

4. Unemployment

Much of the higher rate of employment for Cohort 2 is mirrored by a fall in unemployment. Over the period 1994 to 2000, the overall unemployment rate in Australia fell from 9.7 per cent to 6.6 per cent¹. The halving in unemployment among recently arrived migrants (from 21 per cent for Cohort 1 to 10 per cent for Cohort 2) far exceeds this Australian average experience. It is to be expected that when the labour market is improving, the impact on new entrants to the labour force will be greater than the impact on the workforce as a whole. Apart from migrants, the main source of new entrants is young people looking for their first job. In many ways these young people are not comparable with migrants, since most migrants have substantial labour force experience. Nonetheless, it is useful to compare the fall in unemployment among youth over the relevant period with the fall experienced by recent migrants. For young people age 15-24, the unemployment rate fell from 17.0 per cent on average in 1994 to 12.6 per cent on average in 2000 (the comparable figures for those aged 20-24 are 13.6 and 9.5)². The proportionate fall in unemployment for youth of about one-quarter, is less than the one-third fall for the whole population and considerably smaller than the 50 per cent fall for recent migrants.

4.1 Unemployment by visa category

Figure 9 gives a quick visual impression of where the falls in unemployment are concentrated. All visa groups except Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme have recorded a fall in unemployment, with Independent and Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked showing the greatest falls. For Cohort 1, the Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme migrants had by far the lowest levels of unemployment six months after arrival (at about 5 per cent, less than the Australian average). Independent migrants had levels of unemployment that looked more like those of the Preferential Family/Family Stream and Family Skilled. For Cohort 2, unemployment among Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme migrants was still very low, but now it was almost matched by the levels for the Independent migrants. While unemployment in total has halved between Cohorts 1 and 2, the really big gain has been among the Independent migrants: for them,

¹ ABS catalogue no. 6291, table 91

² ABS catalogue no. 6291, table 91

unemployment has fallen by two-thirds, from 28 to 10 per cent. Humanitarian migrants had high levels of unemployment in both cohorts.

Figure 9: A Comparison of Unemployment Rates for Migrants Six Months After Arrival, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, by Visa Category

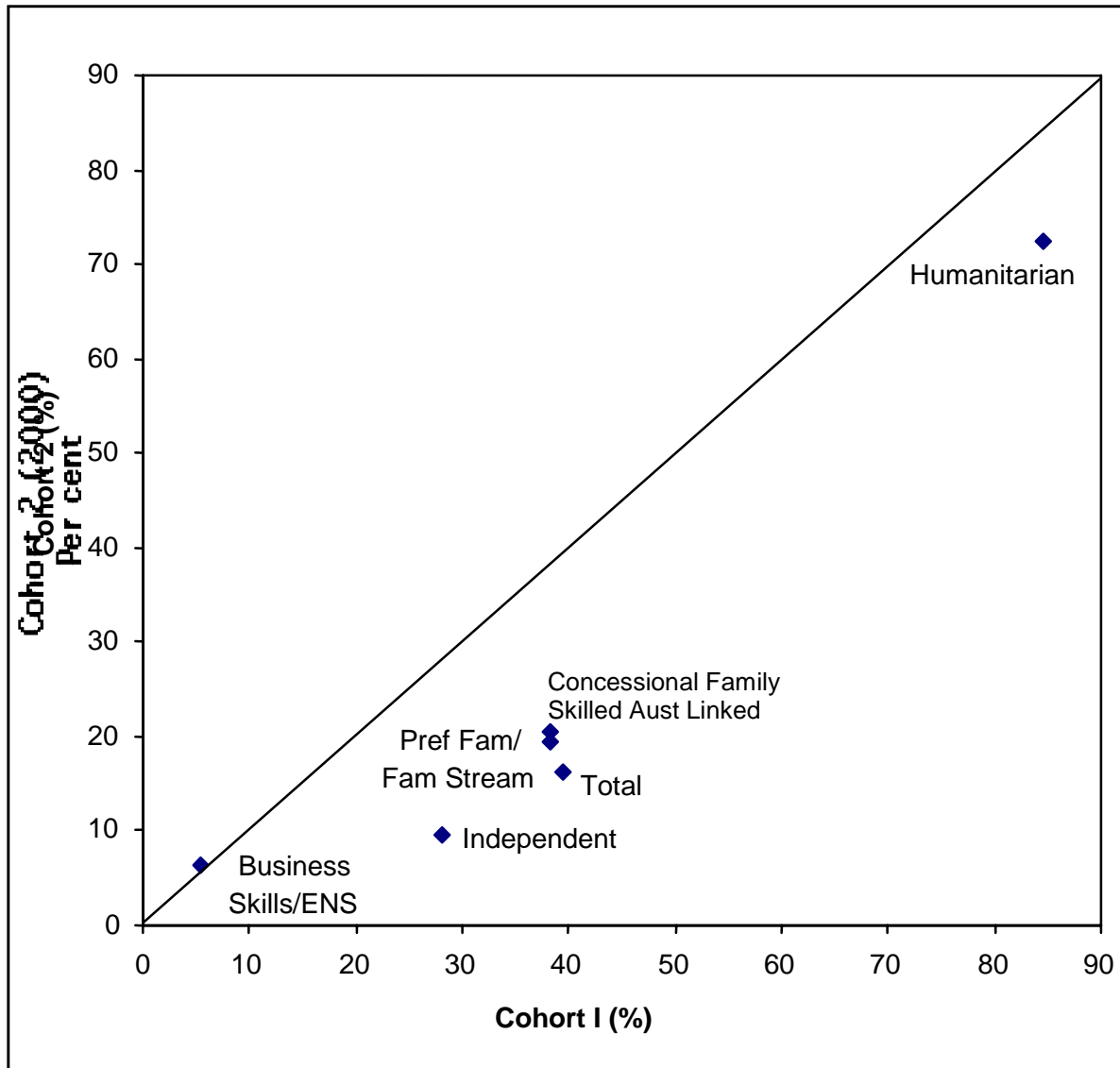
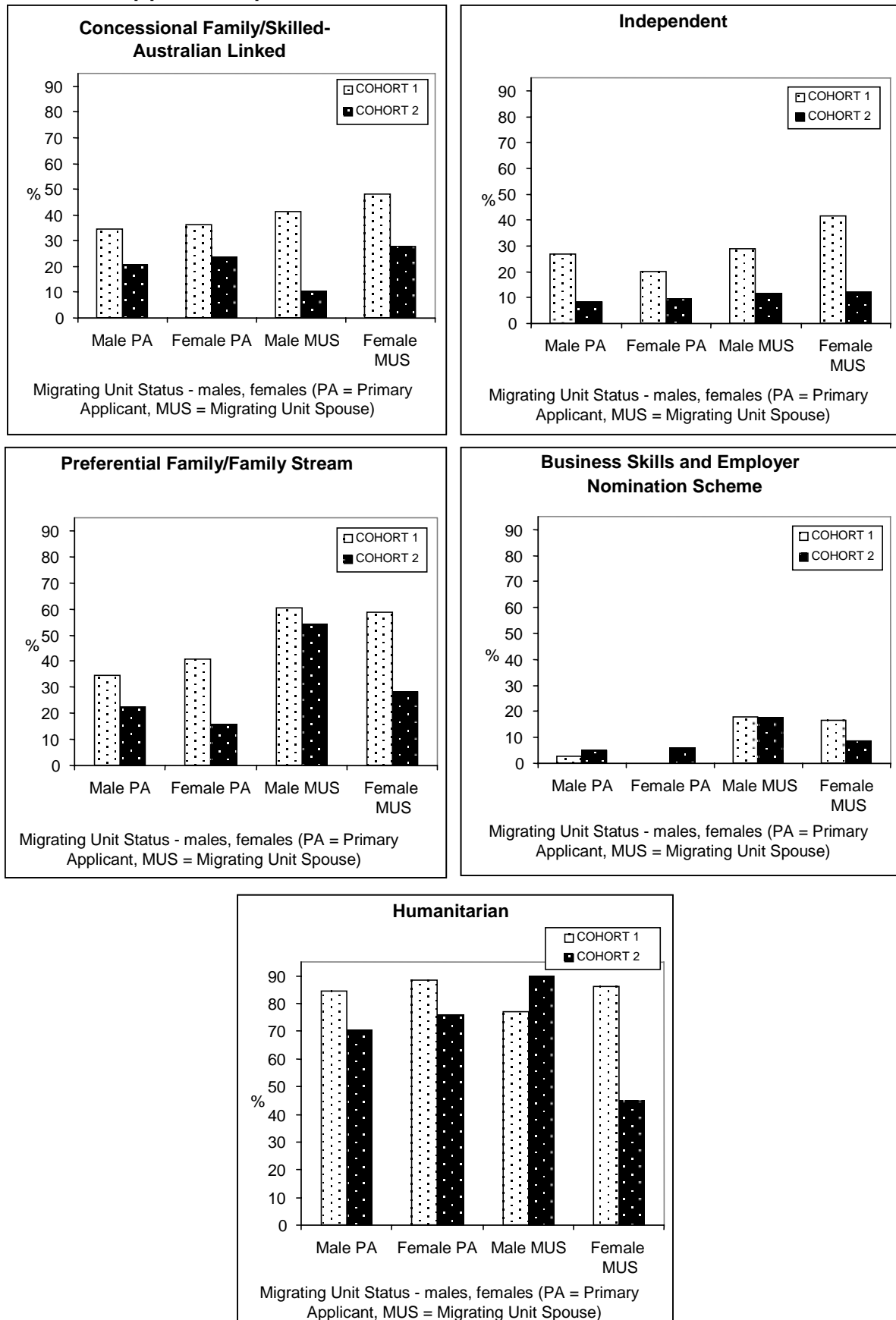


