New Immigrants Improving Productivity in Australian Agriculture

By Professor Jock Collins (UTS Business School), Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko (CSU) and Dr Devaki Monani (ACU)
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Foreword

While most immigration to Australia has been to the cities, in the past decade new immigrants (permanent and temporary) have been directed to regional and rural Australia. This move has been quite successful, with new skilled immigrants generally filling labour shortages and adding to the productivity of the regional and rural economy and re-energizing regional and rural towns. However, the specific impact and contribution of immigrant farmers and growers, as well as permanent immigrant settlers (including refugees) and temporary immigrants (including working holiday makers) on the Australian agricultural industry has not been researched.

This study aims to improve the future productivity of the Australian agriculture sector by filling a critical gap in our knowledge of the contribution of immigrant farmers and both permanent and temporary immigrant labour in Australian agriculture, and to inform future policy development in the area. The findings provide insights into how to redress labour shortages across the skill spectrum by tapping into immigration possibilities. The findings also identify culturally ingrained agricultural practices, innovation and transfer of knowledge in production and marketing that are the product of immigrant farming businesses in the Australian agricultural sector. Additionally, the research provides a forum to inform key national, state, regional and local interested parties of the new immigrant farmers, humanitarian immigrants and temporary immigrants in the agricultural sector, to enable a fine-tuning of policies and programmes.

This project was funded through RIRDC by the Australian Government. In addition, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria committed $15,000 per year in-kind support to the project, for three years; and the Working Holiday Supporting Centre, a Korean-run organization based in Sydney, has also provided in-kind support for the project.

This report is an addition to RIRDC’s diverse range of over 2000 research publications and it forms part of our National Rural Issues R&D program, which aims to inform and improve policy debate by government and industry on national and global issues relevant to agricultural and rural policy in Australia by targeting current and emerging rural issues, and produce quality work that will inform policy in the long term.

Most of RIRDC’s publications are available for viewing, free downloading or purchasing online at www.rirdc.gov.au. Purchases can also be made by phoning 1300 634 313.

John Harvey
Managing Director
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
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Cover Photo: Mamre Farm immigrant farmers

Abbreviations

ABC – Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
CEC – Canadian Experience Class
DOE – Australian Government Department of Employment
FWO – Fair Work Ombudsman
IS – International student/s
NES – Non English speaking
NFF – National Farmers’ Federation
MES – Main English Speaking
PC – Productivity Commission
PSWP – Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme (Australia)
RSE – Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (New Zealand)
SAWP – Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (Canada)
SAWS – Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (UK)
WHM – Working Holiday Maker/s
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Executive Summary

What the report is about

In the last fifteen years new visa pathways have been opened up for permanent and temporary immigrants to settle in rural and regional Australia. Many of these new immigrants in the Australian bush have worked in the agricultural sector of the economy helping to redress labour shortages and adding new skills and innovative insights to contribute greatly to increasing the productivity of the Australian agricultural industry. Yet despite the increasing importance of new permanent and temporary immigrants to Australian agriculture in particular and to the revitalisation of regional and rural Australia in general research in this field has been lacking. Hence the initiative of the RIRDC in funding this three-year research project, New Immigrants Improving Productivity in Australian Agriculture, to fill an important gap in evidence-based research that identifies the ways that immigrants can contribute to the increasing vitality of Australian agriculture in coming decades as new bi-lateral free-trade agreements struck between Australia and China, Korea and Japan have opened up new market opportunities for Australian agricultural exports to Asia in addition to established markets in Europe and the Americas.

Who is the report targeted at?

The findings of this study are of specific interest to government agencies, community and industry organisations that have an interest in better understanding the impact of new farmer immigrants on the agriculture sector, and in refining existing or introducing new policies and procedures that can improve the attraction and retention of farmer immigrants in coming decades.

Where are the relevant industries located in Australia?

Fieldwork was conducted in five Australian states – NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia - involving interested parties in the Australian agricultural industry and permanent and temporary immigrants who work in the industry. The research involved fieldwork with skilled permanent immigrants and immigrant farmers and with temporary immigrants – including Working Holiday Makers and Pacific Island Seasonal workers – and humanitarian immigrants.

Background

While most immigration to Australia has been to the cities, in the past decade new immigrants (permanent and temporary) have been directed to regional and rural Australia. This move has been quite successful, with new skilled immigrants generally filling labour shortages and adding to the productivity of the regional and rural economy and re-energizing regional and rural towns (Collins, Jordan, and Krivokapic-Skoko 2006; Jordan, Krivokapic-Skoko and Collins, 2009, 2010, 2011; Cully 2010). A three year study of nearly 1000 new immigrants in regional and rural Australia, funded by a RIRDC research grant (Collins and Krivokapic-Skoko 2011) demonstrated that new immigrants can make an important contribution to regional and rural Australia. This research had an immediate national impact, with the Australian Government announcing an increase in new immigrant places in the 2011 budget. There has also been some research into Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) (Harding and Webster 2002; Tan et al 2009) and refugees and humanitarian entrants (Refugee Council of Australia 2010; Hugo 2011) and the contribution that they make to the Australia economy. However, the specific impact of and contribution of immigrant farmers and growers, as well as permanent immigrant settlers (including refugees) and temporary immigrants (including WHMs) on the Australian agricultural industry has not been researched. New immigrants make important contributions to Australian agriculture that we need to understand if productivity in the industry is going to increase in coming decades.
**Aims/objectives**

This research project aims to investigate the experiences of immigrant farmers and growers and temporary and permanent immigrant farm labourers in order to better understand the ways that immigrants improve agricultural productivity in Australia. Achieving a better understanding of the ways in which immigrants can contribute to productivity, sustainability, preserving resources and contributing to rural renewal in Australia is an underlying objective of the project. Key outcomes are policy recommendations to improve the attraction and retention of immigrant agricultural producers and to improve the fit between Working Holiday Makers and seasonal labour demand in the agricultural sector.

**Methods used**

A mixed methodology utilising surveys, interviews and focus groups as well as case studies in five States was employed.

**Results/key findings**

**Immigrants are of increasing importance to the Australian agricultural sector** in particular and to regional and rural Australia in general. Indications from this study are that the recent trend to open up new visa pathways for permanent and temporary immigrants to settle in the Australian bush has likely been very successful for the immigrants themselves, for rural and regional Australia in general and for the Australian agricultural sector in particular.

At the 2011 Census first and second generation immigrants comprised between 22 per cent (Tas) and 38 per cent (WA) of the non-urban population of the Australian States. Given the substantial increase in Australia’s immigration intake since 2011 (Productivity Commission, *Migrant Intake into Australia: Draft Report 2015*) we can expect the immigrant presence in rural and regional Australia to increase when the 2016 Census data is collected and published.

Immigrants in the Australian agricultural sector come from a very diverse range of countries and visa pathways. Some come as skilled permanent immigrants – including immigrant farmers – while others come on temporary visas as Working Holiday Makers, skilled workers on 457 Visas and Pacific Island Seasonal Workers. Others come as refugees who are settling in increasing numbers in regional and rural Australia. It is likely that some of the 12 000 Syrian conflict refugees arriving in Australia in the next 12 months will be resettled in regional centres across Australia.

**Skilled permanent immigrants** add considerably to the productivity of Australian agriculture by filling skilled vacancies in the agricultural sector, and bring their expertise from their pre-immigration employment experience. Of those surveyed, most find a job in their area of expertise, like the job, and like living in regional and rural Australia. Most find a very warm welcome in the Australian bush and have strong relationships with local residents and fellow workers. The warmth of welcome for skilled immigrants employed in the agricultural industry is even stronger than that experienced by other skilled permanent immigrants in the Australian bush. These findings emerged from a random sample of nearly 1000 skilled immigrants across Australia.

**Immigrant farmers** are increasing in numbers and significance, helping to redress problems of inter-generational succession increasingly experienced by non-immigrant farmer families, by providing an alternate source of new generation farmers. Immigrant farmers also increase productivity by bringing with them new technological insights gained overseas to apply to Australia farming. For example, African farmers from countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa bring with them experience with water-saving farming. Asian market gardeners bring in a new range of vegetables and fruits that find a ready market in a country where cooking contests and food shows are finding a very large audience.

**Working Holiday Makers** provide a large and mobile workforce that helps meet seasonal demand for agricultural workers, particularly at harvesting or picking time. They also provide labour for hard-to-
staff jobs in rural and remote areas of Australia. By reducing labour shortages at critical times on the agricultural industry cycle they add considerably to its profitability and productivity. Unscrupulous employers, brokers and labour hire companies – co-ethnics and others – have led to well-publicised instances of low-pay, exploitative accommodation arrangements and very unsatisfactory work experiences for a minority of WHMs, threatening to undermine the future viability of the programme.

**Pacific Island Seasonal Workers** will likely become increasingly important to the Australian agricultural sector in coming decades. After a successful pilot programme in the horticultural sector, the Pacific Seasonal Workers Programme is now an uncapped demand-driven source of labour supply for the agricultural sector. The potential to utilise this source of labour has not yet been fully taken up by Australian farmers.

While most refugees and humanitarian immigrants settle in Australian cities, the research in this report shows that **refugees** also add very considerably to the agricultural sector workforce, with a number of refugees becoming farmers or entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. Agricultural productivity will likely increase as regional and rural Australia opens up its communities and agricultural sector jobs to this cohort of Australian immigrants.

**Implications for relevant stakeholders**

This study aims to improve the future productivity of the Australian agriculture sector by filling a critical gap in our knowledge of the contribution of immigrant farmers and both permanent and temporary immigrant labour in Australian agriculture and to inform future policy development in the area. The findings provide insights into how to redress labour shortages across the skill spectrum by tapping into immigration possibilities. The findings also identify culturally ingrained agricultural practices, innovation and transfer of knowledge in production and marketing that are the product of immigrant farming businesses in the Australian agricultural sector. Additionally, the research provides a forum to inform key national, state, regional and local interested parties of the new immigrant farmers, humanitarian immigrants and temporary immigrants in the agricultural sector, to enable a fine-tuning of policies and programmes.

**Recommendations**

Strategies to increase the number of permanent and temporary immigrants who settle in rural and regional Australia will likely benefit the Australian bush in general and the Australian agricultural sector in particular. Consideration could be given to policies that:

- while recognising immigration is within the domain of Federal Government policy, allow States and Territories some independent control over migration intakes – similar to the way in which Canada operates – to enable them to better target migration to areas of skills and employment shortages in rural and regional areas;

- target immigrants with sound farming experience and skills, for example through Immigrant Farmer Expos similar to 457 Skilled Temporary immigrant Expos that the Australian government holds in cities in Europe and the UK. These could be trialled, particularly in countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe;

- redirect more of Australia’s permanent immigrants to non-urban settlement, such as providing applicants more points for regional and rural settlement and adding agricultural sector jobs to the list of occupations in demand;

- increase the number of WHMs coming to Australia and promote the second visa opportunity;

- reduce exploitation of WHMs to strengthen the future impact of WHMs on agricultural productivity.
• improve the knowledge of, and promote, the untapped opportunities provided by the Pacific Seasonal Workers Programme to farmers

• increase the number of settlement opportunities for refugees in rural and regional Australia; and

• continue to develop local initiatives to welcome new immigrants to cities and towns and condemn the activities of a minority of exploitative employers or racist individuals who threaten to undermine the social and economic achievements that contribute to the future of agricultural productivity.
Introduction

Australia is one of the world’s great migration nations: in seven decades of post-war immigration Australia has attracted immigrants from all over the globe. Most of those immigrants have settled in Australian cities but in the last fifteen years new visa pathways have been opened up for permanent and temporary immigrants to settle in rural and regional Australia. Many of these new immigrants in the Australian bush have worked in the agricultural sector of the economy helping to redress labour shortages and adding new skills and innovative insights to contribute greatly to increasing the productivity of the Australian agricultural industry. Yet despite the increasing importance of new permanent and temporary immigrants to Australian agriculture in particular and to the revitalisation of regional and rural Australia in general, research in this field has been lacking. Hence the initiative of the RIRDC in funding this three-year research project, *New Immigrants Improving Productivity in Australian Agriculture*, to fill an important gap in evidence-based research that identifies the ways that immigrants can contribute to the increasing vitality of Australian agriculture in coming decades as new bi-lateral free-trade agreements struck between Australia and China, Korea and Japan have opened up new market opportunities for Australian agricultural exports to Asia in addition to established markets in Europe and the Americas.

This Final Report provides an overview of the main findings of fieldwork conducted in five Australian states – NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia – involving key interested parties and permanent and temporary immigrants who work in the Australian agricultural industry. The research involved fieldwork with skilled permanent immigrants and immigrant farmers and with temporary immigrants – including Working Holiday Makers and Pacific Island Seasonal workers – and humanitarian immigrants. A mixed methodology utilising surveys, interviews and focus groups as well as case studies in the five States was employed. Our Industry Partner, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Department of Premiers and Cabinet, Victorian Government, played an important role in this research project.

The project investigated the role of new immigrants in Australian agriculture and their contribution to productivity as farmers, growers and workers in the industry. A preliminary literature review about ethnic minorities and immigrant farmers in rural Australia shows that immigrant communities historically have played a central role in the development of the agricultural sector in Australia, particularly in horticulture and market gardening. Yet while there has been some detailed research on immigrants in regional and rural Australia (Cully 2011; Collins and Krivopkapić-Skoko 2016), there has been very little recent research specifically focused on immigrants in the agriculture sector. One of the key issues faced by agriculture is securing a new generation of agricultural producers: family succession is no longer a fait accompli (Barr 2003). Immigrant farmers are one solution to this problem. Another problem is labour shortage on a seasonal and permanent basis. Moreover the agricultural industry does not exist in isolation: the regional, rural and remote towns and cities that sustain agricultural farmers, businesses and workers and their families are sensitive to the productivity and economic growth of agriculture and are in turn critical to the productivity and vitality of the agricultural sector.

This research project provides for the first time a comprehensive overview of the new immigrants who have entered Australian agriculture as (a) immigrant farmers, (b) refugees and humanitarian immigrants and (c) Working Holiday Makers and identifies the ways that they contribute to productivity in the industry. The research findings develop insights into the pathways that immigrants take to agricultural employment and reflect on the efficacy of existing immigration policies and programmes that aims to direct new immigrants – permanent and temporary – to regional, rural and remote Australia.

Productivity relates to innovative ways of combining labour and capital to maximise the output of products that can be sold to national and international markets. Immigrant farmers and producers and immigrant workers are vital to improving productivity in Australian agriculture by overcoming the
problem of farmer and seasonal and permanent labour shortages and by re-energising capital and labour productivity. Temporary immigrant workers are increasingly important sources of Australia’s seasonal agricultural workforce, particularly Working Holiday Makers, who provide a mobile seasonal labour force to assist in maximising the harvest yield. Moreover, permanent labour in the agricultural sector can be hard to source. Humanitarian immigrants who settle in regional and rural areas can assist with this labour shortage.

Immigrant farmers/growers contributed substantially to the establishment of the modern horticultural industries in Australia and have been highly successful at introducing new crops. Historical accounts outlined how the Dutch (Hempel 1960), Italian (Burnley 1972), German (Borrie 1953), Scandinavian (Lyng 1939), Indian (de Lepervanche 1984) and Chinese immigrants (Lancashire 2000; Frost 2000) played a significant role in the Australian agricultural sector. On the other hand, there is a substantial body of empirical knowledge and literature accumulated around immigrant farmers in the context of US agriculture (Salamon 1985, 1987; Tsukashima 1998; Wells 1991). The significant and multifaceted contribution to development of rural communities and rural industries was also recorded in New Zealand where the dairy industry and horticulture attracted the largest number of immigrants (Krivokapic-Skoko 2005). There is some evidence concerning the role of public assistance in successfully incorporating ethnic farming groups into local agricultural production in some highly developed countries. For instance, the Indo-Chinese farming project in Western Washington, U.S. during the 1980s managed to capitalise on immigrant knowledge and experience in the production and culture of certain vegetables and fruits (Evans 1985). The project was designed to enable ethnic farmers to continue with their farming practices and maintain their own cultural tradition. Such a view of the organised and planned introduction of immigrant farmers in local agricultural production was promoted a decade ago by the New Zealand Vegetable and Potato Growers Association.

Most recent global developments which target immigrants who have sound farming experience and skills, and attract them into the agricultural sector of highly developed countries are relevant for this project. The provinces of Nova Scotia, Ontario and Saskatchewan are introducing programs for attracting more immigrant farmers. These programs are being run jointly by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Department for Agriculture. These programs are providing technical and infrastructural support to aspiring new immigrant farmers and also presenting farming opportunities at settlement and immigration centres across Canadian provinces. The Office of Immigration of Nova Scotia set up an Agri-food Sector pilot stream as part of the Nova Scotia Nominee program and Ontario province introduced the program called FarmStart for experienced farmers from overseas who intend to move to that province and set up farming operations there. The government also allocated some funds (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) for development of a website, detailing the profile of the agricultural sector and a comprehensive data base of the farmland available for future farming operations in Nova Scotia. Saskatchewan, too, introduced programs for attracting more immigrant farmers, and in 2002 established a new category for farm-operators, mostly recruiting farmers from the United Kingdom and Germany. Most recent programs in the United States targeting immigrant farmers, such as Cultivating Success on Immigrant-Owned Farms, Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program, and Immigrant Farming Projects Global Gardens (Refugee Agriculture Program), are designed to provide specific support for immigrant farmers who have an interest in small scale agriculture (Ostrom et al. 2010; Sowerwine et al. 2015; Imbruce 2007). Finally, the importance of the study of migration in rural areas was recognized by the EU in 2000 in the Social and Economic Committee report (Kasimis et al. 2003), where apart from migrant labour in rural areas of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, the focus was also on immigrants setting up small farming operations there.

