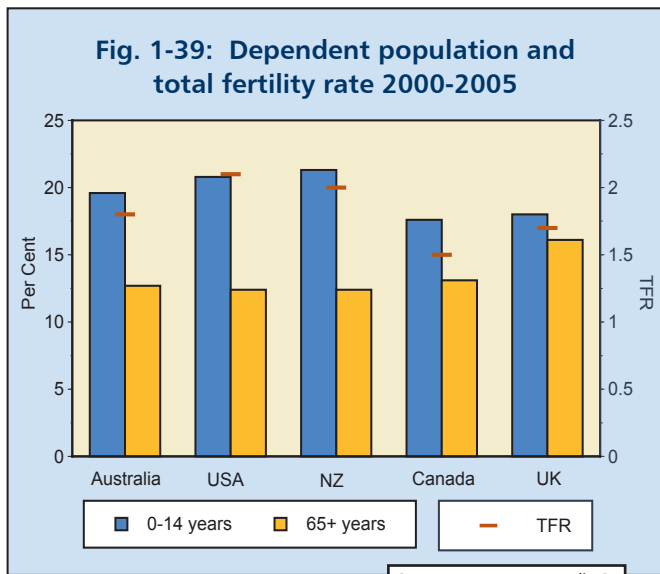
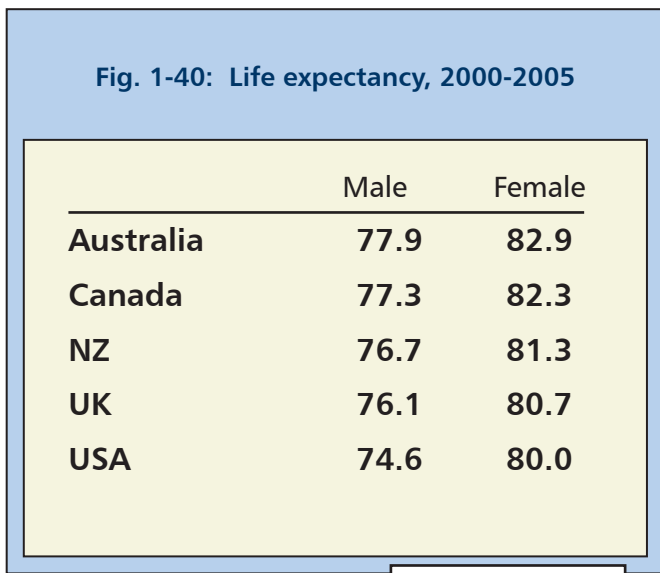


Population characteristics of other countries



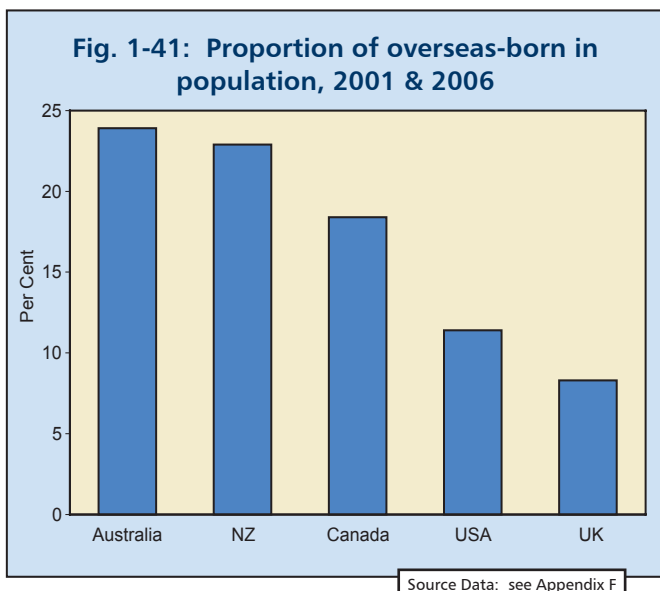
Populations of different countries grow at different rates, depending on the number of births, deaths, immigrants and emigrants. Other than Australia, three countries have traditionally operated planned migration programs, the USA, Canada and New Zealand. The UK has recently introduced plans to manage migration into their country and hence has been included in this analysis. The characteristics of their populations are similar in some respects and quite dissimilar in others.

The annual average population growth rate between 2000 and 2005 for Australia was 1.2 per cent. Comparable growth rates for the other countries were 1.2 per cent for New Zealand, 1.0 per cent for Canada and the USA and 0.5 per cent for the UK (*United Nations Population Division – World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision*). As with many other developed countries, the growth rate in Australia has slowed over time due to the decline in the fertility rate. The replacement level of around 2.1 children per woman is not being met. Australia has a total fertility rate of 1.8. Canada 1.5, the UK 1.7 and New Zealand and the USA 2.0.



Low fertility impacts on the ageing of the population and consequently on the size of the labour force. As people retire there is no counterbalance of similar numbers of younger people moving into the labour force often leading governments to look for workers overseas. In these five countries the proportion of those people aged 65 years or more is increasing. Fig. 1-39 shows the proportion of those aged 65 years or more, the UK has the highest (16.1 per cent) the followed by Australia and Canada (both 13.1 per cent) then the USA and New Zealand (both 12.3 per cent).

New Zealand has the highest proportion with those aged less than 15 years accounting for 21.5 per cent followed by the USA with 20.8 per cent. Both these countries have a TFR that is higher than that of Australia, UK and Canada. The proportion of the Australian population aged 15 years or less was 19.6 per cent, the UK was 18.0 per cent and for Canada, 17.6 per cent. The group comprised of those aged less than 15 years and those aged 65 years or more, is collectively known as the dependent population, as generally they do not participate actively in the labour force.



Another component of population growth is life expectancy. All countries throughout the world have experienced a decline in mortality. Life expectancy at birth (that is, the age that a person is expected to reach when they are born) of males and females is shown in Fig. 1-40. Life expectancy for these countries compares well with other developed countries, with Canada and Australia ranking amongst the top group.

The proportion of the Australian population born overseas is significantly greater than in the other four countries. In 2001 the overseas-born comprised 8.3 per cent of the UK population, 11.4 per cent of the population of the USA 18.4 per cent of the Canadian population and 22.9 per cent of the New Zealand population. This compares with 23.9 per cent of the Australian population who were born overseas.