

MIGRANTS' ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION IN AUSTRALIA: 1990 TO 2004

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Since 1990, migrant Australians' attitudes to immigration have waned and waxed according to the same overall pattern as those of the Australia-born. However, migrants are consistently less likely to want a decrease in the intake and consistently (slightly) more likely to want an increase. This is particularly true of those born in non-English-speaking-background (NESB) countries. Even so, in 2004, only 26 per cent of NESB-born Australians wanted an increase in immigration.

Migrants are also likely to want an increase in immigration from their own region of origin. But the stand-out group here are the British. UK-born Australians are much more likely to want an increase in British immigration than are Asia-born Australians to want an increase in Asian immigration or Southern-Europe-born Australians to want an increase in Southern European immigration.

When we focus on regions within New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, the differences between the Australia-born and the NESB-born in their attitudes to immigration in general are marked. But in no instance do a majority of the NESB-born want an increase in immigration.

Two trends in Australians' attitudes to immigration are now clear. First, opposition to immigration was high in the early to mid-1990s but is now much lower. Second, whatever the general attitudes of Australians might be to the size of the intake, more educated people (especially people working in the social professions) are consistently more favourably disposed to high immigration than are less educated people.¹

But what about Australians who are themselves immigrants? What do migrants think about immigration? Some commentators assume that migrants themselves are staunch advocates of further immigration and that, as their numbers grow within the Western democracies, it will become politically impossible for any politician to argue for a lower migrant intake.²

This paper attempts to answer the question of what Australia's migrants think about immigration. It uses data drawn from two different sources: the Australian Election Studies (AES) (seven post-election surveys taken between 1990 and 2004, including one after the 1999 referendum)³ and the Australian Survey of

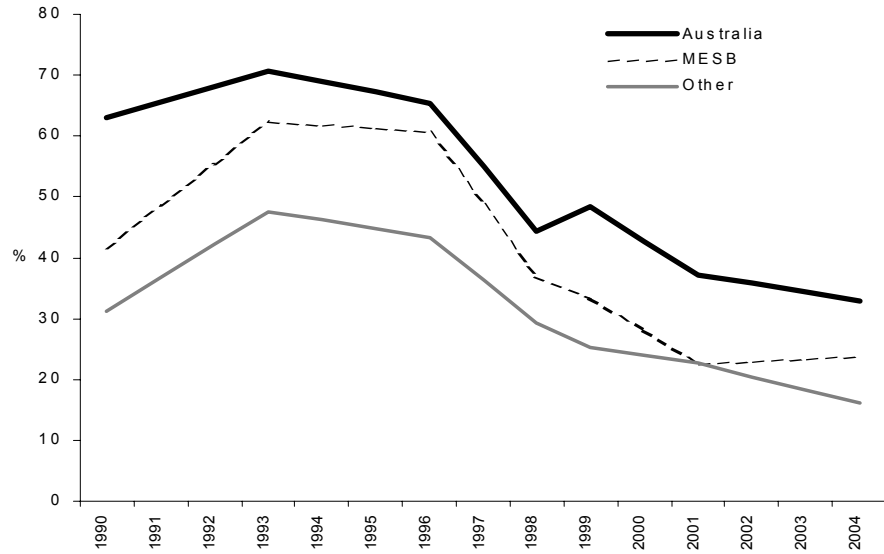
Social Attitudes (AuSSA) (a large survey taken in 2003). All of these eight surveys are based on mail-out questionnaires sent to random samples, and all are restricted to citizens who are on the electoral roll (see Appendix 1 for details).