Immigrants with experience and skills entering farming can convey their knowledge and skills to growing particular crops, achieving more productive and sustainable land management practices. At the same time immigrant farmers often have extensive co-ethnic networks, if not in the community they live in, then in other parts of Australia or other countries. These Diasporic networks provide opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to innovate, including access to supply networks, knowledge sharing, and sometimes labour. Moreover, in the light of environmental degradation and
the issue of environmental sustainability, there has been increasing research interest in ethnic minorities’ farming practices which are environmentally sensitive, and in particular the ones which adopt water conservative agricultural practices (Sommers and Napier 1993; Paterson 1989).

However, in the Australian context there is little research on immigrants’ farming practices, sustainability, and the ways in which the transfer of knowledge and farming experience that immigrants bring can improve productivity in the agricultural sector. Some previous research projects funded by RIRDC, such as the projects on Asian growers and growers from non-English speaking background, mainly focused on improving information and agricultural extension, such as how to encourage adoption of best practices (Morgan 2003), or the safe use of farm chemicals (Parker 2000). Since the present project focuses on the knowledge and skills of immigrants, it aims to contribute to increased productivity of the agricultural sector in Australia. Contribution of immigrants to rural communities through innovation and knowledge transfer has had a longstanding relevance in the overseas literature (Wells 1991). However, this issue has not been addressed in great detail in rural Australia. Innovation and knowledge transfer triggered by an influx of immigrants in rural communities will be one of the focuses of this project.
Objectives

This report presents the findings of a three year research project that investigated the experiences of immigrant farmers and growers and temporary and permanent immigrant farm labourers in order to better understand the ways that immigrants improve agricultural productivity in Australia.

The main research objective was to understand the impact that immigrants have made to productivity in the agricultural sector to date in order to substantially increase productivity in the future. This is important because it assists in developing successful strategies to improve agricultural sustainability, preserve resources and enhance rural renewal in Australia. The central research question was: ‘In what way do immigrant farmers and growers and immigrant workers contribute to current productivity in the Australian agricultural sector and how can this be enhanced in the future?’

The principal research objectives of this project were to:

- map the presence of new immigrants in Australian agriculture;
- investigate the financial, human, cultural and social capital that new immigrants bring into Australian agriculture in order to better understand the ways they improve productivity of the farming sector in Australia;
- map the presence of new immigrant farmers and growers in Australia, develop understanding of the issues and factors that drive and influence farming practices, identify the ethnic business networks – both national and transnational – which new immigrants use when seeking information, advice and additional capital, and, finally, determine ways to work effectively with new immigrant farmers to foster a culture of innovation and sustainability;
- explore the settlement and work experiences of humanitarian entrants engaged in agricultural work and investigate the contribution of the agricultural sector and regional and rural communities to refugee settlement and vice versa;
- investigate the contribution that temporary immigrant farm labour plays, particularly as seasonal labour during harvest or picking time, in order to explore ways to better utilise temporary immigrant farm labour in general, and Working Holiday Makers in particular, in the agricultural sector;
- review comparative international lessons from Canada, New Zealand, and some European countries, in attracting and retaining new immigrant farmers and workers;
- explore the policy implications of this research and communicate the results to relevant policy stakeholders at federal, state and local government level.

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1 Rural Industries Research and Development Council Research Grant (2012-15) PRJ-007578 New Immigrants Improving Productivity in Australian Agriculture, Prof. Jock H Collins (UTS), Dr Branka Krivokapic-Skoko (CSU). Industry partners: Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Department of Premiers and Cabinet, Victorian Government; Working Holiday Supporting Centre.
Methodology

The mixed methodology employed in this research project comprises a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to give the greatest insights into the relationship between immigration and agricultural productivity. Key groups of immigrant farmers, humanitarian labourers and Working Holiday Makers have been selected as informants for our fieldwork. Quantitative methodologies were used to:

- analyze data from the 2011 Census
- analyze the cohort of 915 permanent skilled immigrants employed in the agricultural sector who were surveyed for a previous RIRDC research grant
- analyze data from a survey of 104 Korean WHMs.

Qualitative methodologies were used to analyse in-depth interviews of key interested parties, immigrant farmers, and Korean WHM temporary entrants, and focus groups of humanitarian permanent entrants, WHM temporary entrants and Pacific Seasonal Workers. These interviews and focus groups were taped, transcribed, and thematically analysed. Key-informant interviews were conducted with key agricultural sector organizations, the National Farmers’ Federation, principals of firms that broker WHM agricultural labour, and State and Federal department officials with responsibility for the immigration of farmers, refugees and humanitarian entrants, and WHMs.

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2 Prof. J.H. Collins (UTS) and Dr B. Krivokapic-skoko (CSU): Regional Industries Research and Development Council (RIRDC) Research Grant 2006-10 HCC06-27, New immigrants in regional and rural Australia: attraction and retention
Chapter 1: Immigrants in Australia

Australia is one of the world’s great immigration nations (see Figure 1.1). With Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, Australia is one of the world’s main settler migration nations with a long post-1947 history of permanent migration. Immigrants were sought to solve short term labour market shortages and, at the same time, to bring their family with them or complete family formation in Australia as part of long term nation building. Immigrants comprised about half of all the population growth in Australia over the last sixty years.

![Graph showing foreign-born as a percentage of the total population, 2012](image_url)

Source: OECD (2014), p. 48

Figure 1.1. Foreign-born as a percentage of the total population, 2012

Temporary migration to Australia has grown significantly since the turn of the century as a consequence of the growth in the numbers of international students (ISs), Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) and temporary skilled migrants – mostly on 457 visas – entering Australia (Hugo 2014, pp. 385-387). Figure 1.2 demonstrates two key features of Australia’s immigration intakes from 2003-04 till 2011-12. The first is the growth of net overseas migration to a peak in 2008-09, followed by a decline after the GST (Collins 2011) and a recovery phase from 2011-12 till the present. The second feature is that the temporary migrant intake has been much larger than the permanent intake over this period.

Immigration data for the 2013-14 year, the latest available, shows that 736 124 immigrants entered under the temporary programme (DIBP 2014a), vastly outnumbering the permanent programme of 207 947 in that year (see Table 1.1). In other words, in the 2013-14 Australian immigration intake permanent immigrants comprised 22 per cent of the total intake, and temporary migrants 78 per cent of the total intake. Humanitarian migrants comprised 6.6 per cent of the permanent immigration intake and 1.5 per cent of the total immigration intake in that year. Boat people were a fraction of this humanitarian intake. Nearly 300 000 temporary immigrants on international student visas and just under one quarter of a million on WHM visas comprise over 70 per cent of the temporary immigration intake of that year, with just under 100 000 temporary skilled workers arriving on 457 visas.
Table 1.1. Australian Immigration Programme 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NUMBERS</th>
<th>% OF TEMPORARY INTAKE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Holiday Makers</td>
<td>239 592</td>
<td>32.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>292 060</td>
<td>39.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Work (Skilled)</td>
<td>98 571</td>
<td>13.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other temporary visas¹</td>
<td>105 901</td>
<td>14.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL TEMPORARY</td>
<td>736 124</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PERMANENT</td>
<td>207 947</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Programme</td>
<td>13 768</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Temporary Work (Short Stay Activity), Temporary Graduate, Training and Research, Business (Long Stay Independent Executive), Skilled Recognised Graduate, New Zealand Citizenship Family Relationship, Student Guardian, other Temporary Work visas introduced 23 March 2013, and former visas for social, cultural and international relations purposes.

(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en)

Table 1.2 shows the most recently available figures for the top ten source countries of Australia’s permanent immigration intake. Whereas the UK and Ireland have long been the major source countries for Australia’s post-war settler migrants, this has changed in the past decade, with permanent immigrant arrivals from India and China outnumbering permanent arrivals from the UK, and arrivals from the Philippines and Pakistan also outnumbering the arrivals from Ireland. Vietnam, South Africa, Nepal and Malaysia round out the top ten source countries for permanent immigrant arrivals over the period 2011-12 to 2013-14. Overall around 27 per cent of permanent immigrant arrivals are
from OECD countries, demonstrating how the Australian immigration net has switched to Asian countries in particular in the past decade or so. Note that New Zealand settlers are not included under the permanent immigration intake: because of the Trans-Tasman Agreement New Zealanders are excluded from the points-test system of selecting other permanent immigrants.

Table 1.2. Australia’s Permanent Immigration Intake: Top Ten Source Countries 2011-12 to 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>29,018</td>
<td>40,051</td>
<td>39,026</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>25,509</td>
<td>27,334</td>
<td>26,776</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>25,274</td>
<td>21,711</td>
<td>23,220</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>12,933</td>
<td>10,639</td>
<td>10,379</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4,295</td>
<td>3,552</td>
<td>6,275</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4,938</td>
<td>5,209</td>
<td>6,171</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>4,773</td>
<td>5,339</td>
<td>5,199</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>7,640</td>
<td>5,476</td>
<td>4,908</td>
<td>-10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2,472</td>
<td>4,107</td>
<td>4,364</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>5,508</td>
<td>5,151</td>
<td>4,207</td>
<td>-18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>62,638</td>
<td>61,431</td>
<td>59,475</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total OECD countries</td>
<td>52,517</td>
<td>50,365</td>
<td>51,114</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>184,998</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand settlers(^2)</td>
<td>44,311</td>
<td>41,230</td>
<td>27,274</td>
<td>-33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DIBP (2014a), p. 25

Table 1.3. Distribution of Australian-born and overseas-born people between major urban, other urban and rural areas, 1947–2006 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major urban</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other urban</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (no.)</td>
<td>733 372</td>
<td>4 414 577</td>
<td>6 827 383</td>
<td>14 068 993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Immigrants are more likely to settle in urban areas than people born in Australia. Table 1.3 shows the settlement patterns of Australian-born and overseas-born people between major urban, other urban and rural areas for the period 1947-2006. This shows that in 2006 while 61 per cent of the Australian-born
population lived in major urban centres, 82.8 per cent of first generation immigrants (that is, the overseas born) were urban dwellers. Similarly, Figure 1.3 shows 2011 census data on the settlement patterns of the Australian-born and overseas-born people. While 86 per cent of immigrants lived in the major cities of Australia in 2011, only 65 per cent of the Australian-born population did so. Only 13 per cent of immigrants lived in regional areas and 1 per cent in remote areas, compared with 33 per cent and 3 per cent respectively for the Australian-born population.


**Figure 1.3. Geographic distribution of immigrants and Australian-born people, 2011**

In the past decade Australian immigration policy has attracted increasing numbers of new permanent and temporary immigrants to regional and rural Australia. New permanent and temporary visa pathways have been opened up. For permanent immigrants, entry is via a points test where points are allocated for factors such as an applicant’s age, education and qualification, employment experience and English language ability. Additional points are provided for those who agree to settle in regional and rural Australia. Other pathways are employer sponsored and designed to fill key skill shortages in non-metropolitan areas. As Table 1.4 shows, 22,260 permanent immigrants settled in regional and rural Australia in 2010-11, falling to 7,941 in 2013-14. On the other hand, employer sponsored immigrants settling in regional and rural Australia rose from 2,190 in 2010-11 to 2,650 in 2013-14.

While most immigrants have been destined to settle in the largest Australian cities, developments in Australian immigration policy this century have opened up visa pathways for more and more new immigrants to settle in regional and rural Australia. Some are skilled immigrants on either permanent or temporary 457 visas, including immigrant farmers. Others arrive on temporary WHM visas, attracted by the opportunity to extend their visa by 12 months by working in regional and rural Australia. Many international students enroll at regional universities while increasing numbers of refugees who arrive in Australia on humanitarian visas are settling in the Australian bush. Seasonal workers from the Pacific Islands have significant potential to redress labour shortages during harvesting and picking periods.

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3 A case study of refugees in Australian agricultural industry is discussed in Chapter 6.
Labour shortages in Regional and Rural Australia

Permanent and temporary migrations play a critical role in redressing labour shortages across the skill spectrum in regional, rural and remote Australian labour markets. New immigrants in the bush also assist redressing population decline in many towns and cities as well as revitalising the built and social environment of regional, rural and remote neighbourhoods across Australia.

The National Farmers’ Federation in 2008 undertook an analysis that revealed that there were 22,000 unfilled fruit-picking positions in horticulture. The NFF estimated that unpicked rotting fruit was costing horticultural farms, on average, $100,000 a-year while in the most extreme cases the farmers were losing $250,000 per season in rotting produce due to the inability to find labour. In 2014, the NFF undertook a Farm Business Survey to better understand critical employment and labour-related issues affecting the agriculture sector. Almost 50 per cent of respondents said that a shortage of labour was the greatest impediment to their business (PC 2015, p. 305).

In a submission to the Productivity Commission’s review of Australian Immigration the NFF notes the important contribution that WHMs make to meeting labour shortages in rural and regional Australia: ‘Overseas workers are an important part of the Australian agricultural workforce. Approximately 40,000 working holiday makers, 3000 Seasonal Worker Programme participants and almost 900 skilled temporary migrants work on Australian farms each year: [this represents] almost one-third of the total (non-managerial) workforce. (sub. 31, p. 4)’ (PC 2015, p. 301).
**Australia’s temporary migration intake**

Australia’s temporary migration intake, like the annual permanent intake, is drawn from a wide range of countries around the globe. Australia is one of the main destination countries for international students (ISs). ISs are more prominent in Australia than in any other OECD country other than Luxembourg: in 2012 ISs comprised 18.3 per cent of all tertiary enrolments in Australia compared to the OECD average of 7.6 per cent. In declining order the corresponding figures for other OECD countries were: Luxembourg (40.5%); the UK (17.1%); Switzerland (16.5%); New Zealand (15.8%); Austria (15.1%) and France (11.8%). In no other OECD country did ISs comprise more than 10 per cent of all tertiary enrolments (OECD 2014, p. 29). China, India, South Korea, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the USA are the ‘top ten’ source countries of ISs in Australia (DIBP 2013a, p. 60). ISs can officially work up to 20 hours per week but in practice some ISs work longer hours, mainly in retail and restaurant employment in the large Australian cities where most of Australia’s universities are located. One 2012 survey of ISs found that 16 per cent admitted that they worked 21-25 hours per week during semester (Robertson & Clark 2012, p. 10).

### Table 1.5. Temporary-type labour migration, by category, 2007-12

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working holiday makers (OEC) total</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-18.4</td>
<td>-46.5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD (2014), p. 25

As Table 1.5 shows, Australia ranks by far the highest OECD nation in terms of absolute flows of WHMs. In 2012 Australia took in more WHMs than the USA, Canada, New Zealand and the UK combined (see Table 1.5). As the OECD (2014, p. 25) argued, ‘The flows of WHS workers have increased by 10% (38,000) from 2007, however, more than half of this increase is driven by increased WHS flows to Australia.’ Australia has Working Holiday Programme agreements with 28 countries. The latest two added to the list were Uruguay, in April 2013, and Greece, in May 2014. Over the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 the UK was the major source country of WHMs followed by South Korea, Taiwan, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Canada and Hong Kong, though the number of WHM visa holders from some source counties varies significantly from year to year (DIBP 2013a, p. 55).

WHMs receive a 12 month visa that permits them to work in a number of jobs with a maximum of 6 months with any one employer. This means that WHMs are mobile between employers and often geographically as they roam the nation seeking a combination of work and holiday experiences. Like ISs, WHMs tend to work in unskilled jobs. If they work more than 88 days in jobs located in regional and rural Australia they then qualify for a second WHM visa. This attracts WHMs to non-metropolitan labour markets and employment in the agricultural sector in seasonal jobs or in retail and service jobs in remote and rural areas that find it difficult to attract staff. Second Working Holiday visa grants grew from about 2700 in 2005-06 to 46,000 in 2013-14; in 2013-14, this represented about one in four first-time Working Holiday visa holders (DIBP 2014b, p. 4).
The general focus on skills shortages has shaped migration policy in recent years (Collins 2013; Hugo 2014, p. 380). The 457 visa has been the major source of skilled temporary immigrants to Australia. The UK is the major source of Australia’s temporary immigrants on 457 visas, with India, China, the Philippines and France in the ‘top ten’ countries of 457 arrivals along with the USA, Canada and South Africa (DIBP 2013b, p.14). The 457 visa is an uncapped, employer-demand driven category of temporary migration: employers play a key role in selecting 457 migrants. Migrants must have a job offer before they arrive – after an employment test has indicated that there are no available local workers to fill the job vacancy. Most 457 workers are older than ISS or WHMs, with most aged over 25 years (32% aged 25-29 years old and 34% aged 30-34, DIBP 2013b, p. 14).

