



Inquiry into the Value of Skilled Migration to Australia

Tuesday 16 December 2025

Introduction

Pearson welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the *Inquiry into the Value of Skilled Migration to Australia*.

Pearson is the world's lifelong learning company. We employ over 17,000 people globally, delivering products and services to more than 160 million people across 200 countries.

As a business with experience in English language learning, enterprise learning and skills, assessments and qualifications, virtual learning and higher education, we are deeply engaged with people who leverage education and skills to support global mobility.

English language learners in more than 121 countries take the Pearson Test of English (PTE) to study or work globally. Every year millions of tests are delivered around the world, including hundreds of thousands in Australia, where Pearson has been an approved provider of English language tests for all visa purposes since 2014.

While we are best known to the Australian Government for PTE, a large part of Pearson's Australian and global business is dedicated to supporting organisations and governments to identify and address skills gaps.

This work gives Pearson the opportunity to see first-hand the enormous benefits that skilled migration brings, not only to individuals seeking to start a new life but to the nations they join.

This is especially clear in Australia, where the migration program has made this country younger, smarter and wealthier, delivering social and economic benefits for everyone who lives here.

Responses

a) The ongoing economic, social and cultural value of skilled migration to Australia

Pearson conducted research as part of the white paper, Australian Dreams: Stories from International Students and Skilled Migrants Powering Australia's Prosperity, in 2024.¹

This report presents key insights from the Pearson Migrant and Student Study, a comprehensive research initiative that surveyed over 3,000 PTE test takers who have migrated to Australia under skilled migration or international student visas, and three focus groups held in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

The research confirmed migrants are driving the Australian economy and way of life and helping to fill roles in critical sectors.

Key survey findings include:

- Migrants have a 91% employment rate, with 72% engaged in skilled professions, playing a critical role in addressing Australia's skill shortages. This integration significantly enhances the economic landscape.
- With a median income of \$93,000, substantially above the national median of \$68,900, migrants are successfully contributing as workers and taxpayers in the Australian economy.
- Additionally, migrants contribute through volunteering and community engagement, strengthening societal bonds. 90% feel welcome in Australia, 81% report building community connections in Australia, and more than 10% are engaged in volunteer work. This demonstrates a robust two-way integration, with migrants enriching community life.
- English language skills play a fundamental role in unlocking opportunities. The survey shows 97% of migrants believe learning English is important.
- For 86% of respondents, progressing their skills and education in Australia was a key goal. As one respondent noted: "I started working in Australia at a lower level than previous roles. But, I worked hard in order to get promotion and career development in Australia". Male 35-39yrs, Vietnam. WA.

Skilled Migrants and International Students As Catalysts In Shaping The “Great Australian Dream”

Migration has long been integral to the socioeconomic fabric of Australia, fuelling growth and serving as a cornerstone in the evolution of what is commonly referred to as the ‘Great Australian Dream’.

Traditionally associated with home ownership and the quarter-acre block, this conceptual framework has progressively expanded to encompass the broader aspirations of a diverse, inclusive, and prosperous society.

Within this context, skilled migrants and international students emerge as pivotal contributors, not merely participants in this vision, but as dynamic agents of change and growth.

Economic Contributions: Beyond Filling Skill Gaps

The discourse surrounding the economic impact of skilled migrants often centres on their role in addressing labour shortages and driving productivity outcomes (Castles, 2016; Walsh, 2008; Wright, 2015).ⁱⁱ

However, with the release of the Australian Government's 2023 review of the migration system, a more nuanced analysis reveals the complex and symbiotic relationship with the Australian economy and society. International students, too, represent a vital economic force, contributing to Australia's prosperity beyond their direct financial investment in education.

The Australian Government's Migration Strategy also acknowledges that 'International education is a new engine of economic growth for Australia and an important part of our social fabric.ⁱⁱⁱ Their participation in education, the workforce and society can be understood as contributing to our highly valued cultural diversity while enhancing Australia's economic adaptability and international linkages.

Social Contributions: Enhancing Cultural Diversity and Cohesion

The social contributions of skilled migrants extend beyond economic metrics, significantly enriching Australia's cultural tapestry. The Scanlon Institute's ongoing research on social cohesion illuminates the positive impact of these communities on enhancing multiculturalism and fostering a sense of belonging among diverse populations. Australians, too, are increasingly understanding and valuing these contributions.

In its 2023 Mapping Social Cohesion Report, the Institute notes that "78% agree that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger', 89% agree that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia', and 86% agree that 'immigrants are generally good for Australia's economy'.^{iv}

By introducing varied cultural traditions, languages, and perspectives, migrants and international students play a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and understanding.

Furthermore, these groups facilitate international diplomacy and cross-cultural exchanges, contributing to a globalised sense of Australian identity. This aspect of social contribution is pivotal in enriching the nation's cultural landscape, promoting unity and a collective identity that embraces diversity as a strength.