Figure 10 shows the fall in unemployment in more detail. Among the main visa categories, the fall in unemployment is to be found for both men and women and for primary applicants and spouses. Female migrating unit spouses, who in Cohort 1 had the highest rates of unemployment, seem to have gained the most from the improvements for Cohort 2. In all visa groups except Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked their unemployment rates were lower than those of male migrating unit spouses.

Figure 10: Unemployment Rates for Migrants Six Months After Arrival, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, by Visa Category, Sex and Primary Applicant/Spouse



4.2 The evolving unemployment pattern

Of central interest is the speed with which unemployment falls as migrants settle into the Australian labour market. We have already seen, in Figure 5, how employment rates rose for Cohort 1 as their time in Australia increased. Figure 11 shows the same information, but from the perspective of those unemployed and looking for work. The first panel shows unemployment rates for both primary applicants and migrating unit spouses. The second and third panels show the data just for primary applicants, distinguished by sex.

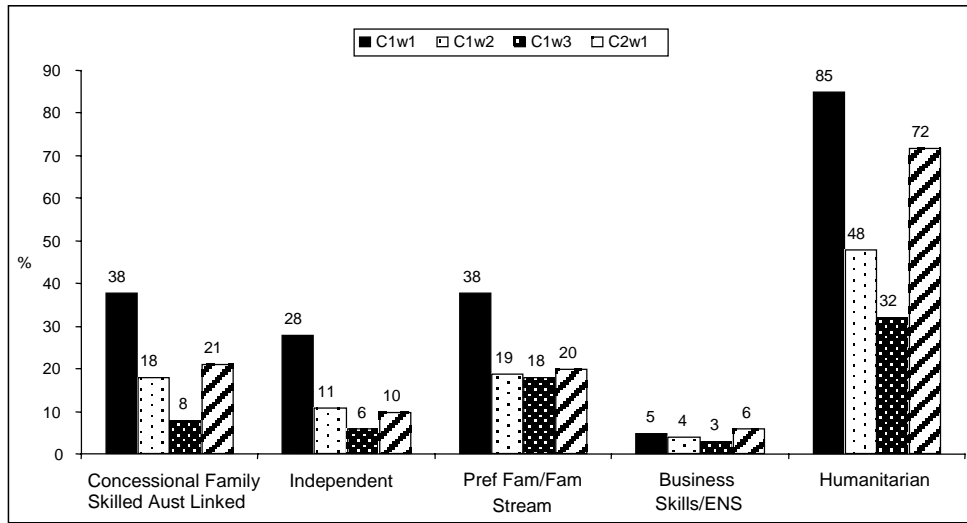
The falls in unemployment over the three and a half year settlement period for Cohort 1 are dramatic. It is clear that initial unemployment rates give little indication of subsequent success in attaining economic independence. Not everyone who left unemployment did so because they found a job. But those who did not find a job presumably found supported roles within the family. From panel (a), we see that the Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked and Independent migrants had particularly large falls in unemployment, from rates of 28-38 per cent six months after arrival to rates of only 7-8 per cent three and a half years after arrival. That is, after three and a half years, the unemployment rate of these groups of migrants was indistinguishable from that of the general Australian workforce. The most spectacular fall in unemployment was in fact among the Humanitarian group, who started with extremely high rates which fell almost by two-thirds. Even with this success, however, there was still an unemployment rate of 31 per cent among Humanitarian migrants. The Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme group started with very low levels of unemployment and had even lower levels after three and a half years (only 2.6 per cent).

The group that saw the least progress in reducing unemployment was the Preferential Family/Family Stream. They started with an unemployment rate (38 per cent) the same as the Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked group and their unemployment rate fell in the same way for the first eighteen months (to 19 per cent). But there it stayed and the subsequent eighteen months of residence in Australia saw no further fall in their unemployment. After three and a half years in Australia, they had the high unemployment rate of 18 per cent (only marginally less than the unemployment rate of the same group of migrants in Cohort 2, six months after arrival).