CHANGING PATTERNS OF SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION BY BIRTHPLACE GROUP

Figures 1 and 2 are based on data from the AES series. Respondents were presented with the unfinished statement: 'The number of migrants allowed into Australia has...' and invited to circle one of five responses: gone much too far, gone too far, about right, not gone far enough, not gone nearly far enough. Those who circled 'gone much too far' or 'gone too far' can be taken as opposed to the then current levels of immigration. Those who circled 'not gone far enough' or 'not gone nearly far enough' can be taken as immigration supporters who wanted an increase in the intake.⁴

The two figures show respondents by birthplace groupings: the Australia-born,

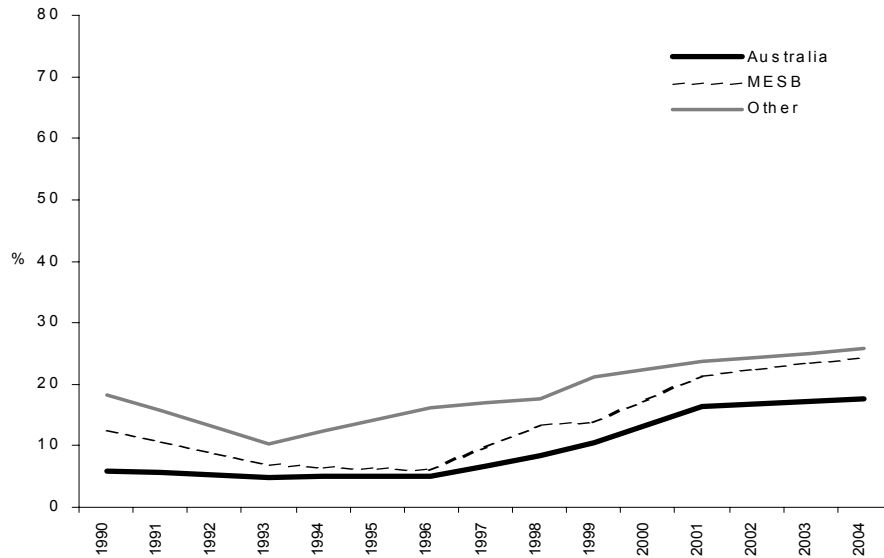
Figure 1: 'The number of migrants allowed into Australia at the present time has ... gone much too far or too far' by birthplace, 1990 to 2004, per cent



Sources: AES data files 1990 to 2004 listed in Appendix 1

Notes: MESB stands for main-English-speaking-background countries while Other refers to the remainder. All but a handful of Other-born respondents were born in non-English-speaking-background (NESB) countries.

Figure 2: 'The number of migrants allowed into Australia at the present time has ... not gone far enough or nearly far enough' by birthplace, per cent



Sources and notes: See Figure 1.

people born in the main-English-speaking-background countries (MESB—the UK, New Zealand and Ireland), and people born in Other countries (almost of all which are non-English-speaking-background—NESB).⁵ The figures show that opposition to immigration was high among all three birthplace groups in the early and mid 1990s. In 1993 opposition was running at just over 70 per cent for the Australia-born and just under 50 per cent for people born in Other (or NESB) countries. But by 2004 this opposition had eased considerably amongst all birthplace groups.

Figure 2 shows similar data for active supporters of immigration, those who would prefer an increase. Their numbers were small in the early and mid 1990s. Indeed they did not reach double figures for the Australian-born until 1999. But by 2004, the proportions in all birthplace groupings who favoured an increase had risen. However, even among the most enthusiastic birthplace group, the Other-born, it only stood at 26 per cent.

The popular perception that migrants from NESB countries are more in favour of immigration than are the Australia-born does have a basis in reality. Nevertheless, in 2004, even among this set of voters, only 26 per cent would have liked an increase (compared with 15 per cent of Australia-born voters).