Supporting skilled refugees

Pearson's belief in the value of skilled migration is evident through our work with humanitarian partner Talent Beyond Boundaries. Pearson provides free English tests and resources for skilled refugees seeking a new life in Australia.

Since the partnership began, Pearson has provided 144 free PTE tests, leading to 75 job offers, including 64 in Australia, and 39 successful relocations as of June 2025.

Test takers have come from 21 countries, including Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Lebanon and Afghanistan, and bring skills across 21 sectors, many of which are facing skills shortages, from construction and healthcare to IT, food and beverage, and engineering. They include young professional women fleeing the Taliban to live and work safely in Australia.

Pearson renewed this partnership in November 2025. The new agreement offers a free PTE exam to all refugees who work with TBB and need a test to move to any accepting country.

b) The effectiveness of current skilled migration settings in meeting the current and future needs of the states and territories, while recognising the ongoing need for housing and infrastructure;

The evolution of Australia's migration policy reflects an ongoing dialogue between economic needs, social aspirations, and the challenges and opportunities presented by global migration trends. The Australian Government's review of the migration system emphasised a strategic and demand-driven approach to migration.^v

Such an approach seeks to align skilled migration with Australia's economic priorities while ensuring that migration policies foster social cohesion and successful integration. In its 2022 response to the Australian Government's Migration policy review that preceded its 2023 Strategy, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia outlined the essential role that skilled migration plays in driving our prosperity and that; importantly, it does so without harming the job prospects of local workers overall.^{vi}

It is important to note that there is growing competition for skilled migration, and OECD countries are implementing 'new pathways to attract highly educated migrants, remote workers and potential investors'.^{vii}

Meeting current and future skills needs

Pearson is proud to support Australia's migration program through the provision of secure, accurate and trusted evaluations of English language capabilities for visa applicants.

One area the government may consider in future policy development is how to support ongoing English language proficiency, not only at the point of visa application but during employment or study.

Through Pearson's Global Scale of English research with migrants^{viii} we know:

- Proficiency in English is indispensable in the workplace, with 85% of individuals stating that English is important for their work life.
- Poor common language communication adds a significant cost in lost productivity.
- While 72% of English learners would find their job easier with better English skills, only 33% report that their employer offers language training.
- English proficiency is crucial for closing the skills gap globally. Over half of English learners are seeking access to a wider range of roles and new career opportunities.
- 43% associate English with unlocking better paying job opportunities.
- 35% believe English helps them gain confidence in all other areas.
- 47% of advanced proficiency respondents felt that English could help them build better connections at work.
- 61% feel that English will help them with better earning potential.

Global Scale of English Job Profiles

Pearson recently launched the Global Scale of English Job Profiles, which map English proficiency across 1400 job roles.

This tool helps language learners pinpoint English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills on a simple scale tied to job requirements. With detailed learning objectives for every point on the scale, learners can advance their abilities with a highly personalised learning pathway.

Global Scale of English Job Profiles can also help employers specify the proficiency needed for roles, benchmark candidates accurately and identify skills gaps, ensuring a more effective hiring process, personalised upskilling and a future-ready workforce.

Adopting tools such as this may assist skilled migrants and their employers to promote ongoing language learning, improving workplace and societal outcomes.

Continuous learning for international students

Through our *Australian Dreams: Stories from International Students and Skilled Migrants Powering Australia's Prosperity* research, Pearson found that only around a quarter of student visa holders made use of English language support services. More than a third noted that they were unsure of the availability or lacked English support services at their institutions.

This suggests a strong strategic opportunity to increase awareness of access to and the utilisation of these important services for helping international students maximise the positive impacts of their studies in Australia.

c) The scope to more effectively target skills gaps and shortages in critical sectors to improve services that benefit Australian communities

Pearson understands that the Australian Government is developing a new National Skills Taxonomy through Jobs and Skills Australia, which may assist the government to better understand and target skills gaps.

There are products and tools currently in the market that could assist visa applicants to demonstrate their skills against independently verified benchmarks and assist the government to predict skills trends. We have contributed a submission to this process and would be happy to participate in any future consultations.

Credly

Pearson operates Credly, the world's largest credentialling marketplace. Credly hosts the largest and most-connected digital credential network, helping the world speak a common language of verified knowledge, skills, and abilities.

More than 100 million digital micro-credentials have been certified through Credly globally, including for TAFEs, Austrade, ASIC, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, the ACTU and Engineers Australia. These badges offer more granular detail on individuals' skills than a degree or diploma, and can be shared on LinkedIn, CVs and applications to improve the fit between employer expectations and applicants.

Faethm

Many large organisations are using data analytics to predict workforce need.

Faethm by Pearson is an AI-powered workforce analytics solution designed to help large organisations anticipate how AI and economic changes could reshape jobs over the next 15 years.

