



Migration from Colombia and the dynamics of integration

Summary

- > The Colombian-born population is the third largest migrant group from Latin America resident in Australia. Over the last 20 years, Colombians have moved from the sixth largest migrant group from Latin America to the third largest.
- > In 2018 there were an estimated 29,840 Colombian-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 561.6% since 2001.
- > In 2019 there are 20,169 Colombian migrants on temporary visas in Australia.
- > 35.3% of Australia's Colombian-born population resides in New South Wales, followed by 28.2% in Victoria.

Dynamics of migration

History of migration to Australia

The Colombian presence in Australia can be traced back to the 1891 Colonial Census, which recorded one Colombian migrant in New South Wales (NSW). There has been a relatively steady rise in the number of Colombian arrivals since 1969. By 1986, Colombians were the seventh largest migrant group from Latin America in Australia with 1,687 residents. The largest period of net Colombian migration was from 2010 to 2016, peaking in 2015 with 2,984 migrants arriving in Australia.

The 2016 Census asked people who were born overseas what year they first arrived in Australia. It did not measure all migrant arrivals, as the overseas-born population recorded in the Census excluded migrants who resided in Australia for less than a year, re-migrated or those who died. In 2016, almost half of Colombian-born residents

Figure 1. Colombian-born population of Australia by year of arrival, 2016

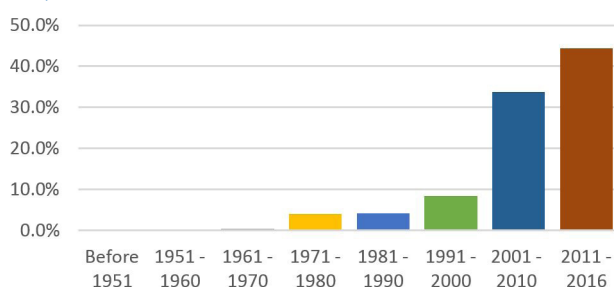
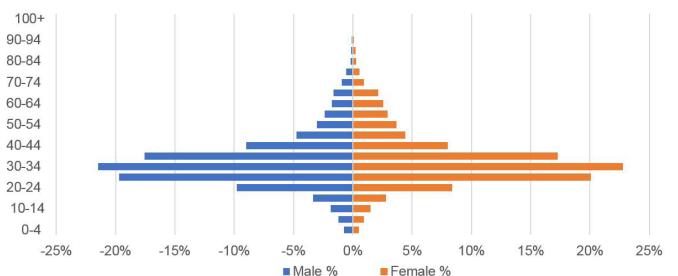


Figure 2. Colombian-born population of Australia by age and sex, 2016



(44.4%) of Australia had arrived after 2010. Only 17.1% of Colombian migrants had arrived before 2001.

Demographic composition

The median age of the Colombian-born population of Australia was 33, whereas the median age of the Australian population was 38 in 2016. Two-fifths (42.1%) of the Colombian-born population was between the ages of 25 and 34 years. Two-thirds of Colombians (68%) in Australia were between the ages of 25 and 44. Among the Colombian-born population, 3.8% was over 65 years old and 3.3% was under 15 years old.

Of the total Colombian-born population of Australia 45.9% were men and 54.1% were women. The sex ratio was 91.2 males per 100 females which compared to a sex ratio of 97.2 for the total Australian population.

Geography of settlement

In 2016, 35.5% of Australia's Colombian-born population were resident in NSW. Of these, 94.5% lived in greater Sydney. The second leading state of residence was Victoria, where 28.1% of Colombian migrants lived. Of these, 97.5% lived in greater Melbourne. Australia-wide, the most popular areas for residence were Central Melbourne and Southbank in Victoria and Spring Hill in Queensland.

The distribution of Colombian migrants across Australia has changed over time. Whilst NSW is still the state that hosts the greatest proportion of Colombian migrants, the actual proportion has dropped significantly from 56.5% in 2001 to 35.5% in 2016. Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia all experienced significant growth during this period.

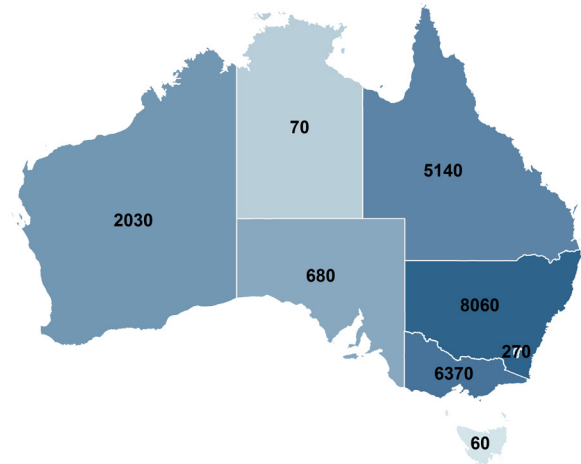
Pathways to integration

Economic impact

The 2016 Census recorded that 20.4% of Colombian workers were employed in the administrative and support services industry. Of these employees, 54.2% were female. The industry was the largest employer of Colombian males and females in 2016.