The numbers of Other-born migrants in the AES surveys (and the numbers of MESB-born migrants) are rather small. In the seven surveys illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 the mean total sample size was 2274, and the mean size of the sub-sample born in Other countries was 229.⁶ Nonetheless, despite the small size of these sub-samples the difference between them and the Australia-born as far as attitudes to immigration are concerned are statistically significant. For example, in

2004, 33.0 per cent of the 1326 Australia-born respondents thought the immigration intake had 'gone too far or much far' compared to 16.2 per cent of the 229 Other-born respondents. This difference is significant at the 0.01 level.⁷ In 2004, 17.6 per cent of Australia-born respondents thought the immigration intake had 'not gone far enough or nearly far enough' while 25.8 per cent of the Other-born were of that opinion. This difference is significant at the 0.05 level.⁸

Though NESB Australians are more likely to favour an increase in the migrant intake than are the Australia-born, 74 per cent of them do not favour such an increase. Preference for a larger intake is a minority view, even among immigrant minorities.

TYPE OF IMMIGRANTS PREFERRED

What about the type of immigrant that voters prefer? Commentators often assume that NESB immigrants favour family-reunion migration, and so they do, if they are compared with the other two birthplace groupings. The 2001 AES asked a number of questions about the type of immigrants that Australia should recruit. (Unfortunately most of these questions were not repeated in 2004.) Table 1 shows that Other-born migrants are much more likely to want an increase in family-reunion migration than are MESB- or Australia-born voters (though even here, just under 50 per cent of Other-born voters do not say that they want such an increase). But when we compare Table 1 with Table 2 on attitudes to skilled migration it is clear that, though Other-born migrants are more likely to favour increased family-reunion migration than are the rest of the electorate, they are even more likely to support skilled migration. Fifty-one per cent of Other-born

Table 1: (2001 AES) ‘Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who have relatives in Australia?’ by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	30.1	38.7	51.4	33.8
Stay about the same	50.6	45.7	33.1	47.3
Accept some less or a lot less	16.4	9.7	9.1	14.7
Missing	2.9	5.9	6.4	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1496	186	296	2010

For sources and notes to Tables 1 to 10 see Figure 1.

Australians want an increase in family reunion, but 64 per cent of them want an increase in skilled immigration.

Table 3 also shows that a majority of Other-born (and MESB-born) Australians were opposed to accepting boatpeople in 2001. Unlike the questions set out in Tables 1 to 2, the question on boatpeople was repeated in 2004. Despite the fact that no boats of any size had arrived in the preceding three years, Table 4 shows that, in 2004, around half the respondents in all birthplace categories still wanted to turn all such boats back.

The question on boatpeople does not, of course, tap attitudes towards humanitarian migration in general—there is no such question in any of the AES surveys (or in the 2003 AuSSA survey). Nonetheless, Tables 1 to 4 confirm an established hierarchy. If asked to rank the three main categories of Australia’s immigration program—skilled migration, family reunion, and humanitarian migration—most people put skilled migration first, followed by family

reunion, followed by humanitarian migration.⁹

What about immigration from particular regions? In recent years there has been debate about Asian immigration and, more latterly, about Muslim immigration. The 2001 AES does include questions on preferences for migrants from particularly areas and, while it does not ask about attitudes to Muslim immigration, it does ask about attitudes to immigration from the Middle East.

In 2001, 18 per cent of respondents wanted an increase in immigration in general (that is, 18 per cent said the overall numbers coming in had ‘not gone far enough or nearly far enough’) and 34 per cent wanted a decrease (saying that the numbers had ‘gone too far or much too far’). Table 5 shows that attitudes to immigration from Asia did not deviate from this general pattern to any marked extent.

But it is a different matter when we look at attitudes to immigration from the Middle East (see Table 6). Here, in 2001, around half of all respondents wanted

Table 2: (2001 AES) ‘Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who have a skilled trade?’ by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	47.7	62.9	64.2	51.1
Stay about the same	37.6	28.5	25.3	34.8
Accept some less or a lot less	11.2	3.8	4.1	9.6
Missing	3.4	4.8	6.4	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1496	186	296	2010

Table 3: (2001 AES) 'All boats carrying asylum-seekers should be turned back' by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Strongly agree and agree	63.1	57.0	52.7	60.9
Neither agree nor disagree	16.4	18.8	22.6	17.5
Disagree and strongly disagree	19.4	22.6	19.9	19.5
Missing	1.1	1.6	4.7	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1496	186	296	2010

