

Labour market composition

Labour force by birthplace

In August 2007, the Australian labour force totalled 10 883 400 people: 8 083 100 Australia-born and 2 800 300 overseas-born. Of the overseas-born, 1 663 400 people were from non-English speaking countries (NESC) and 1 136 900 were from the main English speaking countries (MESC).

The Australia-born are more strongly represented in the workforce than migrants. The participation rate of the Australia-born was 68.2 per cent. The participation rates for NESC were 55.2 and for MESC 65.7 per cent. These differences partly reflect the older age structure of the overseas-born population compared to the Australia-born.

Of migrants in the workforce, 96.5 per cent of MESC migrants and 93.1 per cent of NESC migrants were employed. This compares with 96.0 per cent employed for the Australia-born.

Migrant employment

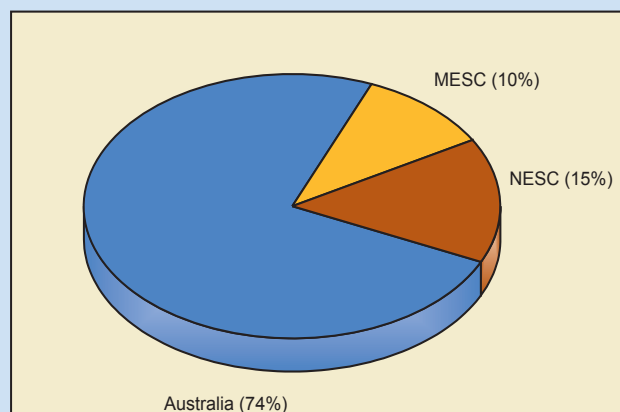
In August 2007, the unemployment rate for all people born overseas was 4.3 per cent, compared with 4.0 per cent for those born in Australia. People born in English speaking countries had a lower unemployment rate (3.5 per cent) than the Australia-born and people born in non-English speaking countries had a higher unemployment rate (5.3 per cent). This pattern has been in evidence since 1992. Fig. 6-9 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 eight years, the employment and participation rates of the newly arrived overseas-born have improved even more significantly.

Employment by industry

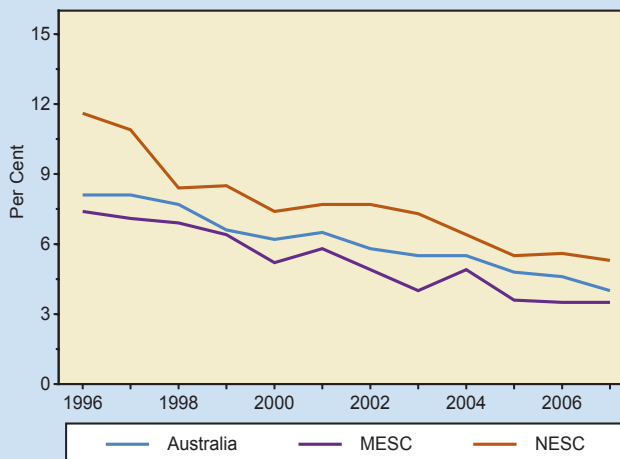
The overseas-born are heavily represented in communication services, compared to other industries, making up 34.3 per cent of all workers in August 2007 while 32.4 per cent of workers in finance and insurance, and 32.3 per cent of workers in manufacturing were also born overseas. Migrants are least represented in agriculture, forestry and fishing (10.1 per cent of the workforce).

Fig. 6-8: Labour force by birthplace August 2007



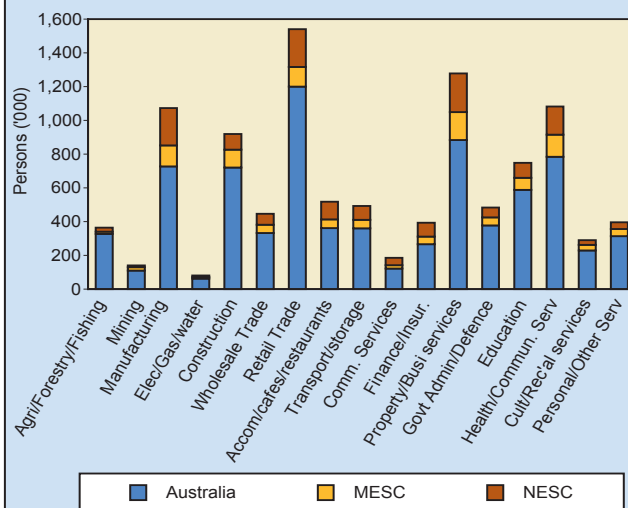
Source Data: ABS Labour Force (6291.0)

Fig. 6-9: Unemployment rates by birthplace at August 2007



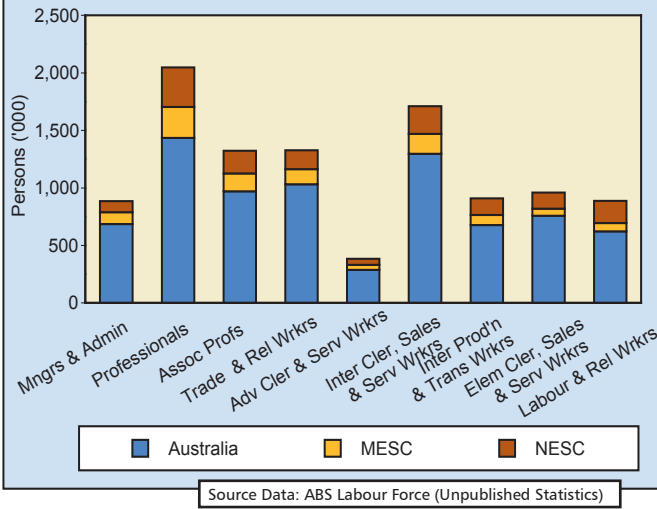
Source Data: ABS Labour Force (6291.0)

Fig. 6-10: Employment by industry and birthplace, August 2007



Source Data: ABS Labour Force (Unpublished Statistics)

Fig. 6-11: Employment by occupation and birthplace, August 2007



Employment by occupation

The overseas-born are more highly represented as professionals (30.0 per cent of all professionals employed in August 2007), labourers and related workers (29.7 per cent) and associate professionals (26.7 per cent).

MESC migrants are more likely to be employed as professionals, managers and administrators, and associate professionals. While Australian born are more likely to be employed as elementary clerical, sales and service workers, tradespersons and related workers and managers and administrators. NESC migrants are more likely to be employed as labourers and related workers, professionals and intermediate production/transport workers.

Unemployment by skill level

The importance of skill is underlined by the much lower rates of unemployment for skilled people compared to those for unskilled over time (see Fig. 6-12). 'Skilled' comprises employed people in ASCO major groups 1-4 and those unemployed people who had worked for two weeks or more in the two years prior to the Labour Force Survey and whose last job was in one of the first four ASCO major groups.

Fig. 6-12: Polarised nature of Australian unemployment rates