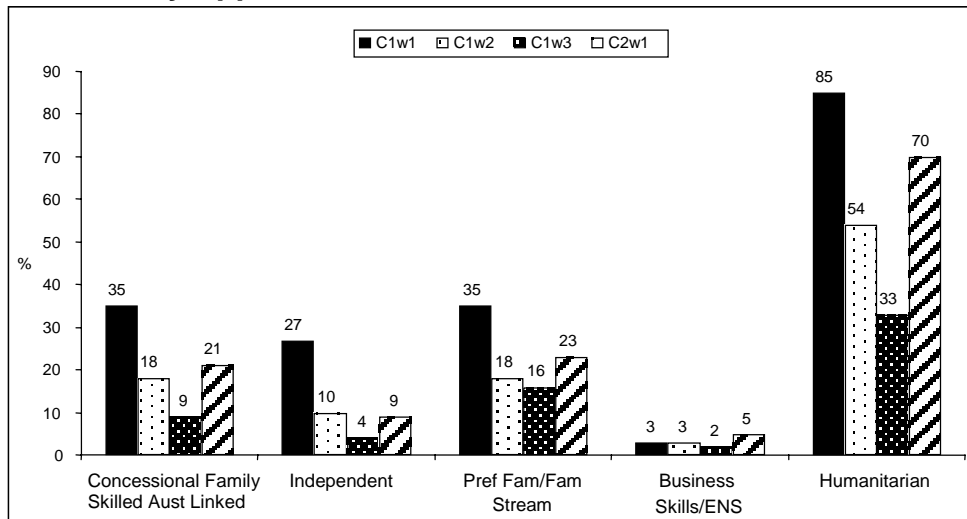
Figure 11 also reports unemployment rates by male and female primary applicants. The sex of the primary applicant has little effect on the time pattern and levels of unemployment. The only exception to this general conclusion is for Independent migrants, where the women had somewhat lower levels of unemployment in all three waves of Cohort 1. Indeed, by wave 3, the unemployment rate for female primary applicants in this group was only one per cent.

Figure 11: Unemployment Rates for Migrants Cohort 1 Waves 1-3, and Cohort 2, by Visa Category

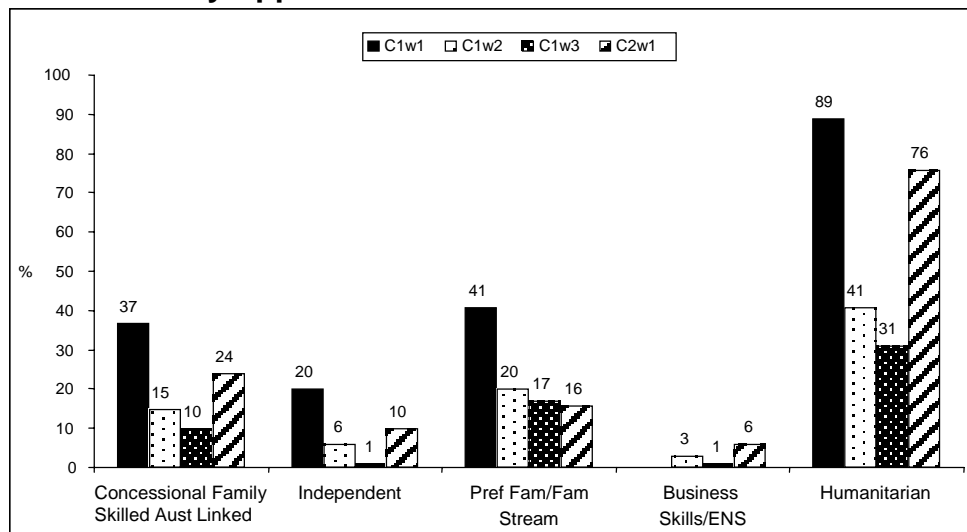
(a) All Primary Applicants and Migrating Unit Spouses



(b) Male Primary Applicants



(c) Female Primary Applicants



4.3 Unemployment and age

For the whole Australian labour force, there is a modest fall in the unemployment rate as one moves from younger to older age groups, if we put to one side the high unemployment rate among youth. In November 2000, the unemployment rate for people aged 25-34 was 5.9 per cent. It fell for each 10 year age bracket to a low of 3.7 for those aged 55 to 59. Among Australian workers who were born overseas, the comparable figures are 6.7 and 4.1³. With this context in mind, we look at the relation between unemployment and age among the two cohorts of recent migrants.

Figure 12 shows unemployment rates for each cohort, disaggregated by visa category and by age group. For recent migrants of both cohorts there is a tendency for unemployment to be higher for older people. For Cohort 2 the tendency has diminished, especially among the Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked and Independent groups. For the latter, unemployment is low and confined to those aged 25 to 44: all those aged 45-54 who were in the labour force were employed. Amongst the Preferential Family/Family Stream, the 45-54 group has done particularly well compared with the earlier cohort. Employment for this age group has risen dramatically and unemployment has fallen below that of the 35-44 age group. Any age differential in unemployment rates among Independent migrants has largely disappeared for Cohort 2. Thus the propensity to higher unemployment among older workers has been attenuated for Cohort 2.

4.4 Unemployment by State

There are modest variations in the labour markets across the States, that might have an influence on the success of recent migrants in obtaining employment. As has been noted before, Cohort 1 migrants who went to Queensland had higher employment rates than would be expected from their personal characteristics. Table 7 shows whether Queensland continues to look different if the focus is unemployment rather than employment, and whether there is much difference in experience of unemployment over time and across the two cohorts, by state.

³ ABS catalogue number 6203, tables 22 and 23.

Figure 12: Unemployment Rates for Migrants Six Months After Arrival, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, by Age Group (per cent)

