

A Policy Agenda for Migration and Development in Australia

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Migration Council
AUSTRALIA





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Executive Summary

Over 50 per cent of lifetime income is determined by one factor: the country we live in (Milanovic 2012). When combined with the fact over 96 per cent of people live in the country they are born in, citizenship and the lottery of birth play a determinative role for earning capacity and well-being.

However migration also creates opportunities for origin and destination countries. In this sense, there is a triple win: for the migrant, for the origin and for the destination.

Migration barriers are one of the largest structural costs for the global economy. For example, if five per cent of those living in the developing world moved to developed countries, the economy gains would exceed the gains from removing all remaining trade and capital barriers (Clemens 2011).

While the global community spends significant political capital on negotiating these trade barriers, there is very little focus on migration barriers. Leadership on this important topic is critical, particularly in Australia's region.

On immigration, Australia is generally a global outlier. 28 per cent of Australians were born overseas, well above the OECD average. A generous migration framework has seen the Australian population expand from 7.3 million at the end of World War Two to over 23 million in 2015. This has brought people from all over the world, in some cases out of abject poverty.

But as a country, there are greater opportunities to help. For the past two decades, migration policy has prioritised those with skills or family already in Australia. As international students pay their own way, many are unable to migrate. Overall, this policy stance has been an economic boon for Australia and those migrants who have arrived. Due to this immigration policy framework, by 2050, migration will contribute \$1.6 trillion to our economy and see labour participation improve by 15 per cent.

Yet there exists an opportunity to do more for those less fortunate by the lottery of birth. Skilled migration is not available to many who live in poorer countries. Family migration is too expensive. While skilled and family migration will rightly remain the bedrock of Australia's immigration policy framework, the opportunity to be more inclusive of those isolated from increasing global mobility is important.

Migration is not zero-sum. There are opportunities where Australia, home countries and the migrants themselves can each benefit from the act of migration to Australia.

Our close neighbours in the Pacific are not economic powerhouses. They are sparsely populated, geographically isolated and lack natural resources. These factors lock Pacific countries out of the global environment, hurting trade links and labour mobility.

Australia has a responsibility to these countries, to help them and their citizens drive economic development. This is the rationale for much of our aid budget, seeking to prevent poverty in the Pacific. Migration is an opportunity that can complement domestic efforts in Pacific countries to reduce poverty and foster human development. But for emigration to occur, migrants need a place to go, to work and to thrive.

This short paper outlines a number of ways to increase Australia's commitment to Pacific development by migration.

- Removing the barriers preventing a larger Seasonal Worker Program
- New visa pathways for Pacific emigrants to Australia
- A formal target to reduce the cost of remittances

Each of these proposals would help migrants, their country of origin while making a small contribution to the Australian economy, a rare 'win-win-win'.

Australia is uniquely placed to do more for the Pacific through migration. We already have a sophisticated migration framework, a culturally diverse population and labour demand in poorly populated areas. History also says migration will not hurt local workers but create opportunities.

What is migration and development?

For much of human history, people have moved by choice to improve their lives. Four fundamental forces drive global movement:

- The gaps between high wage and low wage countries;
- Poverty constraints preventing movement out of poorer countries;
- The proportions of young adults in both destination and origin countries;
- The proportion of migrants already living in destination countries.

(Hatton and Williamson, 2002)

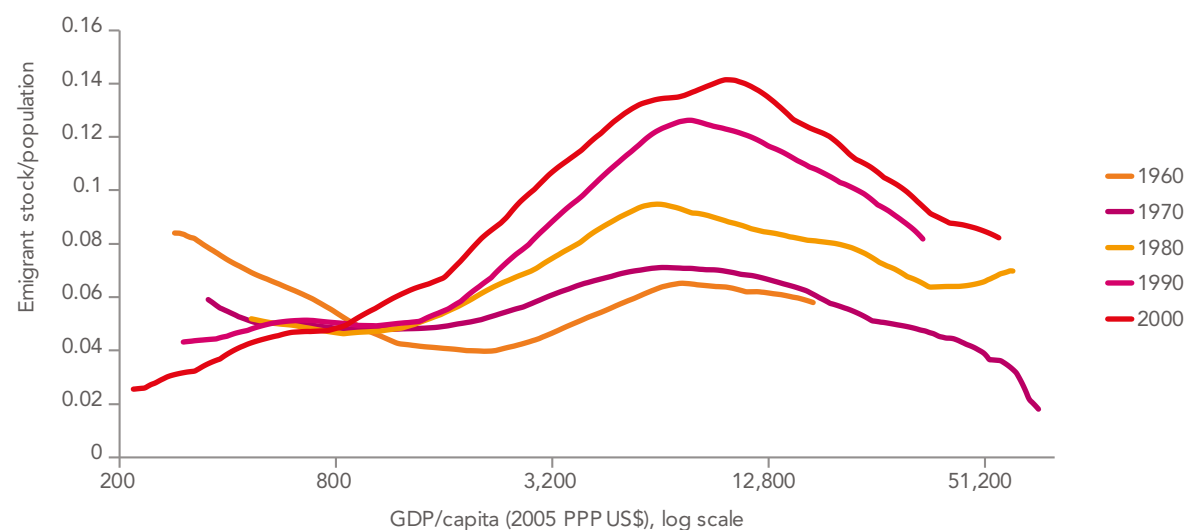
International migration and economic development are 'inextricably linked' because of these fundamental forces. When countries grow richer, economic resources facilitate movement. This occurs at first within countries where transaction costs and barriers are lower. As growth continues, opportunities to move internationally open up.

