

Labour Market Composition

Labour Force by Birthplace

In August 2001, the Australian labour force totalled 9,768,200 people: 7,400,900 Australian-born and 2,367,300 overseas-born. Of the overseas-born, 1,383,600 people were from non-English speaking countries (NESC) and 983,700 were from the main English speaking countries (MESC).

Of migrants in the workforce, 94.2 per cent of MESC migrants and 92.3 per cent of NESC migrants were employed. This compares with 93.5 per cent in employment for the Australian-born. The Australian-born are more strongly represented in the workforce than migrants. The participation rates of Australian-born men and women are 74.7 and 59.3 per cent respectively. The participation rates for NESC men and women are 63.4 and 43.9 per cent respectively and for MESC men and women 72.7 and 55.2 per cent respectively.

Employment by Industry

The overseas-born are heavily represented in manufacturing, making up 31.8 per cent of workers in August 2001, while 31.7 per cent of workers in communication services are also migrants. Migrants are less strongly represented in the agriculture, forestry and fishing (10.6 per cent of the workforce) and mining (16.9 per cent) sectors.

The participation of migrants in industries also varies between MESC and NESC migrants. MESC migrants are disproportionately represented in the property and business services industry (13.1 per cent of all workers in this industry) but represent only 4.7 per cent of workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

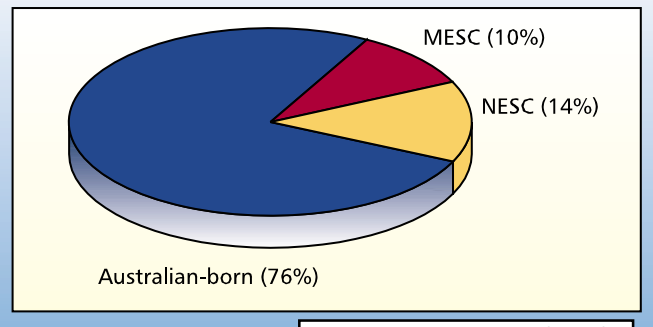
Employment by Occupation

The occupational groupings used below reflect the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) Second Edition, which consists of nine major occupation groups.

The overseas-born are more highly represented as professionals (27.5 per cent of all professionals employed in August 2001), intermediate production and transport workers (27.3 per cent) and labourers and related workers (26.5 per cent).

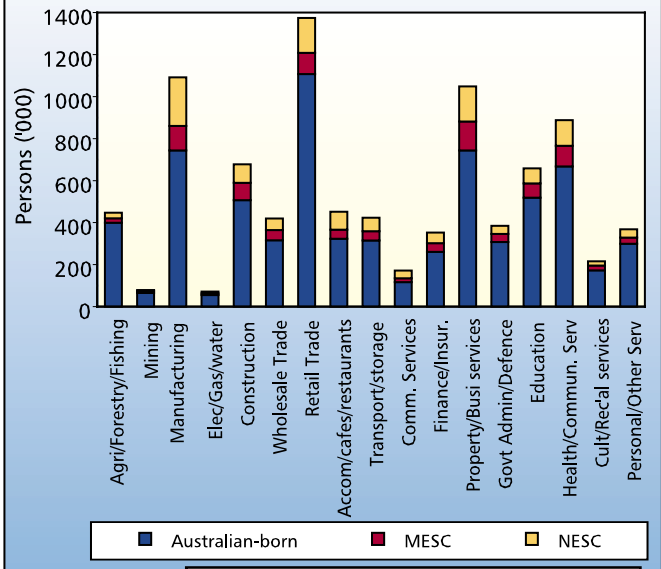
Compared with the Australian-born, MESC migrants are more likely to be employed as professionals and associate professionals than the Australian-born. While NESC migrants are more likely to be employed as professionals, intermediate production and transport workers, and labourers and related workers.

Fig. 5-8: Labour Force by Birthplace August 2001



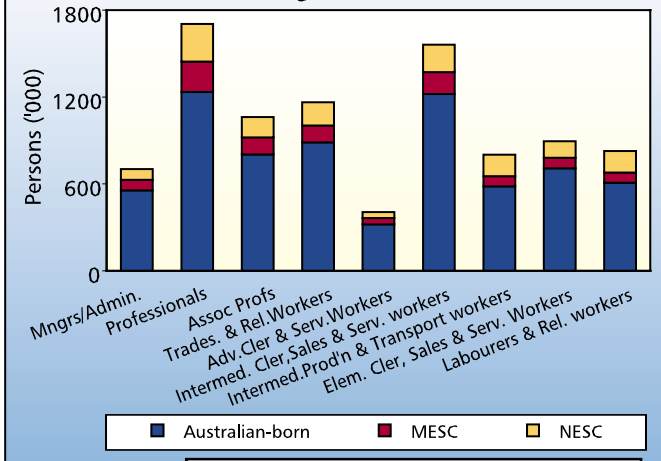
Source Data: ABS Labour Force (6203.0)