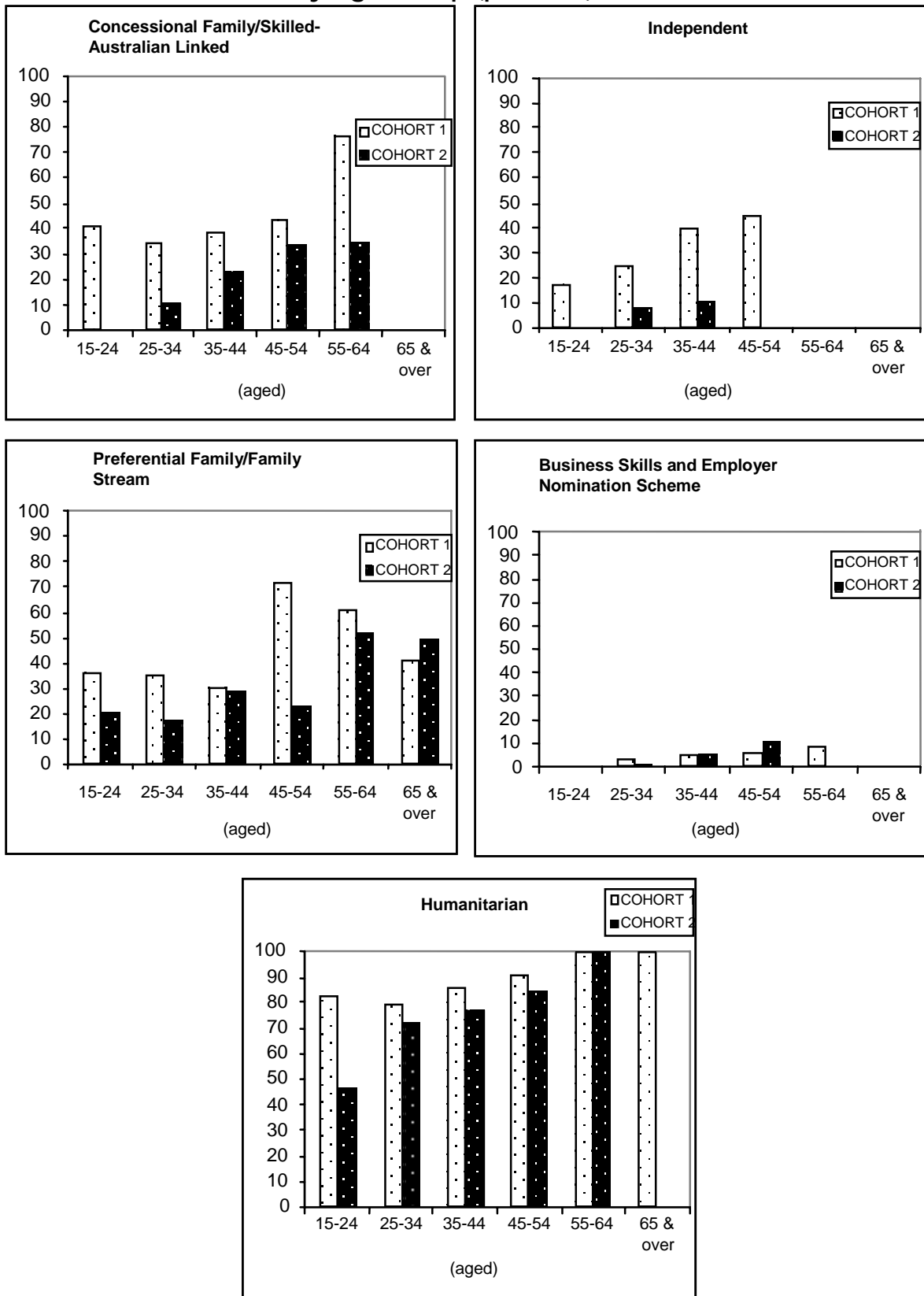


Table 7: People now Unemployed by Intended State of Residence, Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2 (per cent)

State	Cohort 1 %			Cohort 2 %
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1
New South Wales	37	22	15	16
Victoria	57	25	21	20
Queensland	18	9	6	19
South Australia	42	26	21	17
Western Australia	33	11	7	11
ACT	28	19	11	12

The table presents unemployment rates for the whole migrant group, by duration of stay in Australia and by cohort, for each state. It shows that Victoria had a particularly high level of unemployment for Cohort 1 wave 1 (57 per cent) while Queensland had a particularly low rate (18 per cent). By wave 3, three and a half years after arrival, the Queensland/ Victoria difference was still pronounced, but by then the Western Australian levels had fallen to match those of Queensland. It is interesting to note that Cohort 2 levels of unemployment were approximately equal to those for Cohort 1 wave 3, in each state except Queensland. In Queensland, Cohort 2 has fared relatively badly, with an unemployment rate above that in WA, SA and NSW.

We cannot make a true comparison of risk of unemployment across the States unless we control for visa categories. When we do that, that the sample size becomes too small for meaningful numbers to be reported for the smaller States and Territories. Thus only data for NSW, Victoria, Queensland, SA and WA are reported. They show that the broad story given by the aggregate unemployment rates applies when they are disaggregated by visa group, with some variations. The main difference is that for the Cohort 1 Preferential Family/Family Stream, those in SA started off with relatively low unemployment rates but saw these rates *rise* over the following three years.

4.5 Duration of unemployment

The economic and psychological costs of unemployment are strongly linked to the time that a person spends looking for work. If a given level of unemployment among, say, Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants, is widely experienced but of short duration, then it is likely to be much less stressful than if a smaller group experiences long periods of joblessness. With this in mind, we report below in Table 8 the average duration of unemployment experienced by those people who had any unemployment. The data are presented by cohort and compare the experiences of waves 1-3 of Cohort 1, and Cohort 2.

If we compare Cohort 1 wave 1 with Cohort 2, we see that the average duration of unemployment for people who were unemployed at the time of interview was the same (14 weeks). The duration of unemployment of people who had gone on to find jobs or who had withdrawn from the labour force was also similar (indeed, slightly higher for Cohort 2). The difference in the extent of unemployment between the two cohorts is thus explained by the greater proportion of people in Cohort 1 who experienced a spell of unemployment. For Cohort 2, 38 per cent experienced some unemployment during their first six months in Australia. The comparable figure for Cohort 1 is 50 per cent. This implies that the greater unemployment experienced by Cohort 1 was largely a reflection of more people experiencing some unemployment in the process of job search. The better unemployment experience of Cohort 2 is also reflected in the movement out of unemployment. Of all the people who had experienced some unemployment, 59 per cent for Cohort 2 and only 38 per cent for Cohort 1 had found a job by the time of first interview (about six months after arrival): 24 per cent (Cohort 2) and 42 per cent (Cohort 1) were still unemployed.⁴

⁴ Note that the timing of the interviews was such that people in Cohort 2 had typically been in Australia a few weeks longer than was the case for Cohort 1.

Table 8: Duration of Unemployment, for those who Experienced Some Unemployment, by Labour Force Status for Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2 (weeks)

<i>Current Labour Force Status</i>	<i>Cohort 1</i>						<i>Cohort 2</i>	
	<i>Wave 1</i>		<i>Wave 2</i>		<i>Wave 3</i>		<i>Wave 1</i>	
	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>No.</i>
Employed	7	1327	21	1022	32	731	9	936
Unemployed	14	1484	41	708	64	456	14	381
Not in Labour Force	12	678	32	602	48	308	14	265

Not surprisingly, the duration of unemployment rises with waves 2 and 3, Cohort 1, as more time has elapsed during which people could be unemployed. Migrants in Cohort 1 who were unemployed after three and a half years in Australia had typically experienced 64 weeks of unemployment. Those who were now employed had experienced 32 weeks of unemployment.

4.6 Obstacles to finding a job

Respondents were asked to nominate if they had had difficulties in finding a job, and if so what those difficulties were. We report the responses for each of the two cohorts as a whole, ie, not by visa group. This is necessary because the numbers in each cell become unreliably small if further disaggregation is attempted. In Table 9 we show the number of people who reported each of a range of difficulties, and the percentage of the total that this represented.

For Cohort 1 the problems that people reported in finding work did not change much over the three waves, although the number reporting problems fell steadily. English language difficulties were clearly the major problem reported at each wave, with about one third of respondents indicating this problem. About half that number (15 per cent) said that their problem was that there were not enough jobs, a proportion that stayed constant over the three year interval. The inability to have qualifications recognised was cited by only a small percentage of people. Since 60 per cent of people in Cohort 1 arrived in Australia with some sort of post-school qualification, this suggests that the recognition systems in place are working commendably well.

Table 9: Problems that Migrants had in Finding Work, Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2 (per cent)

Problem	Cohort 1 %			Cohort 2 %
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1
English language difficulties	34	38	30	20
Qualifications not recognised	6	5	3	5
Lack of training, experience	9	8	10	8
Not enough jobs	16	14	14	9
No particular problem	11	5	-	22
Insufficient local experience	8	14	12	24
Discrimination	4	6	5	2
Other	13	11	25	9

n = 8977

The most striking difference between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 was that only half as many people in Cohort 2 said that the main reason that they could not get work was that there were not enough jobs. This is the most direct evidence available in the survey data that an improvement in the labour market was one of the important reasons why Cohort 2 has had much better outcomes than Cohort 1. But Cohort 2 also reports much less of a problem in terms of English language difficulty. It is possible that the shortage of jobs identified by Cohort 1 applied particularly to people looking for manual employment where language skills were of little importance. Cohort 2 report that the most frequent problem that they faced was lack of local experience. By its nature, this is likely to be a temporary problem, and suggests that many of those who were looking for work after six months would be likely to find a job in the next period, as they gain local knowledge.