Recent emigrant stocks support this contention.

Figure 1, taken from a recent Michael Clemens working paper, shows a clear pattern.

Emigrant stocks increase as wealth grows and opportunities to finance movement arise.

FIGURE 1: EMIGRANT STOCKS IN CROSS-SECTION, WORLD BANK



(Clemens, 2014)

This peaks as growth continues and then declines over time, as people feel more comfortable within their country of origin.

Of course, the vast majority of people remain in their country of origin regardless of relative wealth between countries. Even at emigration peak outlined above, emigration stocks peaked at 14 per cent of the population for countries with a GDP per capita of around \$10,000 for the year 2000.

An important take away from this historical perspective is how traditional aid may in fact encourage migration. A common refrain heard from countries and multi-lateral institutions is how aid flows can improve developing countries, with the hope of limiting the attraction of migration. In fact, the very opposite is likely occurring, with aid facilitating more migration opportunities as countries grow.

Potential gains from migration

The World Bank estimates developing countries will receive \$440 billion in remittances in 2015. This is nearly three times larger than official aid flows and equal to the amount of private debt, which includes commercial lending.

In the Pacific, this is seen by the size of remittance flows. Remittances are equal to 23 per cent of Tongan GDP, 20 per cent of Samoan GDP, 5 per cent of Fijian GDP and 3 per cent of Vanuatu GDP.

Remittance income plays a crucial role in these economies. While some have criticised this type of income is used primarily on consumption such as food and shelter, surveys have shown a more nuanced outcome.

Remittances can support business investment, school attendance, housing and general consumption. Unlike official aid, remittance income typically flows direct from a migrant to her family or community directly.

Studies of migrants in Australia show some of these effects. Brown, Leeves and Prayaga (2012) surveyed a number of different migrant communities. Households received the lion's share of remittances (over 60 per cent for urban migrants in Sydney and over 70 per cent for regional migrants in the Riverina) however investment in assets was 17 per cent and 13 per cent respectively as well as contributions to the church, 16 per cent and 11 per cent. Interestingly, the longer migrants had lived and worked in Australia, the more they remitted. While this finding is countered by other survey work from New Zealand, it shows long-term outcomes are important.

TABLE 1

The sizes of these remittance flows are impressive:

Length of absence (years)	0 – 5	5 – 10	10 – 15	15 – 20	20 – 25	25 +
Mean Household remittance ('000\$)	5.21	7.15	6.39	6.44	7.46	8.09
Remittances as % of income	10.19	10.01	8.16	10.21	9.35	8.57

(Source: Brown, Leeves and Prayaga, 2012, Table 9)

Table 1 shows the average dollar figure remitted was ~\$5,200 for the first 5 years in Australia, rising to over \$8,000 per year for those who had been away for over 25 years. These remittance figures exceed typical annual household budgets in Tonga, demonstrating the massive disparity in earning capacity for people who live in Australia compared to those living in Tonga.

An emphasis on remittances tends to focus attention on countries, particularly the bilateral flows from one country to another. Another way to measure the potential gains from migration is to look at the migrants themselves. How much does a migrant stand to gain by moving?

Sticking with the Pacific, McKenzie, Gibson and Stillman estimate a 263 per cent increase in income for a Tongan who wins a place in the New Zealand visa lotto. The winners were all 18–45 years old and migrated through a specific visa category (the Pacific Access Category). This study compared migrants who won the lotto with those who didn't and those who did not even apply, accounting for potential selection bias.

Any process whereby a Tongan person can more than double their income must not be easily dismissed. The fact this occurs from migration should prompt policy makers and development professionals to better understand the large and substantial gains at stake. In Australia, similar income gains should be expected for migrants from Pacific countries.