The Australian workforce is relatively geographically immobile, particularly compared to the U.S. labour market. The exception is the move of workers from regional and rural areas to metropolitan labour markets or movement between the large capital cities. This creates labour shortages across the skill spectrum in regional and rural areas. WHMs are geographically mobile by definition since their prime purpose is travel around Australia: only 40 per cent of WHMs do not travel outside urban areas during their time in Australia (Tan et al., 2009). The granting of a second WHM visa as incentive to work in non-metropolitan jobs is one way that Australian immigration policy has attempted to direct guest workers to the Australian bush, as regional and rural areas are popularly referred to in colloquial terms. The Australian government announced changes to the WHM programme in the 2015-16 Budget, to tax previously exempt earnings of backpackers, and to remove voluntary work as an eligible input to the 88 days of employment on farms needed to get a year’s visa extension (PC 2015, p. 301).

Gender considerations are critical in understanding the global flows of temporary migrants. Castles, De Haas and Miller (2014, p. 16) identify the growing feminisation of international migration flows as one of the key features of contemporary global migration. Women from countries like the Philippines play a major role as temporary nurses or domestic workers in many countries like Canada (Castles et al., pp. 257-8). Data of the 457 visa intake for 2010-12 found that females comprised about 43 per cent of the intake. For no top-ten source country of 457 visa holders did females outnumber males (DIAC 2013, p. 123). While males on international student visas outnumber females the gap is reducing: in 2012 there were 166 080 males and 140 920 females (DIAC 2013, p. 121). Gender dimensions of the WHM population are not reported by DIBP (2014b).

In addition to these initiatives a recent innovation in Australian immigration policy has been to provide new immigration pathways for seasonal workers from Pacific nations to jobs in the bush. The temporary migration of seasonal agricultural workers has a long tradition in many OECD countries – Canada, the USA and New Zealand have had temporary migration of seasonal agricultural workers for some time – but not in Australia. The World Bank (2006) called on western nations like Australia to open up labour market opportunities for Pacific Islanders as a way of contributing to the economic development of these nations: over 20 per cent of people in most Pacific Island countries live in hardship and are unable to meet their basic needs (DFAT 2015).

Australia is thus a relative latecomer to permitting the entry of seasonal agricultural workers. A three year trial Pacific Seasonal Worker (416 Visa) Pilot Scheme was introduced in Australia in August 2008 (DIBP 2014a, p. 17). The pilot programme aimed to provide work opportunities in the Australian agriculture and accommodation industries to workers from Pacific Island nations whose remittances would contribute to the economic development while being provided with opportunities for up-skilling in Australia. The programme allowed seasonal workers from East Timor, Nauru, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to work in low-skilled jobs for up to seven months in a 12-month period. The Australian government renewed the Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme in the horticulture industry across Australia and extended the range of occupations to include tourism (accommodation); agriculture (sugar cane, cotton); and fisheries (aquaculture) industries in limited locations. The annual intake of Seasonal Workers has grown from around 400 in 2010-11 to just over 2000 in 2013-14. 12 000 visa places were made available over a four year period to 2016 (DIBP 2014d, p. 72). Workers from Timor Leste can now access the programme which is now
a fully fledged, uncapped, demand driven programme to provide seasonal Pacific workers to the agricultural sector and a broader range of occupations in regional and rural Australia.
Chapter 2: Immigrants in regional and rural Australia and the agricultural sector

This section provides a brief overview of:

(a) participation and distribution of non-English speaking people in Australian agriculture

(b) occupation by birth place for overseas born people involved in Australian agriculture

(c) industry orientation of overseas born farmers involved in Australian agriculture

This section is based on the 2006 and 2011 Censuses of Population and Housing. While this section presents key findings, more detailed overviews are summarised in tables and figures included in Appendices.

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 2.2 Percentage of non-English speaking farmers per industry in 2011.

Immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds make a significant contribution to productivity and innovation in agriculture industries in Australia. According to the 2011 ABS Census of Population and Housing, within the Australian agriculture, fishery and forestry industry classification at least 20,000 people speak a language other than English at home. They represent up to 8.56 per cent of the total people employed in Australian agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. Since 2006 around 2110
more immigrants from non-English speaking (NES) backgrounds entered Australian agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. According to ABS, in 2006 there were 17 890 persons of a NES background in Australian agriculture, fisheries and forestry which represented 6.7 per cent of the total workforce in those industries (Kancans, Stenekes and Benedictos 2010).

Immigrant farmers from a NES background are most likely to be participating in vegetable, mushroom, horticultural and poultry industries (Figure 2.1). Actually, one in three farmers/growers involved in Australian mushrooms and vegetable production comes from a NES background. While Chinese, Mon-Kmer, Korean and South East Asian language groups tend to be more involved in mushroom and vegetable growing, Italian, Greek and Indo-Aryan language groups tend to enter fruit and tree nut growing. Sheep, beef, cattle and grain farming tend to attract more German and Dutch speaking farmers. Immigrants from South East Asia also tend to enter poultry and other livestock industries.

Between 2006 and 2011 the biggest increase of participation of NES farmers was recorded in: nursery and floriculture (from 11.5 to 14.96%); mushroom and vegetable growing (from 28.9 to 37.1%); fruit and tree nut growing (from 17.1 to 22.26%); and poultry farming (from 14.1 to 19.9%).

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

**Figure 2.2. Participation and distribution of NES workers in Australian agriculture, forestry and fishing**

Victoria has the highest number of NES people employed in agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries (5036 or 24.5%), followed by New South Wales (4891) and Queensland (4690). In the Northern Territory one in five people working in agriculture is a non-English speaker (Figure 2.2).

According to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, 16 per cent of farmers and farm managers were born overseas. Overseas born farmers are well represented in vegetable and mushrooms growing (42%), fruit growing (35%), deer farming (30%), poultry farming (25%), and nursery and floriculture production (22%). Australian born farmers are particularly well represented (at least 90%) in sheep, beef cattle, dairy and crop farming, and hunting (Figure 2.3). Forty per cent of overseas born farmers
came from Europe, 23 per cent came from Asian countries and almost 17 per cent came from NZ/Pacific countries. Provinces in Canada such as Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Ontario have had great success in targeting immigrants from Europe and the UK with sound farming experience and skills, a practice that could be more actively followed in Australia.

**Note:** nfd = not further defined

**Data Source:** ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

**Figure 2.3. Participation and distribution of Australian-born workers in agricultural industry**

Figure 2.4 provides a detailed breakdown of the agricultural sector’s overseas-born workforce by regional grouping of first-generation immigrants. Asian immigrants are over-represented as farmers and farm managers, crop farmers and workers, farm, forestry and garden workers, florists and nursery persons. New Zealanders and Pacific Islanders are over-represented as skilled animal and horticultural workers, animal attendants and shearsers. More detailed data on contribution of overseas born immigrants across specific agricultural industries are presented in the figures in Appendix D.
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 2.4. Participation and distribution of immigrant workers in Australian agricultural industry

There are some notable tendencies in participation of some overseas born farmers in particular industries. Such specialisation in agricultural industries where almost one third or more of the farmers from a particular group tend to enter the same industry is outlined below. Farmers born in:

- North and Western Europe tend to be involved in sheep, beef, cattle and grain farming (34%)
- South and Eastern Europe tend to be involved in fruit growing (30%)
- North Africa and the Middle East tend to be involved in vegetable growing (31%)
- Asia tend to be involved in vegetable and fruit growing (more than 40%)
- Sub-Saharan Africa tend to be involved in sheep, beef, cattle and grain farming (30%)

Contribution of overseas born farmers is highest in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, where one in five people working in agriculture was born overseas. Farmers born in Northern Africa and the Middle East tend to settle mostly in NSW (close to 50%), while those born in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to gravitate towards Western Australia and Queensland. More than half of the farmers born in Southern and Eastern Europe are in NSW and Victoria. Farmers born in South East Asia tend to be more evenly settled across the five main states, with a somewhat stronger orientation to move to the Northern Territory (Appendix F).
Chapter 3: Skilled immigrants in the agricultural sector (survey data)

Skilled Immigrants in regional and rural Australia

For an earlier RIRDC research grant the authors conducted a national survey of 915 skilled immigrants in rural and regional Australia (Collins & Krivokapic-Skoko, forthcoming). The survey was conducted by random sample administered by the then Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) using their confidential databases. The self-administrated questionnaires were sent to the sample of 2748 immigrants living in rural and regional Australia. The contact details such as the names and addresses were randomly selected from the DIAC Settlement Database of immigrants who arrived under the permanent immigration programme in recent years. The survey was conducted between April and June 2008. In order to increase the response rate, postage-paid envelopes with real stamps were included in the mail package together with an accompanying letter explaining the purpose of the survey. The cover letter also stressed anonymity and confidentiality of this research and highlighted the associations with the funding bodies and universities.

![Spatial distribution of the national survey of immigrants in rural and regional Australia (N=915)](image)


Figure 3.1. Spatial distribution of the national survey of immigrants in rural and regional Australia (N=915)

The overall response rate to this mail survey after allowing for ‘Returning to Sender’ was 33 per cent. As Figure 3.1 shows the survey drew responses from all around Australia. Most of the respondents (86%) were from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia, while the
respondents from South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory were under-represented in this survey. This survey is the largest random sample of new immigrants in the Australian bush.

One in four of the survey respondents came from the United Kingdom and Ireland (Figure 3.2), and almost half (48.8%) came from Main English Speaking (MES) countries. Immigrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and generally immigrants coming from the MES countries are over-represented in this survey when compared with other surveys conducted by DIAC (2007a, 2008). For instance, in the Riverina survey (DIAC 2007a) only 10 per cent of immigrants came from the United Kingdom. Also, the corresponding percentage of the immigrants from the MES countries is much higher than in the longitudinal survey of the immigrants in Australia (DIAC 2007b). There were relatively large numbers of participants who came from the Philippines (10.7%), while the participants from India and China together accounted for only for 5.3 per cent of the total survey, and were outnumbered by immigrants from South Africa/Zimbabwe (8.2%). The proportion of immigrants from China and India settling in non-metropolitan areas of Australia is rather low. The immigrants from these two countries are under-represented in this national survey when compared with other surveys of rural immigrants done by DIAC (2007a, 2008). It seems that in terms of the origin of the immigrants this survey was closest to the one undertaken on the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (DIMIA 2005).

![Country of origin chart]

*Includes Hong Kong and Taiwan
** Includes Middle East, Other Africa, Pacific Islands and New Zealand, and other America

Source: Collins & Krivokapic-Skoko, forthcoming, p. 16.

Figure 3.2. Country of origin of informants surveyed

---

4 The MES countries include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, the United States, and South Africa (DIAC 2008). This survey also includes the immigrants coming from Zimbabwe as part of the MES countries.
This survey shows that a majority of the respondents were living in major metropolitan areas before immigrating to Australia.\(^5\) Around 30 per cent of the respondents in this survey came from non-metropolitan areas (population of less than 100 000 people) while almost 40 per cent came from communities with less than 200 000 inhabitants.\(^6\) Around 10 per cent of the participants in this survey came from rural towns with up to 10 000 people.\(^7\) Interestingly, there was a large number of immigrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland who used to live in small rural towns before immigrating to Australia.

Regarding the visa category only one third of the respondents (31.2\%) came under one of the specially designated migration schemes. Most of the immigrants included in this survey (63.5\%) came under the category of ‘other’ such as family reunion or the marriage–family migration (Figure 3.3). Most of the respondents who immigrated under the category of ‘other’ came from the Philippines and Thailand.

![Visa Category of Informants Surveyed](image)

**Source:** Collins & Krivokapic-Skoko, forthcoming, p. 16.

**Figure 3.3. Visa category of informants surveyed**

Immigrants settling in rural and regional areas tend to immigrate to Australia mainly because of non-economic reasons. Around 70 per cent of the respondents decided to move to Australia to join family/relatives, or because of marriage or a better future for their families (Figure 3.4).\(^8\) Respondents who came under one of the specially designated migration schemes also indicated ‘the better future for

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\(^5\) Question 1 of the questionnaire asked about the names of the towns or cities the immigrants came from, so it was possible to identify the size of these places.

\(^6\) Following Hugo (2005) and Gray et al. (1991, p. 1) the term non-metropolitan is used to refer to the parts of the country outside of centres with no more than 100 000 inhabitants. Hugo et al (2006, p. 27) adopted a different approach defining non-metropolitan areas as communities with less than 200 000 inhabitants.

\(^7\) According to du Plessis et al. (2001) rural and small towns are settlements with up to 10 000 people.

\(^8\) Only one response was allowed and the respondents were asked to give only the most important reason.
their family’ as the main reason for immigrating - it accounts for more than 35 per cent of the answers to this question (Figure 3.4). Work and business opportunities account for less than 10 per cent of the reasons mentioned by the survey respondents.

Source: Collins & Krivokapic-Skoko, forthcoming, p. 17.

Figure 3.4. Why the immigrants surveyed decided to immigrate to Australia

Figure 3.4 shows the reasons that the immigrants surveyed decided to immigrate to Australia. Respondents from the Philippines are more likely to move to Australia for family reasons, mainly as spouse stream migrants, while respondents from the MES countries are more likely to come because of Australian features, such as life-style or climate. Immigrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe are most likely to come to escape war or the political situation.

More than 90 per cent believe that the decision to immigrate to Australia was the right one. Generally, immigrants living in the non-metropolitan areas have a partner (90% of the respondents) and do not have school age children (62% of the respondents). This may indicate that immigrant families with young children of the preschool age are more willing to live outside metropolitan areas.

One of the main drivers of the new immigration to regional and rural Australia is employment: immigrants want jobs and there are many job vacancies in the Australian bush, particularly for skilled immigrants. Figure 3.5 shows the jobs that these new immigrants were employed in at the time of the survey. Forty of those surveyed took up employment in the agricultural sector. Most others took employment in regional and rural towns in the education, management, health, trades, engineering, administration or retail sectors. Just over 16 per cent were employed in unskilled jobs, indicating that 84 per cent of the skilled immigrants had found skilled employment in the Australian bush. This finding alone indicates that the new pathways for immigrants to settle in regional and rural regions are successful in economic terms for both the immigrants and the bush.
Skilled Immigrants in the agricultural sector

Most skilled permanent immigrants do not work in the regional and rural areas of Australia, let alone in the agricultural sector. The 2008 survey of permanent immigrants provides a rare opportunity to examine the experiences of permanent immigrants in the agricultural sector and how they compare to permanent immigrants in other industries in regional and rural Australia. In this section of the report we present a detailed analysis of the 40 new immigrants who were employed in the agricultural sector, comparing their experiences to the sample as a whole.

Where the immigrants came from

Table 3.1 and Figure 3.6 show that one in three of the respondents from the agricultural cohort came from Asia (36%), and almost two in three respondents (60%) came from non-MES countries\(^9\). There were relatively large numbers of participants who came from the Philippines (13%), and South Africa/Zimbabwe (13%). In comparison with the main survey (Figure 3.2) there is a relatively lower percentage of immigrants coming from UK/Ireland entering agriculture. While the proportion of immigrants from India settling in non-metropolitan areas of Australia is rather low, a relatively high proportion of them are in agriculture.

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\(^9\) The MES countries include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, the United States, and South Africa (DIAC 2008). This survey also includes the immigrants coming from Zimbabwe as part of the MES countries.
Table 3.1. Country of origin of skilled immigrants in the agricultural sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK/Ireland</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa/Zimbabwe</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regions**</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes Hong Kong and Taiwan
** Other regions include the Middle East, Other African, Pacific islands and NZ, and other American

Figure 3.6. Country of origin of skilled immigrants in the agricultural sector

In Figure 3.7 the country of origin of skilled immigrants in the agricultural sector (called the subgroup in the graph) are compared to the country of origin of all skilled immigrants in the bush. Skilled immigrants from South-Africa and Zimbabwe, India, the Philippines and Thailand have a higher representation in the agricultural sector than other birthplace groups of skilled immigrants in the bush.
Motivations for settling in the Australian bush

Immigrants settling in rural and regional areas tend to immigrate to Australia mainly because of non-economic reasons. Around 70 per cent of the respondents decided to move to Australia to join family/relatives, or because of marriage or better future for their families (Figure 3.8). An interesting feature of this graph is that respondents who moved into agricultural employment were much more likely to emigrate to Australia for family or employment reasons – and less likely to emigrate for lifestyle reasons – than all other skilled immigrants in the Australian bush.

Figure 3.9 provides information about the source of information that skilled immigrants to the Australian bush drew on. This is important because it can inform strategies of recruitment for future immigrants to regional and rural Australia.

