

FEATURE ARTICLE — The impact of migration on Western Australia's population

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the movement of people across Australia, known as interstate migration, has been dominated by a northward stream to Queensland and a southward stream to Victoria, with all other states and territories experiencing net migration losses. In Western Australia, a net interstate migration loss has been recorded in each of the four years since 1999, which is in contrast to the long-term trend of moderate gains in previous years. This loss has resulted from both an increase in the number of people departing Western Australia and a decrease in the number of people arriving in Western Australia.

Despite this loss, Western Australia has consistently recorded a higher annual population growth than the national average, and in 2003 Western Australia's growth of 1.4% was second only to Queensland (2.3%). In 2003, net overseas migration accounted for the majority of Western Australia's growth (18,000 persons), while natural increase (births minus deaths) accounted for 12,600 persons and interstate migration resulted in the loss of 2,800 persons. This paper explores the demographic characteristics of people migrating to and from Western Australia, and the regional impacts of interstate and overseas migration on the population distribution of Western Australia.

MIGRATION INTO AND OUT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA—2003



Scale: 1mm of width corresponds to 2,000 people.

Source: *Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2003, Data cube (cat. no 3101.0)*

MEASURES OF MIGRATION

Migration changes Australia's population distribution and impacts on population growth at the state and territory, and regional level. Interstate migration is the most volatile component of population change in each state and territory as it depends on many factors such as varying economic opportunities, overseas immigration and settlement patterns, and lifestyle choices. It is also the most difficult component to measure as the movement of people between states and territories is unrestricted and not systematically captured in any data collection.

TABLE 1: COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE(a)

	Unit	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Natural increase(b)	no.	13 715	14 509	13 829	13 966	12 809	12 573
Net overseas migration	no.	11 993	13 381	13 993	16 263	14 970	17 964
Net interstate migration	no.	3 227	296	-2 187	-3 110	-4 385	-2810
Net population change	no.	27 676	27 065	24 726	26 700	23 394	27 727

(a) Year ending 30 June.

(b) Natural increase equals births minus deaths.

Source: *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0).

MEASURES OF MIGRATION *continued*

Quarterly and annual estimates of Australia's population are derived by adjusting the base population, provided by the five yearly Census of Population and Housing, with subsequent births and deaths, and overseas and interstate migration. There is no single data source available to provide reliable estimates of interstate migration.

While the census collects the usual residence of people on census night and their usual residence one and five years previously, these figures are not available for intercensal years and census data provide no indication of the number of moves made by individuals in the intercensal period. However, 2001 census data indicate that almost 5% of the population aged 5 years and over had moved interstate since 1996.

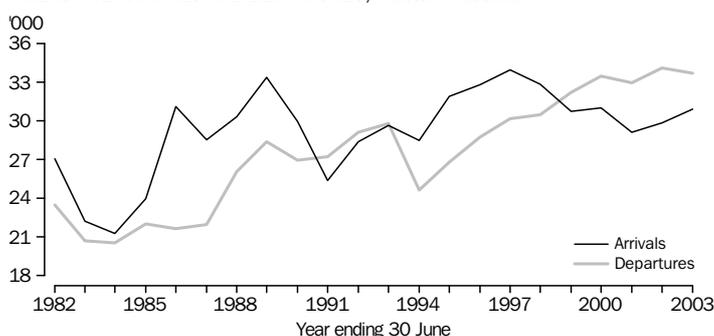
Since 1986, quarterly interstate migration estimates have been derived from Medicare change of address records, supplied by the Health Insurance Commission. Census data are used to adjust these estimates for under-reporting of males aged 16–29 years and females aged 18–24 years.

Overseas migration is collected from Incoming and Outgoing Passenger cards completed at Australian air and sea ports. Net overseas migration refers to the net permanent and long-term overseas migration, adjusted for changes in traveller duration intention and errors associated with multiple movements during long-term stays or absences.

INTERSTATE MIGRATION

Western Australia's net interstate migration has fluctuated over the past 20 years, peaking at 9,400 in 1986 and declining to its largest net loss of 4,400 in 2001. Despite the longer term trend of moderate net interstate gains, Western Australia has, over the past four years, experienced a net loss in interstate migration. Net interstate migration losses were also recorded during 1991, 1992 and 1993, although not of the same magnitude as in the past four years. After 1993, net interstate migration increased to 5,100 in 1995 before again declining to a loss of 4,200 in 2002. In 2003, this loss had reduced to 2,800 people.

