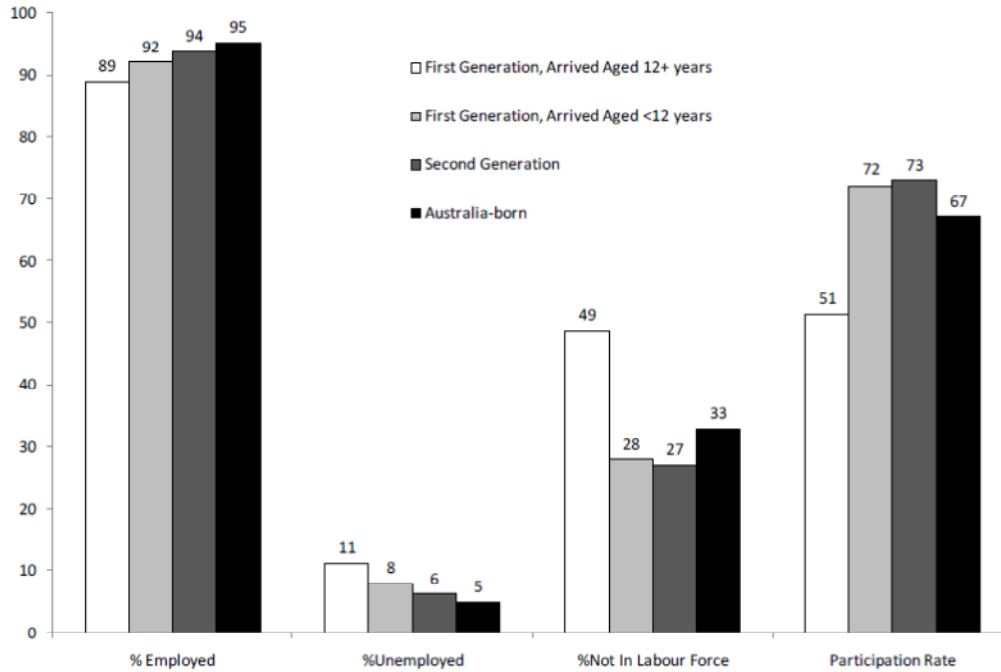
Refugee-humanitarian settlers face more barriers in entering the labour market than other migrants due to the lack of knowledge of the labour market, their lack of relatives and friends to help them to find a job, lack of education or failure to have their qualifications recognised. The barriers which all new migrants face are exacerbated by the particular circumstances under which humanitarian migrants are forced to move. Accordingly their levels of workforce participation are lower and their unemployment levels are higher than is the case for other migrant groups in the early years of settlement. However it is apparent that refugee settlers' labour market participation approaches the Australian average with increased time in Australia as they gain more experience and greater facility in English. If we look at the children of refugee settlers their labour market experience is not only better than that of their parents but is above the Australian average.

Figure 1 demonstrates these trends. The labour force participation rate of refugee settlers who arrived in Australia aged 12 years and older was 51 percent much lower than for the Australia-born (67 percent). However it will be noted that the participation rate is substantially higher for those that arrived as children and hence went to school here (72

percent) and higher still for the children born after their parents settled in Australia (73 percent).

Figure 1: Australia: Refugee-Humanitarian Birthplace Groups, First and Second Generation and Australia-Born Labour Force Status, 2006

Source: ABS 2006 Census



Language barriers are an important impediment to participation in the workforce. Table 1 shows that 28.2 percent of Refugee settlers in Australia do not speak English well or not speak it at all – the highest for any immigrant group. The table shows clearly how labour force participation improves with ability to speak English. Indeed for those who speak English well their rate is higher than for the Australia-born.

Table 1: First Generation Humanitarian Entrants: Proficiency in Spoken English by Labour Force Status, 2006

Source: DIAC 2011b, p. 24

Proficiency in English	Total		Percent Unemployed	Participation rate
	No.	%		
Very well	195,477	37.3	7.7	70.2
Well	181,384	34.6	10.8	57.0
Not Well	121,520	23.2	20.0	36.3
Not at all	26,229	5.0	31.5	12.1
Total	524,610	100.0	11.0	54.9
Australia-born	10,416,233		4.9	67.1

Productivity

The refugee settler population of Australia are often stereotyped as having low levels of education and skill. However Figure 2 indicates that while indeed a higher proportion of the group have only primary school or had never been to school than the Australia born or the total overseas-born population in fact a higher proportion have University degrees. It is apparent that the refugee-humanitarian settler group has a large stock of human capital that is potentially available to the Australian labour market. The key question however is to what extent are those resources being used?

