

1969

Public concern over Australia's capacity to integrate migrants grew as the Migration Program reached a peak of 185,000.



Victims of earthquakes
in Sicily settle into
suburbia in Launceston (1968)



Migrants from the ship 'The
Britanis' passing through customs
at Station Pier, Melbourne (1971)

1971

The Government lowered the planned Migration Program to 140,000 from its previous levels of around 170,000, in response to the end of a long economic boom.

1972

The Government sought to completely dismantle the White Australia Policy. The focus of immigration policy became the economy, employment, housing, and social service support. Priority for admission was given to close dependent relatives and limited numbers of workers in occupations for which there was unmet demand.

The migration intake for 1972–73 had been planned for 140,000 but the new Government reduced the planned level to 110,000.

1973

The Government took further steps to remove race as a factor in Australia's immigration policies, however these steps had very little impact on the number of migrants from non-European countries because of overall reduced migrant intakes.

All migrants became eligible to obtain citizenship after three years of residence.

The Australian Government accepted refugees from Chile following the overthrow of the Allende Government.



British arrivals at Brisbane (1973)

1974

The 1974–75 Migration Program was reduced to 80,000 because of increasing unemployment.

Displaced persons from Cyprus were accepted after the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus.

1975

The planned migrant intake was reduced to 50,000, the lowest since World War Two.

The Government declared immigration as an essential instrument of population policy and broader national strategies guided by humanity, equity, and compassion and by Australia's capacity to successfully integrate migrants. It also committed to the preservation of a culturally diverse but cohesive society.

1976

The new Government increased the size of the Migration Program to 70,000.

Amnesty was offered and approved for nearly 8,000 visitors who had overstayed their visitor visas at the end of 1975. This encouraged subsequent visitors to overstay. As a result controls on entry were tightened.

Australia accepted Indo-Chinese refugees from Thailand.

Australia assisted people affected by civil conflict in Lebanon.

During 1976 and 1977 Australia accepted refugees from forty countries.

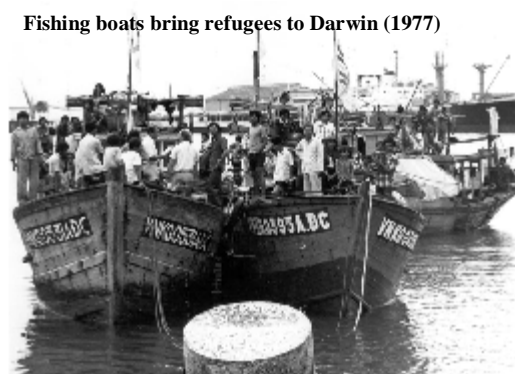
The first of the small refugee boats arrived on Australian shores. It contained five refugees from Viet Nam. Two more refugee boats arrived in the year.

1977

The *Australian Population and Immigration Council* presented to parliament a paper with scenarios of immigration intake ranging from 30,000 to 200,000 producing net gains ranging from zero to 100,000 per annum. The paper also drew attention to emigration and its repercussions. In response to the paper the public and Government supported moderate to high levels of population growth through immigration.

A new refugee policy was announced covering assessment and handling of refugee situations. Special provision was made for handling evacuees from places such as East Timor, Cyprus and Lebanon where, although not strictly refugee situations, humanitarian action was warranted.

In the second half of the year an increasing number of small boats carrying Indo-Chinese refugees arrived along Australia's northern coast. Twenty four of these boats arrived in the year.



**Population Development is an Important Backbone of Immigration Policy
1978–1984**

Population passed 15 million.

1978

Following wide public debate, new immigration policies were developed to provide a framework for Australia's population development. The features included relaxation of the criteria for family reunion, a more consistent approach to migrant selection and an emphasis on attracting people who would be a positive gain to Australia. It also committed to three year plans to replace annual immigration targets, an average net gain of 70,000 per annum and the application of immigration policy without discrimination.

Increased effort was put into detection and deportation of an increasing number of illegal entrants and overstayers.

The categories of visitors eligible to apply for a change of status to that of permanent residence were tightened following widespread abuse of this facility.

1979

There was a continued outflow of refugees from Viet Nam including boats reaching Australia's northern coast. After assessment by Australian officials, airlifts to Australia from crowded refugee camps in Southeast Asia were arranged for refugees. The 'Australian Refugee Advisory Council' was established to recommend improvements in the way Australia handled this increasing number of refugees.



A disastrous journey's end in the South China Sea (1979)



The 'Numerical Multifactor Assessment System (NUMAS)' was introduced. This immigrant selection assessment system gave weight to factors such as family ties and occupational and language skills as indicators of the likelihood of successful settlement.