Table 4: (2004 AES) 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Strongly agree and agree	53.3	56.8	47.6	52.7
Neither agree nor disagree	17.1	11.9	21.8	17.1
Disagree and strongly disagree	27.3	31.3	25.8	27.1
Missing	2.3	0.0	4.8	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1326	176	229	1769

Table 5: (2001 AES) 'Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who are Asian?' by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	11.4	12.9	15.5	12.0
Stay about the same	48.4	50.5	43.6	47.4
Accept some less or a lot less	36.7	30.6	32.8	35.6
Missing	3.5	5.9	8.1	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1496	186	296	2010

Table 6: (2001 AES) 'Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants from the Middle East?' by birthplace, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	8.8	14.5	11.8	9.7
Stay about the same	33.8	35.5	28.4	32.8
Accept some less or a lot less	54.3	45.2	53.4	53.2
Missing	3.1	4.8	6.4	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1496	186	296	2010

smaller numbers and the overall proportion wanting more was less than 10 per cent. While the question is about geographic origins not religion, it is possible that the difference in responses to Asian and Middle-Eastern immigration in 2001 was influenced by reservations about Islam.¹⁰

While Other-born Australians are more likely to support both family- reunion migration and skilled migration than are the Australia-born, they show limited enthusiasm for migrants from the Middle East. Here their response pattern is close to that of the Australian-born.

A PREFERENCE FOR ONE'S OWN KIND?

There are only 19 respondents in the 2001 AES who are from the Middle East (and North Africa) so it is not feasible to explore whether they themselves would prefer more or fewer of their compatriots to come to Australia. But it is possible to see whether the Asia-born want more Asian migrants, and whether the Southern-Europe-born want more migrants from Southern Europe, and whether the UK-born want more British migrants. We can answer these questions by using the extended birthplace codes in the AES file to separate Asia-born Australians from the larger category of all Other-born Australians, and then use the same approach to separate out the Southern-Europe-born and to separate the UK-born from the MESB-born.

Table 7 shows that Asia-born Australians are more than twice likely to say that we should accept more Asian migrants than is the sample as a whole and very much less likely to say that we should accept fewer. Despite the relatively small number of Asia-born respondents these differences are large enough to be statistically significant. The difference

between them and the sample as a whole on 'accept a lot more or some more' is significant at the 0.05 level (as is the difference between them and the Australia-born, and between them and people born in Other countries, minus Asia). The difference between the Asia-born and the sample as a whole on 'accept some less or a lot less' is significant at the 0.01 level, as is the difference between them and *all* of the other sub groups in the sample. Asian Australian's opposition to any targeted reduction in Asian immigration is therefore a strong finding.

Table 8 tells a similar story, except that Australians born in Southern Europe are more likely to want to give preference to their compatriots than are Australians who were born in Asia. However, the remaining birthplace groups are much less opposed to Southern European migration than they are to Asian migration and, while the differences between Southern Europeans and the total, and between them and most sub-groups, are statistically significant, this significance is only at the 0.05 level.

But what of UK-born Australians? Do they too prefer their own kind? Table 9 shows not only that they do, but they do so more strongly than Asian Australians prefer Asian migrants or than Southern-European Australians prefer Southern-European migrants.

The differences between the UK-born and the sample as a whole, and between them and the other subgroups (except the small residual group of MESB minus the UK) on both 'accept more' and 'accept less' are all significant at the 0.01 level. Thus UK-born Australians' preference for British migrants is a strong finding.

There are at least two explanations for the desire that migrant groups express for the Australian Government to recruit more of their compatriots. The first

Table 7: (2001 AES) 'Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who are Asian?' by birthplace, showing Asia, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other, minus Asia	Asia	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	11.4	13.3	10.7	25.8	12.0
Stay about the same	48.4	50.5	36.2	58.4	47.4
Accept some less or a lot less	36.7	30.6	43.4	10.1	35.6
Missing	3.5	5.6	9.7	5.6	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1497	196	196	89	2010

Note: Tables 7 to 9 used the extended birthplace codes in the 2001 AES file in order to identify the birthplace groups. Consequently the sub totals for MESB-born and Other-born differ slightly from those in the earlier tables.

