



Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry  
'Migrant Intake into Australia', 12 June 2015

By the **Reduce Immigration** website team

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The **Reduce Immigration** website team congratulates the Australian Government on initiating this inquiry into the greater use of charges to determine the intake of temporary and permanent immigrants into Australia.

We are pleased to provide responses to some of the questions raised in the issues paper released in May 2015.

What are useful examples of immigration policy settings in comparable overseas countries? (p. 18)

David Cameron's government is currently approaching the UK's immigration problems in a very up-front manner: they aim to keep net migration down to the tens of thousands and make it more difficult for EU immigrants to claim social or housing benefits. We applaud his determination to reduce immigration. Given the population differentials between the UK and Australia, their 'tens of thousands' is appropriately low in comparison to our high 203,750 target.

What should be the objectives of Australia's immigration policy? What do these objectives mean for the composition of Australia's immigrant intake? Is the current immigration policy in Australia broadly aligned with the objective of improving the wellbeing of the Australian community? (p. 18)

The objective should be to stabilise the population at levels that are not detrimental to Australia's environmental, social and cultural sustainability. This can only be achieved by reducing net overseas immigration (NOM). Many commentators suggest that 70 – 80,000 would be an appropriate annual intake. We agree.

The current high levels of NOM (over 200,000 p.a.) are not well aligned with an objective of improving the wellbeing of the Australian community. In fact, there is much evidence to suggest the opposite. We have gathered some of this evidence in a bibliography under the heading 'Why should immigration be reduced?' (see: <https://reduceimmigration.wordpress.com/links/why-should-immigration-be-reduced/>)

How does the Australian immigration system compare to those overseas in its ability to provide net benefits to the Australian community? (p. 19)

In 2012-13, immigration into Australia contributed to a population growth rate of 1.8 per cent that year — among the highest in the developed world and more than three times China's 0.5 per cent rate (*The Australian*, 12 June 2015, p. 3). Although the rate has declined slightly since then, it is still very high internationally and against our own historical growth rates. This means that the immigration system has been tasked to fight against the well-being of the Australian community as a whole. Net benefits to migrants are large through the welfare and other support systems, while the net benefits to citizens and longer-term residents are eroded through increased urbanisation, inadequate infrastructure, higher taxes and, in the larger cities, a loss of social cohesion. Across Australia, there is rising concern about this reduction in social cohesion. Reducing the growth rate of Australia's immigration would provide a net benefit to the Australian community.

Should Australia consider alternative pathways for low-skilled migration for low-skilled workers from Pacific island communities? (p. 20)

No – no alternatives to the current provisions are necessary.

What has been the impact of Australia's immigration intake on government budgets and balance sheets to date? Which streams are likely to have been net contributors, and which have been net beneficiaries? (p. 21)

The humanitarian stream is known to attract beneficiaries rather than contributors. In 2000, at the Australian Demographers conference, then Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said that refugee / humanitarian migrants were costing \$20 million per thousand people, per annum.

What are the key urban amenity impacts of overseas immigration? Which of those impacts could be most directly addressed through immigration policy? How could the existing migration policies be improved to reduce the adverse effects, and increase the positive effects, on the amenity of existing residents? (p. 23)

Infrastructure crumbles under growth stress in the capital cities where the majority of migrants settle.

Gridlock grows where urban road systems are under pressure from increased population. Immigration is the largest contributor to Australia's population increase.

Metropolitan areas sprawl and the costs of congestion continue to rise. Scarce capital is borrowed overseas to fuel unproductive suburban expansion, thus diverting labour and capital from productive import-replacement enterprises.

Health services are deteriorating.

As with every other facet of our built environment, education and community services infrastructure struggle to keep pace with the rate of immigration-induced population growth.

Bob Carr has today become the latest of many analysts to draw a direct correlation between soaring house prices in Sydney and Melbourne and "ridiculously overambitious" immigration targets (*The Australian*, 12 June 2015, p. 3).

What has been the impact of Australia's immigration programs on the environment? How direct is the relationship between immigration policy and domestic environmental outcomes and how can the latter be improved through immigration policy? (p. 23)

Australia is the oldest and driest continent. Agriculturally smaller and less fertile than France, our arable land and wilderness areas are being built over. Pollution is increasing, not to mention greenhouse gas emissions, inevitably in proportion to our rapid population growth.

Water is a scarce resource, expensive and more distantly diverted to expanding cities.

Regardless of costly investment in signage and community education programs about the harvesting of Australia's native flora and fauna, there is still today a lack of respect by some immigrant (ethnic) groups for the rules and boundaries that have been put in place to protect Australia's marine and terrestrial ecosystems, flora and fauna.