---

* Includes Hong Kong and Taiwan
** Other regions include the Middle East, Other African, Pacific islands and NZ, and other American

Figure 3.7. Country of origin of new skilled immigrants to the Australian bush – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (group)

---

10 Only one response was allowed and the respondents were asked to give only the most important reason.
Figure 3.8. The reasons new skilled immigrants in the bush decided to immigrate to Australia – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)

More than half of the respondents from the agricultural cohort found out about their current town though family and friends, more so than other skilled immigrants. This demonstrates the importance of the role that social networks play in contemporary migration chains: information spread through diasporic immigrant networks informing friends and family about immigration experiences and what to avoid and what to seek. The Internet was used by 5 per cent of the respondents. Clearly, the Internet does not have the same importance in obtaining information for the immigrants moving into rural Australia as it did in the case of the immigrants moving into rural Canada. One-third of the respondents included in the surveys of the rural immigrants in Alberta (Derwing and Krahn 2008) and Ontario (Lusis and Bauder 2008) had learned about their towns via the Internet. Also, while one in eight (13%) of Edmonton (Alberta) survey participants had obtained information about the place from immigration offices (Derwing and Krahn 2008), less than 2 per cent of rural immigrants in Australia included in this survey indicated that they used the material or services provided by the Department of Immigration (DIAC). While using the materials provided by DIAC and the Internet is not how these skilled permanent immigrants moving into non-metropolitan Australia typically seek information, this is not the case for Working Holiday Makers. Thus, in order to influence the location choices of immigrants, one of the ways will be to do so via their family and friends already residing in the community or through the local employers.
Immigrant entrepreneurship in the Australian agricultural sector

One important dimension of the contribution that immigrants make to productivity in the Australian agricultural sector, as in other sectors of the economy, is that some immigrants will move from the role of employee to that of employer or self-employed. Many immigrant groups have much higher rates of entrepreneurship than average: the rate of entrepreneurship across the whole of Australia is 10 per cent; for many immigrant groups including the Koreans it is 2-3 times higher (Collins and Low 2010; Collins and Shin 2014). As Table 3.2 shows when questioned about their main economic activity, 80 per cent of those informants who worked in the agricultural sector were wage and salary earners (compared to 57% of the whole group). Skilled immigrants in the agricultural sector were also much more likely to have set up their own business (15%) than the overall sample (9.6%) (see also Figure 3.10). When set against the Australian average rate of entrepreneurship (those in the workforce who are self-employed or employers) of 10 per cent, this propensity for immigrant entrepreneurship in the Australian agricultural sector is very encouraging since entrepreneurs drive employment and productivity growth in the industry. This is a key area for further research identified by this research project.

Table 3.2. The main activity of skilled immigrants working in the Australian bush

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Immigrants working in the agricultural sector</th>
<th>All skilled immigrants in the bush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A wage or salary earner</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting own business</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment looking for work</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up business</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.10. Rates of entrepreneurship among new skilled permanent immigrants to the Australian bush – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)

Employment experiences

Figure 3.11. How new immigrants found their job in the Australian bush – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)
Salary is an important factor in attracting employment to any industry. Regarding the gross annual salary from all the jobs, the median salary income of the agriculture cohort (28 out of 40) is $33 000, which is lower than the median of the whole group, $45 000 (Table 3.3). Only 10 per cent of the respondents from the agricultural cohort reported a gross annual salary of at least $50 000 (28.3% for the main group), while 40 per cent of respondents were earning between $30 000 and $50 000 per year. No respondent reported an income higher than $80 000, while almost one in seven respondents from the main survey reported an income higher than $80 000. Compared with the earnings of the immigrants in Australia included in the third longitudinal survey (DIAC 2007b) the median income of immigrants in agriculture was significantly lower (the survey conducted by DIAC reported median earnings of $47 000 per year).

Table 3.3. The salary of skilled immigrants working in the Australian bush

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th>Immigrants working in the agricultural sector</th>
<th>All skilled immigrants in the bush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30,000</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30000 - 50000</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50000-80000</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80000</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pay is one dimension of employment satisfaction. While skilled permanent immigrants in the agricultural sector were paid less on average than skilled permanent immigrants in other sectors of the regional and rural economy, Figure 3.13 shows that respondents who were agricultural sector workers were overwhelmingly positive about their job; overall 90 per cent of the respondents either liked their job or described their job as being ‘OK’.

Figure 3.13. How new immigrants rated their job in the Australian bush, overall – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)

Satisfaction of life in the Australian bush

Figure 3.14. How satisfied new immigrants were with the primary and secondary schools in their current city/town – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)
The degree of satisfaction of life in the Australian bush as a skilled permanent immigrant is partly shaped by the employment experience and partly shaped by the experiences of living in regional and rural Australia, for the immigrant and his/her family. One key area of importance for immigrant families relates to the educational experience of their children: most immigrants put the future of their children as the key factor behind their decision to emigrate to Australia. As Figure 3.14 shows, the overwhelming majority of the skilled immigrants surveyed who enrolled their children in local primary and secondary schools in the Australian bush were either very satisfied or satisfied with them.

![Figure 3.14](chart.png)

**Figure 3.15. How satisfied new immigrants were with the transport, telecommunications, entertainment and medical services in their current city/town – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)**

The skilled permanent immigrants in the Australian bush were also asked about their level of satisfaction with other key services where they lived: with the transport, telecommunications, entertainment and medical services. Once again those employed in the agricultural sector were compared to those in all sectors of the economy in the bush. As Figure 3.15 shows there was almost universal satisfaction with medical services, with agricultural sector employees more satisfied than those employed in other industries. Few informants were very satisfied with telecommunications services, though most were satisfied. There was much less satisfaction with local entertainment and transport services.
The warmth of the welcome:

In order to analyse community participation, this survey used the composite index of assessing social connectedness (Wulff and Dharmalingam 2008) and consequently included the five following questions: whether respondents regularly attend an activity arranged by the local school, or by religious organisations, or by people from their home country, or by the local community, or whether they regularly attend or participate in activities involving sports or hobbies. Regarding community participation 81 per cent of the respondents had participated in at least one activity, which is very close to the findings of the longitudinal survey (DIAC 2007b). However, the community participation of the participants in this national survey is lower than that reported for the immigrants who came under the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, where 93 per cent of immigrants had taken part in at least one activity since arriving in Australia (DIMIA 2005). As Wulff and Dharmalingam (2008) argued, immigrants who regularly attend two or more activities can be classified as having strong connections with the community. According to this criterion 41 per cent of the respondents in this survey had developed strong connections with the community.

As can be seen from Figure 3.16 respondents were more likely to take part in the activities organised by local communities (62.5 % of the respondents) and in the religious activities (40 % of the

Figure 3.16. Activities attended regularly by new immigrants to the Australian bush since coming to their current city/town – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)

11 The findings of the third longitudinal survey (DIAC 2007) reported that 29 per cent of the immigrants in Wave One and 15 percent in Wave Two surveys were not involved in any community activity.
The immigrants from the Philippines are more likely than others to attend church or religious activities. More than a quarter of the respondents had some contacts with the ethic voluntary associations. Some sub-groups such as the immigrants from the Philippines and South Africa/Zimbabwe tend to have stronger ethnic group involvement. Almost half of the immigrants from the Philippines and South Africa/Zimbabwe had some contacts with the ethnic voluntary associations.

![Graph showing the percentage of respondents who felt welcome or unwelcome](image)

**Figure 3.17.** Whether the community made new immigrants to the Australian bush feel welcome or unwelcome since coming to their city/town

![Graph showing the percentage of immigrants who visited their neighbours](image)

**Figure 3.18.** Whether new immigrants to the Australian bush had visited any of their neighbours since coming to their current city/town – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)

The participants in this survey strongly indicated that they were made welcome since moving to their current place, as Figure 3.17 shows. Two in three (65%) of the participants felt that they were made very welcome. This suggests that the experience of new immigrants in the Australian bush is a success socially as well as economically. This is reinforced by Figure 3.18, which shows that nearly all skilled permanent immigrants in the Australian bush who worked in the agricultural sector had visited their neighbours since settling in their current regional or rural city or town, even more than the overall skilled immigrant cohort. The warmth of the welcome for new immigrants in the bush overall, and in
the agricultural sector in particular, is very strong, dismissing any stereotypes of regional and rural Australians being unable to live in social cohesion with new immigrants from all over the world.

**Overall impressions of new skilled permanent immigrants in the Australian bush.**

While almost 40 per cent of the survey participants mentioned the presence of family and friends as the main ‘pull’ factor for moving into a particular regional/rural town (Figure 3.8), less than 5 per cent of the respondents mentioned the family as the best thing about living in their current place. Friendliness of the place, rurality, environment and climate were the things most liked about the place respondents currently live in. Almost 30 per cent of the respondents identified friendliness of the people as what they liked most about living in their current city/town. The next most common response related to rurality, highlighting the size or location of their towns (‘big enough, but not too big and busy’, ‘uncrowded and peaceful’, ‘quiet’ and ‘it’s away from the hectic life in the city’). Lifestyle aspects were noted by almost 20 per cent of respondents (often with the word ‘relaxed’ attached to it) and environmental aspects were highly valued, particularly the low traffic. Work/employment factors were mentioned by less than 10 per cent of the respondents as one of the things most liked about their current town.

![Figure 3.19. Whether new immigrants to the Australian bush would encourage friends or relatives to live in their current city/town](image)

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12 These finding strongly correspond with the results of Canadian studies (Derwing et al. 2005; Derwing and Krahn 2008) which emphasised that only 2 per cent of the respondents mentioned the family and friends as the best thing about living in their current place.

13 The respondents were able to nominate more than one thing they like about the place and hence the total percentage exceeded 100%.
The new experiment of directing more skilled permanent immigrants to the Australia bush seems to be working well from the evidence presented in this chapter. But immigration chains need to be sustained and replenished over time as new immigrants, with other locals, move out of their current bush neighbourhoods. Attraction is important, but retention of those new immigrant settlers and attraction of future immigrants is critical to any long term strategy of adding to the productivity and growth of the Australian agricultural sector through immigration. Generally, the respondents from the agricultural cohort were very satisfied with their current place of residence, since 75 per cent of them would encourage relatives or friends to reside in the same city/town (Figure 3.19). The main reasons that these new immigrants gave for encouraging friends/family to live in their current city/town were: a friendly community, good job opportunities, good infrastructure and services, and good lifestyle.

With regards to the movement intentions, three in four respondents indicate that they intend to stay in their current place. This is a very encouraging point in terms of retaining immigrants in non-metropolitan areas. If this proved to be right for these respondents and the wider skilled immigrant population, the regional programmes in Australia may be considered successful. For the respondents intending to move to other places (22% of the survey participants) in the next five years, Sydney, Melbourne, coastal areas of New South Wales and Queensland, as well as overseas destinations, were the most preferred locations. Only nine respondents (less than 5 per cent of the ones planning to move) were considering moving into another rural town.

These results are very encouraging and, if representative of the skilled immigrant population, indicate that the retention rate is likely to reach 70-80% in the next five years which is considered to be an indicator of successful regional immigration policy (Carter et al. 2008). For instance, Canada’s most successful regional immigration programs – Manitoba Provincial Nominee programs (Carter et al. 2008) – recorded a retention rate of immigrants close to 80 per cent, and in Nova Scotia the retention rate was expected to reach 70 per cent in 2010 (Flint 2007). Comparing the data gathered in this longitudinal survey with the Canadian experience would signify the success of the regional immigration policies/schemes in Australia.

![Figure 3.20. Whether new immigrants to the Australian bush think that the decision to migrate to Australia was the right one – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)](image)

Figure 3.20. Whether new immigrants to the Australian bush think that the decision to migrate to Australia was the right one – agricultural sector (subgroup) compared to all sectors (whole group)
To summarise the findings of this survey of new skilled permanent immigrants in regional and rural Australia, it is clear that it has been a great success from the point of view of the respondent new immigrants and their families. They have jobs that they like and are satisfying, and they and their families received a warm welcome and are mostly very happy with their life in the bush. The strong finding is that on nearly every economic and social indicator presented in this chapter, new skilled immigrants employed in agricultural sector jobs out-perform those in other Australian industries in the Australian bush. Not surprisingly 90 per cent of the respondents who moved into agriculture sector work believed that the decision to immigrate to Australia was the right one (See Figure 3.20). In this regard skilled immigrants who work in the agriculture sector (the subgroup) are as positive about their immigration experience in the bush as those who work in other industries. When added to the other economic and social evidence presented above, this is a strong endorsement for skilled immigration into agricultural sector jobs.
Chapter 4: Korean Working Holiday Makers in the agricultural sector

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the experiences of permanent immigrants in the Australian bush in general and in the Australian agriculture sector in particular. But as the report noted in Chapter 1, the biggest change in over six decades of post-war Australian immigration history is the rapid growth in the past decade of temporary immigration. Today annual temporary immigrant arrivals outnumber permanent immigrant arrivals by 350 per cent. Any contemporary study of the impact of immigration on productivity in the Australian agriculture sector must therefore include study of the impact of new temporary immigrants. There are three main components of Australia’s temporary immigration programme: skilled workers on 457 visas, international students and Working Holiday Makers. In terms of impact on the Australian agriculture sector Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) on 417 visas are clearly the most significant. This is because since November 2005 Working Holiday visa holders who have completed at least three months of specified work in agriculture, mining or construction in regional Australia, may apply for a second Working Holiday visa.

The number of second Working Holiday visa holders has grown significantly from 2692 in 2005-06, when it was just 3.3 per cent of the overall Working Holiday programme, to 45 950 in 2013-14, when it comprised 20 per cent of the overall Working Holiday programme (DIBP 2014b, p. 4). Thus these WHMs are an important source to fill seasonal and unskilled labour shortages in the agricultural sector, and the regional and rural towns across Australia that are the key goods and service nodes for Australian farmers and graziers and their families. Unlike skilled permanent and temporary (457 visa) immigrants and international students (who are permitted to work 20 hours per week on their temporary student visas) – all of whom primarily work in metropolitan labour markets – WHMs have an incentive to work in regional and rural jobs. In 2013-14, the latest available data, nearly one quarter of a million WHMs (239 592) arrived in Australia, comprising roughly one third (32.5 %) of Australia’s temporary migration intake (DIAC 2013, p. 53). As a consequence of their numbers and incentives to work in the Australian bush, WHMs are the most important source of temporary migration for Australia’s agricultural sector.

Working Holiday Makers

Australia ranks by far the highest OECD nation in terms of absolute flows of WHMs, as Table 1.5 shows. As mentioned above, in 2012 Australia took in more WHMs than the USA, Canada, New Zealand and the UK combined. As the OECD (2014, p.25) argued, ‘The flows of WHS workers have increased by 10% (38 000) from 2007, however, more than half of this increase is driven by increased WHS flows to Australia’. The source countries of WHMs have historically been largely European, although the proportion fell from 78.3% in 2001-02 to 61.2% in 2007-08 (Tan & Lester 2012, p. 362). In 2014-15, approximately 63% were from European countries, and about 30% from Asian nations (DIBP 2014c, p. 19).

The Working Holiday Maker Programme serves both a cultural exchange function and a labour market function. Young adults between 18 and 30 years of age from selected countries can enter Australia under two similar visas – the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) and the Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462) – to have an extended holiday and engage in short-term work (up to 6 months work with any one employer) and study for up to 4 months in a 12 month period. The Work and Holiday visa has country caps and also requires non-US applicants to have functional-level English, tertiary qualifications and the support of their home government. Caps on the number of visa grants per
programme year are also generally applied to Work and Holiday visa arrangement partner countries. Since November 2005 Working Holiday visa holders who have completed at least three months of specified work in agriculture, mining or construction in regional Australia, may apply for a second Working Holiday visa, a right not available to those on a Work and Holiday visa (DIAC 2013, p. 53). As mentioned above, the number of second Working Holiday visa holders has grown significantly to comprise 20 per cent of the overall Working Holiday programme in 2013-14 (DIBP 2014b, p. 4).

There is relatively little research into WHMs and their experiences in Australia compared to international students and temporary skilled workers. The relevant government department produces reports every six months which give statistics of the numbers of visas which were applied for and granted, and a brief outline of any major changes and trends in the programme. The most recent in-depth report is from 2009 and provides the most comprehensive information regarding the background, experiences, motivations, and demographics of WHMs in Australia (Tan et al. 2009). Since that report was published, the number of partner countries has risen from 24 to 34 (DIBP 2014c), while major forces such as the global economic downturn and recovery have also impacted WHMs.

There are two relevant visa subclasses: Working Holiday (417) and Work and Holiday (462). The key difference is that numbers of 462 visas are capped annually by country. For example, a Work and Holiday arrangement currently under negotiation with China would cap 462 visas issued to Chinese nationals at 5000 per year (DIBP 2014c). 417 holders may apply for a second 12-month visa if they have completed 88 days ‘specified work’ in regional Australia; second visa holders now comprise approximately 20% of WHMs (DIBP 2014c).

In 2011-12, 19 Working Holiday and eight Work and Holiday visa arrangements were in effect. Another Work and Holiday visa arrangement was also signed with Papua New Guinea, which was not yet in effect (DIAC 2013, p. 53). The WHM programme expands each year with agreements with new countries. In 2014 arrangements with Poland, Portugal and Spain began, as did negotiations with the Philippines, Austria, the Solomon Islands, and Switzerland, while an arrangement was signed with Israel, and a programme with China (to begin in 2015) was finalised (DIBP 2014c). 417 and 462 visa holders must be: aged 18-30 at the time of participation; not be accompanied by dependent children; and meet health, character, and financial requirements. 462 visa holders must also demonstrate that they speak functional English, and have completed at least two years of undergraduate university study (DIBP 2014c).