Table 8: (2001 AES) 'Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who are Southern European' by birthplace, showing Southern Europe, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other, minus Southern Europe	Southern Europe	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	16.8	24.0	14.1	33.3	17.8
Stay about the same	63.1	60.2	61.1	52.9	61.6
Accept some less or a lot less	16.3	10.7	17.7	5.7	15.4
Missing	3.9	5.1	7.1	8.0	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1497	196	198	87	2010

Table 9: (2001 AES) 'Do you think the Government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants: migrants who are British?' by birthplace, showing the UK, per cent

	Australia	MESB minus the UK	Other	UK	Total
Accept a lot more or some more	26.7	25.0	21.8	48.8	27.5
Stay about the same	56.2	65.6	53.0	43.3	54.5
Accept some less or a lot less	14.3	6.3	18.2	4.3	13.9
Missing	2.9	3.1	7.0	3.7	4.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1497	32	285	164	2010

Table 10: (2004 AES) 'It is more important for new migrants to learn what it is to be Australian than to cling to their old ways' by birthplace, education and occupation, per cent

	Australia	MESB	Other	University graduates	Social professionals	Total
Strongly agree and agree	58.1	62.5	60.3	38.2	40.1	58.4
Neither agree nor disagree	23.1	24.4	22.3	29.1	32.1	23.0
Disagree and strongly disagree	17.0	11.4	15.3	31.6	27.2	16.1
Missing	1.7	1.7	2.2	1.0	0.6	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	1326	176	229	395	162	1769

Note: Social professionals are defined according to the *Australian Standard of Classification of Occupations*, Cat. no. 1220.0, ABS, Canberra, 1997

concerns interests. Possibly they actually do have relatives and friends overseas whom they would like to have join them in Australia. But as Birrell pointed out some years ago,¹¹ it is also possible that, when they are expressing preferences of this nature, they are responding to the symbolism of the immigration program. If the Government is recruiting more people from their own ethnic group this is a sign that they themselves are respected and valued. If on the other hand, the Government seems to be discriminating against their compatriots this devalues their own status within the Australian community. (There is, of course, a third possible reason for some ethnic community leaders to argue for the recruitment of their compatriots and that is to build up the demographic base of their community in Australia. However, such a motive is unlikely to show up in a large survey of the kind explored here.)

Given the long-term lack of interest in migration from Southern Europe the second explanation is a likely one, as far as the data in Table 8 are concerned. But what of the British? Throughout the 30 years of the Australian experiment with multiculturalism the British have not been valued as an ethnic group. They have also witnessed the immigration program turn away from an overt interest in the recruitment of Britons to an ostensibly even-handed approach that some of them may have felt to be unfair. For example, the emphasis on family reunion in the 1980s and early 1990s usually told against the British with their absence of strong ties to extended families. In the late 1960s net permanent and long-term migration from Britain (and Ireland) was running at around 60,000 per annum, or 52 per cent of total net permanent and long-term migration. By the early years of this century (2000 to 2002) it had fallen to

around 16,000 per annum, or 12 per cent of the total.¹²

Ethnic spokespeople from NESB groups have been active in pointing to their constituents' interest in immigration and the hurt done to them when these interests have been overlooked. Some politicians have been eager to respond to these claims, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s.¹³ But no one has spoken for British Australians in this matter, despite the fact that their professed desire for more of their compatriots is stronger than that of any other major grouping of overseas-born Australians.