Figure 2: Australia: Education by Birthplace (aged 15+ years), 2006
Source: ABS 2006 Census

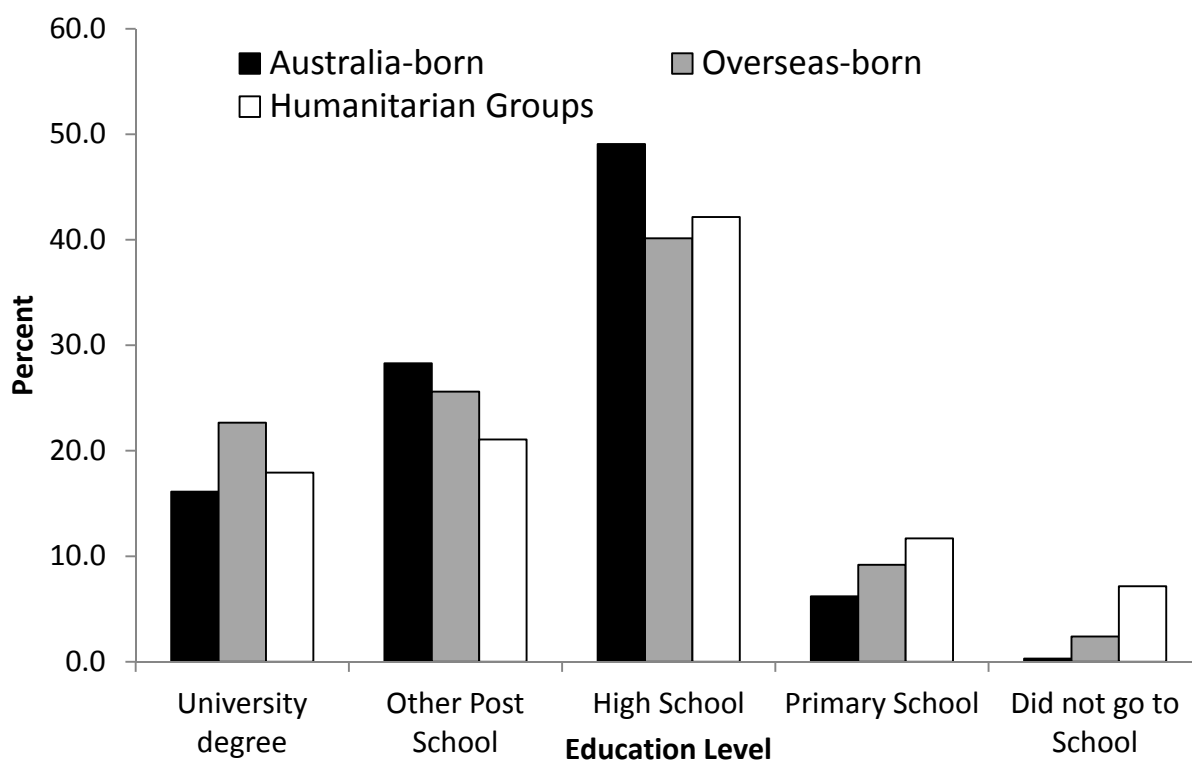


Figure 3 shows that compared to skilled visa recently arrived migrants, humanitarian settlers are disproportionately concentrated in low status, low income jobs with 45 percent being labourers, machinery operators or drivers. It is apparent that there is a significant degree of 'brain waste' among Australia's refugee-humanitarian settlers. Table 2 compares first and second generation refugee settlers with other migrant groups and the Australia-born who are in low status occupations cross tabulated against their level of education. There are

some striking discontinuities. The proportions of those with post school occupations in low income jobs compared to their Australia-born equivalents is several times greater for those with postgraduate qualifications, four times for degree holders and three time for advanced diploma holders.

