An Overview of Tasmania’s Older Migrants (55 years and over) by Continent
Introduction

It is acknowledged that migrants from many countries have arrived in Australia pre 1930, for a variety of reasons including the gold rush, pearl diving and cane cutting.

The focus of Australia’s migration programs has changed since Arthur Calwell headed the first Australian Government’s immigration portfolio. Australia’s immigration policies have evolved over time from focusing on attracting migrants, mainly from the United Kingdom, to economic migrants and temporary (skilled) migrants from all over the world and accepting humanitarian entrants.\(^1\)

The origins of the White Australia Policy can be traced back to the 1850s. One of the incentives of creating a federated Australia was the need for a common immigration policy. Prior to federation, each state had implemented its own immigration policy. This created resistance to Chinese and New Caledonia workers for the sugar industry.\(^2\)

With Federation came the implementation of the Restriction Act 1901, (the White Australia Policy), had a significant impact on Australia’s population composition by only allowing migrants from European origin.

The loss of Australian lives during WWII had a significant impact on Australia’s population. After WWII, Australia launched a large scale immigration program. Feeling threatened by the Japanese and believing it had narrowly avoided Japanese invasion, Australia adopted a “Populate or Perish” migration policy and began to loosen the implementation of the White Australia Policy.\(^3\)

The Australian Government also had an ambitious post-war reconstruction program planned, but needed workers to undertake the construction, including the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

Australia introduced the “Ten Pound Pom” in 1946 to increase the population. Any British subject or resident of a British Colony was eligible for the scheme\(^4\). Australia also operated schemes to assist migrants from many other countries including Italy, Greece, West Germany and Turkey.

Visiting Europe in 1946, Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, agreed to accept a minimum 12,000 war refugees that were unwilling to return home to Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia.\(^5\)

In 1949, Immigration Minister Holt permitted 800 non-European refugees and Japanese war brides to stay in Australia. This was the first step towards a non-discriminatory immigration policy.\(^6\)

In 1957, the “Bring out a Briton” campaign was launched. Employers and organisations were encouraged to sponsor particular families and assist in their settlement.\(^7\)

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1 Department of Parliamentary Services, 2005, Australia’s Migration Program, Research Note No 48.
2 Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Fact Sheet 8 - Abolition of the ‘White Australia’ Policy www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition
3 www.migrationexpert.com/australia/visa/history_of_australia_immigration
6 n 4
7 n 2, p 6
The relaxation of the White Australia Policy began in the 1950s and from mid 1960s migration from non-traditional countries became easier.

As Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby overhauled the immigration policy in 1972. He introduced a structured selection process where migrants were chosen based on their attributes and occupation rather than country of birth. The *Australian Citizenship Act 1972* stated that all migrants are equal.8

**TASMANIA**

According to the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data for Tasmania, Tasmanian persons aged over 55 identify with 120 different countries (including Australia) as their country of origin.

Attached are continent profiles with commentary on the highest ranking three countries of origin for older Tasmanians.

The commentary describes the events and policies, nationally and internationally, that affected the focus and drive for various Australian Governments’ migration policies. It should be noted that migration policy is an Australian Government, not state government, area of responsibility.

It should also be acknowledged that Tasmania may not have been a migrant’s first place of residence in Australia. The graphs are based on Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census data for Tasmania.

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8 n 4
OLDER MIGRANT TASMANIANS FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

SOUTH AFRICA
During the 1960s, increasing tension in South Africa prompted many English-speaking white South Africans to migrate to Australia. The final dismantling of the White Australia Policy in 1972, allowed many non-European South Africans to migrate to Australia.

The 1976 Soweto riots were also a catalyst for many South Africans of European descent to migrate to Australia.9

Apartheid ended in the 1980s, at which time many skilled South Africans of British or European backgrounds, left South Africa to call Australia home. As a result, Australia gained skills such as engineering, farming, technological and entrepreneurial.10

Even after the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, many European South Africans continued to migrate, and many to Australia.11

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9 www.Museumvictoria.com.au/origins History of Immigration from South Africa,
ZIMBABWE
Called Rhodesia when under British control, Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 and was ruled by elected Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe.

Between 1976 and 1980, almost one-fifth of the British and European population left Zimbabwe due to political turmoil, with many migrating to Australia.\textsuperscript{12}

Since 2000, 16 Zimbabweans now call Tasmania home.\textsuperscript{13}

SUDAN
In 1956, Sudan gained independence from joint British-Egyptian administration, but has since been troubled by drought, famine and war. Sudan has seen regular turnover of governments, mostly military regimes, controlled by northern Sudanese favouring Islamic-oriented policies.\textsuperscript{14}

Disputes between the northern Sudanese and the southern non-Muslim Sudanese regarding access to electricity and resources, and have resulted in two extended periods of civil war.