Discrimination and lack of training or experience rate low in terms of being an obstacle to employment, for both cohorts.

An examination of the problems reported by visa category supports the general conclusions described above, with some variation. English language difficulties were trivial for Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked in Cohort 2 but much more of an obstacle for such migrants in Cohort 1. They remained a problem for Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants. The Independent migrants saw the greatest fall in those reporting not enough jobs as an obstacle (from 22 per cent of Cohort 1 to 9 per cent of Cohort 2). The Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked, Independent and Preferential Family/Family Stream categories all had much higher percentages reporting no particular problem in Cohort 2, for example, for the

Independent group this category rose from 18 per cent for Cohort 1 to 36 per cent for Cohort 2.

In summary, the significant changes across the cohorts in problems in finding work are a) a reduction in problems caused by inadequate English and b) a reduction in problems caused by insufficient jobs. Both a general improvement in the labour market and the effects of the changes in migrant selection criteria seem to be at work here.

4.7 Strategies for finding a job

The previous section looked at the obstacles that people met in their search for a job. In this section, we report on the strategies that people used successfully to find their current job. Again we report this for each of the cohorts as a whole. Table 10 reports the strategies used, by Cohort 1, waves 1-3, and by Cohort 2. The responses refer to current job, so we may expect to see some changes as people have been in Australia longer. Some of the response categories are not identical across the cohorts. We have treated the responses “arranged myself after arrival” for Cohort 1 wave 1, “arranged myself” for waves 2 and 3, and “direct approach” for Cohort 2 as being the same.

The overall picture provided by Table 10 is that the methods that people used to find jobs did not change much as a result of being in Australia longer. For each wave of Cohort 1 and also for Cohort 2, the main ways of finding a job (of about equal importance) were English language media, friends and making direct arrangements oneself. Employment agencies were quite important, especially for Cohort 2 where 20 per cent said they found their job in this way. About 10 per cent had their job arranged before they arrived, and another 10 per cent found their job through family contacts. The ethnic media and sponsors had little role to play. Cohort 2 looks very much like Cohort 1 in the strategies used to find jobs. They were much less likely to have used Employment National/Centrelink, but this is probably because of the sizeable fall in the share of Employment National in the public job search market that occurred between the arrival of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

Table 10: How Migrants Found Work, Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2 (per cent)

How Migrant found Work	Cohort 1 %			Cohort 2 %
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1
English language media	21	23	21	17
Ethnic media	2	1	2	3
Sponsor	4	-	1	2
Employment Nat..	6	7	5	2
Centrelink				
Other employment agency	7	6	8	18
Arranged pre-arrival	11	-	-	8
Family	11	10	11	8
Friends	18	28	21	17
Arranged myself	17	19	25	21

n = 7594

5. English Language Proficiency

Migration policy has changed between the two cohorts with the intention of increasing new migrants' prospects for obtaining a job. The changes have been designed to increase the level of English language competence, the level of skills relevant to available jobs, and to reduce the number of older people, especially those over age 45, entering as migrants. The main method for effecting these changes has been through changing the points score for specific attributes in the different visa categories (excepting the Humanitarian category), to give higher weights to English language competence, youth and skills deemed to be in short supply. Below we set out the changes in the profile of migrants between the two cohorts, in terms of their English language skills according to visa category.

Figure 13 shows the effect of the change in policy. The two visa categories that have been affected by the increased emphasis on English language competence are Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked and Independent. In these two groups there has been a clear increase between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 in the self-reported level of English competence. There was a 10-15 per cent increase in the proportion who say they speak English as their only or best language and a slight increase in the proportion saying they speak English very well. Matching this has been the virtual disappearance of people unable to speak English and a sizeable fall in the proportion who say they have limited or modest competence in English. These changes for the Australian Skilled and Independent categories are not matched for the other visa groups. Indeed, for the Preferential Family/Family Stream and

Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme, there has been some fall in the overall level of English competence. On this evidence alone, it would appear that the change in migration policy has had a noticeable impact on the levels of English competence among migrants in the affected categories.

In a later section of this report we will examine whether the greater English language proficiency in the two affected groups has had an impact on the probability of recent migrants in these visa categories being employed. As background to this later analysis, Figure 14 shows the language that employed recent migrants report they need to be able to write in order to perform their job. Overwhelmingly, the Australian-Skilled and Independent migrants report that the only language they need in their job is English, and this is little changed between the cohorts. About 10 per cent say they need to be able to write both English and another language. Among the Preferential Family/Family Stream and Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme, the exclusive need for English literacy is less pronounced and has declined slightly for Cohort 2. Fewer than two-thirds of Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme migrants report that they only need English. By Cohort 2, a quarter say that they need to be able to write English plus another language. In the light of Figure 14, we would expect that high level proficiency in English would be a less powerful factor in labour market success for Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme and Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants than it is for Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked and Independent migrants.

The levels of English proficiency have changed only modestly for Cohort 1 in their three years in Australia. Figure 15 shows the self-reported levels of English speaking skills for each wave of Cohort 1 and for Cohort 2. A higher proportion of Cohort 2 speak English as their only or best language. Not surprisingly, this proportion has not risen much for Cohort 1 in their three years in Australia. What has changed for Cohort 1 is the fall in the proportion who say they do not speak English well, and even more so, the fall in the proportion who do not speak English at all. By wave 3, the latter group had fallen to 5 per cent and was lower than for Cohort 2.

Figure 13: English-language Competence of Migrants Six Months After Arrival by Cohort and Visa Category (per cent)