In the ten years up to 2007-08, the number of WHMs more than doubled, although WHMs as a percentage of temporary migrants with work rights stayed steady at 28% (Tan & Lester 2012, p. 360).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>36 995</td>
<td>38 974</td>
<td>41 712</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>34 863</td>
<td>30 527</td>
<td>32 591</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>14 790</td>
<td>21 753</td>
<td>25 827</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>20 860</td>
<td>21 146</td>
<td>22 499</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>10 175</td>
<td>13 809</td>
<td>22 393</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>18 158</td>
<td>18 530</td>
<td>20 086</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>5 481</td>
<td>6 429</td>
<td>9 600</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>8 079</td>
<td>7 746</td>
<td>9 162</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>8 209</td>
<td>7 899</td>
<td>7 929</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong (SAR of China)</td>
<td>3 722</td>
<td>4 545</td>
<td>7 512</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4 208</td>
<td>4 121</td>
<td>4 772</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4 036</td>
<td>3 821</td>
<td>3 879</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1 385</td>
<td>1 453</td>
<td>1 813</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1 294</td>
<td>1 260</td>
<td>1 484</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1 298</td>
<td>1 230</td>
<td>1 456</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>1 066</td>
<td>1 181</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>-26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total OECD countries</td>
<td>161 577</td>
<td>166 791</td>
<td>184 608</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>175 746</td>
<td>185 480</td>
<td>214 644</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 provides an overview of Working Holiday visa grants, 2009–10 to 2011–12. Over this period UK was the major source country of WHMs followed by the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Two features dominate this table: First the wide range of European, Asian and North American countries from which Australia draws WHMs; second the potential for the number of WHM visa holders from some source counties to expand rapidly from year to year. For example, there was a 65.3 per cent increase in the number of WHMs from Hong Kong and a 62 per cent increase in the number of WHMs from Taiwan entering Australia over the period 2010-11 and 2011-12. There was also a 26.2 per cent decrease in the number of WHMs from Norway over this period, though the overall numbers are much smaller.

Table 4.2. Work and Holiday visa grants, 2009–10 to 2011–12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>6 149</td>
<td>6 219</td>
<td>6 831</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>No cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>1 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>-30.7</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>320.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran’</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-75.0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7 422</td>
<td>7 442</td>
<td>8 348</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DIAC (2013), p. 56

Table 4.2 provides an overview of Work and Holiday visa grants, 2009–10 to 2011–12. This shows that the USA is the major source country with three in four Work and Holiday visa grant holders coming from the USA in 2011-12. This is because the USA is uncapped compared to the other countries. It is also noticeable that while Chile had by far the highest cap during this period, less than half of the places available for Chileans under this visa program were taken up.

The Australian Government has announced that it will amend the Working Holiday Maker visa programme to encourage WHMs to spend more time working in the Australian bush. This will be done in two ways. First it will allow both Working Holiday (subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa holders to work an additional 6 months with one employer in northern Australia if they work in the following high demand areas in the north: agriculture, forestry and fishing; tourism and hospitality; mining and construction; disability and aged care. Second it will give Work and Holiday (462) visa holders the opportunity to access a second 12 month visa if they work for 3 months in agriculture or tourism in the north (417 visa holders already have access to a second 12 month visa) (Australian Government 2015, p. 112). This change means Working Holiday Maker visa programme
participants work for the entire duration of their two year stay in Australia thus increasing the supply of seasonal and temporary labour in the north.


Figure 4.1. Second Working Holiday visa applications granted in 2013-14 by employer industry

As Figure 4.1 shows, the agricultural, forestry and fishing industry most benefits from the provision of a second year WHM visa for those who work more than 88 days in regional and rural Australia during their first year on a WHM visa.

Korean Working Holiday Makers

Koreans have numbered among the top four source countries of Australian Working Holiday Makers for many years. In 2011-12, 32 591 Korean WHMs arrived in Australia. In 2012-13 this rose to 35 220 falling to 26 893 in 2013-14. In 2013-14, 5783 Korean WHMs were granted a second WHM visa because of their work in regional and rural Australia, the third highest group after WHMs from Taiwan (11 295 second WHM visas) and the UK (8430 second WHM visas) (DIBP 2014a, p. 43). For this reason Korean WHMs were chosen as the WHM cohort to be the subject of fieldwork for this research grant, as a window to shed new light on the impact of temporary migration on the Australian agricultural industry. 104 Korean WHMs were surveyed in Sydney in two cohorts: 56 who had just began their WHM visa and 49 who had completed their WHM visa and were leaving Australia. The methodological reason for this is that we could look into intentions on arrival and experiences on departure of these Korean WHMs. A further 20 Korean WHMs gave in-depth interviews about their Australian experiences.
Survey

Figure 4.2 shows the ages of those Korean WHMs surveyed: about one in three were aged 18-19 years – presumably just out of high school – while nearly half of the remainder were aged 24-27 years.

![Age Ranges of WHM](image1)

**Figure 4.2. The ages of the Korean WHMs surveyed (n=104)**

As Figure 4.3 shows, males surveyed outnumbered females about two to one. It should be noted, however, that the WHM cohort is the only cohort of temporary migration where females exceed males: there are 88.5 male WHMs for every 100 female (Tan & Lester 2012, p. 362).

![Gender Distribution of WHM](image2)

**Figure 4.3. Gender of the Korean WHMs surveyed (n=104)**
Figure 4.4. Where in Korea the Korean WHMs surveyed lived (n=104)

Figure 4.4 shows that the Korean WHMs come from many areas in Korea. About one in four comes from Seoul, Korea’s largest city, with the large cities of Pusan and Ulsan the next largest source. Around two in three of the Korean WHMs surveyed were students, though, as Figure 4.5 shows, those who were not students had a very broad range of employment experience and skills.

Figure 4.5. Occupational background of the Korean WHMs surveyed (n=104)
It is important to understand the underlying reasons why WHMs like the Koreans surveyed decide to come to Australia to travel and work. As Figure 4.6 shows, the major reasons were a combination of work, education and travel: to study English, to earn good wages, to have new experiences and to travel or study.

**Figure 4.6. The reasons the Korean WHMs took up their Australian visa**

As well as understanding the motivations of WHMs, it is important to understand the processes that lead them to choose Australia as their destination. How did these WHMs hear about the Australian WHM programme in the first instance? As Figure 4.7 shows, school, friends and family were the major source of information. Like all international migration decisions, the WHM programme is...
embedded in the social networks of people around the world who hear about the immigration experiences of friends and family around the world. These global diasporic information chains are constantly updated. The corollary of this is that information about negative immigration experiences is as quickly distributed via social media as information about positive experiences, so that existing immigration patterns can quickly expand and contract accordingly. This is particularly important for the WHM component of temporary migration because, as Table 4.1 above shows, WHM numbers from different source countries fluctuate significantly. This means that there is sensitivity to exploitative work experiences with unscrupulous employers who can undermine the benefits of the WHM programme for the majority of Australian employers who provide appropriate pay and work conditions for WHMs.

Figure 4.7. Source of information about the Australian WHM programme

The WHMs need to find work in Australia to pay for their travel to and around Australia. They are limited to a maximum of 6 months in any one job and they like to travel, so that they are the most mobile workforce in Australia. Moreover if they pick up work in regional and rural Australia they can extend their WHM visa for a further 12 months. How do they find jobs in Australia? Figure 4.8 shows that like young people around the world today many Korean WHMs (36% of those surveyed) primarily use the internet for information about available work as they do for most aspects of their daily lives. In particular many of those surveyed and interviewed mentioned that they used the Korean language Hojunara website to find jobs in Australia. The two other most common ways that Korean WHMs found jobs in Australia was via job agencies and their network of friends. Temporary migration of the scale experienced in Australia opens up many business opportunities in Australia and the home country for co-ethnic entrepreneurs to facilitate the migration process from beginning to end, including the all-important task of finding jobs in Australia. The use of Korean job agencies as the means to find employment in Australia is understandable given the English language constraints of many of the Korean WHMs and the enterprise opportunities that a large flow of Korean temporary immigrants opens up for Korean entrepreneurs in Korea and in Australia. However this also opens up opportunities for co-ethnic exploitation of Korean WHMs, a point developed later in this chapter.
Figure 4.8. How the Korean WHMs arriving in Australia intended to find Australian jobs

Figure 4.9. The proportion of Korean WHMs who intended to work in the agricultural industry on arrival in Australia
Since the main focus of this research project is to investigate the way that immigration improved productivity in the Australian agricultural sector it is important to probe the extent to which Korean WHMs take up jobs in the agricultural sector in particular and in regional and rural Australia in general. The cohort of Korean WHMs surveyed on arrival in Sydney were asked if they intended to work in agricultural sector jobs. As Figure 4.9 shows, nearly two thirds of these arrivals did intend to do so.

![Reason for Intention to Work in Agricultural Industry - WHM Arrivals](image)

**Figure 4.10. The reason Korean WHMs intended to work in the agricultural industry**

Figure 4.10 probes this further. It shows that by far the most significant reason that Korean WHMs intend to take up jobs in the agricultural sector is because they can get a second year on the Working
Holiday visa. This shows both the extent of the awareness by Korean WHMs about the potential of a second WHM visa, and how effective to the agricultural sector the policy to provide the second year of the WHM visa to those who work in non-metropolitan labour markets is.

Figure 4.11 shows the employment experience in Australia of those departing WHMs. WHMs take many jobs during their stay in Australia across a wide range of industries. A number had worked in agriculture, farming and meat processing jobs, while others were employed in the hospitality sector.

Figure 4.11. The employment history of the Korean WHMs in Australia

The link between the employment choice of Korean WHMs and the agriculture sector is further evident in Figure 4.12 which explores the reasons the Korean WHMs chose their Australian jobs. ‘Working toward a second visa’ was the second most common reason provided by those surveyed after ‘Major study area at school/trained in the industry’.

The literature on the experience of temporary migrants in Australia in recent years has been preoccupied with reports of exploitation and mistreatment. In 2013-14, temporary skilled (457) visa holders lodged 404 complaints with the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO). In the same year the FWO assessed 1029 workplaces employing a total of almost 2000 temporary skilled visa holders and found that wages or position obligations were not being met for 338 employees (FWO 2014, p. 30). In the most recent examples, the Australian Fair Work Commission has been investigating exploitation of 457 workers at Baiada Chicken, one of the largest chicken processors in Australia. As is often the case with the employment of temporary migrants, Baiada contracts six intermediary labour hire companies who in turn contract a large number of other intermediaries to provide temporary migrant labour for its factories. The FWO claimed that Baiada’s 457 workers were paid about half the minimum hourly wage and worked up to 18 hours a day without paid overtime (FWO 2015). Another study reported that 18.4 per cent of 457 holders from non-English-speaking backgrounds reported experiencing discrimination because of their ‘skill, colour, ethnic origin or religious beliefs’ (MCA 2013, p. 32). Another survey found that 16 per cent of 457 workers reported discrimination on these grounds (DIBP 2013b, p. 35).
Working Holiday Makers have also experienced exploitative work arrangements according to reports to the Australian Fair Work Commission. Complaints from WHMs represented just over 1000 of the 25,650 finalised complaints made to the FWO in 2013-14, over three times the rate for all other workers (FWO 2014, pp. 26, 30). Since August 2014 the Ombudsman’s Overseas Workers’ Team has been reviewing the wages and conditions of overseas workers in Australia on the 417 Working Holiday visa following a spike in complaints since 2012. That review is due to report before July 2016 (PC 2015, p. 302).

A survey of 705 WHMs in 2012 found that they averaged 2.3 jobs each and 52 days per job. Rates of pay varied significantly by age and country of origin, with older workers receiving higher hourly wages – likely as the result of greater experience or qualifications. WHMs from the UK had the highest hourly wage ($19.40) and Japanese and South Korean the lowest ($13.60 and $13.90), below the federally mandated minimum wage. Overall one in three (36%) of WHMs were paid below minimum wages while WHMs from non-English speaking backgrounds were likely to receive the
lowest rates of pay (Tan & Lester 2012, p. 367). Another study of WHMs from Taiwan reported that they were generally employed in ‘low-paid, seasonal, and sometimes unpleasant jobs’ which could not be filled from the local workforce (Ho et al. 2014, p. 473). The Guardian reported that Chinese-language websites advertised jobs at well below the minimum wage, usually for employment in Chinese-owned small businesses (Tan 2015). There is also a concern that some female WHMs are vulnerable to exploitation by criminals or criminal syndicates. According to Robertson (2013), ‘there is also increasing evidence that women on working holiday visas are a source of foreign labour for the Australian sex industry.’ An ABC TV documentary in 2015 aired allegations that WHMs needing to prove they are eligible to apply for a second visa are open to exploitation by employers: ‘it is in return for signing off on their second year visa application…they either continue working for nothing or they pay a significant lump sum…or provide sexual favours’ (Meldrum-Hanna & Russell 2015).

The most persistent finding is that examples of exploitation of temporary migrants on temporary student, skilled work or working holiday visas are plentiful and sustained over time. Examples of co-ethnic exploitation are also common, suggesting immigrant entrepreneurs are as eager to exploit Australia’s new guest-workers as non-immigrant entrepreneurs. What is unclear is how representative are these experiences of guest-worker exploitation given that over 700 000 new guest-workers arrive in Australia each year. More specifically it is not clear how extensive experiences of exploitation are for temporary migrants who work in the agricultural sector: the research is simply not available to make such conclusions. But it is clear that the sector as a whole suffers from the exploitative practices that do exist, probably by a minority of employers in the industry.

Table 4.3. Problems the Korean WHMs encountered working in Australian jobs (n=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers did not pay fair wages/treat employees fairly</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor English made interacting with non-Koreans difficult</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to find jobs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living conditions associated with job were not as expected</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of visa and visa conditions limited job opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 lists the employment problems that the departing Korean WHMs reported. Eleven of the eighteen who responded to this question mentioned that employers did not pay fair wages and/or treat their employees fairly. However the industry where this occurred was not identified. The other major employment problem identified related to the poor English language skills of the Korean WHMs which constrained them in interacting with non-Koreans at work. But Korean WHMs also had positive experiences at work in Australia. As Table 4.4 shows that 32 departing Korean WHMs reported positive experiences at work while only 18 reported negative experiences. The most common positive experience at work was ‘Good relations with non-Koreans’, followed by ‘New experiences/learnt new skills’, ‘Opportunity to speak English’ and ‘Good wages’.
Table 4.4. Positive experiences of departing Korean WHMs in employment in Australian jobs (n=32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good relationships with non-Koreans</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New experience/learned new skills</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to speak English</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good wages</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping people</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing skills learned in Korea</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained work experience for improving job opportunities in Korea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Chinese language skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight into Australian home life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked farm environment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter working hours than in Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5. Departing Korean WHMs’ views on how their experience in Australia on a WHM Visa could be improved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better English skills</td>
<td>27 (69.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More contact with non-Koreans</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn a professional skill in Korea before applying for WHM visa</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better knowledge of worker’s rights and compensation</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel more/experience more</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink less and save more</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study English further while in Australia</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More contact with other Korean WHMs</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better job availability</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked how could their Australian experience as a WHM be improved (Table 4.5), the most common response by far related to the desire of the Korean WHMs to have better English before arriving in Australia to take better advantage of the opportunities their time as a temporary immigrant in Australia provided.
In-depth interviews

A more nuanced take on the Korean WHM experiences in Australia emerged from the in-depth interviews. One of the features of the WHM cohort of Australian temporary migration intake is the job mobility that they exhibit, partly because of the 6 month limit on working with any one employer and partly driven by the desire to extend their visa for a further 12 months by working in non-metropolitan labour markets. For example K2, a female, worked fruit picking in a town near Melbourne and in Tumbarumba near Canberra, made sushi rolls in a Sydney Japanese restaurant and was a waitress in a Korean restaurant in Sydney. She found all these jobs through the Hojunara website. K8, a male, worked in Sydney in a cleaning job, then moved to Peats Ridge on the NSW Central Coast picking and packing ‘Bok Choy’ and ‘Lettuces’ at a farm. He also found these jobs on the Hojunara (Australian Nation) website. K3, a female, had six jobs: at a sushi bar, a clothing shop for babies, a café, a noodle restaurant, a massage-machine-selling shop and a Korean restaurant. She also used the Hojunara website to find these jobs.

When asked about their pay rates, the Korean WHMs interviewed mostly had a mix of good and bad experiences. As K3, cited above, summed up:

1. Sushi bar: $11.00 per hour, $600.00 per week. It was reasonable, I think. 2. Clothing shop for babies: $10.00 per hour. I think it was small income. 3. Café: $10.00 per hour. It was small. 4. Noodle restaurant: $12.00 per hour. I made $1200.00 per week. It was reasonable. 5. Massage-machine-selling shop: $10.00-$14.00 per hour and incentives. It was reasonable. 6. Korean restaurant: $12.00 per hour. It was not enough.

K9, a male, also had good and bad pay experiences:

Cleaner in Sydney: I was paid $12.00 per hour at the first stage. And then the wage was $14.00 per hour. It was adequate. Factory workers in Emerald, Queensland: I was paid $17.60-$18.00 per hour. It was adequate. Farm worker in Emerald, Queensland: I earned about $330.00-$340.00 at the farm. It was not reasonable. I do not want to go there to work once more. I earned $700.00 after tax (about $1000.00 before tax).