Addressing 'brain drain'

A common refrain when discussing migration from poor countries is 'brain drain', the theft of human capital in developing countries by rich countries. Opponents of emigration from developing countries point to this as proof migration opportunities should be limited at best.

The head of research at the World Bank, David McKenzie and Michael Clemens outline why brain drain is pejorative term that should be treated with some scepticism:

- Poor countries do not possess a fixed number of workers and the opportunity to migrate can actually induce human capital. For example if qualifications present a barrier to migrating, more people can seek to gain qualifications.
- Those migrating from poor countries are often poor people themselves, not simply those at the very top of the skill tree.
- The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states a 'right to leave'. This norm should act to prevent nations from stopping the voluntary movement out of any country.

(McKenzie and Clemens, 2009)

Recent survey evidence also supports the rejection of the 'brain drain' hypothesis. David McKenzie and John Gibson, using a unique survey largely based in the Pacific, find:

- High levels of emigration and return migration amongst highly skilled workers. This shows how migration is not simply a one-directional flow of people but often circular and transitory.
- Large income gains to the best and brightest coupled with substantial rates of remittance sending, meaning even when skilled people do leave developing countries, they continue to contribute in the form of remitting income.

- Additional postgraduate education arising from emigration, creating opportunities that for the most part do not exist in many developing countries.
- A negligible involvement in trade and foreign direct investment. The stated potential for these effects is often greater than what is borne out in the research.

(McKenzie and Gibson, 2010)

For example, in Tonga, skilled emigrants remit more money than lower skilled migrants and show a strong tendency to return to Tonga. McKenzie and Gibson find by age 35, about a third of the 'best and brightest' in Tonga have returned home.

The term 'brain drain' conjures up highly negative, neo-colonial imagery. In fact, the movement of skilled people from developing countries to developed countries is much more likely to produce positive economic effects.

Potential negative effects on destination countries

An increasing concern in many high-income countries is whether migrants from developing countries push down wages and existing labour market conditions.

Australian public opinion is largely positive on the economic effects of migration. In an ANUPoll in early 2015, 83 per cent of respondents agreed immigrants were generally good for Australia's economy. Further, only 29 per cent of respondents agreed immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in Australia (ANUPoll, 2015).

However Australian migration has focused on carefully selecting skilled people for over two decades. The entire migration framework is geared towards prioritising skilled people over family, development or humanitarian considerations. This likely has had a strong effect on how the general public consider migration.

Increasing the opportunities to migrate from Pacific countries would look distinct from the current status quo. The average skill level would be significantly lower than current trends, meaning a different labour market impact.

Despite this, there is increasing evidence that lower skilled migration does not have large negative effects, especially in high wage countries. This evidence is drawn from multiple countries and situations.

Denmark

A rapid increase in low-skilled migrants to Denmark occurred in the mid-1990s owing to conflict in the Balkans. 40–50 per cent of these new migrants did not have post-secondary education. Examining the economic effects on lower skilled Danish workers, Peri and Foged find the migration flow 'generated an effective mechanism to produce upward wage and skill mobility', especially for younger workers, highlighting how new migrant workers — regardless of skill level — can act as complements within larger labour markets. This is particularly true for labour markets that are relatively flexible, such as Australia's.

Miami, United States

A massive one-off flow of Cuban emigrants in 1980 increased the labour market supply in Miami by 7 per cent. Despite this, David Card found almost no change in either the unemployment rate or wage level of existing Miami residents. Those who did experience some negative effects were predominantly previous migrants. This finding of very little impact from such a large labour shock was at first surprising given such a large one-off increase in lower skilled workers however this research has stood the test of time, remaining one of the most cited articles on the economics of migration.

Israel

In the five years after the Cold War ended, there was an exodus of Soviet Jews to Israel. Rachel Friedberg documents how a 12 per cent increase in labour supply caused by migrants actually increased the earnings for those already in the labour market by nearly 10 per cent. However a note of caution: Jewish migrants to Israel receive automatic citizenship, an uncommon factor that may shape economic effects.

North Carolina, United States

In the midst of the Global Financial Crisis, the number of unemployed people in a number of counties dominated by farming nearly doubled to 490,000. Yet Michael Clemens found this had zero effect on domestic employment opportunities in the farming labour market, pointing to the existence of distinct labour markets for migrants and domestic residents. Migrants were in positions that would have otherwise remained vacant.