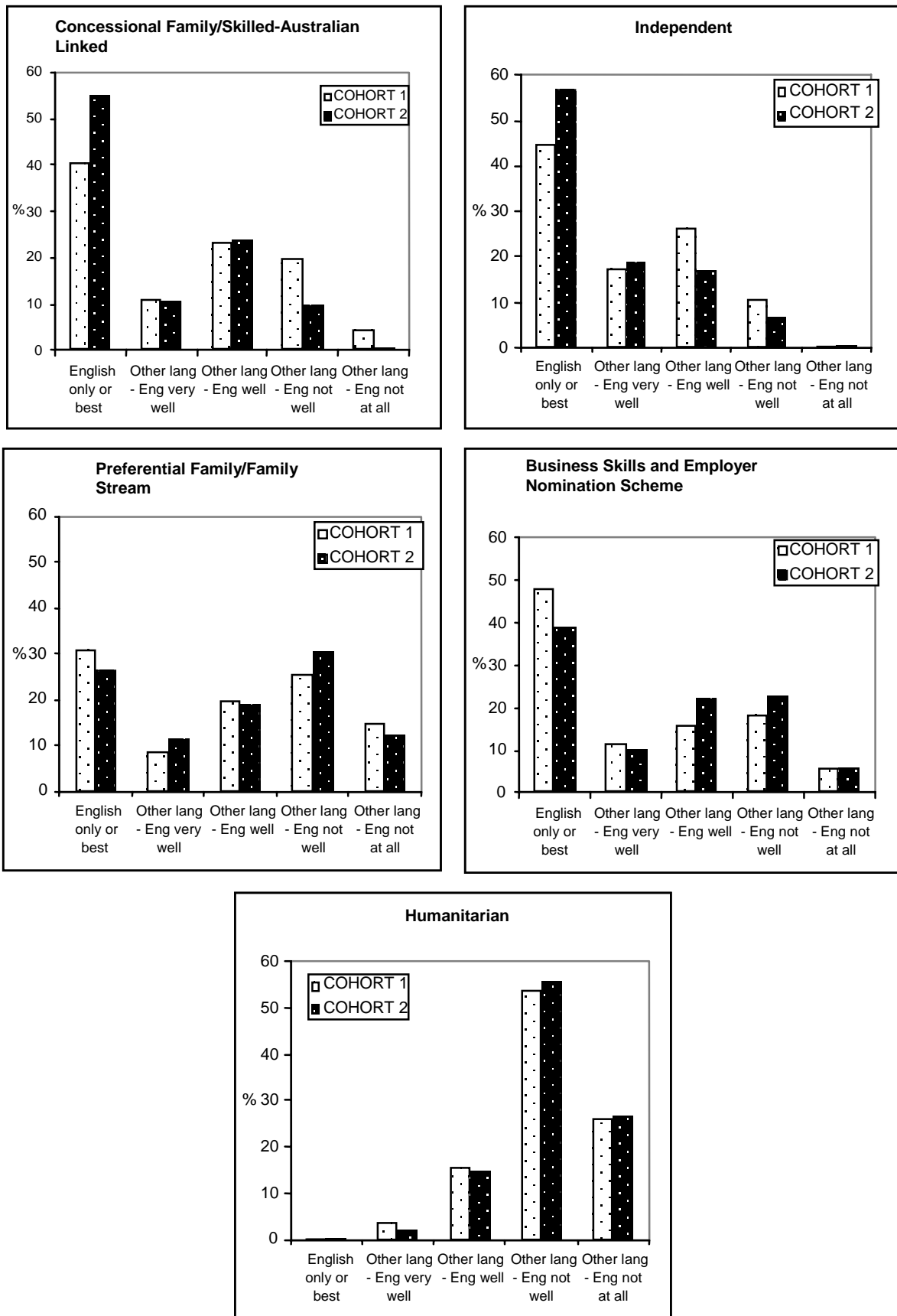


Figure 14: Languages Recent Migrants need to Write to do Main Job or Business, by Cohort and Visa Category (per cent)

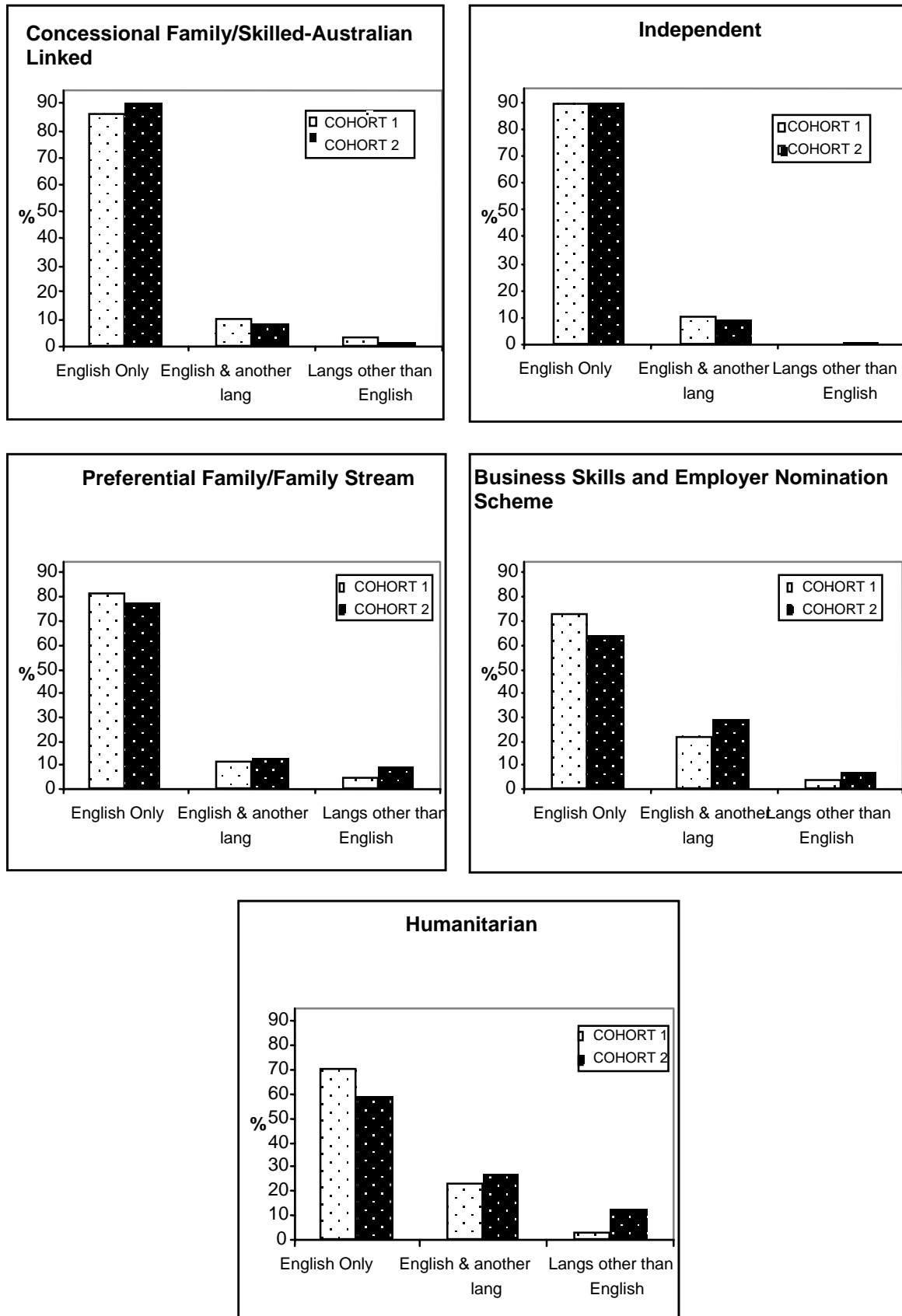
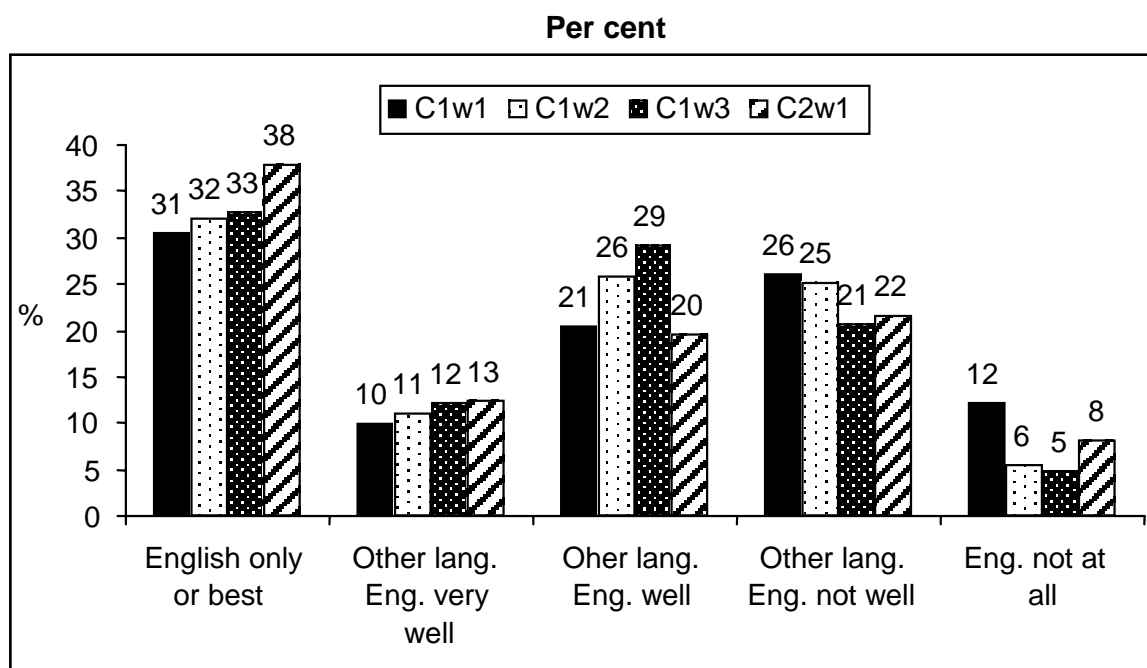