ATTITUDES TO MULTICULTURALISM

What then of multiculturalism? Is it the case the NESB immigrant voters are more in favour of it than are the Australia-born? Table 10 draws on data from the 2004 AES. It shows that, if support for multiculturalism means opposition to migrants integrating into Australia and support for their retaining their culture of origin (clinging 'to their old ways'), few immigrants, either of NESB or MESB origin support it. Indeed they are slightly more opposed to it than are Australia-born Australians. The strongest centres of support are to be found, not among migrants themselves, but among university graduates and social professionals.¹⁴ Table 10 shows that graduates are more than twice as likely to reject the idea of integration for NESB migrants than are such migrants themselves.

LOCATION AND MIGRANTS' ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

The numbers of respondents in the AES surveys are too small to allow us to consider them by both location (inner Sydney, outer Sydney and so on) and birthplace. However, in 2003 a group of scholars

centred at the Australian National University's Social Science Data Archives conducted a larger study of Australian attitudes to a range of social questions, drawing on a sample of over 4200 respondents (the AuSSA study).

This too asked a question on immigration: 'Do you think the number of immigrants to Australia nowadays should be...increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, reduced a lot, can't say'. Responses to this question by birthplace are set out in Table 11 together with those from the 2001 AES and the 2004 AES. The 2003 AuSSA question is different from the one used in the AES surveys but its meaning is similar. However, Table 11 shows that the responses to it were rather more polarised than were responses to the AES question. Whether this is an artifact of the wording of the questions or whether the differences reflect changes in public attitudes between the three data collection periods is uncertain.¹⁵

Table 12 shows that, despite the rather more polarised pattern of responses to the 2003 AuSSA question, when we consider these responses by birthplace, they echo the patterns illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Migrants, both from English-

speaking-background countries and from Other countries, are more in favour of an increased intake and less likely to want a decrease than are the Australia-born.

The larger total numbers in the 2003 sample mean that it is feasible to see whether these patterns differ by location. Here the analysis will be restricted to New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, as these are the states with the largest overall numbers of migrants and thus are more likely to produce statistically significant results. They are also the states where the political effects of ethnic concentrations are most pronounced and where any tendency for immigrant Australians to shape their vote according to immigration policies might be most strongly felt.¹⁶ For simplicity's sake, Table 13 focuses just on Australian-born voters and Other-born voters.

Table 13 shows a clear difference between the Australia-born and the Other-born. In all locations the Other-born are less likely to want a smaller intake and more likely to want a larger one than are the Australia-born. Despite the small numbers of Other-born respondents, this difference is sufficiently

Table 11: Comparing the 2001 and 2004 AES questions with the 2003 AuSSA question, by birthplace, per cent

Want fewer migrants	Australia	MESB	Other	Total
2001	37.2	22.6	22.6	33.5
2003	40.6	29.2	24.2	37.0
2004	33.0	23.9	16.2	29.7
Want more migrants				
2001	16.4	21.5	23.6	17.9
2003	21.0	29.8	36.0	23.9
2004	17.6	24.4	25.8	19.2

Sources: See Appendix 1 for information on the 2003 AuSSA survey

Note: The question in 2001 and 2004 was: 'The number of migrants allowed into Australia has.....' gone much too far, gone too far, about right, not gone far enough, not gone nearly far enough. Those who said 'gone too far or much too far' are shown as wanting fewer migrants and those who said 'not gone far enough or nearly far enough' as wanting more. The question in 2003 was: 'Do you think the number of immigrants to Australia nowadays should be.....increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, reduced a little, can't say'. Respondents who said 'reduced a little' or 'reduced a lot' are shown as wanting fewer migrants while those who said 'increased a little' or 'increased a lot' are shown as wanting more.

