



Ethical Dilemma

Immigration Policy

Description	Immigration and economic policy: an exercise in critical thinking and addressing ethical issues.
Task Type	In-class activity, tutorial, assignment
Time	30 minutes-1 hour
Level	Appropriate as introductory, developmental or final level
Class Size	Small or large classes. Class needs to be divided into groups of 4-6 students
Learning Outcomes	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Demonstrate an understanding of the current basis of Australian immigration policy ✦ Analyse the criteria used to set the level of immigration ✦ Discuss the role of immigration policy in ensuring Australia's economic and environmental sustainability. ✦ Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues involved in setting the immigration quota
Method	<p>Students are asked to read the attached material and to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Should immigrants be chosen on the basis of economic or other criteria? ✦ What are the arguments for making the immigration quota a long term policy decision that does not alter with the business cycle? ✦ What are the arguments for allowing the immigration quota to change annually depending on the state of the business cycle (that is reducing immigration in a downturn and increasing it when the economy is growing)? ✦ What other factors should be taken into account in setting the annual immigration quota?

	<p>Students will be divided into groups of 4-6 and each group asked to consider these questions from the points of view of one of the following stakeholder groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✳ Australian workers ✳ Australian employers ✳ The Australian community as a whole ✳ Potential immigrants to Australia, including refugees <p>If time allows this can be turned into a jigsaw exercise where new groups of 4 are formed consisting of one member of each 'stakeholder' group. These groups then discuss the issues with each member representing the views of their stakeholder.</p>
Concluding Activity	<p>The exercise can be concluded in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✳ Asking each group to present a summary of the major points arising from their discussion. ✳ Holding a formal debate, probably in a subsequent class so the students have time to research further and to gather their thoughts, on the following topic: 'The immigration quota is a legitimate policy instrument to address short-term economic performance.' ✳ A written assignment addressing the debate topic.
Assessment	<p>Assessment activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✳ A debate ✳ Students could be assessed individually on a written report covering the question. The length would depend on the weight given to the assignment. Material covered in group discussions would form a basis for individual or group assignments.
Tips	<p>Students may require some additional guidance on ethical frameworks.</p>
Student Instructions	<p>Students need to read and actively consider the material provided. They will be expected to participate in small group discussion.</p>
Additional Material	<p>There are a range of textbooks available on Business Ethics. These include:</p> <p>DesJardins, J. and Duska, R. (1987) 'Drug testing in employment', <i>Business and Professional Ethics Journal</i>, 6. Reprinted in Beauchamp T. and Bowie, N. <i>Ethical Theory and Business</i> 6th edition, Prentice Hall, 2001</p> <p>Grace D. and Cohen S., <i>Business Ethics</i>, Oxford University Press, 2nd edition.</p> <p>Shaw, W. (2005) <i>Business Ethics</i>, Thomson, ch 7.</p> <p>Attached is a very short summary of Australia's immigration policy past and present with some relevant references along with a press article which highlights some of the areas of debate.</p>

Immigration Policy

Australia is a nation of immigrants. About a quarter of Australians were born overseas and over 40 per cent are first or second generation immigrants. This makes Australia one of the leading immigrant societies in the world. There has been however, since European settlement, a series of different selection processes designed to influence who should enter the country. Initially the British settlement was established for convicts but economic considerations soon came into play. As Jupp notes:

‘For 150 years Australian immigration policy has been dominated by economic considerations’ (2007:137).

The White Australia policy, established at Federation, was designed to reduce competition in the labour market from cheaper immigrant labour. After the Second World War there was a significant expansion of the immigrant program aimed to develop a strong economy that would be able to defend the country against the risk of invasion from more populous nations. The White Australia policy was retained during this period. Immigration policy was therefore designed to address the long term needs of the Australian economy and the Australian taxpayer subsidised immigrants to come to Australia. Immigrants had mainly come from the British Isles but after the Second World War, immigrants were encouraged from throughout Europe. There were 1,729,000 assisted migrants to Australia between 1951 and 1980 (Withers, 1989).

Immigrants were seen as a significant potential source of long term economic growth:

- ✦ Immigrant labour was important in major infrastructure projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme.
- ✦ Increased population added to aggregate demand in the economy (eg housing, consumer durables) and enabled Australian firms to reap the benefits of economies of scale in production.
- ✦ Immigrants added to the innovative capacities of the economy.
- ✦ Immigrants from the war-torn countries of Europe brought a significant pool of skilled workers into the country.

The source of immigrants started to change in the 1970s with the abolition of the White Australia policy but the United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand (NZ) were still the major sources of immigrants. Criteria for selection of immigrants remained focused on family reunion and humanitarian criteria.