INTERSTATE ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES, Western Australia



Source: *Migration, Australia* (cat. no. 3142.0)

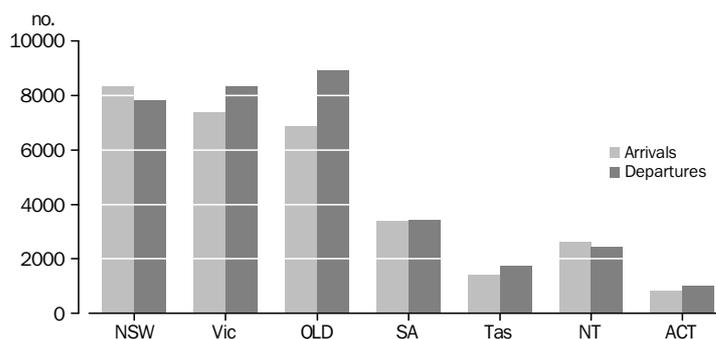
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INTERSTATE ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES BY STATE AND TERRITORY

Despite fluctuations between years, the number of people departing Western Australia has steadily increased over the past 16 years, reaching 33,700 during 2003. In 2003, people were most likely to move to Queensland (27%), Victoria (25%) and New South Wales (23%) and least likely to move to the Australian Capital Territory (3%) and Tasmania (5%).

The number of people moving to Western Australia reached 34,700 in 1997. Since 1989, more people have moved to Western Australia from New South Wales than any other state or territory. In 2003, most arrivals to Western Australia came from New South Wales (27%), Victoria (24%) and Queensland (22%), lesser numbers came from the Australian Capital Territory (3%) and Tasmania (5%).

ARRIVALS TO AND DEPARTURES FROM, WESTERN AUSTRALIA—2002–03



Source: Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2003, (cat. no. 3101.0)

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERSTATE MOVERS

Sex

The proportion of males and females migrating interstate has remained fairly stable over the past 16 years. The proportion of people departing Western Australia who were male, peaked at 55% in the period 1989 to 1991 and declined to 51% from 2002 onwards. Similarly, males accounted for 54% of all arrivals to Western Australia in 1987. This proportion declined to 51% in 2003.

Age

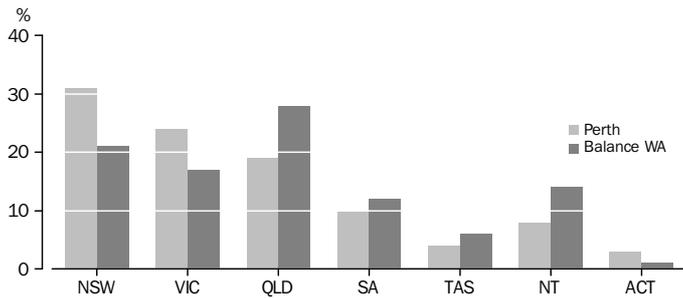
Estimates of interstate migration have only been available by age since 1998. Since this time, interstate migration in the 25–64 year age group has made up 56% of departures and arrivals, followed by children (0–14 years) and young people (15–24 years) which have both averaged 21% of departures and arrivals over the same period.

Region

In the 2001 census there were notable differences in the interstate movements (in the previous 12 months) between people from Perth and the balance of the state. Those departing from Perth were most likely to move to Victoria (29%), followed by New South Wales (28%) and Queensland (21%), while those departing from the balance of the state were most likely to move to Queensland (30%), followed by New South Wales (22%) and Victoria (18%). For those people moving to Perth they were most likely to move from New South Wales (31%), Victoria (24%) and Queensland (19%). As with people moving from the balance of State, people arriving into the balance of Western Australia were mostly likely to come from Queensland (28%), New South Wales (21%) and Victoria (17%).