Figure 15: How well Migrants Speak English, Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2



How did people improve their English language skills after they had arrived in Australia? The survey in waves 2 and 3 of Cohort 1 did not ask questions about learning English in the same way as the questions were asked in wave 1, Cohorts 1 and 2. In the table below, we add “other AMEP” (about 5 per cent of waves 2 and 3) in with the main AMEP category.

Table 11 shows that the AMEP was widely used by migrants in the first year or two after arrival, especially those in Cohort 2. Over one-third of Cohort 2 migrants used the program, twice as many as relied on informal methods. For Cohort 1, by waves 2 and 3 most migrants were not formally learning English. However, 29 per cent of wave 2 and 19 per cent of wave 3 continue to do so, mainly through the AMEP.

Table 11: The Main ways in which Migrants Learned English, Cohort 1, Waves 1-3 and Cohort 2 (per cent)

Main Way	Cohort 1 %			Cohort 2 %
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1
Not defined		64	78	
AMEP	29	29	16	37
Other formal	15	7	7	7
Informal methods	20	-	-	16
Not studied, learned	37	-	-	36

n = 14971

6. Qualifications

6.1 Use of qualifications

Table 1 shows that migrants in both cohorts, but especially Cohort 2, have high levels of post-school educational qualifications. The level of qualifications does not change much across the three waves of Cohort 1. Here we examine the extent to which migrants actually use these qualifications in their job. We compare the extent to which they use their qualifications before and after arrival in Australia, and compare Cohorts 1 and 2. We do not present the information by wave because there is very little variation across the three waves. Nor do we present information for the Humanitarian group, since very few had qualifications or indeed were employed.

Figure 16 shows people's assessments of the extent to which they use their qualifications in their job. Only people who had both a post-school qualification and a job at the time of interview (or had one prior to migration) are included. The figure reports responses for each cohort before immigration, and disaggregates responses into visa categories for post-immigration. Again the different waves are not reported, because they are largely unchanged. The exception is for Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme. For this group, the use of qualifications drops from wave 1 to wave 3. Fifty eight per cent of wave 1 report using their skills very often, whereas only 48 per cent of wave 3 do so. Conversely, 14 per cent of wave 1 report rarely using their qualifications compared with 19 per cent of wave 3.

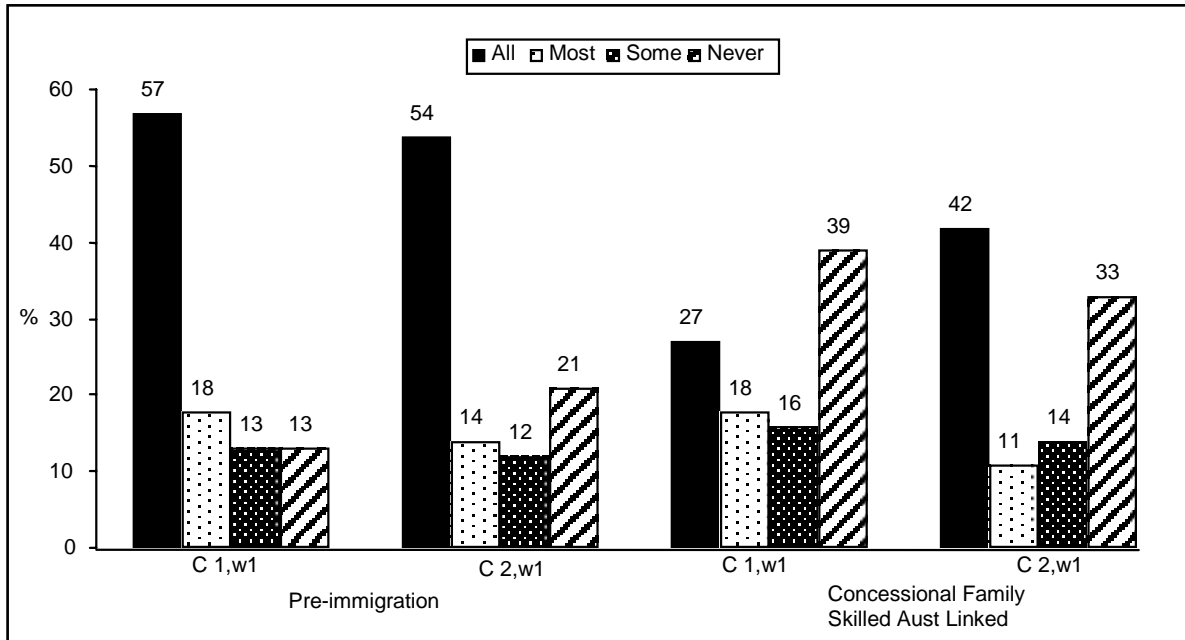
The use of qualifications prior to migration was quite high - over half saying that they used their qualifications all the time. It is interesting to note that in aggregate slightly fewer of (the more highly qualified) Cohort 2 made use of their qualifications than did Cohort 1.