K7, a female, also reported good and bad experiences: ‘Gladstone in Queensland: $13.00 per hour. It was not adequate. Innisfail in Queensland: Packing Bananas: $21.00 per hour. It was adequate. Sydney: $21.67. It was adequate’. On the other hand when K9 (male) was asked ‘What was the best thing about Australia in your view?’, his answer was: ‘The wages in Australia were good’. Similarly K8 (male) was very satisfied with his pay: ‘The job and pay conditions were reasonable. I was paid $20.00 per hour. I worked there 8 hours per day and 5 days per week. I worked at the farm for about 75 weeks’. It is worth noting here that working 75 weeks with one employer exceeds the 26 week maximum that the WHM visa specifies.

A number of informants reported experiences of co-ethnic exploitation. As K1 (female) explained:

A Korean manager treated me badly at a farm. He said to us that the house, which he rented, would be out of contract. So, I and my friends rented a house, but he mentioned if you moved to the house, we could not work at the farm. He said ‘you must move to a house which I recommend’. So we gave up the job at the farm which the manager worked for.

This experience demonstrates that exploitation can emerge in non-wage areas such as accommodation arrangements. K5 and K6, males, had similar experiences: ‘Caboolture: The owner of farm was good, but the Korean supervisor wanted to gain good treatment from us, however he did not treat us well ’ [K5]; ‘The worst thing was working with a Korean boss. I thought I was not treated well by the Korean boss after working with an Australian boss’ [K6]. On the other hand two informants reported positive interactions with Korean businesses who assisted their WHM journey to and in Australia: ‘[A Korean] agent helped me to find jobs at farms in Australia and accommodations. It cost me $800.00. Its help was useful for me easily to find jobs at farms and accommodations’ (K2 Female); ‘[A Korean] agency helped me get a visa to Australia. Its professional assistance without any mistakes was useful.'
If I had applied the visa, a mistake might occur. It cost me about $50.00 to gain the visa for me’ [K4 male].

Finally the in-depth interviews provided some insight into the warmth of the welcome – or lack thereof – experienced by the Korean WHM informants. Most were very positive about their social experiences in Australia:

‘The Australians who I have known are kind. We meet to talk about this and that such as life in Australia. Sometimes I ask them about English such as pronunciations and Aussie English. I think other Australians are mostly kind. When I come into eye contact with an Australian, the person say “hello” even if I did not know the person before’. (K2 Female)

Asked ‘Did you find Australians friendly?’ K3 (Female) replied:

Yes. In Korea, Australia was known a white Australian racist country. So I thought it was a racist country. However, it is not. When I asked a way, they said “ah” and showed the way. … I found half Australians friendly but half not. I think the kind people are very kind, however some people do not have manner.

K4 (Male) was asked: ‘Did you have good experiences with people in country towns?’ He replied:

Yes. People in Sydney were busy, however people in Innisfail in Queensland, a farming village, took it easy. The houses were away from others, so they did not complain when we made a noise. When their eyes happened to meet my eyes, they did greet me.

K7 (Male) was asked: ‘Did you have good experiences with people on your travels in Australia?’ He replied: ‘Yes. When we stayed in a caravan park for travelling, an Australian old couple shared foods with us and asked us the reason why we came to Australia’. K8 (Male) commented:

My Australian fellow workers were friendly to talk me and treated me very well. I thought generally Australians were kind because I did not find them unfriendly. I had a good experience with Australians. When I got a flat tyre in Peats Ridge in Central Coast, people in the town helped me to change the tyre.
Chapter 5: Pacific Island Seasonal Workers in the agricultural sector

The international migration of Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Canada, like Australia, has a long history of settler immigration. A temporary migration programme was introduced in Canada initially to permit the entry of temporary seasonal agricultural migrant workers in the mid-1960s. The Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) has been described as ‘Canada’s flagship temporary migration program’ (Basok 2007). SAWP workers first came from the West Indies in 1966 with the program later extended to seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico in 1974 and Guatemala in 2003. Most take up employment on Ontario farms.

Employers’ requests for foreign agricultural workers are submitted to Canadian government agencies. Once approved, recruitment agencies in Mexico or the Caribbean recruit workers to match the requests. Growers bear most of the program costs, including airfares and ground transportation, visa fees, and administrative costs, though some costs including airfares are subsequently deducted from the workers’ pay cheques. Growers also provide housing to the workers and contribute to the provincial health insurance and workers’ compensation insurance programs. While the program has clear benefits for the Canadian agricultural sector by filling labour shortages at critical harvest times, the program also has serious flaws according to Basok (2007):

- SAWP restricts workers' mobility. In addition, employers have excessive control over the workers' current and future labour contracts. The need to secure approval from current employers can make workers acquiescent. They may decide not to claim worker's compensation when injured or take time off to see a doctor when they are sick. Also, workers may choose not to refuse employer requests to work seven days a week or complain about substandard housing or safety conditions. Those who assert their rights risk being deported and/or blacklisted. (Basok 2007, n.p.)

In the 1990s Canada attracted temporary skilled migrants to overcome labour shortages skilled in the Alberta oil industry. In 2002 the temporary worker program was expanded with temporary skilled migrants with the hospitality, food, construction, and manufacturing industries included. In recent years Canada's temporary migration program has increased considerably from 160 908 in 2006 to 283 096 in 2010.

One issue that has been raised by the Auditor General of Canada in relation to Canada’s temporary migration program has been the lack of oversight on the program and the persistence of fraud and employers’ exploitation of temporary migrants (Challinor 2011). Canada also encourages highly skilled temporary migrants and international students who are graduates of Canadian universities to transfer to permanent status via the creation, in 2008, of the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). As Challinor (2011) put it, ‘the CEC program aims to capitalise on temporary workers with Canadian work experience and education, and to retain their skills by granting them permanent residence’. The proviso to the transition to permanent status is that CEC class migrants must live outside of Quebec and work in a managerial, professional, or technical/skilled trade occupation. The United Kingdom and some other European countries have admission programmes especially designed for young people seeking seasonal employment. The UK’s Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), for example, dates back to the post-war period when young people from across Europe were encouraged to work in the UK during the main harvest periods. Priority was given to full-time agricultural students aged from 18 to 25, who attended agricultural colleges in their home countries, mainly in Eastern Europe. There was an annual quota of 5500 all the way up to 1996, which increased to 15 202 in 2001 and then to 20 200 in 2003 (Abella 2006, p. 28).

The 92 countries surveyed by the International Labour Organization in 2003 reported twenty bilateral agreements on seasonal agricultural workers. The oldest agreement was between Switzerland and Italy which was signed in 1964. Many of the agreements were entered into by Western European countries
with the former communist countries after the collapse of Communism, notably those of Germany (with Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania), Greece (with Bulgaria and Albania), Spain (with Poland and Romania), France (with Poland), and Italy (with Albania). These may have been prompted by concern that clandestine movements would otherwise become a problem. In the western hemisphere, Canada had the most agreements for seasonal agricultural workers – first with several Caribbean countries and later with Mexico. The US mainly relied on Mexican workers who were brought in under an agreement between the two countries starting in 1942. Called the Bracero Program, it lasted for 22 years during which time some 4.6 million admissions of farm workers from Mexico were recorded (Abella 2006, p. 31).

The temporary migration of seasonal agricultural workers has a long tradition in many OECD countries. Canada, the USA and New Zealand – along with Australia, the three other nations with a long-term settler migration history – have had temporary migration of seasonal agricultural workers for some time. The Canadian SAWP dates from 1966 and draws in seasonal workers from Caribbean countries and Mexico. The US mainly relies on seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico. New Zealand introduced the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) in 2005.

The World Bank (2006) called on western nations like Australia to open up labour market opportunities for Pacific Islanders as a way of contributing to the economic development of these nations. While Australia has opened the doors to temporary migrants in a big way in the past two decades (Collins 2014), only skilled and professional workers have had significant advantage.

An evaluation of the NZ scheme found that it provided employers in the horticulture and viticulture sectors with access to a reliable, stable, seasonal workforce avoiding the labour supply crises of previous years. Significant productivity gains were reported in the second season, together with improvements in harvest quality. Alongside the employer ‘wins’, Pacific workers and three Pacific states have benefited economically from participation in the RSE Policy. Skill development has also been identified as a positive outcome for workers (DL 2010).

**The Australian Seasonal Workers Programme (416 visa)**

Australia is a relative latecomer to permitting the entry of seasonal agricultural workers (see Table 5.1). A three year trial Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme was introduced in Australia in August 2008 (DIBP 2014a, p. 17). The programme allows seasonal workers from East Timor, Nauru, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to work in low-skilled jobs for up to seven months in a 12-month period. The objective of the Seasonal Worker 416 visa programme is to contribute to the economic development of Pacific Island and Asian nations by providing work opportunities in the Australian agriculture and accommodation industries. These seasonal workers provide remittances back to their families and are provided with opportunities for up-skilling in Australia. The Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme is one component of the broader commitment that the Australian Government is prepared to make as part of Australia’s Regional Aid Programme. In recognition that the Pacific region continues to experience significant economic challenges, entrenched in extreme poverty a significant proportion of the population is living below US$1.25 a day. Over 20 per cent of people in most Pacific Island Countries live in hardship and are unable to meet their basic needs (DFAT 2015). In the 2014 Federal Budget Australia cut foreign aid to the Pacific countries such as Vanuatu by 11 billion dollars (Tim Lee, *Landline*, ABC 2015). Hence, one of the main intentions of DFAT backing the Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia is the humanitarian aspect. It is believed that the PSWP will increase the quantity and capacity of workers coming to Australia, thereby increasing opportunities for remittances back to their homelands (DFAT 2015).
The National Farmers’ Federation noted that the programme has placed almost 3500 seasonal workers in the horticulture sector since its commencement and that anecdotal evidence indicates the programme is working well in filling otherwise unmet demand. It concluded that the programme can deliver increased productivity for the agricultural sector and is a valuable scheme that brings together foreign aid and labour market policy for the economic benefit of Australia and participating nations (NFF, sub. 31, p. 11) (PC 2015, p. 319).

Table 5.2. Pacific Seasonal Workers 2013-14 to 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirabathi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor Leste</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


After the trial period the Australian government has renewed the Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme in the horticulture industry across Australia and extended the range of occupations now able to employ Pacific Islander seasonal workers, to include tourism (accommodation), agriculture (sugar cane, cotton), and fisheries (aquaculture) industries in limited locations. The programme is demand driven with 12 000 visa places made available over a four year period to 2016 (DIBP 2014d, p. 72). More specifically, the Department of Employment in the 2014-15 programme has identified three
participating categories: Horticulture Producers, Horticulture Labour Hire Companies and Horticulture Service Providers, such as Contractors and Accommodation Providers (DOE 2014). The Government has recently announced it will remove the annual cap on programme places, expand it to the broader agriculture industry and make the accommodation sector part of the programme on an ongoing basis (Bishop and Robb 2015).

The annual intake of Seasonal Workers has grown from around 400 in 2010-11 to just over 2000 in 2013-14. Table 5.2 shows the PSW entrants since 2013.

**Pacific Seasonal Workers contributing to Australian agriculture**

As part of the field work for this research grant we conducted interviews with key interested parties in PSW programmes and held focus groups with Pacific Seasonal Workers. Table 5.3 outlines the fieldwork conducted. It included *key stakeholder interviews*: with officials in the *Department of Employment* (DOE), Canberra, who had oversight of the PSW programme; with two approved PSW labour hire employers in Sydney and Mildura; and in Cairns, Qld, with the *Pacific Communities Council* about Tongan PSWs employed in the banana industry. Focus Groups were held in Sydney with PSWs from Samoa, who were returning home after completing their seasonal work on cabbage and lettuce farms, and with two groups of PSWs – one from PNG, the other from Kirabati – who were working on almond plantations in Robinvale, Victoria.

**Table 5.3. Fieldwork conducted with key stakeholders and Pacific Seasonal Workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Profile of Participant</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>No of participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Industry/Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Employment</td>
<td>Government stakeholders</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Employer</td>
<td>Labour Hire</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Employer</td>
<td>Labour Hire</td>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Pacific Communities Council</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>PSW workers on completion of stay</td>
<td>Camden, Sydney (NSW)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21-30 yrs</td>
<td>Cabbage, Lettuce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea (PNG)</td>
<td>Current PSW</td>
<td>Robinvale (Vic)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30-40 yrs</td>
<td>Almond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirabathi</td>
<td>Current PSW</td>
<td>Robinvale (Vic)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25-30 yrs</td>
<td>Almond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section focuses on the participant profiles of PSWs in the current study. It details our findings based on the consultations and focus group discussions conducted with the various stakeholders engaged in the PSW programme. More importantly voices from four different PSW communities, from Tonga, Kirabathi, Samoa and Papua New Guinea, are highlighted. Aspects of temporary migration such as housing, community connectedness and productive participation in the workplace have been prioritised and analysed as key to improved productivity. It should also be highlighted that the different participating groups each shared unique insights; hence the experiences of PSWs participating in this study are not universal. The participants in this study volunteered to be consulted, however their contact details were facilitated through the DOE. Participants were aware and had complete knowledge of the networks utilised to reach them.
In this section perspectives of the above participants are highlighted. Firstly, key areas of strengths and concerns by the DOE stakeholders are mentioned. Secondly, the view of the labour hire companies officially identified as Approved DOE employers participating in this study are presented and finally vignettes from focus group and interview discussions are cited to give voice to the lived experience of PSW participants.

The Department of Employment is currently overseeing the activities of a number of labour hire companies, contractors, and sub-contractors across the multiple aspects of the SWP, their work is not particularly confined to PSWs in agriculture. Despite having set standards and evaluation frameworks, the DOE’s PSWP is largely dependent on research produced by external stakeholders such as that presented by the ANU in collaboration with the World Bank. Time constraints for DOE staff means it is almost impossible to visit every site where the PSWs are placed. Most often it is not possible to ensure that minimum standards of occupational health and safety, accommodation choices and overall experience of PSWs across Australia are measured. A competitive expression of interest process is currently in place for labour hire companies and contractors to bid for the opportunity to attract the workers to be placed in their respective domains. In some cases, significant disparities may exist in what a prospective employer has outlined to what may exist on the ground. The DOE is largely dependent on the previous track record of competing employers. DOE recognises and acknowledges co-ethnic exploitation.

An approved employer is responsible for ensuring that the flights, transport, accommodation, wages with at least 30 hours of work, alongside pastoral care responsibilities and well-being, are provided. Our consultations with the approved employers highlight the need for bringing more PSW workers to Australia. There is a significant labour shortage in the horticultural sector in Australia: the PSWs are helping to fill this gap.

**Lived Experience of Pacific Seasonal Workers: Place, Work and Community**

Focus group discussions with the PSWs revealed that all of the participants were hopeful of returning the following year to Australia. In the case of two participants from Papua New Guinea, they nominated Victoria as their choice of destination in Australia, as a previous negative experience in Queensland deterred them from returning to that employer. A secondary impetus to come to Victoria was the additional numbers of workers from PNG there meant that they did not feel isolated and had access to members of their own community.

There are three aspects of the lived experience of Pacific Seasonal Workers which are covered in this section. The first is ‘place’, the second ‘work’ and the third ‘community’. This study is the first so far to have conducted focus group discussions with PSWs. A detailed literature review on PSWs has revealed that prior to the current study, no focus group discussions have been conducted with such workers. The DOE undertakes regular feedback with various stakeholders including the workers. However, there is no systematic reporting of these experiences using a qualitative approach to the PSWs so far. Hence the ideas expressed by PSWs in this study are contributing to the knowledge base in this area.

The participants recollected the initial excitement they experienced when they boarded the plane to Australia. For some it was their first, whilst others in the group were returning PSWs. This has been a valuable opportunity for them to gain experience in another country while earning in Australian dollars, with the hope of sending money back from Australia. As one informant put it:

> I am really happy to be here and be able to send money back home. The only problem is that I did not realise I will be in debt as soon as I arrive. Since coming to Australia, I am now having to pay of my air ticket and accommodation which will take at least 6-8 weeks. Everything here is so costly. (PNG Participant, Robinvale)
This disconnect between aspiration and reality of income-earning in Australia is not a rare phenomenon for migrant workers, as the previous chapter on Working Holiday Makers confirmed. In the case of PSWs they are in debt the moment they arrive in Australia. They are expected to pay off all the costs the labour hire companies have incurred to give them work and bring them to Australia. The workers were aware that they had to pay off their debts, but the realization that the wages were not enough to cover the costs was a rather late one.

Another feature of their short stay in Australia is the change in the landscape. PSWs are a long way from enjoying Australian beaches, unless they find work in tropical Far North Queensland. Both Camden and Robinvale are landlocked which meant that workers missed the familiar landscapes of their homelands:

One of the things that struck me is how different the Australian landscape is. I had heard that Australia is a very beautiful country but I have found the ruggedness personally quite dull. I miss the beaches and the blue ocean of my homeland. Six months is a long time to be away (Kirabathi participant, Robinvale).