Figure 3: Occupation of Employed Recent Migrants, 15 Years and Over, 2006
Source: ABS, 2010, 13-14

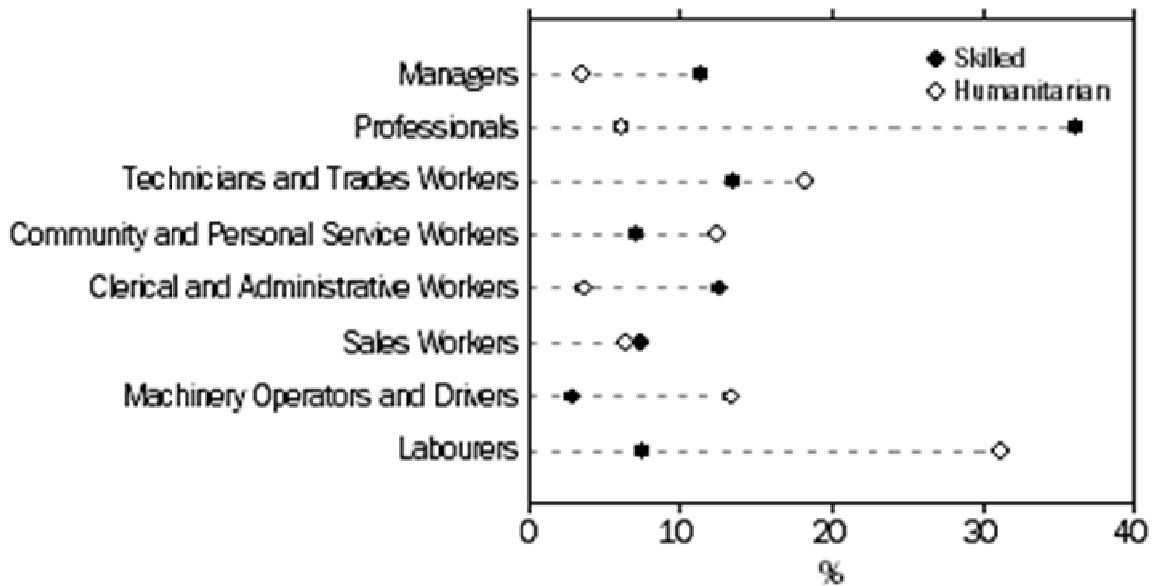


Table 2: Percent of Different Migrant Groups Employed as Labourers or Machinery Operators by Level of Education, 2006
Source: ABS 2006 Census, unpublished tabulations

	Postgraduate Degree Level	Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level	Bachelor Degree Level	Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	Certificate Level
First Generation, Refugee Humanitarian Birthplace Groups	3.4	4.9	7.4	16.5	23.4
Second Generation, Refugee Humanitarian Birthplace Gps	0.4	0.9	1.8	5.0	12.2
Australia Born	0.5	1.0	1.7	4.8	14.7
Overseas Born	3.7	2.9	6.1	9.5	16.9
Total Population	2.1	1.5	3.2	6.2	15.2

What are the reasons for this? Language barriers are one. It is apparent too that while all migrants have to struggle with getting their qualifications recognised in Australia this is especially difficult for refugee-humanitarian settlers. This is because many come from countries whose qualifications are not recognised and many were unable to bring

documentation of their qualification with them. However it is also evident from field study that discrimination in the labour market continues to play an important role. Despite the existence of regulations and laws, discrimination against workers on the basis of ethnicity, race and religion remains.

Other Economic Contributions

Beyond workforce engagement there are some other aspects of the economic contribution of refugee humanitarian settlers that are often overlooked. One of the unmeasurable but nevertheless common ways in which migration is selective of certain groups in the population relates to risk taking. The people who 'get up and go' are often those groups with the most 'get up and go' in the population. This often translates at the destination into migrants showing greater entrepreneurialism and an ability to identify and seize on opportunities when they present themselves. One of the most striking images of the economic impact of refugee settlers in Australia has come from Stevenson's (2005) analysis of the origins of the 2000 *Business Review Weekly* annual richest 200 people in Australia. This found that five of Australia's eight billionaires were people who themselves, as their families had, come to Australia as postwar refugees. Refugees and their descendants accounted for perhaps 5 percent of the national population but in 2000 they made up almost two thirds of the nation's billionaires! In 2010 three of the top richest people in Australia were of refugee-humanitarian background. This raises the important question of the extent to which refugee-humanitarian settlers in Australia are selectively more entrepreneurial than the Australia-born or of other types of migrants. Do these types of migrants have a greater propensity for risk taking? Are they more likely than other groups to identify emerging opportunities and set up new businesses? Do they have more entrepreneurial flair than others which allows them to identify, and take advantage of, business and economic opportunities?