Sudan’s first civil war began shortly after independence in 1956, and continued until 1972. In 1983, after eleven years of relative calm, fighting broke out again. The estimated toll from the second war and associated famine included almost two million deaths and more than four million displaced people. Many Sudanese fled to neighbouring countries.\textsuperscript{15}

Australia has assisted in resettling some of the worst affected people in the region through the Humanitarian Program.\textsuperscript{16}

Since 2000, 770 Sudanese refugees, now call Tasmania home.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} n 9
  \item \textsuperscript{12} n 10 –Zimbabwe-born
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s Settlement Reporting Facility accessed 16/5/11
  \item \textsuperscript{14} n 9 – Sudan
  \item \textsuperscript{15} n 10 Sudan-born
  \item \textsuperscript{16} ibid
  \item \textsuperscript{17} n 13
\end{itemize}
INDIA

In 1947, India gained independence from Britain and a large number of Anglo-Indians migrated to Australia.

After the abolition of the White Australia Policy in the early 1970s, many Indian doctors and teachers settled in Australia.

In 1987, following the military coups and political unrest in Fiji, many Fijian Indians sought asylum in Australia. Most Fijians in Australia are of Indian-Fijian origin.¹⁸

In the early 1980s, with the information technology revolution, many Indian computer software professionals migrated to Australia.

¹⁸ n 10 – India-born
PHILIPPINES

The Colombo Plan, launched in 1951, initially by seven Commonwealth nations, aimed to boost Asian economic and social development through economic and technical assistance (the University of Tasmania participated in this scheme). A large number of Filipino students entered Australia under the Colombo Plan and many chose to stay after graduation.

In 1966, immigration policy reform allowed well-qualified non-Europeans to immigrate to Australia – this included Filipinos.

In early 1970, following the final dismantling of the White Australia Policy and the declaration of Martial law (the imposition of military rule) in the Philippines, many Filipinos settled in Australia. Many Filipino women also migrated as spouses of Australian residents.

CHINA

Between 1936 and 1949, Japan’s war in China and the Pacific, resulted in many Chinese seeking refuge in Australia.

In the 1950s, many Chinese students came to Australia to study under the Colombo Plan.

In the 1970s, with the advent of Multiculturalism as an Australian Government policy, many ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia) migrated to Australia, closely followed in the 1980s and 1990s by Hong Kong economic migrants.

The Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 prompted the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to permit the 20,000 Chinese students to stay permanently in Australia.
CHILE

In the 1960s, many Chileans fled the economic recession and high levels of unemployment resulting from Eduardo Frei Montalva’s Government.

In the 1970s, political and economic unrest under Salvador Allende – the first democratically elected Marxist President of any nation - prompted many Chileans to immigrate.\(^{23}\)

In 1973, following the military coup by the Pinochet regime, many skilled workers and their families fled Chile to Australia. The 1970s was the height of Chilean migration as they fled economic and political uncertainty.

Most Chilean migrants were wealthy and well educated.\(^ {24}\) During the 1990s, many Chileans migrated to Australia under the Family Reunion Migration Program.\(^ {25}\)

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\(^{23}\) ibid

\(^{24}\) n 10 – Chile-born

\(^{25}\) ibid
ARGENTINA
At the start of the 20th century, Argentina had grown into one of the world’s ten richest nations and a massive migration program increased the population sevenfold.

Between 1955 and 1973, Argentina experienced high inflation, increasing unemployment and political instability due to military rule.

The country’s economic situation improved little when Juan Domingo Peron returned in 1973, after 18 years of exile.

Prior to 1970, there was little immigration from Argentina. In 1976, political conditions deteriorated under military rule of General Joge Videla. Under the new regime, people were tortured, abducted or murdered. The continuing economic difficulties, prompted high levels of Argentineans to emigrate.²⁶

Between 1974 and mid 1985, 6 572 Argentines immigrated to Australia and most are assisted immigrants rather than political refugees which reflects Argentina’s economic difficulties and political instability.²⁷

BRAZIL
The first wave of Brazilian migrants arrived in the mid 1970s, attracted by the Australian Government’s assisted passage scheme. These migrants were working class, trades people.

In the 1980s, towards the end of the Brazilian military dictatorship, many Brazilians migrated to Australia under the Humanitarian Program.²⁸ This second wave of migration began in the late 1990s and is attributed to the growing socio-economic unrest in Brazil since the 1980s.²⁹

²⁶ n 9 Argentina
²⁸ n 10 – Brazil-born
²⁹ www.cts01.hss.uts.edu.au/students06/Group3finalcut/A%20Brief%20History
OLDER MIGRANT TASMANIANS FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Americans have long been associated with Australia. The first Americans arrived on The Endeavour with Captain Cook and developed trade links with North America.