Figure 5.1. Dr Devaki Monani with PSWs from PNG in Robinvale, Victoria

The missing of the landscape can also be associated with general homesickness and feelings of isolation. For instance, Tongans working in Cairns have expressed a need to meet other community members. This has been particularly challenging when they have had to work on farms: ‘We have often found ourselves to be isolated particularly because our families, wives and children stay behind in our home countries. We suffer from terrible home sickness’ (Tongan Participant, Cairns). On closer probing of what would enhance community connectedness for PSW Tongans in Cairns, the participant responded:

It is challenging for farm workers as we do not necessarily get the opportunities of engaging in sporting activities and as a result our community’s sporting needs are overlooked. This is the problem across all PSW farm workers in Queensland. In Tonga we do get involved with community through sport. Australians do the same. We just don’t get the same chance as the local population. (Tongan Participant, Cairns)
The PNG and Kirabathi participants, by contrast, experienced higher levels of community connectedness through their involvement in the local churches in Robinvale (see Figure 5.1): the need for recreation and sporting activities was not touched upon by the participants in Robinvale.

Note: Samoan participants are pictured at the international airport departure lounge, returning to Samoa after spending 8 months in Australia: the one thing they wanted to eat on their way out was a Big Mac meal from McDonalds.

**Figure 5.2. Samoan PSWs with Dr Dvaki Monani**

In Camden, Sydney, it was found that the Samoan group of men were able to socialise at the local pub (see Figure 5.2). Their experience of Australia was unique in the sense that the two aspects of Australia that they were completely unprepared for were ‘bush fires’ and ‘snakes’:

As a group we were very excited to come to Sydney, however we realised that our housing was almost an hour away from Sydney where we have been working in the cabbage farms at Camden. The first night in Camden we were faced with fires. There was an occurrence of a bush-fire not far from us and we were evacuated. We were really afraid. After a few days when we started working on the farms we spotted snakes. This we were most scared of – we had not seen snakes before we came to Australia. (Samoan Participant on behalf of his entire group, Camden)

The aspect to consider here is that the Samoan group of participants in this study consisted of relatively young men in their early to late twenties, when compared to the PNG and Tongan men. The Kirabathi men were equally young. The majority of the PNG and Tongan participants had a wife and children.

Australia has been named the ‘lucky country’ a number of times, particularly considering lifestyle, housing and cultural diversity. While the PSWs are immensely grateful for the opportunity to be in
Australia, the contradiction is that some feel much worse off in Australia than they did back in their (relatively underdeveloped) Pacific Island homes, as the following quote indicates:

We did not realise that we will have to live in such cramped conditions. Currently we are six of us in one room having to share one bathroom. Each of us are paying $80.00 per week. We think it’s a lot of money for the one bed and mattress we are getting. Our problem is that we don’t know where to go and look for house. We are staying wherever we are told to. You see we don’t have a choice. Sometimes we feel we are living in much poorer condition than back home (Papua New Guinea Participant, Robinvale).

The PSWs realistically do face challenges as under Australian tenancy rules tenancy agreements can be for a minimum of 12 months. This does jeopardise the opportunity for PSWs as their visas only allow them to stay in Australia for 6 months. There is clear evidence here that there is a power imbalance. Who is involved in this exploitation is yet to be ascertained as the participants were unwilling to share this information. However, it is crucial for the DOE-approved employers to undertake due diligence in this area particularly by encouraging PSWs to give feedback and allow for transparency. A study conducted by Connell (2015, p.78) highlighted similar findings. Although Connell does not capture the voice of the PSWs, his work presents a commentary on the challenges faced by temporary migrant workers such as the PSWs and the policies surrounding PSWs in Australia.

**PSWs contributing to Australian agriculture**

The second theme explored with the participants is the nature of work, and the contributions they are currently making to agricultural productivity. One of the key issues is that many PSWs do not have prior training or skills relevant to the agricultural work that they are expected to do. As one informant put it:

[The] majority of us Tongans have no knowledge of working in Australian farms. We also have not much knowledge of Australian work environment and work culture. We are often grouped as ‘lazy’. Most commonly we are described as strong people so we are considered good for working in Australian agriculture (Tongan Participant, Cairns).

These PSWs do have the ability to learn these skills on the job, so that on return visits they become much more productive workers.

The history of the use of Pacific Islanders – ‘Kanakas’ – as forced or indentured labour for the Queensland cane fields in the late nineteenth century was one of clear exploitation of Pacific Islander labour in Australia (Markus 1979). The PSW scheme however has been successful in shedding a positive light on the participation of PSWs in Australian agriculture. The current wave of PSWs wants Australian employers to feel positive about their entry into the agricultural sector in Australia. Hence the Tongan participant in this study was determined to see that this perception that Tongans are lazy needs to be changed. Drawing on the vignette of Kevin Willie Bong from Vanuatu, shared on ABC’s *Landline*:

Back in Vanuatu we just sit in the coconut tree, you can sleep the whole morning, wake up, climb a coconut tree, everything's there and we don't really follow time. But here, time is money. Something which you have to teach our people before they come here for work. (Tim Lee, *Landline*, ABC 2015)
Are PSWs doing the work that local Australians are unwilling to do? The response to this broad question may lie in the experience of PSWs from Robinvale. As one PSW put it:

When we arrived we were told that we will be taken to this almond farm. We will be weeding out and clearing the farm. When we reached there we found out that there was no work done on the property for over two years. The trees are big and it is tiring work. So we really have to work very hard. We had not expected the work to be hard. We were not exactly informed (PNG participant, Robinvale).

As mentioned by the Tongan participant in this study, it is the physical strength of the Pacific workers that make them an attractive labour force in agriculture. However, it is equally important for this labour force to be job-ready and have the mental strength to endure the hardship of working in some of the Australian farms. In this case it was only in 2013 that the almond industry in Victoria was given much impetus. Australia is the second largest almond industry after the US. This means that for the next five years there is likely guaranteed work for PSWs if the scheme continues. Indeed, in the Robinvale-Mildura belt, it is the Pacific Seasonal Workers making a difference in this sector (Staigh, *Landline*, ABC 2013).
Chapter 6: Case studies

Refugees in the Australian agricultural industry

Although most refugees have settled in large Australian cities, an increasing number have settled in regional and rural Australia. For example, in NSW over the period 2008-09 to 2012-13, 734 refugees had settled in Wollongong LGA, 630 in Coffs Harbour LGA, 373 in Newcastle LGA, 371 in Albury LGA and 273 in Wagga Wagga LGA (Refugee Council of Australia 2014). Moreover, given the substantial increase in Australia’s immigration intake since 2011 (Productivity Commission, Migrant Intake into Australia: Draft Report 2015) we can expect the immigrant presence in rural and regional Australia to increase when the 2016 Census data is collected and published. For this research project we conducted fieldwork with refugees in South Australia, Victoria, NSW and Queensland. This work included interviews with individual humanitarian immigrant workers and entrepreneurs, and focus groups, particularly with Pacific Islander seasonal workers. In addition we conducted a number of case studies: Mamre Farms (local organic produce) in St Marys, on the western outskirts of Sydney; Hmong farmers from Thai border regions now residing in Innisfail, Queensland; 457 visa holders from Estonia; and Lebanese cucumber growers past and present in Western Sydney. Other places visited during this research were: Naracoorte, South Australia; Horsham and Nhill, Victoria; Cairns, Queensland; and Griffith and Coffs Harbour, New South Wales.

Table 6.1. Fieldwork conducted with the refugee community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Visa Category</th>
<th>Industry Produce</th>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Naracoorte</td>
<td>Afghani</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Vineyards</td>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre, Adelaide</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Mount Gambier</td>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Herbs</td>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre, Adelaide</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNQ</td>
<td>Cairns, Innisfail</td>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre, Cairns</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>Nhill</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Luv A Duck</td>
<td>RDA Nhill</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Orchard Hills</td>
<td>Ethiopian, Sudanese, Burmese</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Organic local</td>
<td>Mamre Farms</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fieldwork conducted in Naracoorte and Mount Gambier (South Australia) with refugees from Afghanistan and Burma (see Table 6.1) found farming work was fulfilling and readily available. Particularly due to limited English speaking abilities, the community members found ongoing work in the vineyards and other farms. Moreover, some Afghani focus group participants revealed that they also worked in the abattoirs, however they found this to be particularly challenging as getting promoted to supervisory roles was a major barrier. They found working on the vineyards more enjoyable and identified it to be a flexible employment opportunity, particularly because of the seasonal nature of farming. Amongst the Burmese community in Mount Gambier both men and women of the community worked on the herb farms. Among the Afghans, it was only the men who were actively employed in the vineyards: there was an absence of Afghani women in matters of employment. Unlike the Burmese women who participated in the focus group discussion, the Afghani
women were reluctant and in the end it was a male only participant group. Yet there are more than 15 Afghani families settled in the small town of Naracoorte in South Australia, including several children.

Fieldwork in the Victorian region of Horsham and Nhill found that several immigrants contributed to farming (duck livestock farming). In Nhll, Dr Devaki Monani completed focus group discussions with Karen refugee community members and the manager of Luv a duck farm. Karen refugee members now have become contractors for duck livestock farming. Luv a duck believes this to be a great success as they have given many Karen refugees a chance to take up work opportunities and ownership opportunities. This has dramatically improved the living conditions of Karen community members. A community of 60-80 Karen members now live in Nhll, a remote town located in Western Victoria, 374 km away from Melbourne. This community initially was settled in Werribee, a western suburb of Melbourne. However, through DIAC, Luv a Duck arranged for the training and community relocation to Nhill. As part of this initiative, housing support was also extended to Karen refugee community members in this region.

Luv A Duck: enabling Karen refugees in a remote town

This case study focuses on Nhll, a remote regional town in Victoria and the role of Luv A Duck. This is an example whereby a corporate body has made a real difference to the way in which the skills of newly arrived Karen refugees were nurtured to give them appropriate employment opportunities. The Karen hill-tribe people have been persecuted by the Myanmar government since 1949: a number of Karen refugees lived in the United Nations refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border. Karen refugees have been settled in the Wimmera town of Nhll, located between Melbourne and Adelaide. In 2007, as refugee migration restrictions to Australia were loosened, they began to make their way to Werribee, 120 of their number subsequently settling as refugees in Nhll. Most of them arrived last year and many work at the Luv-a-Duck poultry manufacturer. A story by Chris Johnston in The Age in 2013 (‘No halfway steps as Nhll welcomes its newest citizens from Myanmar’, The Age, 23March) provides a very useful overview of the Karen workers at Luv A Duck. Johnston cites John Millington, Manager of Luv A Duck, as saying: ‘They are not a burden, they are a blessing. The Australians were unwilling to come and live and work in Nhll. The Karen refugees filled the labour shortages’.

The assimilation required here from both sides is huge. Nhll is deeply conservative and predominantly white Anglo-Saxon, though Johnston writes that it does have 27 nationalities in the town, including a Nigerian GP and Indian nurses. The town's Karens are mentored by locals.

Johnston writes that Kaw Doh Htoo, one of the first Karen to arrive in Nhll, works seven days a week, collecting young ducks from farms for the factory. Kaw Doh really enjoys Nhll because it reminds him of his homeland: ‘It was rural, like here. Peaceful, fresh air, not busy. Very nice’. Kaw is now one of a few contractors with Luv A Duck.

The changing landscape of immigrant growers in Griffith

For the purpose of data collection, we visited Griffith, NSW, in August 2013. In 2016, Griffith celebrates the centenary of settlement and farming in the town.

Historically, farming land became available in 1912 with the first settlers being the primary farmers. From 1912 the new Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme brought a population boom to the Riverina. Soldier settlers, city folk and farmers from selections elsewhere all came to ‘cash in’ on the expected prosperity. New immigrants also arrived, beginning with British but also including Italians, Spanish and Germans in the first wave (Kabaila 2005, p. 53). Of these new immigrants, the Italians ‘constituted the most distinct group’ (Kabaila 2005, p. 53). The first Italian immigrants to arrive in Griffith came via Broken Hill between 1913 and 1915 (Kelly 2001). They were soon followed by those who came directly from Italy: these were mainly Trevisani from the Veneto region in Italy’s north (Huber 1977).
Subsequent immigrants came from many other regions of Italy: prior to World War II they were mostly from the northern provinces, especially from the north-east of Veneto and Friuli (including Friulani, Veronesi, Vicentini and Bellunesi) (Piazza 2005, pp. 10, 19). Following World War II a new wave of Italian immigrants arrived, this time mostly from the southern regions, particularly Calabria and Sicilia (Piazza 2005, pp. 10, 19). Those from the south eventually came to equal or even outnumber those from the north (Kabaila 2005, p. 53; Kelly 2001, p. 497). Other Italian immigrants came from Abruzzo, Toscana, Piemonte, Marche and Campania (Piazza 2005, pp. 10, 19).

The first Italians to arrive in Griffith came with few personal belongings and found a region with little industrial development. The early Italian immigrants took up farming and trades, bringing valuable skills with them from home, as builders, tailors and small-scale farmers. With skills and experience in a ‘mixed economy’ – working for cash as well as producing their own food in small plots and vegetable gardens – the Italians found success while many of the soldier settlers failed (Kabaila 2005, p. 55). Where Anglo-Celtic Australians had abandoned farms that had been damaged by salt intrusion or waterlogging, Italian farmers were able to repair them and ‘bring them back to full productivity’ (Kelly 2001, p. 497). Italian immigrants became central to the region’s economic growth, dominating the fruit and vegetable farming industry and introducing new industries such as wine production that remain central to Griffith’s prosperity today. By the 1930s, the relative success of the Italian farmers had contributed to an ‘increasing hostility towards Italian settlers’ in the region (Pascoe 1987, p. 150).

While they worked hard to develop their economic resources, Italian immigrants also developed a strong cultural life. In the early days, ‘they played favourite folk songs at social gatherings, cooked traditional foods and visited friends and family on weekends’ (Kabaila 2005, p. 55). Over time, numerous Italian regional associations, music clubs and social clubs were born, some of them with affiliations overseas. Many Italian families carried over customs and traditions from their homelands, including seasonal religious festivals, regional dialects and recipes for traditional Italian foods handed down over generations (Kabaila 2005, p. 56). The importance of family and community were strongly impressed on the younger generations. Huber (1977) and Kelly (1984) analysed the social interaction and integration of Italian migrants to Griffith. They found that Italian immigrants formed close-knit communities which had a strong capacity for internal social and economic support. The importance of family commitments is still a strong feature of Griffith’s Italian community.14

Today, many Italian immigrants and their descendants are well-respected professionals and business people in Griffith and several have become key players in local politics. Over the last 20 years, there has been only one non-Italian mayor of Griffith City Council, with Italian immigrants holding the position for all but approximately three years. As of early 2009, four of the current twelve councillors are first- or second-generation Italian immigrants.

Following the Italians, the next largest immigrant group in Griffith are Sikh Indians. Sikhs began arriving in Griffith in the mid-1970s, with the first group coming via Melbourne to work as fruit pickers on local farms. As word spread about the available work, another wave of immigrants followed. In the mid-1980s a new wave of Sikh immigrants arrived, many with formal qualifications. The last three decades have seen further immigration to Griffith from South and Central Asia (India, Pakistan and Afghanistan), the Pacific Islands (Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga), the Middle East and Southern Europe (Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon) and, most recently, Africa (Zimbabwe, Uganda, Sudan). Many immigrants from these regions have formed sizeable communities and have often taken up work in fruit picking, farming, or agricultural processing. The Aboriginal community in Griffith is also a relatively large group, with many local Aboriginal families living close to Griffith’s city centre at the former reserve known as Three Ways.

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14 In fact, one interview respondent suggested that traditional family ties and obligations within Griffith’s Italian community are stronger and more restrictive than those in today’s Italian villages, with the older generations in Griffith preserving the traditional family system while families in Italy have modernised and liberalised (Interview G3).
Several studies have been conducted on the Italian traditions of viticulture and market gardening which brought immense financial benefit to Griffith. Griffith council has revealed that the wineries surrounding Griffith produce 80 percent of NSW’s wines and 25 per cent of Australia’s wine grapes. Records show that 110 000 tonnes were harvested by 500 growers in 1996, with Semillon and Shiraz accounting for the bulk of the production.

Griffith council has recently also mapped the history of the rice industry which was founded in 1924. A milling co-op was formed in 1950 as local producers were not pleased with the returns from private millers. There are now six mills in the Riverina. The three irrigation areas of NSW produce about 1.4 million tonnes of rice a year which is virtually the entire Australian output, most of which (around 90 per cent) is exported. Citrus fruit is the other major local product. 230 000 tonnes are harvested, with Valencia oranges the largest crop. Stone fruits, vegetables, wheat, cotton, sheep, wool, eggs and canola are also produced in quantity. All of the gherkins used by McDonald's are also grown in Griffith. In addition, fruit and vegetable packing is also a thriving industry, alongside the production of fruit juice and Australia's largest egg and poultry plant. The influence of Italian immigrants in the wine industry is also evident: Casella and DeBortoli are two large and successful Italian-owned and developed wineries in the area.

Immigrant entrepreneurs have thus played a significant role in the development of the agricultural industry in the Griffith and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area of NSW.