The use of qualifications varied quite substantially between the different visa categories. Business Skills, Employer Nomination Scheme and Independent migrants were the ones most likely to make extensive use of their qualifications, although, as noted above, this propensity fell over time for Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme. Forty two per cent of Independent and 58 per cent of Business Skills and Employer Nomination Scheme in Cohort 1 wave 1 said they used their qualifications all the time, while 24 per cent and 14 per cent respectively

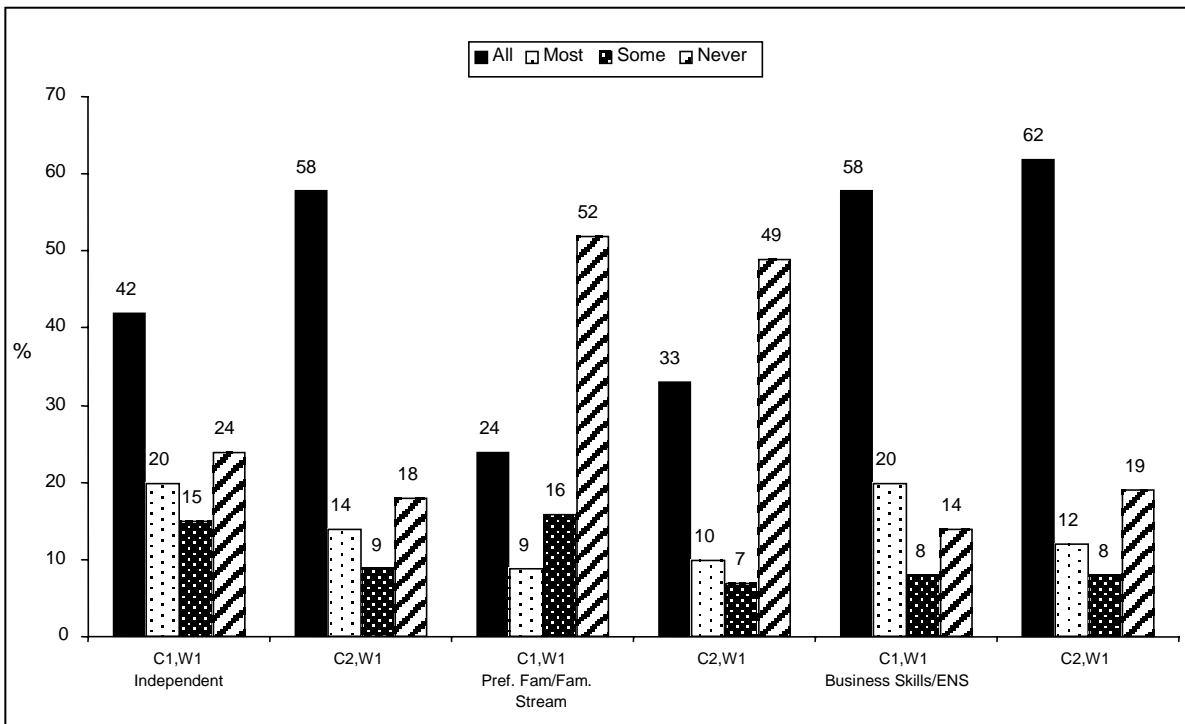
said they used them rarely or not at all. By Cohort 2, the use of qualifications of these two visa groups was almost the same at around 60 per cent.

Figure 16: Use of Qualifications in Employment Before and After Migration, Cohort 1, Wave 1 and Cohort 2, Wave 1 by Visa Category

(a)



(b)



Preferential Family/Family Stream migrants were the ones least likely to use their qualifications, with about half saying that they rarely or never used them - in both cohorts. However, Cohort 2 was more likely to use them very often. There was a sizeable increase between the cohorts in the proportion of the Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked group who made extensive use of their qualifications.

It is interesting that overall, Cohort 2 migrants were *less* likely than Cohort 1 migrants to have made extensive use of their qualifications prior to migration. Despite this, when looked at by visa group, Cohort 2 migrants made more extensive use of their qualifications on arrival in Australia than did Cohort 1 migrants.

6.2 Assessment of qualifications

Qualifications are of most value if they are used in the job that a migrant is able to obtain. In many cases, such as the professions and the trades, qualifications obtained overseas need to be subject to formal assessment for their comparability with Australian qualifications before they can provide access to relevant jobs.

Australia has an extensive and effective structure for the recognition of overseas qualifications - superior to that in most other countries (see Cully and Skladzien, 2001). Support for the efficacy of the Australian system of recognition of overseas qualifications was found in Table 9, which showed that failure to have qualifications recognised accounted for a small proportion of the obstacles to getting a job.

In Table 12 we report how migrants approached obtaining recognition of their qualifications. Of course, this is an issue only for those who have qualifications. Thirty per cent of Cohort 2 and 40 per cent of Cohort 1 did not have qualifications that were relevant to the recognition process. Given this difference, there is little to distinguish the cohorts in terms of how they approached the issue of having their qualifications recognised. Thirty-six per cent of Cohort 1 migrants and 40 per cent of Cohort 2 migrants did not seek recognition of their qualifications.

For each cohort twice as many sought recognition prior to immigration compared with post-immigration. The Concessional Family/Skilled-Australian Linked and Independent migrants were much more likely than the Preferential Family/Family

Stream migrants to have qualifications and to seek to have them recognised. Thirty-eight per cent of the former group sought recognition of their qualifications prior to migrating, compared with three per cent of the Preferential Family/Family Stream.

Table 12: Assessment of Highest Qualifications, by Cohort (per cent)

Assessment Sought	<i>Cohort 1 %</i>	<i>Cohort 2 %</i>
Sought pre-immigration	14	18
Sought post-immigration	8	7
Not sought	36	40
Australian qualifications	3	5
No post-school qualifications	41	30

n – 11124

6.3 Field of qualifications

While the field in which post-school qualifications have been obtained does not have a strong impact on employment prospects or earnings (as we show subsequently), there is still some interest in the types of skills that migrants are bringing into Australia. Table 13 shows the fields in which people's highest educational qualifications have been obtained, separately for each cohort. This is not further disaggregated, because it does not change with time spent in Australia (the relevant qualifications were mostly obtained prior to immigration). Further, an examination of the field by the major visa groups shows that the story for each is similar to the story for the whole cohort. And the story is a simple one. First, as we have seen in Table 1, the proportion of migrants with formal qualifications is substantially higher for Cohort 2 than for Cohort 1. Second, the most common fields for these qualifications are engineering, management, sales, marketing and administration, and social sciences. This was true for both cohorts, although the management group saw the largest rise between cohorts.

Table 13: Field of Highest Qualification Obtained Prior to Migration, by Cohort (per cent)

Assessment Sought	<i>Cohort 1 %</i>	<i>Cohort 2 %</i>
Management, sales, marketing,	11	17
Health	6	6
Education	3	4
Social Sciences	11	13
Science	7	10
Engineering	15	15
Other	7	6
No post-school qualifications	41	30

n = 11123

6.4 Country of highest qualification

Table 14 shows where migrants' qualifications were obtained. Not surprisingly, the picture looks much like the origins of the migrants themselves, except for the few per cent (rising to 5 per cent for Cohort 2) who obtained their qualifications in Australia. This percentage can be expected to increase with the change in migration selection criteria to facilitate migration among graduates of Australian educational institutions. Apart from that change, there have been modest increases in the proportions obtaining their qualifications from Asian countries and some reduction in the proportion obtained from "other Europe". Migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, from South East Asia and North East Asia have increased their proportions with post-school qualifications between Cohorts 1 and 2.

Table 14: Country in which Highest Qualification was Obtained, by Cohort (per cent)

Country	<i>Cohort 1 %</i>	<i>Cohort 2 %</i>
Australia	3	5
UK, Ireland	12	14
Other Europe	12	10
Middle East/Africa	7	10
South East Asia	6	7
North East Asia	7	10
South, Central Asia	7	9
North America	4	3
Other	2	2
No post-school qualifications	40	30

n = 11142