Table 12: (2003 AuSSA) ‘Do you think the number of immigrants to Australia nowadays should be.....’ by birthplace, per cent

	Australian born	MESB born	Other born	Total
Increased a lot or increased a little	21.0	29.8	36.0	23.9
Remain the same as it is	33.0	35.8	31.5	33.2
Reduced a little or reduced a lot	40.6	29.2	24.2	37.0
Can't choose	5.3	5.2	8.3	5.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	3064	439	578	4233

Source: See AuSSA details in Appendix 1. Note: This table excludes missing values

Table 13: (2003 AuSSA) ‘Do you think the number of immigrants to Australia nowadays should be.....’ by birthplace and location, NSW and Victoria, per cent

	Reduced a little or reduced a lot	Remain the same as it is	Increased a lot or increased a little	Can't choose	Total	Total N
New South Wales						
<i>Inner Sydney</i>						
Austn-born	*44.7	33.6	*18.0	3.7	100.0	217
Other-born	*25.5	27.6	*39.8	7.1	100.0	98
<i>Outer Sydney</i>						
Austn-born	**52.9	28.0	16.4	2.7	100.0	329
Other-born	**23.0	41.9	27.0	8.1	100.0	74
<i>Other NSW</i>						
Austn-born	51.9	28.6	15.3	4.2	100.0	472
Other-born	42.9	24.5	24.5	8.2	100.0	49
Victoria						
<i>Inner Melbourne</i>						
Austn-born	19.7	35.9	40.4	4.0	100.0	198
Other-born	16.5	27.1	48.2	8.2	100.0	85
<i>Outer Melbourne</i>						
Austn-born	*37.4	36.1	*20.3	6.1	100.0	310
Other-born	*17.7	29.0	*40.3	12.9	100.0	62
<i>Other Victoria</i>						
Austn-born	*41.9	34.5	18.0	5.6	100.0	284
Other-born	*17.5	32.5	35.0	15.0	100.0	40

Source: See Appendix 1.

Note: This table excludes missing values. The Other-born are almost all NESB-born.

strong in inner and outer Sydney and in outer Melbourne and non-metropolitan Victoria to be statistically significant at either the 0.05 level or the 0.01 level.

Overall the preference for a smaller intake is particularly marked among Australia-born voters in all regions of NSW. It is also strong among Australia-born voters in Victoria, with the exception of inner Melbourne. But despite the fact that NESB-born

Australians in all regions of NSW and Victoria are more in favour of increased immigration than are Australia-born Australians, in no case do a majority of NESB migrants support such an increase.

CONCLUSION

If Australian politicians were to argue for lower immigration they would not meet with an ethnic backlash. In 2004 only 26 per cent of NESB-born Australians wanted

an increase in the migrant intake (and 24 per cent of MESB-born Australians). When we look at specific groups of immigrants (such as Asians, Southern Europeans and Britons) they do tend to show a relative preference for the recruitment of more of their compatriots, but this preference is not overwhelming. The group which expresses the strongest

preference for ethnic-specific recruitment of their own kind are the UK-born. But they have endured the frustration of their preferences with equanimity for many years. We have no reason to suppose that groups of immigrant Australians with weaker preferences would be any less stoic.

Appendix 1

The Australian Election Study (AES) surveys	Sample details
1990: McAllister, Ian et al. Australian election study, 1990 [computer file]. Principal investigators Ian McAllister, Roger Jones, Elim Papadakis, David Gow. Canberra: Roger Jones, Social Science Data Archives, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University [producer], 1990. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University [distributor], 1990.	N = 2037, response rate 58.5% (based on 3482 mailouts that were in scope)
1993: Jones, Roger et al. Australian Election Study, 1993 [computer file]. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University, 1993.	N = 3023, response rate 62.8% (based on 4813 mailouts that were in scope)
1996: Australian Election Study, 1996 [computer file] / Principal investigators Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Gow. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University [distributor], 1996.	N = 1795, response rate 61.8% (based on 2905 mailouts that were in scope)
1998: Bean, Clive et al. Australian Election Study, 1998 [computer file]. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University, 1998.	N = 1897, response rate 57.7% (based on 3289 mailouts that were in scope)
1999: Australian Constitutional Referendum Study, 1999 [computer file] / Principal investigators David John Gow, Clive Bean and Ian McAllister. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University [distributor], 2000	N = 3431, response rate 58.8% (based on 5821 mailouts that were in scope)
2001: Australian Election Study, 2001 [computer file] / Principal Investigators Clive Bean, David Gow and Ian McAllister. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University [distributor], 2002.	N = 2010, response rate 55.4% (based on 3631 mailouts that were in scope)
2004: Bean, C. et al., Australian Election Study, 2004, [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 2005.	N = 1769, response rate 44.5% (based on 3975 mailouts that were in scope)
The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA), 2003	
2003: Gibson, R. et al. The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 2003. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 2004.	N = 4270, response rate 43.7% (based on 9777 mailouts that were in scope)

