

Issues relating to Migrants and Immigration

This resource is from the *Racism No Way!* website located at <http://www.racismnoway.com.au>

Issue 1: Does Immigration lead to higher unemployment?

- 1) Research clearly shows that immigration does not cause higher unemployment in the long term.
- 2) All migrants are consumers and this stimulates the economy and increases the demand for goods and services, which in turn creates more jobs.
- 3) In 1993 26.3% of Greek and Italian workers were self-employed or employing others.
- 4) In short, migrants create at least as many jobs as they take.

Issue 2: Does Immigration stimulate the economy?

- 1) Only 6.7% of the migrants arriving in Australia in 1998-99 were unskilled
- 2) Australia benefits from migrant skills and education without having to pay for it.
- 3) Surveys show that within 12 months of arrival
 - 56% of migrants were engaged in business employing an average of 5 staff
 - 52% had generated export earnings
 - 31% of those in business had turnover of over \$1 million
 - those migrants in business had transferred capital to Australia on average worth just under \$1 million each.
- 4) Immigration stimulates the economy through:
 - increased tax revenue
 - contribution of funds from overseas
 - participation in employment
 - bringing skills into the Australian workforce
 - increased consumption of food and household goods and services spending on housing

Issue 3: How healthy are migrants?

- 1) All migrants have to meet stringent health requirements
- 2) A waiver is only available in very close relationships, such as a wife or a child, and when the applicant does not pose a risk to public health or safety in Australia.
- 3) In general, migrants have better health than people born here because of the health criteria for selection as migrants and because people in poor health are less likely to have the ability or economic resources to migrate.
- 4) Migrants are less likely to bring disease to Australia than Australian residents returning from a trip overseas.

Issue 4: Are migrants living on social security?

- 1) Research into Australia's last three recessions shows that migrants are less reliant on social security than people born in Australia.
- 2) Migrants often do the jobs that the Australian born are reluctant to do
- 3) Migrants who are not sponsored by a family member or employer are expected to be able to support themselves and their families for at least their first two years in Australia.
- 4) All migrants are ineligible to receive social security benefits, including unemployment and sickness benefits and student allowances, for two years after becoming permanent residents

Issue 5: Do migrants want to become Australian citizens?

- 1) Migrants are generally grateful to have been accepted into Australia and endeavour to contribute to society.
- 2) The 1996 Census indicated that 67.8% of eligible migrants have become Australian citizens
- 3) The highest citizenship rates were among migrants from Greece (96.1%), Vietnam (88.5%), the former Yugoslavia (87.5)% and Italy (78.8%).
- 4) To qualify for Australian citizenship, a migrant must be of good character and reside permanently in Australia for at least two years.

Issue 6: How skilled are migrants?

- 1) Migrant workers arriving in Australia in 1998-99 brought the following skills
 - Professionals 30.9%
 - Trades persons 13.1%
 - Managers / administrators 10.6%
 - Associate professionals 8.1%
 - Semi skilled 16.1%
 - Unskilled 6.7%
- 2) 53% of the migrant population as a whole hold post-school qualifications, compared to 47% of those born in Australia
- 3) In 1996-97 more than 75% of migrants entering Australia had a high level of English

Issue 7: Do migrants commit more crime?

- 1) In 1991, the imprisonment rate for the Australian born population was 127.5 prisoners for every 100 000 people
- 2) For migrants the rate was 82 prisoners for every 100 000 people
- 3) All migrants must undergo character and police checks before gaining entry.
- 4) There is no evidence of a direct link between ethnicity and crime. Social and economic circumstances, however, are significant