These examples from across various high wage countries show it is unlikely there will be a negative effect on the Australian labour market from a small increase in Pacific migration to Australia. Previous migration of lower skilled workers — from the great waves of post-war migration to the large flow of Vietnamese in the 1980s — did not see large negative effects on existing Australian workers and residents.

There is no reason to suggest expanding the opportunity for Pacific migrants to Australia will create unemployment or drive down wages.

Current trends in Pacific migration to Australia

The opportunities for people living in Pacific countries to migrate to Australia are relatively slim. From 2001 to 2011, less than 6000 permanent visas were granted to citizens of those Pacific countries currently eligible for the Seasonal Worker Program:

TABLE 2

	Number of family migrants	Total number of migrants	Percentage of family migrants
PNG	1,341	2,907	46%
Samoa	352	428	82%
Tonga	888	1,029	86%
Tuvalu	0	7	0%
Nauru	55	76	73%
Timor-Leste	232	285	81%
Solomon Islands	246	404	61%
Vanuatu	152	170	89%
Kiribati	63	71	89%

(Source: ACMID, ABS, 2013)

Australia's skilled migration framework passively locks out many people living in the Pacific. This is not a deliberate act but must be recognised as part of the cost of Australia's migration framework.

Total visa grants for these nine countries is less than half of one per cent of all permanent visas granted in for this period.

This is not acceptable and provides the basis for examining improved pathways for additional migration from the Pacific to Australia.

Future Pacific migration policy options for Australia

Since the late 1980s, research has increasingly focused on the interaction of migration, mobility and labour markets, creating a large body of work to draw policy ideas on.

Importantly, given migration can evoke passionate responses, the Migration Council fundamentally agrees with Demetrius Papademetriou and Kathleen Newland, who write that a focus on “pragmatic ways to address the matters of greatest consensus is the most productive way forward” (Migration Policy Institute, 2014).

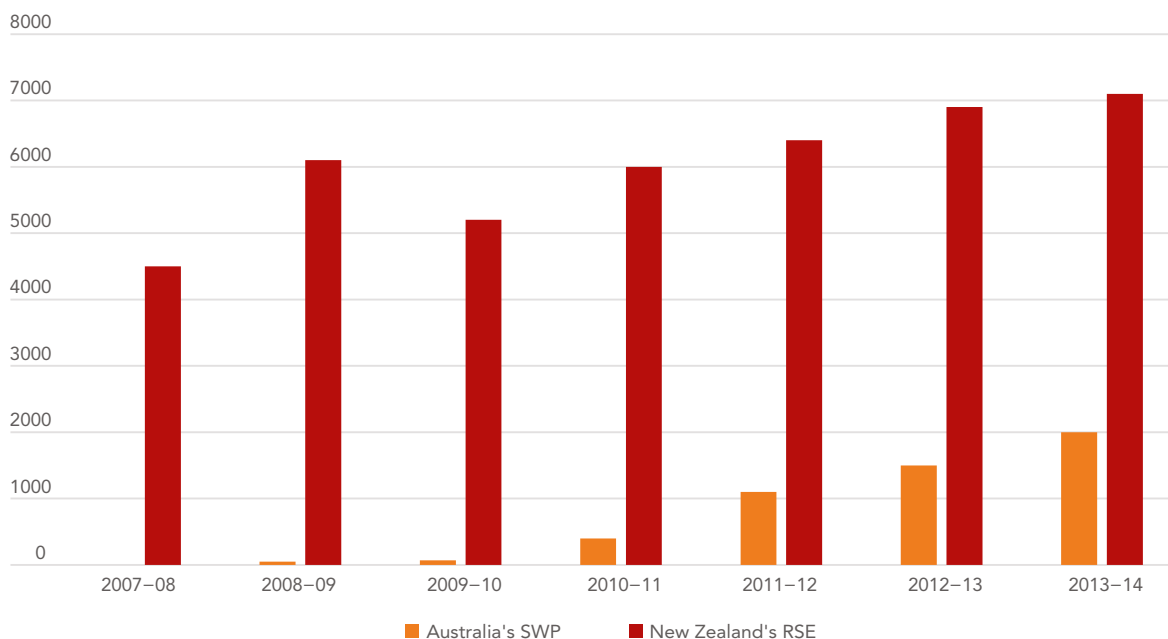
What follows are three broad themes where the possibility for pragmatic change can underpin an additional Australian contribution to Pacific development.

Removing the barriers preventing a larger Seasonal Worker Program

Australia has one migration program in place with an explicit focus on economic development in the Pacific.

The Seasonal Worker Program was introduced as a pilot by the Rudd government and formalised by the Gillard government. However the program has been beset by low usage, particularly when compared to the same program in New Zealand.