There is a substantial literature on the relationship between migration and entrepreneurship (e.g. Cassis and Minoglou [eds.], 2005). It is apparent that there are a number of personal attributes which are associated with both processes – a propensity to take risks, to not accept the status quo, to take advantage of opportunities when they arise etc. It is certainly the case that many refugees have these characteristics.

Refugee-humanitarian settlers show a greater tendency than many migrant groups to be owner/operators of business although this varies between different birthplace groups. It could be argued that these settlers are adding an important and distinctive entrepreneurial element to the economic profile of Australia's immigrant mix.

Another argument relates to the fact that refugee-humanitarian settlers are disproportionately taking up low skill jobs in Australia as was demonstrated earlier. It is important that policies be put in place or strengthened against discrimination which leads to ‘occupational skidding’ whereby refugee-humanitarian settlers are not working in jobs commensurate with their training, experience and skills. However it needs to be recognised that there is a strong tradition among migrants in Australia of being employed initially in low paying and low status jobs and by dint of hard work and skill achieving considerable upward mobility. This process is occurring but we need to find policies and interventions to facilitate it. In the mean time it is important to recognise that the refugee-humanitarian program is one of the ways in which Australia is meeting labour needs in particular areas of the economy which are experiencing labour shortage.

A further economic contribution of refugee settlers does not relate to Australia but to their homelands. There is increasing evidence that as well as the undoubted negative ‘brain drain’ effects that emigration can have on source countries of migrants there can, in the right policy context, be a number of ‘development dividends’ which emigration can deliver. The first of these is through remittances – the moneys sent home by settlers to their families left behind. Refugee-settlers in Australia send considerable sums to their families in origin countries or refugee camps. Studies among recent migrants from the Horn of Africa indicate that they generally send between 10 and 20 percent of their income in remittances, even when they rely only on benefits. Some groups from a particular region in the origin have joined together to fund developments in their home communities such as a well. There is also evidence of some refugee-humanitarian settlers returning to their homeland on a permanent or temporary basis to assist with development as the countries reconstruct after a period of disruption. The recent formation of the new nation state of South Sudan for example has seen some former refugees who settled in Australia return to assist in the establishment of the new country.¹

Conclusion

The initial years of humanitarian settlers in Australia are often difficult and intensive and use is made of government provided support services. The circumstances of their migration makes this inevitable. Nevertheless the evidence demonstrate that over time there

¹ SBS Dateline, 31 July 2011, “Building the Nation”, accessed at <http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/episode/default/id/335>

is a strong pattern of not only economic and social adjustment, but also of significant contribution to the wider Australian society and economy. This is not to say there are not minorities that get stuck in an underclass situation who find it difficult to adjust and achieve upward mobility. These groups are a cause for concern and must be the target of appropriate policy. Nevertheless the overwhelming picture when one takes the longer term perspective of changes over the working lifetime of settlers and also considering their children is one of considerable achievement and contribution. This progress needs to be seen as more than a convergence toward the Australian average in indicators such as unemployment, labour force participation, income, housing, volunteering, education, etc. There is also an element of distinctiveness about the contribution – there are dimensions which add more than human capital. For example it has been demonstrated that humanitarian settlers in Australia are more likely to demonstrate the entrepreneurial and risk taking attributes which are often associated with migrants than other visa categories within Australia’s immigration stream. They concentrate in particular occupational niches where there are worker shortages and they are increasingly moving to regional localities suffering chronic labour shortages. Moreover they add a distinct diversity and significant social and cultural capital to Australian society.