The second and third largest industries of employment were the accommodation and food services industry (16.5%) and health care and social assistance industry (16.5%) and health care and social assistance industry

Figure 3. Colombian-born population of Australia by state of residence, 2016

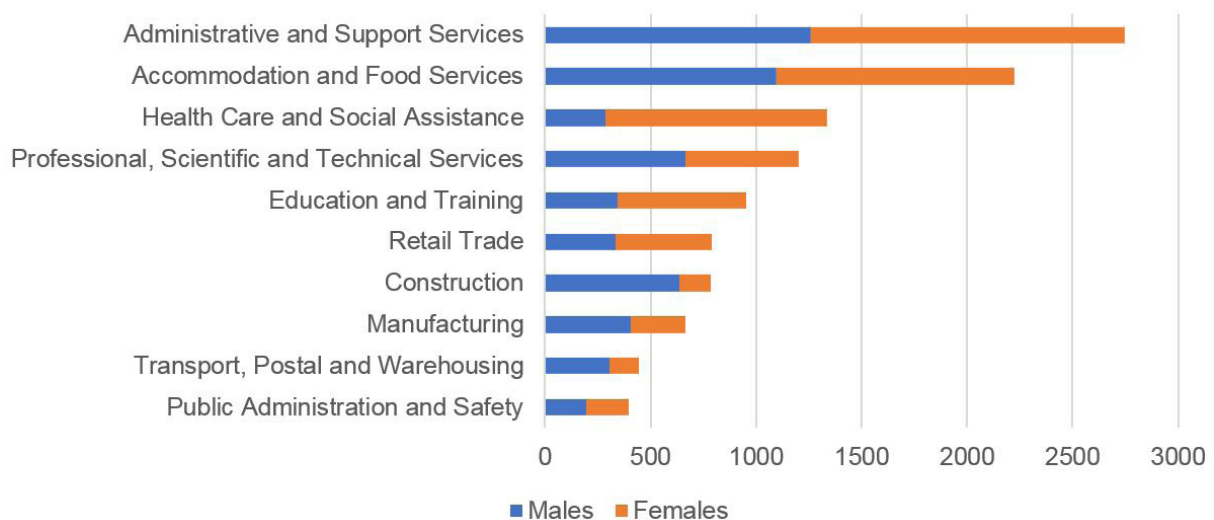


(9.9%). These were also the leading industries for Colombian employment in 2011. The accommodation and food services industry share was held equally between males and females, whereas the health care and social assistance industry was female-dominated, with women comprising 78.7% of Colombian employees.

Education

Over a half (58.8%) of Australia's Colombian-born population aged 15 and over had completed a university Bachelor degree level qualification or above. This compares to 20.4% for the Australian-born population. A growing share of the Colombian migrant population

Figure 4. Colombian-born population of Australia by industry of employment, 2016



is university educated—the 2011 Census recorded that 52% of Australia’s Colombian-born population had a Bachelor degree qualification or above.

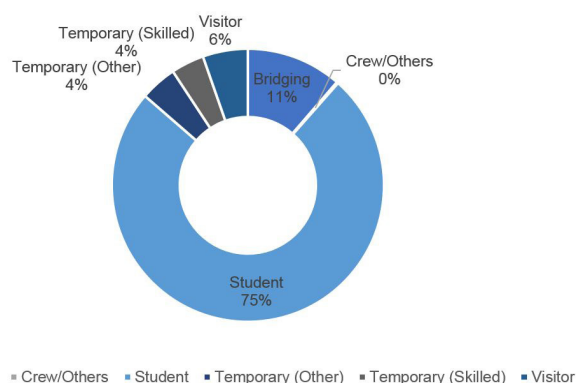
Contemporary migration

The number of Colombian migrants in Australia on temporary visas has more than doubled in the last five years, from 8,536 in 2014 to 20,169 in 2019. The main types of temporary visas are bridging visas, student visas and temporary resident visas. Of these categories, the changes in the numbers of bridging visas and student visas have been the most significant. The number of Brazilian migrants on both bridging visas and student visas has increased by more than two and a half times, with bridging visas increasing from 867 in 2014 to 2,290 in 2019 and student visas increasing from 5,883 in 2014 to 15,090 in 2019.

Identity and community

The Australian Census captures data from both people born in Colombia who have migrated to Australia (known as the First Generation), and those who have one or both parents born in Colombia (Second Generation). In the 2016 Census, 40.2% of Australia’s Colombian-born population were Australian citizens. As a bilingual population, 89.1% of First Generation Colombians speak English well or very well, while 89.9% also speak Spanish at home.