Faethm's Skill Analytics and time-series data offer a real-time view of how skills and occupations are evolving across Australia's labour market.

The models are refreshed quarterly using over 20 million global job ads, allowing analysis of skills and occupations at the country, country + industry, and occupation level.

This includes:

- **Skill Trends** – the percentage of job ads requiring a given skill, based on historical labour-market analysis.

- **Emerging Skills** – skills that previously appeared in very few job ads but have seen a significant demand surge in the past six months. We identify these at the occupation, industry, and national level.
- **Trending and Declining Skills** – skills with a clear upward or downward trajectory, identified using Faethm's gradient analysis.

Because this data reflects the current job market, refreshed every quarter, it provides a more up-to-date view than traditional statistical sources.

Pearson's Labour Market Insights modelling provides a validated forecast of future demand for occupations – and therefore skills – up to 15 years into the future, incorporating demographic shifts, technology adoption, and industry change.

Together, this provides a forward-looking workforce intelligence capability that can identify emerging shortages years before they appear in migration, census, or ABS data, enabling more targeted skilled migration and domestic training needs.

In Canada, Pearson partnered with the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada in developing NAVIGAR, a smart online skills development tool, leveraging technology to ensure accurate and efficient skills assessment and recognition.

On the public service platform, we offer over 40,000 courses aligned to over 30 skills. Providing individuals with over 100 career insights to help them upskill and reskill in their roles and teams.

In the United Kingdom, Pearson recently signed a four-year contract delivering the new cross Government skills capture and learning experience platform via Skills England.

Creating a single 'front door' for all pan-government learning, the platform will enable users to create a profile to capture their skills and track completed learning.

d) The scope for skilled migration settings to more effectively support Australian businesses, boost productivity and encourage innovation

Pearson's 2025 Australia Bound Testing Report^{ix} reveals the diversity of test takers coming to Australia. With a relatively even gender split and age group that leans to the younger age groups, with high education.

Reason for taking PTE in 2025



*includes temporary entrants such as Work and Holiday visa makers

These international students and skilled workers are well targeted via the Australian migration system. Helping address the skills shortage by bringing in talent from around the world to provide much needed services in sectors such as aged care, health and construction.

Test capacity and volumes:



2024

526 test centers
in **119 countries**

2025

539 test centers
in **121 countries**

In 2025 people from **116 countries** sat PTE seeking to go to Australia.

Diverse test takers – Global averages 2024 vs 2025:



2024

27.3

average age

(age range from **16-75**)

2024

181

nationalities

(**India** was the leading nationality)

2024

116

different first languages

(**12.8%** speak Chinese - Mandarin)

2025

27.5

average age

(age range from **16-75**)

2025

180

nationalities

(**India** was the leading nationality)

2025

116

different first languages

(**13.3%** speak English)

e) Strategies to enhance public awareness and understanding of the role of skilled migration in Australia

Pearson welcomes broader recognition of the value that skilled migrants bring to Australia. We note the benefits of ongoing English language learning and testing to support social inclusion and reduce the risk of workplace exploitation.

Conclusion

Skilled migrants are indispensable in rediscovering and realising the ‘Great Australian Dream’. Their economic, social, and cultural contributions are critical in shaping a vision of Australia that values diversity, inclusivity, and prosperity.

As Australia continues to navigate the complexities of a changing global landscape, the strategic management of its migration program remains central to sustaining the principles that underpin this dream.

Through a concerted effort among policymakers, educational institutions, and the broader community, Australia can ensure that its migration strategy remains responsive, equitable, and reflective of the values that define it as a nation, thereby securing a prosperous future for all its inhabitants.

Thank you for considering our submission to your inquiry.

I am happy to make myself available for any hearings or discussion on this matter at a time of your convenience.

In the meantime, please contact Heather Gilmore if you have any follow up questions.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Taha Haidermota
Country Head
Pearson Australia

References

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ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Government (2023). Migration Strategy: Getting Migration working for the nation. page 10

^{iv} Scanlon Institute (2023). 2023 Mapping Social Cohesion Report.

<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/publications/mapping-social-cohesionreport/2023-mapping-social-cohesion-report>

^v Policy Context and Strategic Migration Management: p 14. [Australian Dreams: Stories from International Students and Skilled Migrants Powering Australia's Prosperity](#) (2024)

^{vi} Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA). (2022). 2022 Australia's future migration system. Committee for Economic Development of Australia.
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^{vii} OECD (2022) International Migration Outlook 2022. en. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/social-issuesmigrationhealth/international-migration-outlook-2022_30fe16d2-en

^{viii} GSE 2024 Research : [gse-research-global-report-en.pdf \(pearson.com\)](#)

^{ix} Pearson Australia Bound Testing Report 2025 https://pearsoneducationinc-25ELL_ASIA03_TT_Reports_AUS_bound