During the Vietnam War (1955-75), many American veterans, teachers and academics saw career opportunities in Australia and migration increased.30

CANADA
Australia and Canada were both British colonies and many of the colonial governors had postings in Canada which influenced their administration of the Australian colonies.31

After WWII, many Australia aircrew based in Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme brought Canadian brides to Australia.32

30 n 9 – United States of America
31 n 10 - Canada-born
32 n 9- Canada
In the 1950s, Canadians began to migrate to Australia in larger numbers. The majority were professionals and entered under the Skilled Migration programme or transferred as an employee of international firms.

**EL SALVADOR**

During the 1970s, El Salvador suffered landlessness, poverty and high unemployment. Civil War began in 1981 with the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion (National Liberation Front) leading the fighting against the Government, whose death squads violently suppressed anyone suspected of opposing its regime.33

Between 1983 and 1986, Australia accepted Salvadorans under the Special Humanitarian Program. As they were former political prisoners, they were granted amnesty to leave El Salvador during the civil war.

In 1992, the United Nations brokered a peace deal.

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33Ibid – El Salvador
OLDER MIGRANT TASMANIANS FROM THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

UNITED KINGDOM (INCLUDES ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND IRELAND)
The United Kingdom was the strongly favoured source of migrants and has been the largest overseas born group in the 20th century.

English-born migrants have been the largest component of the United Kingdom born, but the importance of Irish, Scottish and Welsh should not be underestimated.

In 1946, post WWII, the British and Australian Governments agreed to free and assisted passage to ex-British Servicemen, civilians and their dependents.34 Known as the “Ten Pound Pom” scheme, the aim was to increase Australia’s population. In return for adult migrants being charged only ten pounds for the fare to Australia (children travelled free), the Australian Government promised employment prospects, housing and a generally optimistic lifestyle. Under this scheme over a million Britons migrated to Australia.35

34 Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2001, Immigration – Federation to Century’s End , p 3
35 n3
In 1957, to encourage further British migration, the “Bring out a Briton” campaign was launched. Employers and organisations were encouraged to sponsor families and assist in their settlement.  

In 1967, the British assisted passage agreement was renewed for another five years.

The abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973 and adoption of the “multiculturalism” policy by Minister of Immigration, Al Grassby, ensured that the pre-war monoculture of Anglo-Celtic changed significantly.

**NETHERLANDS**

At the end of WWII, the Netherlands had poor economic prospects, agricultural problems and increasing demographic pressures. The Dutch government actively promoted emigration as a solution.

Australia was in need of agricultural and metal industry workers and Australia was an attractive option for many Dutch.

In 1951, an assisted passage scheme was agreed to with the Netherlands Government.

**GERMANY**

During WWII, around 7 500 Germans were interned in detention camps throughout New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Around 60 per cent of the interned German nationals remained in Australia after their release.

Germans were well regarded as attractive migrants. The 1950s was the peak of German migration. In 1952, the Australian and West German Governments agreed to provide assisted passage for 3 000 Germans per annum and 1 000 unassisted Germans.

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36 ibid
37 www.nationaalarchief.nl/emigranten/en/achtergrondinfo_1
38 n 26 p 42
Over 98 per cent (94 143) of Tasmanians over 55 years, stated they were of Australian origin in the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census.

NEW ZEALAND
Since early settlement, there have been close links between Australia and New Zealand. Between 1828 and 1840, New Zealand was under the jurisdiction of the Governor of New South Wales.

Population movement between the two countries has been significant and the direction varied depending on the economic situation of each country.

The 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement allowed Australian and New Zealand citizens to enter each other’s country to visit, live and work, without the need to apply for authority to enter the other country.\footnote{39}

The New Zealand recessions of the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s, has seen the Australian population of New Zealander residents increase.\footnote{40}

\footnote{39} n 10 - New Zealand-born
\footnote{40} n 9 – New Zealand
**FIJI**

The Fijian-born people comprise of Fijian, Chinese, Indian, European, Rotuman and other ancestries. Most Fijians in Australia are of Indian-Fijian origin.

The White Australia Policy prevented non-European Fijians migrating. In the 1960s, after the relaxation of the Policy, and attracted by the better employment prospects, welfare services and higher wages, Fijians began migrating to Australia.\(^{41}\)

In 1970, Fiji gained independence from Great Britain. Migration to Australia accelerated again attracted by employment and economic opportunities.

After the two military coups of 1987, and a new constitution in 1990 that gave indigenous Fijians control, many Fijian-Indians sought asylum in Australia.\(^{42}\)

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

Whilst the White Australia Policy restricted most Papua New Guinean migration, exemptions were those who worked in Queensland’s pearl industry.\(^{43}\)

In 1971, Papua and New Guinea were united. In 1975, it gained independence from Australia. In 1978, The Torres Strait Border Treaty was signed which allowed movement within specific boundaries for traditional purposes.\(^{44}\)