FIGURE 2: A COMPARISON OF AUSTRALIAN SWP AND NZ RSE WORKERS



(Development Policy Centre, 2015)

Since the start of both programs, Australia has consistently lagged behind New Zealand in terms of the number of migrants entering the labour market. However the Seasonal Worker Program has made good progress in more recent years. In 2014–15, over 2,800 visas were granted, the highest number on record.

Now is the right time to seize on this trend and seek for continued large year-on-year increases.

The policy success of New Zealand points the way for Australia.

Half of all first time Pacific workers return the following season, with the vast majority going back to the same employer. This has tremendous productivity gains for employers.

Looking at the big picture, policy makers need to examine the Seasonal Worker Program in the context of other migration pathways.

The Working Holiday program has saturated the horticultural labour market, rendering the demand for Pacific seasonal workers limited. This is despite Pacific migrants being much more productive.

A study by ABARES found "seasonal workers were, on average, significantly more efficient than WHMs. Of the seasonal workers, those who returned for another season were more efficient than new workers" (ABARES, 2013).

In New Zealand, the program has increased the employment of New Zealand permanent and seasonal workers by 19 and 16 per cent respectively (Department of Labour, 2015). By using Pacific migrants, horticultural employers have expanded their businesses to meet unmet demand. This has resulted in employment opportunities for local residents.

In Australia, these benefits are accruing already. In 2013–14, nearly half of all Pacific migrants were return workers, with over 400 on their third (or greater) visa.

Instead of a short-term transitory labour supply in the horticultural industry dominated by backpackers, the Seasonal Work Program provides an opportunity for a sustainable, productive approach to employment. By extending the second Working Holiday visa extension to other sectors, employers in the horticultural sector are more likely to use the Seasonal Worker Program. While there will be some transitional costs, the policy outcome will be positive for all actors over the medium to long-term.

To ease these transition costs, a recent World Bank report has outlined a range of other demand-side reforms to induce more activity for the Seasonal Worker Program. Smoothing out the process for employers by removing some of the most difficult barriers will assist. The government has made some moves in this direction under the auspices of the Northern Australia White Paper.

Consideration to the expansion of the Seasonal Worker Program to relevant industries, including tourism and accommodation, should also be a priority. While the pilot program was largely unsuccessful, incorporating broad changes similar to those outlined in the Northern Australia White paper will help with expansion to additional industries.

Recommendations:

- Working Holiday program: the extension of second-year eligibility to other industries outside of horticulture.
- Regulatory change outlined by the World Bank and other stakeholders, including examining superannuation requirements and deductions for travel costs.
- The Government consider extending the SWP to additional industries.

New visa pathways for Pacific emigrants to Australia

The Seasonal Worker Program already exists. It is likely consensus can be found and opportunities for more migration will occur over time.

Yet the Seasonal Worker Program is just one visa amongst other potential migration pathways. New programs and ideas away from simply businesses sponsoring migrants create the potential to diversify how Pacific migration to Australia could occur.

Permanent Residency visa lotto

It might sound strange to create a lottery for permanent residency visas. Why should Australia allow migration outcomes to be determined by a giant game of chance? Yet visa lotteries can be amongst the most effective methods possible to strike the balance right between rich countries like Australia controlling immigration programs while also creating migration opportunities for those living in poorer countries.

The United States has the most famous visa lottery — the Electronic Diversity Visa Lottery, more commonly known as the Green Card lottery. Kicking off in 1995, the visa lottery is designed to attract migrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. 50,000 visas are set aside and randomly distributed to those who apply. There were approximately 14.5 million applications in the 2015 lottery, meaning each applicant had a one in three hundred chance of winning. Importantly, the United States has basic eligibility criteria, including high school completion.

One study of the Green Card lottery examining winners and rejected applications in Ethiopia found a strong effect on the remaining family members in terms of additional spending on food and improved durable goods (Mergo, 2011). However there was no direct effect on the saving and investment of parents or dependent siblings who remained behind.

In New Zealand, there are two visa lotteries, one specifically for Samoan citizens and the other for a number of Pacific countries. In one survey of Tongan lottery winners there was a massive income boost, higher than expected incomes as well as improvements in health. However there are also barriers. The upfront costs of moving to New Zealand appear to use scarce capital while the opportunity cost of labour may not be covered by the increase in remittances. In another survey of Samoan lottery winners and losers, per capita consumption and income is 17 and 23 per cent higher respectively for the family members of winners, creating lower poverty rates for successful visa lottery applicants.