Fig. 5-9: Employment by Industry and Birthplace August 2001



Source Data: ABS Labour Force, unpublished statistics

Fig. 5-10: Employed by Occupation and Birthplace August 2001



Source Data: ABS Labour Force, unpublished statistics

Migrant Employment

In August 2001, the unemployment rate for all people born overseas was 7.0 per cent, compared with 6.5 per cent for those born in Australia. However, people from English speaking countries had a lower rate (5.8 per cent) than the Australian-born and people from non-English speaking countries had a higher rate (7.7 per cent). As Fig. 5-11 demonstrates this pattern has been in evidence since 1992. Fig. 5-11 also suggests that the unemployment rate for people from non-English speaking countries is more strongly affected by changes in economic conditions.

While employment has improved for Australia as a whole over the last 5 years, the unemployment and participation rates of the newly arrived overseas-born has improved even more significantly.

Factors Affecting Migrant Unemployment

Unemployment rates of migrants are closely related to a number of factors. The most important appears to be proficiency in English, as shown in Fig. 5-12. Skill level and qualifications, reflected in the stream under which the migrant entered Australia are also important. The unemployment rate for all migrant groups also falls substantially with increased duration of residence, as shown in Fig. 5-13. Initial high rates of unemployment partly reflect the difficulties experienced by all new entrants to the labour market, including school leavers. Long established migrants (23 years residence or more) have significantly lower rates of unemployment than the Australian-born (5.3 per cent, compared with 6.6 per cent).

Gender is a factor for migrants from English speaking countries, with women from these countries experiencing lower rates of unemployment than men in every year since 1990. Age is also important in influencing unemployment rates.

The DIMIA Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA1) showed that Independent category migrants 42 months after arrival had an unemployment rate of 5.0 per cent, which was below the Australian rate of 8.1 per cent at the time of the survey.

Fig. 5-11: Unemployment Rates by Birthplace

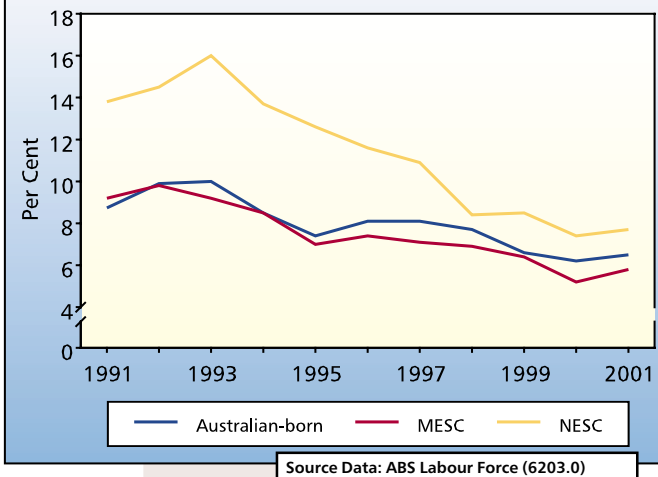


Fig. 5-12: Estimates of Primary Applicant Unemployment Rates by English Proficiency

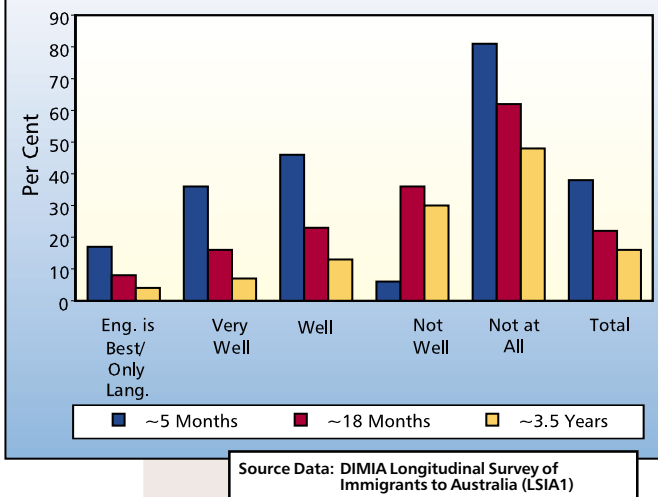


Fig. 5-13: Estimates of Principal Applicant Unemployment Rates by Migration Entry Stream and Time since Arrival

