

**CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION BETWEEN
MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA: TRANSNATIONAL
AND SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES**

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ABSTRACT

Australia hosts a large contingent of overseas Malaysians which has evolved from a number of waves of migration, particularly in recent years. The contemporary migration relationship between the two countries is complex involving movement in both directions, along with the transnational linkages which have generated wide research and policy interest, but little studied in the Malaysia – Australia context.

This study provides a deeper understanding of why Malaysians move to Australia, how well they settle in, and how they maintain links with Malaysia. It adopts a mixed-methods approach using quantitative and qualitative analysis drawing on data collected in an online survey of 1033 Malaysians living in Australia, and 30 interviews with survey respondents and key informants. The findings show that there are three categories of migrants: 1) student; 2) economically active age group; and 3) retirees. The first group is characterised by young, predominantly Malay students, whereas the second is mainly made up of Chinese holding skilled visas. The third group was dominated by females, predominantly Chinese and aged over 50 years. These migrants play a distinct role in their host country, and represent potential resources for their home country too. They are highly skilled, visit their home country frequently for business and leisure, and many retain a strong sense of connection and identification with the countries they move between. The return intentions vary significantly between the Malays and the other ethnic groups, with many intending to stay in Australia. The Malays were very positive about their overseas presence being beneficial to Malaysia, were more likely to return, and over a-quarter own a home and property there. The Chinese were more likely to stay and settle permanently in Australia.

A smaller survey of 134 Australians in Malaysia provide an interesting insight into factors contributing to patterns of movement between Australia and Malaysia. Most were in the economically active age groups, on work contracts, and also most likely to return to Australia. Through a better understanding of these migrants, their migration decisions and potential contribution to Malaysia, it is possible to examine the reciprocal migration flows between Australia and Malaysia.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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"It always seems impossible until it's done." - Nelson Mandela

ABBREVIATIONS

AANZFTA	ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Advance	Advance – Australia’s Global Community
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AiM	Australians in Malaysia (Australian diaspora survey)
AMBC	Australia Malaysia Business Council
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
AUD	Australian Dollar
BGP	Brain Gain Programme
CBU	Complete Built Up
CISA	Certified Information System Auditor
CISM	Certified Information Security Manager
CKD	Complete Knocked Down
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
DIFD	Department for International Development
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DOS	Department of Statistics
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
HTA	Hometown Associations
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

KEA	New Zealand's Global Network
MABC	Malaysia Australia Business Council
MADS	Malaysian Australian Diaspora Survey
MAFTA	Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement
MANZA	Malaysian Australian New Zealand Association
MEM	Malaysia Economic Monitor
MiA	Malaysians in Australia (Malaysian diaspora survey)
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MOIA	Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs
MOSTI	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MM2H	Malaysia My Second Home
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
MSA	Malaysia Students Association
MSO	Malaysian Students Organisation
NEAC	National Economic Advisory Council
NELM	New economics of labour migration
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
NEP	New Economic Policy
NILS	National Institute of Labour Studies
NKEAs	National Key Economic Areas
NRI s	Non Resident Indians
OAD	Overseas Arrivals and Departures
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMM	One Million More Census of Australians Abroad
PIO s	Persons of Indian Origin
REP	Returning Experts Programme
SAHM	Stay-at-home-mum
SMS	Short Message Service

SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TalentCorp	Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America