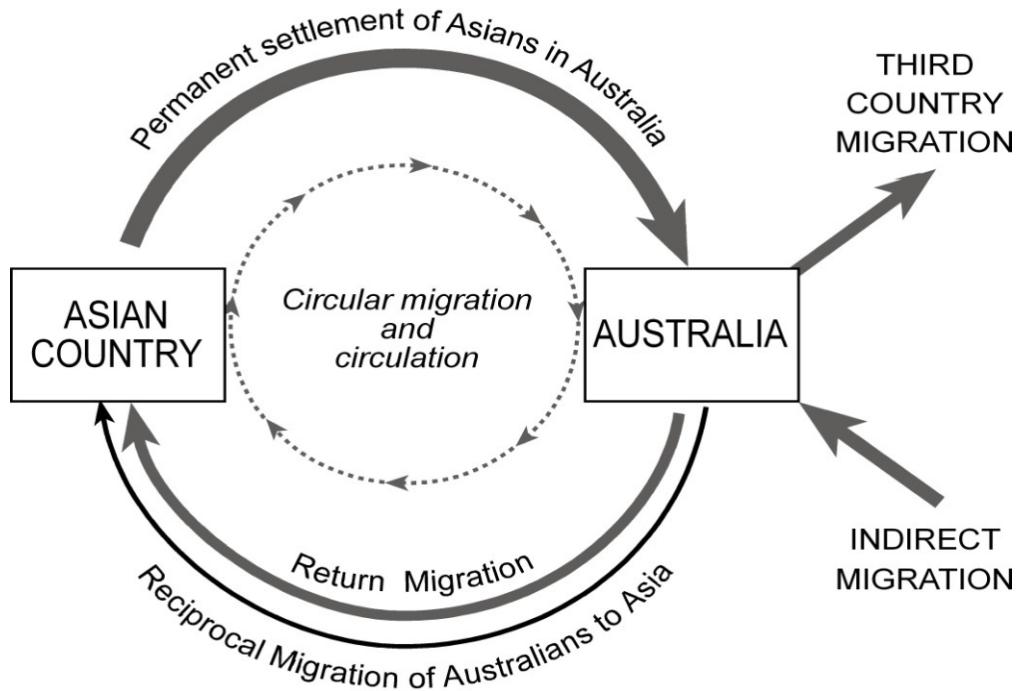
CONCEPTUALISING AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

One of the concerns which we have in the Terms of Reference is that, at least implicitly, it assumes that Australian international migration conforms to a model of permanent settlement. It is critical in the development of an effective migration and settlement policy in the twenty first century that there is a reconceptualisation of Australian migration. Permanent settlement will always be an important element in Australian immigration but it *must* be understood that contemporary international migration in Australia is more complex and if the benefits of that migration to Australia, the migrants and their origin countries is to be maximised, policy must relate to this complexity not just permanent settlement.

At any single point in time there are up to 1 million temporary residents and visitors in Australia and a similar number of Australians overseas. Many are not visitors but temporary residents who will spend considerable time in their destinations. They must be included fully in any analysis of the impact of migration.

Australian migration data is the best in the world and allow us to investigate each of the elements in the migration. Figure 4, for example, represents the migration relationship which Australia has with Asia. It contains a number of important elements.

Figure 4: A Model of the Australia/Asia-Pacific Migration System



- (a) *Permanent Settlement of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Australia:* This refers to the traditional more or less permanent movement of Asians and Pacific Islanders accepted for settlement under the Skill, Family, Refugee-Humanitarian or Special Eligibility Components of the Australian Immigration Program (DIAC, 2008a). They take out permanent residence or citizenship in Australia.
- (b) *Indirect Settlement Migration to Australia:* Some Asian and Pacific groups move initially to a third country and subsequently move to Australia. One of the main such avenues is through New Zealand where they can gain citizenship or residency and then become eligible to move to Australia under the Trans Tasman Migration Agreement (Bedford *et al.*, 2003).
- (c) *Return Migration:* Involving previous settlers in a more or less permanent return to their Asia-Pacific homeland after a period in Australia. This is sometimes referred to in Australia as settler loss (Hugo, 1994).
- (d) *Third Country Migration:* Involving a more or less permanent migration of settlers from Asia and the Pacific to a third country destination after a period of residence in Australia. This is referred to in some contexts as remigration.

- (e) *Reciprocal Migration*: Involving a more or less permanent relocation of Australians to an Asian or Pacific country. These flows are usually smaller in size than the flows in the opposite direction.
- (f) *Circular Migration*: Involving long term but temporary migration of Asia-Pacific people to Australia and Australians to Asia and the Pacific. The main groups are students and long term temporary business migrants. These are people who will spend more than a year at the destination but always with the intention to return. They take out temporary residency in Australia.
- (g) *Circulation*: Involving shorter term movements from Asian countries to Australia and from Australia to Asian countries.

The implications of these patterns for diaspora, Australian labour and housing markets, productivity, social cohesion etc. need to be explored.

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