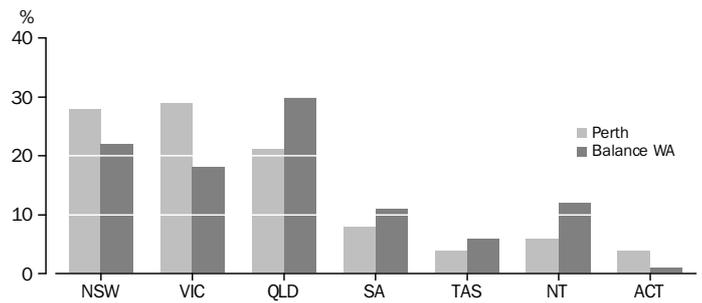
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INTERSTATE ARRIVALS TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA—2001, State or Territory of Departure



Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

INTERSTATE DEPARTURES FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA—2001, State or Territory of Destination

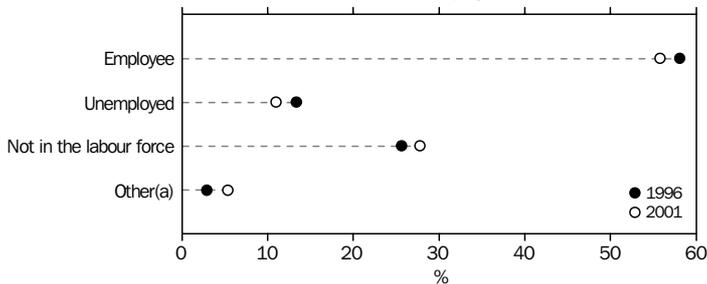


Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Employment status

The interstate arrivals and departures from Western Australia have shown a fairly similar pattern in terms of employment status. The number of people arriving in Western Australia who were employees has decreased slightly between 1996 and 2001 from 58% of all arrivals to 56%. Similarly, the percentage of arrivals who were unemployed has also dropped between 1996 and 2001 (13% and 11% respectively). This has been matched by a small increase in the percentage of persons arriving who were not in the labour force, 26% in 1996 and 28% in 2001. In terms of departures, there is very little difference in the percentages between 1996 and 2001. The largest difference was in the percentage of unemployed persons departing, 14% in 1996 compared with 12% in 2001.

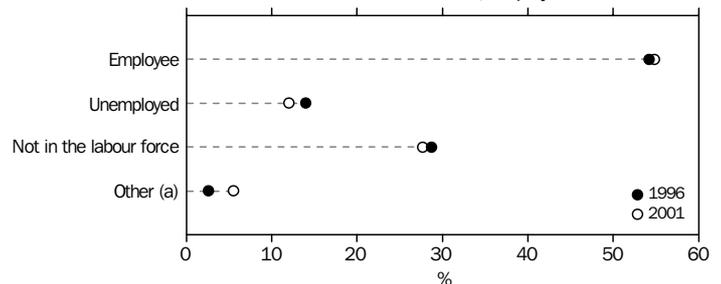
INTERSTATE ARRIVALS TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA, Employment Status



(a) Includes employers, own account workers, contributing family workers and persons whose employment status was not stated.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

INTERSTATE DEPARTURES FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA, Employment Status



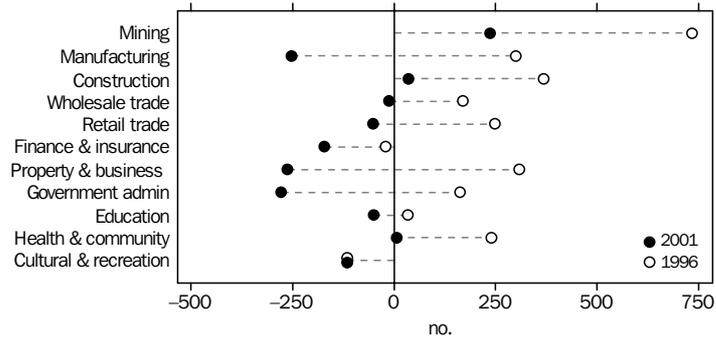
(a) Includes employers, own account workers, contributing family workers and persons whose employment status was not stated.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Industry

Comparisons of net migration data from the 1996 and 2001 censuses show that there are some marked differences across industries. In 1996, with the exception of the Finance and Insurance and Culture and Recreation industries, all industries had positive net migration. However, in 2001 this trend has been reversed with almost all industries showing a net loss of migrants out of Western Australia. The Mining industry was the only industry which still had a large net migration into Western Australia, although this had dropped significantly since 1996. The only other industries to show small net gains in 2001 were Construction and Health and Community Services. The largest turnarounds, in terms of net migration, between 1996 and 2001 were in the Property and Business Services, Manufacturing and Government Administration industries.