New immigrants shaping Griffith: the Sikhs, the Pakistanis, the Gujaratis and workers from the Pacific

Newer groups of immigrant settlers in Griffith are also making a mark on business development in the area. For example Riverina Oils & Bio Energy Pty Ltd is a large agri business investment of 65million dollars plus, run by an Indian immigrant called DD Saxena, who was recently awarded Indian of the year in Sydney (http://www.riverinaoils.com.au/). The Sikhs are now one of the largest migrant groups, after the Italians, residing in Griffith. As evident in the Woolgoolga case study (below), Sikhs are traditionally a farming community from India. In the case of Griffith, there is a sizeable Sikh Population in Yoogali. The Yoogali Sikhs in Griffith are mainly citrus growers and citrus farm workers.

Here we report on the Brar Farm a thriving citrus farm on the outskirts of Yoogali. Sukhdeep Singh arrived in Griffith with his entire family of brothers and uncles. They are all into farming. When Sukhdeep first arrived he worked on nearby citrus farms before venturing into his own farms. He currently owns 50 acres of citrus farms:

I have been very lucky to be here in Griffith. We are a big extended family. My wife is raised in Australia. I moved to Australia as an adult. We have three children. On our farm I grow mainly citrus. I have also leased out our farm worker’s cottage and we have young boys from Punjab living and working there and helping us on the farm.

One of the key successes of Sukhdeep and his brothers is that they have a large pool of farm workers to tap into on their farm. They also have a strong network of distributors along with Woolworths: this makes it lucrative for them to run the farm. The strength and success of Sukhdeep’s farm emerges from his previous experience; this knowledge has added to the way he runs his business. He arrived in Australia less than 10 years ago.

There is a growing Pakistani community in Griffith living in the Yenda, Yoogali and Hanwood townships and a number of Pakistani immigrants have established farms and employ workers from their community on them. The fact that the majority of the Pakistani farm owners in Griffith had a pool of Pakistani labour that they were able to tap into gave considerable impetus to their business.
Pakistani citrus farmer, Mohammed, who had initially worked as a contractor in Griffith and still manages to supply labour through his Pakistani networks on several farms, is another new immigrant who has moved into farming in the Griffith region and owns a citrus farm in the area. Here is the story of one Pakistani citrus farmer:

My family in Pakistan were also into farming. This really helps as it gives us confidence that we can make it here in Australia. Griffith is ideal for my citrus growing business. I used to be a contractor and now it’s great to be able to run my own business. My English speaking skills are not great. I am also a community person and its nice here with so many of my own Pakistani community members here to work on the farm with me. This means that I don’t have to have a high standard of English whilst running this farming business. I can actually be productive without the English language.

Apart from the Sikhs and the Pakistanis, the two communities in Griffith contributing to Australian agriculture are the Gujaratis and the Pacific Islander community. This particular Pacific Islander community in Griffith did not come through the Pacific Seasonal Worker programme. There are currently several young men from Samoa and Tonga residing in Griffith. Some of them have been longer term residents in Griffith. The Gujarati, Tongans and the Samoans have been farm workers for a few years now. They reside in the Ghettos of Griffith city. The majority of them work on the citrus farms. Some of them also work in the vineyards, mainly in pruning. The Gujaratis also organise cultural activities in Griffith and have been a featured community on the Griffith Council website.

**Lebanese cucumbers: Lebanese growers in NSW, past and present**

In NSW, Lebanese growers began growing tomatoes. There were farms towards Wiseman’s Ferry, Glenorie and Mathoura. Some of these are suburbs in the outer western region of Sydney. The Lebanese began growing in this area, however in Mathoura getting labour across was challenging.

![Figure 6.1. Tomato Grower Joe El Boustani with Prof. Jock Collins](image)

The current farming at Rossmore near Riley Creek is perfect. A number of Lebanese farmers are growing in this greater Sydney basin. As a community they are distinctly identified as the Lebanese Cucumber growers. This is a continental product and has been brought to the market because they are
now a large migrant community. Lebanese growers historically come from the village of ‘Giye’ in Lebanon. Some of them have also ventured into figs, eggplant, and beans.

Water irrigation now costs about $30,000 per farm. Growers such as Joe El Boustani (Figures 6.1, 6.2) are providing training to Pacific Islanders and Africans at Campbelltown and Hawkesbury TAFE. Hence there is some activity amongst young migrants wanting to be trained in the hydroponic industry; the key problem is start up finances for young migrant farmers:

We have to find affordable ways of growing and at this stage the Lebanese cucumbers are the most affordable, particularly because we are lucky that currently as a community we are also finding new techniques of growing vine tomatoes, particularly the Dutch and Maltese variety. This is possible through the green houses. Again, sustainability is a big issue and we need support from the government and investment from the government so we can expand the vine tomatoes growing within our community. (Cucumber grower, Joe El Boustani).

![Joe's hydroponic tomatoes](image-url)

**Figure 6.2. Joe's hydroponic tomatoes**

**Jackie Jarvis: best practice in WA**

In WA Jackie Jarvis started a programme in 2013 related to job-matching for re-settled refugees in Perth. To enable refugees in WA to gain work experience in the agriculture sector Jackie Jarvis assisted young refugee men from Perth to strengthen their CVs:

It is easier to place individual members rather than large refugee families as ensuring successful settlement for families in regional areas is a challenging task. Also refugees are one of the best cohorts to place with farmers rather than backpackers, as backpackers have a high turn around, whilst refugees
are on permanent residence visas. I examined these gaps and enabled refugees to go and work in those sites. (Jackie Jarvis, WA)

For example, in Carnarvon, 1000 km North of Perth, there were labour shortages in the banana industry:

We placed Afghan refugees in the fruit fly baiting programme within the shire of Carnarvon. These members were on bridging visas and eventually they were successfully transferred to permanent residency. Hence we were able to ensure best practice and extend support to these people. (Jackie Jarvis, WA)

Jackie Jarvis also cites the example a young man from Burundi who came to Australia as a 16-year-old and completed his high school education in Perth. Jackie was able to find work for him in the dairy industry around Scott River. He spread the word and now there are many other refugee workers in the WA region able to get work around Scott River. The closest town is 60 km away, however the men pictured (Figure 6.3) are glad to have found work.

Photo Courtesy: Jackie Jarvis.

Figure 6.3. Men from Burundi at Scott River; Jackie Jarvis, consultant at Agriculture and Food WA.

Some farmers in WA also play a role in supporting 457 visa holders. A number of Estonians are working in the cereal, oats, wheat, barley, canola industry in WA. WA farmers have helped them to transfer from WHM visas to 457 visas. As one Estonian informant from Miling, WA put it:

Skilled 457 farm workers receive a lot of training, however sometimes the challenge lies with the visa. If the worker only has a two year visa, this is a huge cost burden for the farm owner. They have to keep renewing our visas. It costs up to $10 000 inclusive of renewal of visas, health insurance, workplace insurances and most importantly training costs. Hence it is important to introduce a longer time frame in the 457 visa scheme. (Estonian Participant, Miling, WA)

Another informant said:
I believe I am an excellent manager; I am able to run the farm by taking on a number of roles. As a farm worker, farm manager and a night security person and all of this I am doing for $25.00 an hour. I always feel threatened about losing my Permanent Residency Options due to some policy change. I really love working in Australia and am pleased to be here in WA. I have been working in Australia for five years now (Estonian Participant, Miling, WA).

Finally another informant:

Last year I got really lucky I was paid 5 weeks leave to go and visit Estonia and also bonus pay. My boss is happy if the crop is good and in 2013 the crop was good so I was able to go away on holiday. (Estonian Participant, Miling, WA)

**Nicky Mann: a female agricultural entrepreneur**

Nicky Mann (Figure 6.4) and her husband Wade Mann moved from Zimbabwe 10 years ago. They previously were in the business of rose growing; with much difficulty they established a business in Australia. Together they grow six hectares of roses for daily export to the European markets including Aalsmeer Flower Auctions, Flora Holland and Tele Flower Auction, plus markets in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, England, Russia, etc.

We firmly believe that producing the finest quality roses for strict destinations overseas in Europe has prepared us extremely well for growing roses in Australia for sale directly to the public. We also aim to produce the finest quality roses using the latest environmentally-friendly growing techniques and guarantee all our roses will last a minimum of 7 days in the vase. (Nicky Mann, Roses 2 Go)

Their specialty is hydroponic roses for sale through their two florist shops and online store; they also offer fully guided tours of their hydroponic growing facility. They have diversified into hydroponic raspberries and blueberries as well.

I am really lucky as in 2014 I was awarded the prestigious Nuffield Farming Scholarship and my area of study is intensive berry production in greenhouses using hydroponics and whether aquaponic can be integrated in some way. All of 2014 I have spent travelling on the Global Focus Programme to Philippines, China, Canada, USA, The Netherlands, Belgium, France and Ireland. My private study will also take me to New Zealand, Chile, Mexico and United Kingdom (Nicky Mann, Roses 2 Go).
The first Sikh settlers came to Woolgoolga in the 1940s. The Sikhs belong to the Punjab province of Northern India. On their arrival, they worked as labourers on the banana plantations, but later acquired leasehold and freehold banana plantations. Sikh migrants from other parts of Australia were attracted to this area once they were aware of an established Sikh community and that the possibility of earning a high income was to be found in banana plantations. Today over 95 per cent of Woolgoolga's banana industry and 10 per cent of Coffs Harbour is owned and operated by Australians of Sikh ancestry. More recently the Sikhs have also entered the blueberry industry (‘Co-ops increase farmers’ bargaining power, better for consumers’, The Australian, 10 August 2015). For the purpose of this study we interviewed council officers, Sikh community leaders and also conducted discussions at the Sikh Gurudwara in Woolgoolga.

Sometimes we have international students work on the blueberry farms. This is an important pool of workers. We are able to employ many people through the blueberry farms. There are also Africans interested in working on the farms and depending on the season they get employed. (John Arkan, Sikh Mayor (2012-13) of Woolgoolga Coffs Harbour)

In Woolgoolga the Sikh community has an informal way of labour hiring: in our research we found that the ‘Gurudwara’, the Sikh temple, is a primary site of connecting job seekers with job employers. Not all the Sikh farmers get along with one another and there are often lots of disagreements within the community on approaches to farming.

We conducted our visit to Woolgoolga in 2013. The Australian newspaper ran a success story to highlight OzGroup (the Sikh growing co-operatives now called Ozberries):

The newly-formed Oz Group co-operative now has 97 farmer members around Coffs Harbour, has become the biggest blueberry grower in Australia, runs five packing plants, turns over $50m a year, and employs more than 1000 pickers and packers annually. It runs its own collective farm input and fertiliser business, has its own financial and agricultural advisers for its growers, supplies blueberries almost all year round to the major supermarkets, wholesale markets and exporters from 500ha of covered blueberry bushes, and is expanding at a rate of 25-30 per cent a year. (The Australian 2015)
Results and implications

Immigrants are of increasing importance to the Australian agricultural sector in particular and to regional and rural Australia in general. Indications from this study are that the recent trend to open up new visa pathways for permanent and temporary immigrants to settle in the Australian bush has likely been very successful for the immigrants themselves, for rural and regional Australia in general and for the Australian agricultural sector in particular.

At the 2011 Census first and second generation immigrants comprised between 22 per cent (Tas) and 38 per cent (WA) of the non-urban population of the Australian States. Given the substantial increase in Australia’s immigration intake since 2011 (Productivity Commission, Migrant Intake into Australia: Draft Report 2015) we can expect the immigrant presence in rural and regional Australia to increase when the 2016 Census data is collected and published.

Immigrants in the Australian agricultural sector come from a very diverse range of countries and visa pathways. Some come as skilled permanent immigrants – including immigrant farmers – while others come on temporary visas as Working Holiday Makers, skilled workers on 457 Visas and Pacific Island Seasonal Workers. Others come as refugees who are settling in increasing numbers in regional and rural Australia. It is likely that some of the 12 000 Syrian conflict refugees arriving in Australia in the next 12 months will be resettled in regional centres across Australia.

Skilled permanent immigrants add considerably to the productivity of Australian agriculture by filling skilled vacancies in the agricultural sector, and bring their expertise from their pre-immigration employment experience. Of those surveyed, most find a job in their area of expertise, like the job, and like living in regional and rural Australia. Most find a very warm welcome in the Australian bush and have strong relationships with local residents and fellow workers. The warmth of welcome for skilled immigrants employed in the agricultural industry is even stronger than that experienced by other skilled permanent immigrants in the Australian bush. These findings emerged from a random sample of nearly 1000 skilled immigrants across Australia.

Immigrant farmers are increasing in numbers and significance, helping to redress problems of inter-generational succession increasingly experienced by non-immigrant farmer families, by providing an alternate source of new generation farmers. Immigrant farmers also increase productivity by bringing with them new technological insights gained overseas to apply to Australia farming. For example, African farmers from countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa bring with them experience with water-saving farming. Asian market gardeners bring in a new range of vegetables and fruits that find a ready market in a country where cooking contests and food shows are finding a very large audience.

Working Holiday Makers provide a large and mobile workforce that helps meet seasonal demand for agricultural workers, particularly at harvesting or picking time. They also provide labour for hard-to-staff jobs in rural and remote areas of Australia. By reducing labour shortages at critical times on the agricultural industry cycle they add considerably to its profitability and productivity. Unscrupulous employers, brokers and labour hire companies – co-ethnics and others – have led to well-publicised instances of low-pay, exploitative accommodation arrangements and very unsatisfactory work experiences for a minority of WHMs, threatening to undermine the future viability of the programme.

Pacific Island Seasonal Workers will likely become increasingly important to the Australian agricultural sector in coming decades. After a successful pilot programme in the horticultural sector, the Pacific Seasonal Workers Programme is now an uncapped demand-driven source of labour supply for the agricultural sector. The potential to utilise this source of labour has not yet been fully taken up by Australian farmers.

While most refugees and humanitarian immigrants settle in Australian cities, the research in this report shows that refugees also add very considerably to the agricultural sector workforce, with a number of
refugees becoming farmers or entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. Agricultural productivity will likely increase as regional and rural Australia opens up its communities and agricultural sector jobs to this cohort of Australian immigrants.
Recommendations

Strategies to increase the number of permanent and temporary immigrants who settle in rural and regional Australia will likely benefit the Australian bush in general and the Australian agricultural sector in particular. Consideration could be given to policies that:

- while recognising immigration is within the domain of Federal Government policy, allow States and Territories some independent control over migration intakes – similar to the way in which Canada operates – to enable them to better target migration to areas of skills and employment shortages in rural and regional areas;

- target immigrants with sound farming experience and skills, for example through Immigrant Farmer Expos similar to 457 Skilled Temporary immigrant Expos that the Australian government holds in cities in Europe and the UK. These could be trialled, particularly in countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe;

- redirect more of Australia’s permanent immigrants to non-urban settlement, such as providing applicants more points for regional and rural settlement and adding agricultural sector jobs to the list of occupations in demand;

- increase the number of WHMs coming to Australia and promote the second visa opportunity;

- reduce exploitation of WHMs to strengthen the future impact of WHMs on agricultural productivity.

- improve the knowledge of, and promote, the untapped opportunities provided by the Pacific Seasonal Workers Programme to farmers

- increase the number of settlement opportunities for refugees in rural and regional Australia; and

- continue to develop local initiatives to welcome new immigrants to cities and towns and condemn the activities of a minority of exploitative employers or racist individuals who threaten to undermine the social and economic achievements that contribute to the future of agricultural productivity.
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### Appendix A: Participation of non-English speaking farmers in Australia

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<th>Industry ANZSIC 2011</th>
<th>English speaking</th>
<th>Non-English speaking</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of non-English speaking</th>
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Table A.1. Participation of non-English speaking farmers in Australian agriculture, fishing and forestry industries in 2011

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing
Appendix B: Participation of specific language groups

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Table B.1. Non–English speaking farmers in Australian agriculture, fishing and forestry industries in 2011: Participation of specific language groups

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing
Appendix C: Percentage of non-English speaking farmers per State/Territory 2011

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Table C.1. Percentage of non-English speaking farmers per State/Territory 2011.

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing
Appendix D: Contribution of overseas born immigrants across specific agricultural industries

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.1 Participation and distribution of non-English speaking people in Australian sheep, beef cattle, and grain farming
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.2. Participation and distribution of NES people in other Australian crop growing
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.3. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian dairy cattle farming
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.4. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian forestry and logging
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.5. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian mushroom and vegetable growing
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.6. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian fruit and tree nut growing
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.7. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian deer farming
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.8. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian poultry farming

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure D.9. Participation and distribution of NES people in Australian nursery and floriculture production
Appendix E: Industry orientation of overseas born farmers involved in Australian agriculture

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.1. Participation and distribution of North-West Europeans in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.2. Participation and distribution of Southern and Eastern Europeans in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.3. Participation and distribution of North African and Middle Eastern persons in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.4. Participation and distribution of Sub-Saharan Africans in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.5. Participation and distribution of North-East Asians in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.6. Participation and distribution of Southern and Central Asians in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure E.7. Participation and distribution of South-East Asians in Australian agricultural industry
Appendix F: Geographical distribution of some groups

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure F.1. Geographical distribution of Southern and Eastern Europeans in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure F.2. Geographical distribution of South-East Asian workers in Australian agricultural industry

Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure F.3. Geographical distribution of North African and Middle Eastern workers in Australian agricultural industry
Data Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Figure F.4. Geographical distribution of Sub-Saharan workers in Australian agricultural industry
NATIONAL RURAL ISSUES

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