



FACT SHEET 1: Migrant Workers in Frontline Care

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Migrants form a significant and growing portion of Australia's non-professional frontline care workforce. Frontline care workers make up the majority of the direct care workforce in Australia and provide personal care to young children, the elderly and people with a disability.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing and other ABS surveys² show the main demographic and employment characteristics of overseas-born workers in the three main frontline care occupations: child carers, aged and disability carers, and personal care assistants. These occupations are ranked as 'low-skilled' at Level 4 in the five-level Australian & New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).

Australia's migrant care workers are on average younger, less likely to be male and have a higher level of formal qualifications than their Australian born peers. They increasingly come from non-English speaking countries, with recent migrants more likely to arrive on temporary visas. The shifting composition of Australia's care workforce requires policymakers to ensure better integration of migration policies and employment strategies, and to address the potential vulnerability of newly arrived migrants working in these occupations.

Demographics

In 2016, 37.1% of Australia's 295,324 frontline care workers were born overseas

Gender

Care Workers Migration Pathways

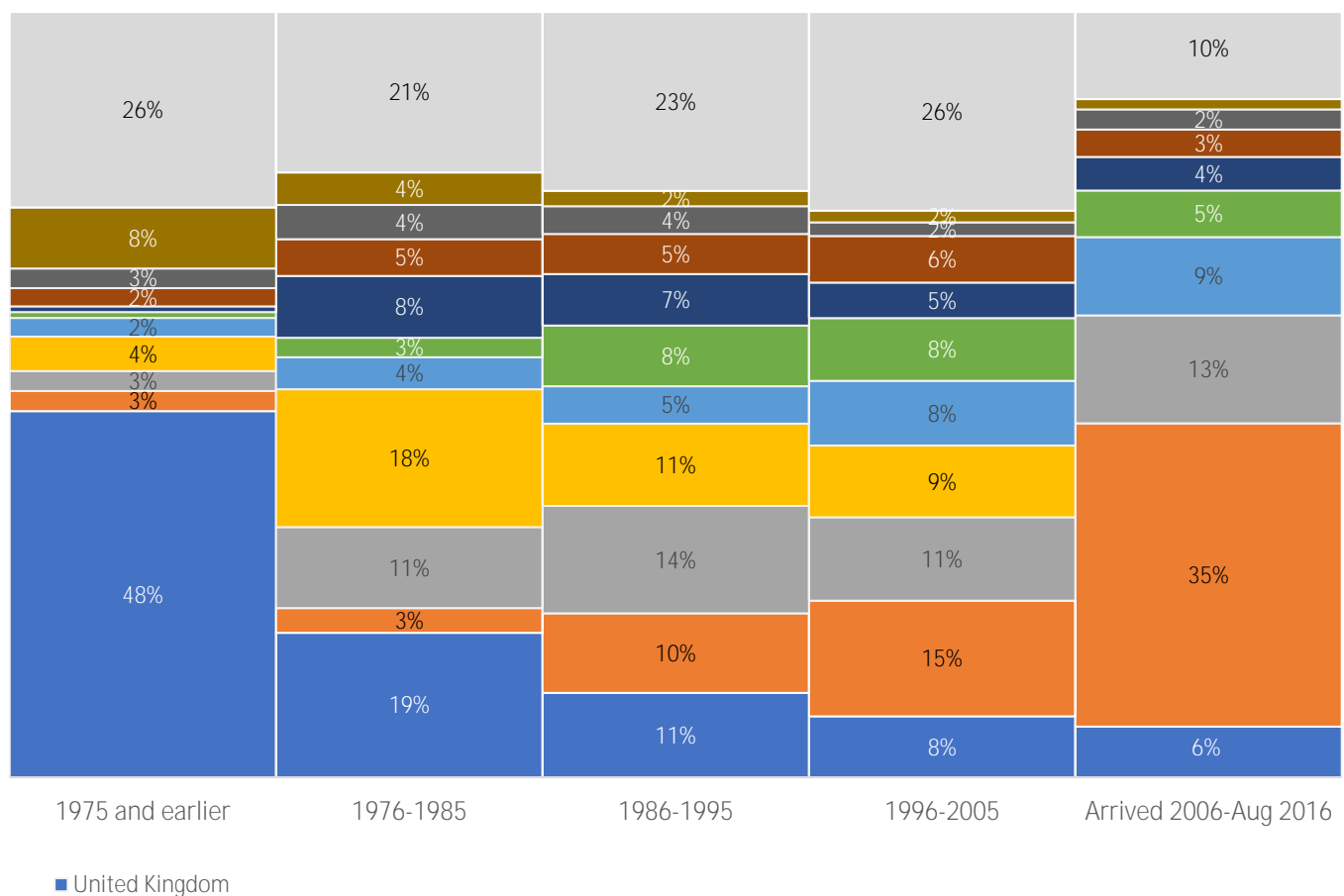
Migrant Care Workers from Non-Main English-Speaking Countries

The proportion of Australia's frontline care workers who come from non-main English-speaking countries³ has increased across all three care occupations between 2011-2016. As seen in Figure 5, the proportion of frontline carers born in non-main English-speaking countries is much higher than is the case for the total Australian workforce.

Region of Birth

There has been a distinct change in the composition of the overseas-born care workforce over time (Figure 6). There is a clear growth in the proportion of workers born in Southern Asia (mainly India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh), as well as a steady increase in the proportion of workers from Africa, and since 1976 stable inflows of workers from Maritime South-East Asia (mainly the Philippines). The proportion of care workers born in the United Kingdom and New Zealand have declined dramatically over time.

Figure 6: Overseas-born Frontline Care Workforce - Region of Birth by Year of Arrival, Census 2016



³ It is important to note that being from a non-main English-speaking country (non-MESC) does not imply a lack of proficiency in English.

Visa Pathways

The Census does not collect data on visas held by overseas-born workers. The Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ACMID)⁴ provides data from the 2011 Census and the Department of Social Services settlement database on visas held by *permanent* migrants who entered Australia between 2000 and 2011, as of the 2011 census date. There were three different types of visa holders: humanitarian, family reunification and skilled. Figure 7, below, shows that most entrants arrived as family and skilled visa holders. The annual proportion of those who held humanitarian and family visas decreased over time, whereas those who held skilled visas increased. However, this trend appeared to reverse as of 2009, which may reflect the stricter migration criteria for permanent skilled visa holders after this time.

Permanent or Temporary?

The Characteristics of Recent Australian Migrants (CoRMs) survey 2016 is a labour force survey that provides information on migrants who arrived between 2006 and 2016 on both permanent and temporary visas.⁵