Australia should establish a pilot visa lottery program alongside the Seasonal Worker Program. Winners should receive a permanent residency visa with basic English (such as the equivalent of an average 5.0 IELTS score) and work requirements (an offer of full-time employment) to be met in the 12 months following the lottery. Eligibility to apply should initially focus on those countries with limited migration opportunities, particularly the Melanesian trio of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

To support new permanent migrants to Australia, extending eligibility to key services will smooth any settlement barriers. Spouses and children should be eligible for employment and language support via the Adult Migrant English Program and JobActive and where relevant, support programs delivered through the Settlement Grants Program. This support would maximise the investment in new migrants, ensuring long-term benefits for the Australian economy.

A critical part of the pilot program should be built-in evaluation of what happens to new migrants when they arrive and over medium and long-term time periods. Outcomes like employment status and involvement in the community can be measured to ensure the program is successful and public confidence can be maintained.

Recommendation:

The introduction of a pilot Pacific visa lottery over a three-year period, providing 1000 visas.

Youth mobility for the Pacific

Thirty-one countries have signed bilateral working holiday treaties with Australia allowing the young people the chance to travel to Australia, journey around and participate in work. For many of these countries, prospective migrants apply directly to the Australian government for their visa. They are free from any interference by their home country.

Unfortunately the work and holiday dream is not extended to those in the Pacific. Only Papua New Guinea have signed a bilateral treaty however this was done back in 2011 and there has yet to be a single visa approved under the program. There are obvious issues here preventing the operation of standard policy.

Creating opportunities for youth mobility is critical given the demographics of many Pacific countries. A middle-ground solution is to create a youth mobility pathway where young Pacific citizens are able to apply directly to the Australian government for a short stay visa, say 12 months. Instead of forcing potential migrants to interact with domestic institutions that may undermine migration opportunities, applications should be lodged directly with the Australian embassy for assessment.

To assist, a small pilot funded from the aid program could be established to support the administration and opportunities of this youth mobility framework.

Setting aside up to 500 places for each Pacific country dependent on their population size is not a difficult task. Australia excels at managing quite complicated migration processes. New thinking about managing the risk of visa overstaying — such as a bond or future visa restrictions — will ensure the process is sustainable and consistent with Australia's broader migration framework.

Recommendation:

Establish a process for Pacific citizens to apply for youth mobility access to Australia.

Natural disaster visas

The Pacific experiences regular natural disasters. Over the course of the 21st century, these are likely to accelerate in both frequency and magnitude. Using migration as a potential disaster recovery tool as a complement to existing processes like emergency relief could have a significant effect. Temporary post-event natural disaster visas could include:

- Automatic 12-month extension of any temporary visas for citizens of the affected country who are currently in Australia.
- A family reunion program for those with family already in Australia, providing a short-term opportunity to relocate and work in Australia.
- A relaxation of other temporary visa category eligibility requirements, such as the Seasonal Worker Program.
- The introduction of temporary humanitarian visas in relation to natural disasters.

These potential visa options would complement other measures such as aid and formal support programs. Acting to reduce pressure within Pacific islands in the aftermath of a natural disaster, visas would generate income and ease the adjustment process.

In addition, a handful of countries – Kiribati foremost amongst them — climate change will pose an existential threat. At some stage in the 21st century, Australia as the major regional power, will be required to play a leading role in managing climate induced migration. By introducing a post-disaster visa framework in the short to medium term, policy makers will be better able to dictate and control terms in the future instead of simply reacting to events as they unfold. This will be important given the number of climate migrants expected by 2050 (see Table 3).

Utilising migration opportunities in times of distress and disaster may seem quaint as it cannot address the fundamental risks posed by natural events such as hurricanes and floods. Yet thinking about how a visa framework could assist to address the outcomes of disasters could have significant gains and may prove more adaptable than first imagined. Australia has excellent institutional foundations to build such a system over a number of years and test out what is effective and what fails.

After all, it is much easier to provide access to basic food, water and shelter in Australian than it is in isolated, post-disaster countries with little responsive capacity.

TABLE 3

	Based on 2009 estimates		Based on 2050 projections	
	Low	High	Low	High
Atolls	240,000	240,000	320,000	320,000
Coasts	95,000	350,000	180,000	580,000
Rivers	80,000	400,000	165,000	825,000
Total	415,000	990,000	665,000	1,725,000

(Source: Ferris, Cernea & Petz, 2011, Table 2)

Recommendation:

A government appointed reference panel would explore the viability of post-disaster humanitarian visas to Australia for Pacific countries, including consideration of how climate change will impact atoll nations such as Kiribati.