All of the files were obtained from the Australian Social Science Data Archives (ASSDA) at the Australian National University: <http://assda.anu.edu.au>
The authors of these files bear no responsibility for my interpretation of their data.

References

- ¹ See M. Goot, 'More "relaxed and comfortable": public opinion on immigration under Howard', *People and Place*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2000, pp. 46-60; K. Betts, 'Immigration and public opinion: understanding the shift', *People and Place*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2002, pp. 24-37; K. Betts, 'Cosmopolitans and patriots: Australia's cultural divide and attitudes to immigration', *People and Place*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2005, pp. 29-40.
- ² See for example, D. G. Papademetriou, 'Managing rapid and deep change in the newest age of migration', in S. Spencer (Ed.), *The Politics of Migration: Managing Opportunity, Conflict and Change*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2003, pp. 47-8.
- ³ The first AES study was conducted in 1987. However, the question on attitudes to immigration was not asked until 1990.
- ⁴ Proportions saying the numbers were 'about right' ranged from 33 per cent in 1990 to 47 per cent in 2004; proportions who did answer the question ranged between two and four per cent.
- ⁵ For data on the sample as a whole, see Betts, 2005, op. cit., pp. 29-40. Almost all of the respondents grouped as *Other* in the present article are in fact NESB-born. However, in some instances a handful of North Americans or English-speaking-background South Africans may be included.
- ⁶ For an overview of sample size by year, see Appendix 1.
- ⁷ This means that there is less than a one in a hundred chance of the difference between the two groups being the result of sampling error (a freak sample) instead of representing a real difference in the broader population of all voters.
- ⁸ This means that there is less than a five in a hundred chance of the difference between the two groups being the result of sampling error instead of representing a real difference in the broader population of all voters.
- ⁹ See 1981 data from Irving Saulwick quoted in K. Betts, *The Great Divide: Immigration Politics in Australia*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1999, pp. 119-120.
- ¹⁰ Such reservations are high in other Western countries with significant levels of Muslim immigration. See for example, M. Champion, 'Religion in Europe: A test to multiculturalism — disapproval of Muslims tops 70% in some countries, survey says', *The Wall Street Journal*, 2004, 10 December, p. A3.
- ¹¹ R. Birrell, 'A new era in Australia's immigration policy', *International Migration Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1984, pp. 65-84
- ¹² See K. Betts, 'Birthplace origins of Australia's immigrants', *People and Place*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2003, pp. 37-42.
- ¹³ See Betts, 1999, op. cit., pp. 237-249, 275-276, 309-311.
- ¹⁴ This is consistent with research done in 1994 by Irving Saulwick and associates which also found more support for structural multiculturalism among university graduates than among immigrants themselves. See data quoted in *ibid.*, p. 130.
- ¹⁵ The difference between the totals wanting fewer migrants in 2001 and 2003 are statistically significant and could therefore be due to sampling error. However, the difference between those wanting fewer migrants in 2003 and 2004 is significant at the 0.01 level. The differences between the totals for those wanting more migrants in 2001, 2003 and 2004 are all significant at the 0.01 level and so are unlikely to be due to sampling error.
- ¹⁶ See B. Birrell, E. Healy and L. Allan, 'Labor's shrinking constituency', *People and Place*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2005, pp. 50-67.