NET INTERSTATE MIGRATION, Employed Persons by Selected Industries

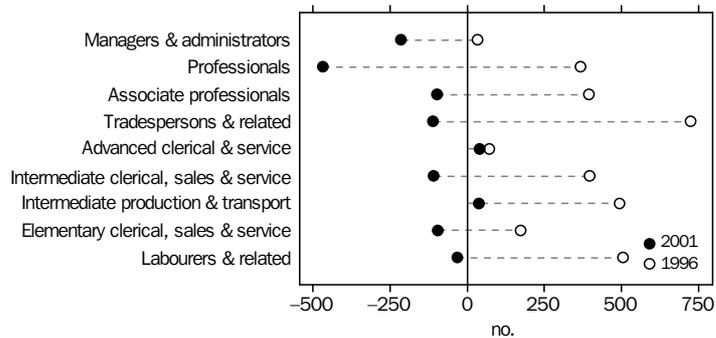


Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Occupation

In 1996, Western Australia experienced a net gain across all the occupation groups. In 2001, this trend was reversed with all occupations, with the exceptions of Intermediate Production and Transport and Advanced Clerical and Service workers, showing a net loss of migrants out of Western Australia. The largest net loss was experienced in the Professional occupation group. This occupation group experienced a net gain of 370 persons in 1996 and a net loss of 470 persons in 2001. Tradespersons and Related Workers, which had the largest net gain in 1996 (730 persons), had one of the smaller net losses in 2001 (110 persons).

NET INTERSTATE MIGRATION, Employed Persons by Selected Occupations

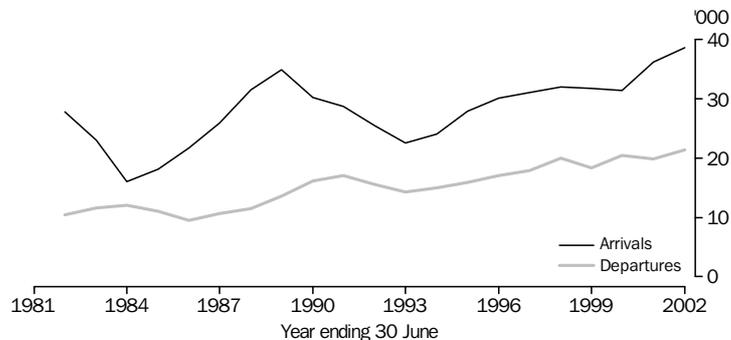


Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

OVERSEAS MIGRATION

Western Australia's net overseas migration has fluctuated widely over the past 20 years, rising from 4,300 (9% of Australia's net overseas migration) in 1984 to 20,800 (14% of Australia's net overseas migration) in 1988 then falling to 17,300 in 2002. Arrivals ranged from 16,000 in 1984 to 36,100 in 2001, while departures ranged from 9,400 in 1986 to 21,300 in 2002.

OVERSEAS MIGRATION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Source: Migration, Australia (cat. no. 3142.0)

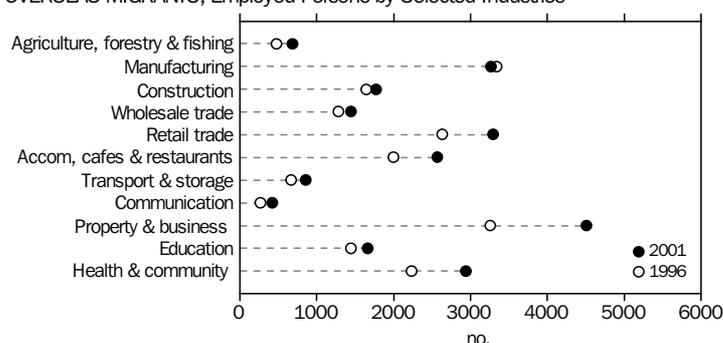
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CHARACTERISTICS OF OVERSEAS SETTLERS

Industry

In both the 1996 and 2001 censuses, people who had arrived in Western Australia from overseas during the previous 5 years were most likely to be employed within the Manufacturing, Property and Business Services, Retail Trade and Health and Community Services industries. Between 1996 and 2001, the Property and Business Services industry showed the largest increase (39%). In contrast employment within the Cultural and Recreational Services industry decreased 12% for overseas migrants.