A formal target to reduce the cost of remittances

With improved measurement, we now know remittances are one of the most significant flows of income into the developing world. One method to increase the amount of income reaching Pacific island countries is to reduce transaction costs associated with sending remittances.

Australia has played a leading role to achieve this. At the G20 in Brisbane, leaders vowed to take strong practical measures to reduce the average cost of sending remittances to five per cent. According to the World Bank, “Australia is engaging with commercial banks and industry associations to support low-cost remittances transfers in its region”.

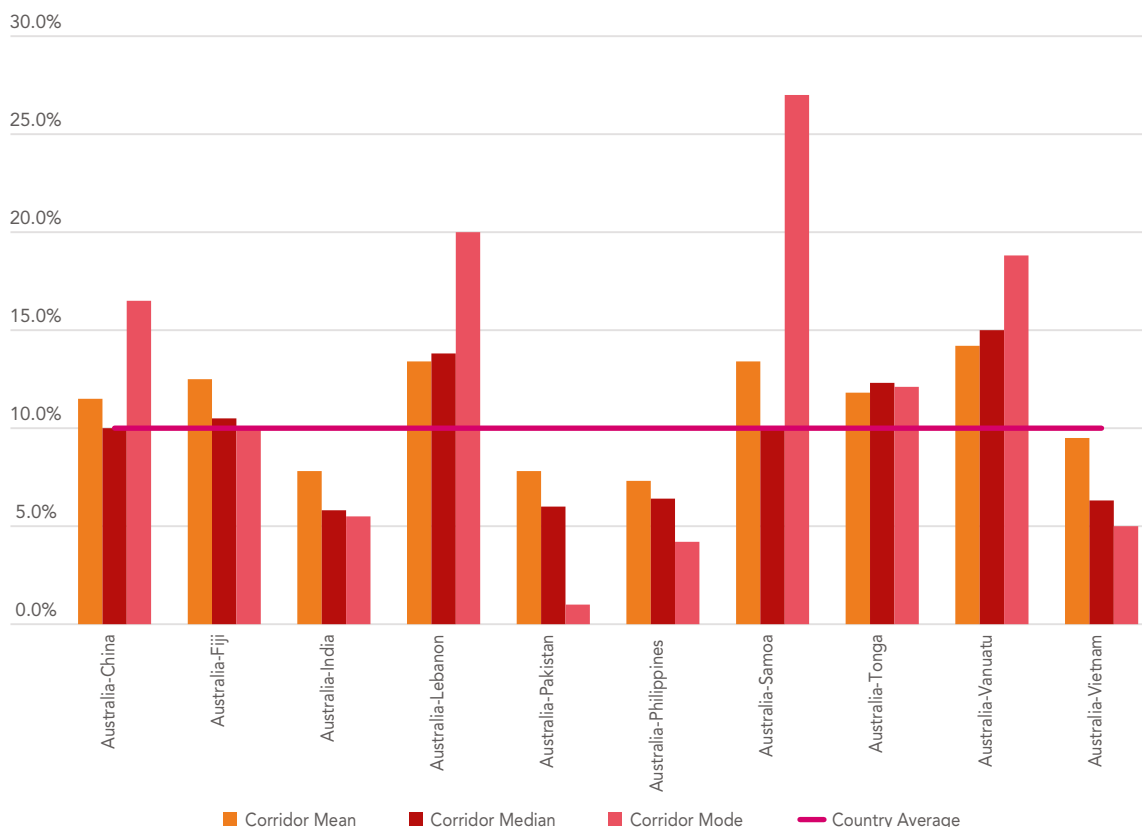
Setting a formal target for the cost of remittances would raise the profile of this work and build a campaign for improving existing measures. Indeed, average costs of remittances from Australia have shrunk from 14 per cent in 2009 to about 10 per cent in 2014.

Yet more work is required, particularly for Pacific countries (see Figures 3 and 4).

The average remittance cost to send from Australia is skewed lower by larger corridors such as Australia-India, Australia-Philippines and Australia-Vietnam. Of course, economies of scale help to drive down prices, something that is much more difficult to achieve in terms of Pacific countries.