The first family assessed by the NUMAS (1979)

1980

Requirements for the entry of relatives and friends of Australian citizens were relaxed. The mechanism for this was lower NUMAS pass requirements concerning economic factors for prospective migrants with family or friends in Australia who were prepared to assist in their settlement.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers agreed to support immigration at around 80,000 but emphasised the need for skilled people in high demand occupations.

1981

All travellers entering Australia were now required to carry a passport. This was to curb abuse of the previously undocumented travel between Australia and New Zealand.

A Review of Commonwealth Functions recommended that assisted passages be terminated for all migrants except refugees.

A fishing boat carrying 146 people who claimed to be refugees from Viet Nam, arrived in Darwin. They were subsequently found to be fee-paying passengers attempting to enter illegally.

The 'Special Humanitarian Program' was announced to provide a humanitarian response to people with close relatives in Australia who were suffering substantial discrimination or human rights violations but could not be accommodated in the existing refugee programs.

1982

The Migration Program was reduced by 15,000 and other changes were made in response to a tightening labour market.

Australia and Viet Nam developed an agreement for an 'Orderly Departure Program' from Viet Nam.



A new migrant selection system (replacing NUMAS) came into force. The new system strongly favoured applicants with skills and personal qualities of benefit to Australia, and those with close family here.

1983

The Government resolved to steer a middle course of a planned Migration Program of between 80,000 and 90,000.

Refugees were accepted from El Salvador, Sri Lanka and Lebanon.

1984

Concerns over the proportion of immigrants from Asian regions were defended by the Government as being a consequence of a non-discriminatory Migration Program.

The Government approved changes to improve the Business Migration Program.

Overseas visitors began to climb sharply. Between 1983–84 and 1984–85 there was only a 7 per cent increase but between 1984–85 and 1985–86 (1,300,750) there was a 19 per cent increase. Sustained growth in visitor arrival numbers of this magnitude had not occurred earlier but it was a feature of the remainder of the 1980s.

Economics is a Major Focus of Immigration Policy 1985–1995

Population passed 18 million

1985

There was increasing recognition of the importance of the positive effects of economic migration.

Australia maintained a strong commitment to assisting refugees.

A major study, *The Economic Effects of Immigration on Australia* was released. It pointed to many positive effects of immigration. Taking these findings into account the Government increased the planned Migration Program to 84,000 settlers and supported a program that was carefully designed to bring in people who did not compete with the unemployed for jobs.

1986

The Migration Program accelerated markedly. After revision, the Minister announced a planned intake for 1986–87 of 115,000. This increased intake was designed to maintain economic development, and to emphasise those who were bringing skills, business expertise and capital to Australia. Declining fertility and the prospect of an ageing population also influenced the planning of the Migration Program.

New 'Independent' and 'Concessional' categories in the Migration Program were introduced to allow extended family members to migrate provided they qualified in relation to employability, age, education and skills.

All migrants were now offered a three-year resident return visa to help business migrants in particular return to their country of origin to transfer operations to Australia.

1987

The 1987–88 Migration Program was set at 120,000.

The 'Skills Transfer Scheme', which was designed to facilitate short-term entry of executives and specialists, was introduced.



1988

Report of the *Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies* (CAAIP) recommended reforms. These reforms included the division of the Migration Program into three streams – 'Family', 'Skill' and 'Humanitarian', the development of a research capacity, better procedures to achieve the numbers set by the Migration Program and revision of the migration categories to realise national social and economic objectives.

The *National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition* was established as part of major reforms to the system of overseas skills recognition.

1989

The planned Migration Program reached a peak of 145,000 for 1989–90.

Following the Tiananmen Square incident in China, Chinese citizens, who were normally resident in China but legally temporarily resident in Australia, were permitted to remain until July 1990. This was later extended to June 1994.

A small boat carrying 26 people arrived illegally from Cambodia.

1990

Planning levels for the 1990–91 Migration Program were set at 126,000, a reduction on the 1989–90 program.

Visitors from Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait were given permission to extend their time in Australia due to unsettled situations in their countries. There were several further extensions to these periods of stay.

1991

The 1991–92 Migration Program was reduced to 111,000.

To encourage the development of an export oriented education industry new arrangements for student entry came into effect.

Because of a tightening labour market the 'Priority Occupations List', used in the selection of points tested migrants, was reduced from eleven occupations to four.

1992

The planning level for the 1992–93 Migration Program was reduced by 31,000 from the previous years program to 80,000. Labour market and English proficiency issues were given greater importance in the design of the program.

Several unauthorised boats entered Australia mainly carrying Chinese nationals.