OVERSEAS MIGRANTS, Employed Persons by Selected Industries

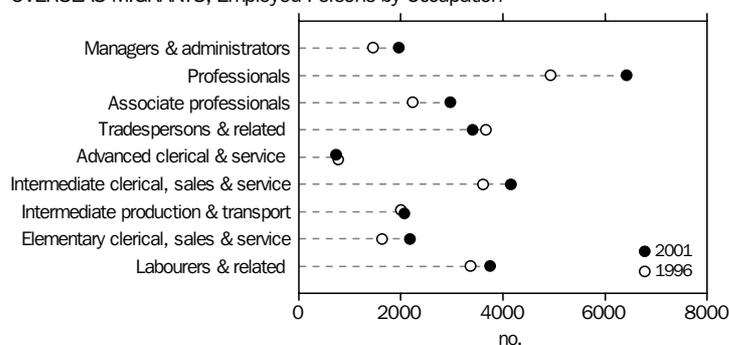


Source: ABS data available on request, 1996 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing.

Occupation

In both the 1996 and 2001 censuses, people who had arrived in Western Australia from overseas during the previous 5 years were most likely to be employed within the Professional occupation group. Between 1996 and 2001, this group showed the largest increase in the number of overseas migrants (30%). In contrast, the number of Tradespersons and Related Workers and Advanced Clerical and Service Workers decreased by 7% and 6% respectively.

OVERSEAS MIGRANTS, Employed Persons by Occupation



Source: ABS data available on request, 1996 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing.

TYPE OF OVERSEAS SETTLERS

The Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs collects information regarding the migration stream of settlers to Australia. In the year ending 30 June 2000, 11,500 persons had settled in Western Australia from overseas. The majority of these settlers (8,400 persons or 73%) arrived as part of the migration program; with skill migration comprising 6,500 persons (57%) and 1,900 (16%) under the family migration program. The humanitarian program accounted for 850 persons (7%) of all overseas migrants. The non program migration category accounted for 20% of all overseas migrants and New Zealanders comprised the vast majority (2,200 persons or 96%) who arrived under this category.

Table 2 shows the occupations which had the largest number of people entering Western Australia through the Skill Migration Program. The Managers and Administrators and Professional occupation groups had the largest numbers of people.

TABLE 2: OVERSEAS MIGRATION: Skills Migration Program—2000–01

<i>Selected occupations</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Selected occupations</i>	<i>No.</i>
General managers	390	Geologists and geophysicists	50
Teachers (pre-primary, primary and secondary)	165	Motor mechanics	49
Accountants	144	Finance managers	47
Computing professionals	102	University lecturers and tutors	47
Registered nurses/midwives	100	Sales and marketing managers	43
Marketing and advertising professionals	74	Mechanical, production and plant engineers	43
Electricians	64	Human resource professionals	42
Metal fitters and machinists	62	Civil engineers	34

Source: *Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.*

CONCLUSION

Western Australia has continued to experience population growth despite recording a net loss of people as a result of interstate migration. This net loss has been more than compensated by natural increase and overseas migration. Data from the 1996 census shows that Western Australia experienced a net gain in population across almost all industry and occupation groups. This trend was reversed in 2001, when data from the 2001 census showed that the movement of people out of Western Australia was spread across most industries and occupations. However, much of the loss to other states and territories has been offset by overseas migrants who have moved into those occupations, particularly in managerial and professional occupations, which experienced some of the largest losses due to the movement of people out of Western Australia.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0)
- *Census of Population and Housing: Population Growth and Distribution, 2001* (cat. no. 2035.0)
- *Demography Working Paper 1999/2 – Estimating Interstate Migration, 1996–2001*
- *Migration, Australia, 2000–01 and 2001–02* (cat. no. 3412.0)
- *Population Projections Australia, 2002–2101* (cat. no. 3222.0)