Beginning in the early 1970s there were two major changes to the initial Post World War Two migration program with potential implications for the labour market. The first was in the source countries of immigrants. While immigrants from the UK remained the largest group of new arrivals, there was a shift from other European sources to Asia. In 1981, 40 per cent of new permanent arrivals came from the UK, NZ, the United States (US) and South Africa (SA) but by 2004 the share arriving from these countries had almost halved to 21 percent. In 2004 the second largest country of origin for Australian immigrants was China, with India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea also in the top ten (Productivity Commission 2006).

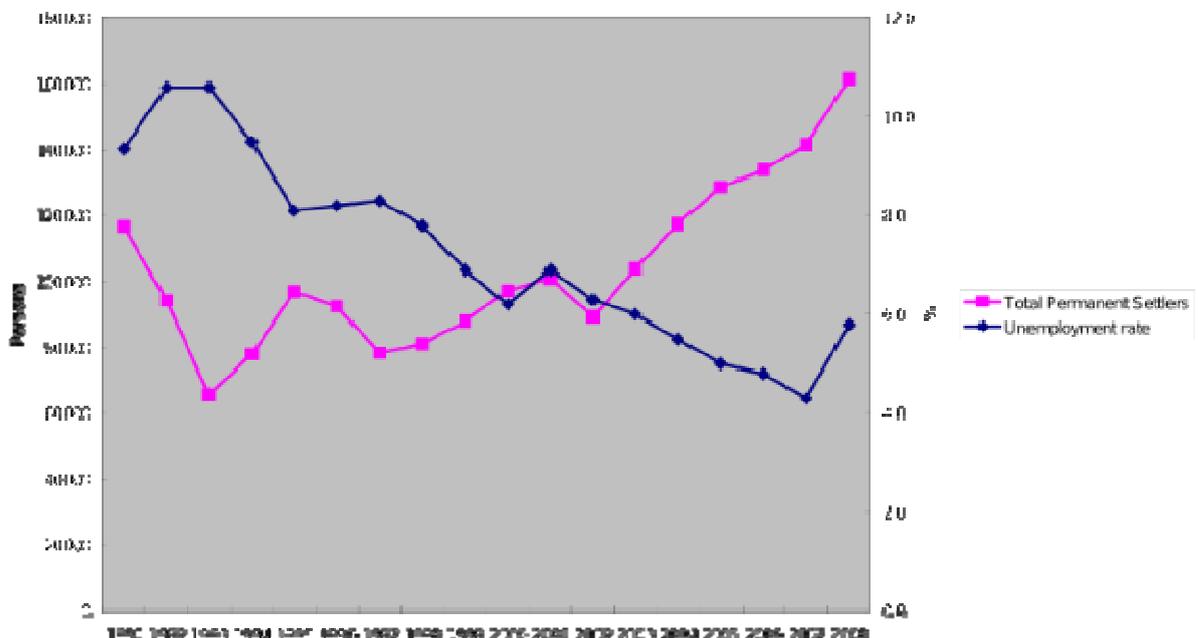
The second major change followed the introduction of the points system in the 1970s and the marked shift, beginning in the 1980s, in favour of skilled immigrants who were expected to

contribute to economic growth. In 1988-89 skilled visas were issued to about 38 percent of permanent migrants, the remaining were family reunion visas. By 2005 the position had been reversed with skilled visas accounting for about 70 percent of new entrants and family visas the remaining 30 percent (Productivity Commission 2006).

There was also an expansion of the temporary visa scheme (the “457 visas”) to enable employers to bring in skilled workers to meet the growing skill shortage beginning in the mid 1990s. Between 1996/97 and 2004/05, there was a 58 per cent increase in the number of temporary visas issued (temporary business entrants, overseas students and working holiday makers) to 670,000 visas, representing about 5.5 per cent of the workforce. Computer professionals, managers, registered nurses, business and information professionals and chefs were the main occupational groups entering under the Business Long Stay program (Productivity Commission 2006). The changing economic circumstances and increased uncertainty in 2008 has put pressure on the program and the government, against opposition from employer groups, announced a reduction in the number of temporary visas to be issued.

As the following graph shows, the number of permanent arrivals has varied inversely with the unemployment rate since the early 1990s. The Global Financial Crisis has prompted a further reduction in the number of permanent arrivals and the numbers entering on temporary visas. There has been a debate about whether it is appropriate to make these changes in response to short term changes in the state of the economy (see attached Canberra Times article).

Permanent Arrivals and the Unemployment Rate, Australia



References

Jupp, James (2007) *From White Australia to Woomera, The story of Australian immigration*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Productivity Commission (2006) *Migration and Population: Research Report*, Productivity Commission, Canberra. Available on the web at www.pc.gov.au

Withers, Glenn (1989) "The immigration contribution to human capital formation" In. David Pope and Lee Alston (eds) *Australia's Greatest Asset*. Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press.



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