Within the Humanitarian Program, Special Assistance visas were granted to 4,000 applicants belonging to ethnic minorities from the former Soviet Union and to Yugoslav, Croat, East Timorese and Lebanese applicants.

Two new visa classes were introduced to provide for State and Territory Governments to sponsor limited numbers of 'Business Skills' migrants.

Visitors from Sri Lanka, Croatia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia were given extended periods of stay because of unrest in their respective regions.

The *Migration Reform Act 1992* was introduced.

1993

The shift continued to people coming to Australia for short-term purposes and a Migration Program built around specific objectives rather than large-scale immigration.

One of the main focuses of the then *Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs* became the balance between facilitating the entry of bona fide visitors and migrants and the control of those entrants to the country who did not meet the requirements of immigration law.

Business migration policy was refined and visas issued under the Business Skills category tripled.

The '1 November' decision to provide access to permanent residence to people temporarily in Australia was directed primarily at Chinese nationals who had been on four-year temporary entry permits and faced uncertainty about their future in Australia. By August 1994, around 49,700 people had applied.

1994

Within the Humanitarian Program, over 5,000 former Yugoslavs and nearly 3,000 persons from the Middle East were resettled in Australia in 1994–95.

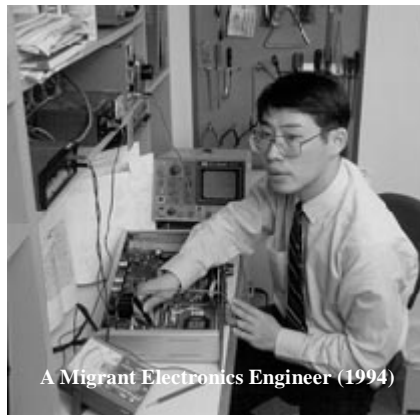
Significant numbers of people, who had already been determined by United Nations endorsed processes not to be refugees, arrived by boat.

An inquiry into Australia's long term population strategies and carrying capacity was established.

1995

For the first time New Zealand-born people became the largest group of settler arrivals, overtaking settlers from the United Kingdom.

There was substantial growth in applications for Business Skills migration following a revamping of conditions and an upturn in economic activity.



Migration Planning Becomes More Focused on Labour Market Issues 1996–2000

Population passed 19 million

1996

The planned Migration (non-Humanitarian) Program was reduced from 82,500 to 74,000. The skilled intake was increased from about 29 per cent in 1995–96 to about 38 per cent in 1996–97. The Humanitarian Program was set at 12,000 places in the 1996–97 program year.

1997

The temporary entry of tourists, business people, students and working holiday makers exceeded 10 million movements into and out of Australia each year, growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent.

More emphasis was given to the Skill stream. The 1997–98 Migration (Non-Humanitarian) Program was set at 68,000, of which 52 per cent were in the Skill stream. This involved the creation of a new ‘Skilled-Australian Linked’ category, which was derived from the former ‘Concessional Family’ category but with more stringent criteria.

A waiting period of two years was introduced before migrants could obtain social security income support payments.

1998

The Humanitarian Program responded, to the *United Nations High Commission for Refugees* (UNHCR) assessments of need, by resettling people from the former Yugoslavia region, the Middle East and Africa.

People from Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, China, Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia, who were temporarily in Australia, were offered residency in a one-off provision.

Considerable success was achieved in reducing the number of unauthorised boat arrivals through dialogue with source countries.

For the first time the number of overseas visitors arriving in Australia for a long-term stay (twelve months or more) passed 100,000.

1999

Permanent departures reached the highest level since 1973–74. The departure of Australia-born people was the second highest ever recorded and began an increasing trend for the Australia-born to emigrate.

Humanitarian resettlement priorities were the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Southwest Asia and Africa.

A new points test for skilled migrants was developed, favouring migrants with skills in demand.

2000

The ‘Employer Nomination Scheme’ and Business Skills categories were amended to increase Australia’s competitiveness for these migrants in an environment of globalisation of the workforce.

Policy changes enabled overseas students who have studied in Australia to apply onshore to migrate permanently.

Temporary entry to Australia continued to increase. There were around ten per cent increases in visa issues for students, visitors, working holiday makers and long-term skilled business entry.

2001

From 26 February 2001, most New Zealand citizens are required to obtain a permanent residence visa if they wish to access social security payments or Australian citizenship. The new arrangements brought into line the treatment of New Zealand citizens with the position of other migrants while retaining the ability of Australian and New Zealand citizens to easily visit, work, study and live in each other’s country.

The 2001–02 Migration (non-Humanitarian) Program included 45,500 places in the Skill Stream, which was 54 per cent of the total program. This was the highest number for the Skill Stream over the past decade.