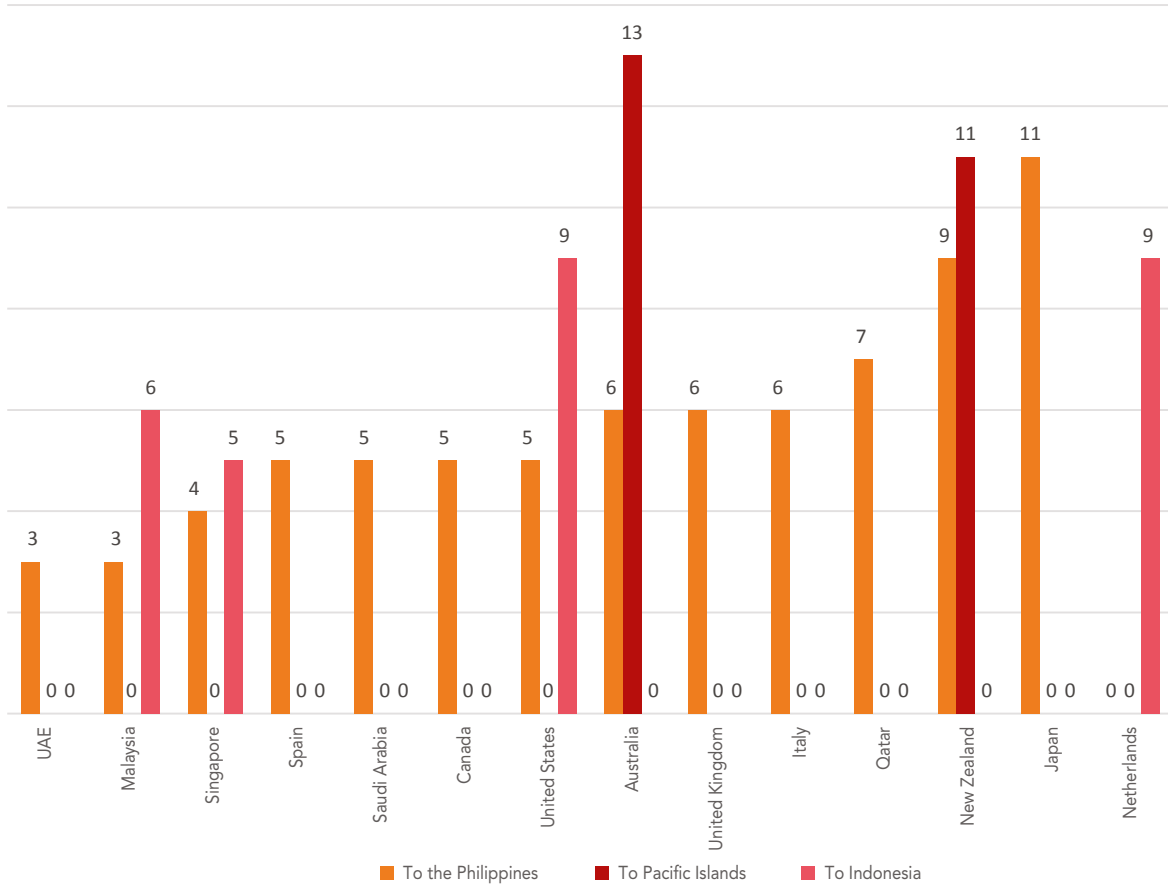
Government supported transparency initiatives such as Send Money Pacific — where people can compare the costs of different services — show there has been substantial work already on reducing remittance costs.

FIGURE 3: MEAN, MEDIUM AND MODE FOR CORRIDORS ORIGINATING IN AUSTRALIA (Q1 2014)



(Source: World Bank, for Australian Government G20 Brisbane 2014)

FIGURE 4: COSTS OF SENDING \$200 ARE THE HIGHEST IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES



(Source: World Bank, 2015)

Building on this good foundation will help ongoing efforts to reduce costs. Tackling obstacles in receiving markets and ensuring a level playing field for providers will improve the sustainability of efficient markets.

On the domestic front, working through the nexus of security concerns and the effect this has on remittance flows is critical. In recent years, a number of money transfer operators have been closed down due to the Anti Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism regulations. This has forced Australian banks to close accounts used by remittance companies, driving up overall costs.

Committing Australia to a formal goal for the price of remittances, with particular attention to the Pacific, would raise the profile of the development effects and help drive down costs by creating a formal policy framework.

Recommendation:

The Government introduce a formal target for 2020 to reduce the cost of remittances to Pacific island countries.

Conclusion

This short paper sets out a number of 'win-win-win' processes for Australia, the Pacific and potential migrants.

For the past 25 years, Australia has increasingly looked to skilled workers to orient our migration framework. This has paid dividends. Yet in the process, we have overlooked those in our backyard.

By expanding and opening up the possible immigration routes to Australia, economic development can be furthered in Pacific countries, migrants themselves can be nurtured while Australia also stands to benefit.

Addressing demand barriers and expanding the Seasonal Worker Program, creating new visa pathways to Australia and aiming to bring down the cost of remittances will each play a small but important role in fostering a triple win outcome.

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