Domestic environmental outcomes cannot be improved through immigration policy, unless the policy is changed to focus on a phased reduction of the net overseas migration.

Current population growth through high rates of net overseas migration has a direct impact on all domestic environmental outcomes. The Australian environment cannot sustain this.

What are the most direct and effective policy mechanisms for influencing the social outcomes of immigration? (p. 24)

To influence social outcomes in a positive way for the benefit of the Australian community, the most direct and effective policy mechanism would be the phased reduction of net overseas migration.

How important is social cohesion and integration to the wellbeing of immigrants and to the Australian community? (p. 24)

The wish to preserve one's identity and the identity of one's community and nation requires no justification, any more than the wish to have one's own children and continue one's family though them needs to be justified or rationalised.

In 2006, Robert Putnam's research on social cohesion was reported thus:

Ethnic diversity seriously undermines the trust and social bonds within a community, according to important new research that casts a gloomy shadow over optimistic theories about the benefits of the social melting pot in immigrant societies such as Australia.

The worrying findings about the effects of ethnic diversity were developed by Robert Putnam, a Harvard University political scientist whose previous research on community dynamics has been highly influential among policymakers in the US ...

His extensive research found that the more diverse a community, the less likely were its inhabitants to trust anyone, from their next-door neighbour to their local government.

People were even more wary of members of their own ethnic groups, as well as people from different backgrounds...

[Putnam's] most important finding was that "in the presence of diversity, we hunker down".

"We act like turtles," he said. "The effect of diversity is worse than had been imagined."

Peter Wilson, 'Ethnic diversity "breeds mistrust"',  
*The Australian*, 10 October 2006.

Putnam's research shows that social cohesion and integration is all-important for the well-being of both immigrants and the Australian community.

Unfortunately, social cohesion is eroding as racial / ethnic gang violence, and individual terrorism events, erupt in our larger cities.

The ethnic lobby's indignation industry proliferates. Competing and conflicting sets of values promote pet legislations (such as the racial and religious vilification Acts), along with the shrill, all-pervasive anti-racism campaigns.

Mass immigration delivered in the context of Australia's multicultural policy contributes to the decline of our social cohesion. (European governments are now largely distancing themselves from their multicultural policy failures.)

For the record, Australia is no more part of Asia than Africa is part of Europe. The push for integration with Asia or Asianisation is shown by opinion polls to be as unpopular as it is undemocratic and unnecessary.

Neither immigration nor multiculturalism are single issues. They affect every facet of Australia's future.

What is the evidence that a substantial change to the current immigration regime, such as the adoption of new methods for determining immigrant intakes, is warranted? (p. 27)

The current method for determining immigrant intakes makes no charge on new arrivals. Administering the migration program, providing support for migrant welfare and settlement, and contributing to additional infrastructure - all are costs borne by the existing Australian population. Change to this system is highly justifiable.

Would an immigration charge as a primary basis for determining the intake of immigrants be consistent with Australia's current migration objectives? Are existing Australian residents likely to accept the scheme, and would the scheme assist in building public support for immigration? (p. 28)

Reducing net overseas migration to between 70,000 and 80,000 per annum, together with imposing a fee for each successful permanent immigrant, could build public support for immigration - and would reduce the burden on existing taxpayers.

In a system that primarily relies on charging for immigrant entry, how much control should the government retain over the size and composition of the immigrant intake? How can this be reflected in the design of the policy?

Should the charging arrangements differ across immigrant streams? Should the charge apply on a per immigrant basis or should there be differential charging for those with a spouse and/or children? (p. 29)

The government should retain complete control over the size and composition of the immigrant intake.

**Size:** We recommend between 70,000 and 80,000 net per annum.

**Composition:** In recent decades, the ethnic, racial and cultural shift in Australia's demography has been dramatic. We recommend rebalancing the mix in favour of people of European descent.

**Charging arrangements:** We suggest \$300,000 per capita for each successful permanent immigrant. No group or family discounts should apply. A sliding scale of fees for temporary immigrants could be related to their length of stay.

Should the investment visa classes (significant investor and premium investor) continue under a charging regime? (p. 29)

No – the investment visa classes should be cancelled.

Which parties should have the right to purchase an immigration permit? What would be the practical challenges and other implications in allowing non-immigrants to purchase the permits? (p. 32)

Only the prospective immigrant should be able to purchase an immigration permit, and that purchase should be directly from the Australian government.

Allowing non-immigrants to purchase permits would foster corruption.

## Conclusion

For expansion on all aspects of the above responses, please visit our Reduce Immigration website: [www.reduceimmigration.wordpress.com](http://www.reduceimmigration.wordpress.com)