Figure 5. Types of temporary visas held by Colombians in Australia, March 2019



In 2016, the Second Generation Colombian population in Australia was 5,498 persons. The largest group was those aged zero to four years, totalling 2,232 persons. There were 4,445 Second Generation persons aged under 20, and 934 persons aged from 20 to 39 years.

The Australian Census asks respondents to self-identify their ancestry to provide further detail on their ethnic or cultural identity beyond their place of birth or citizenship. Latin American migrants may identify their ancestry with one or two specific countries, an indigenous identity (such as Mayan), a regional identity (South or Central American) or other types of ancestry (for example European, Asian, African or American). There were 17,984 persons who identified in the 2016 Census as having Colombian ancestry, of whom 1.6% had both parents born in Australia and 9.3% had one parent born in Australia.

Figure 6. Age profile of First and Second Generation Colombians in Australia, 2016

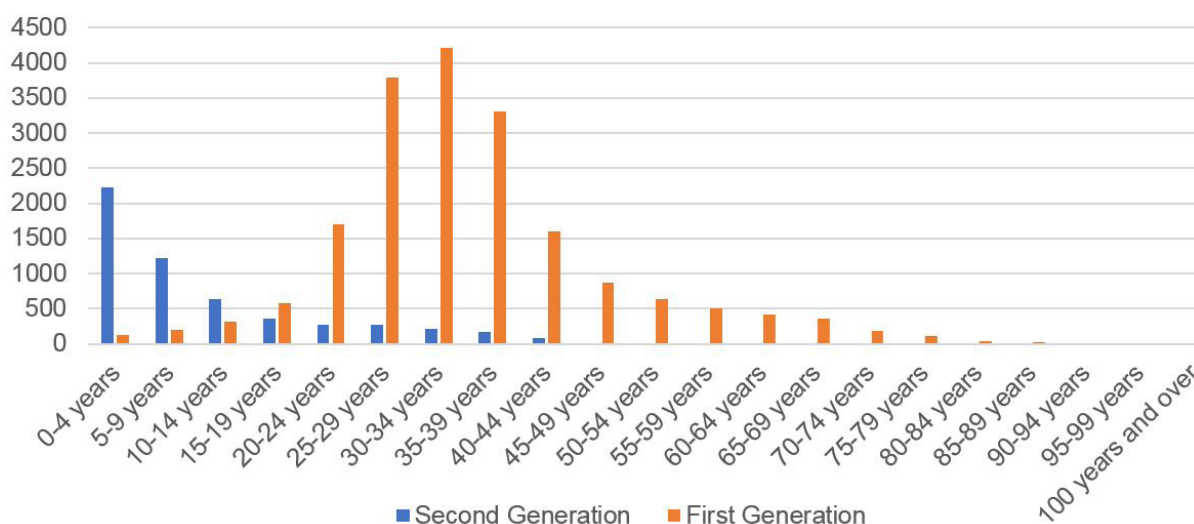
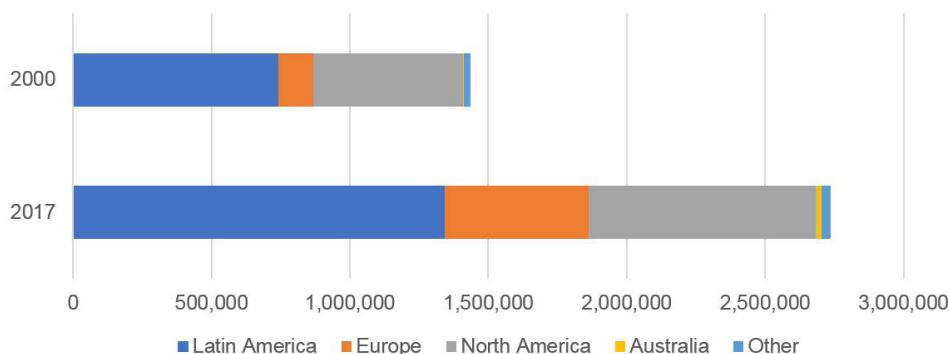


Figure 7. Global distribution of Colombian migrants in 2000 and 2017



Global connections

Recent migration to Australia from Colombia has been affected by broader changes to the internal economies of Latin America and to their external migration flows, caused by globalisation. The population of Colombia in 2017 was 49.1 million persons. Another 2,736,230 Colombians are estimated to be living outside the country of their birth. Of this diaspora:

- > 1,342,201 Colombian-born migrants were resident in Latin America
- > 520,265 Colombian-born migrants were resident in Europe
- > 824,252 Colombian-born migrants were resident in North America

The number of Colombian migrants has increased by 90.7% between 2000 and 2017. Latin America has the largest share of the Colombian diaspora, receiving around half of Colombian migrants between 2000 and 2017. North America is the residence of the second highest proportion of Colombian migrants. Europe receives the third highest proportion of Colombian migrants and has experienced its share of the diaspora growing from 9% in 2000 to 19% in 2017.

According to the World Bank, remittances to Colombia totalled US\$5636 million in 2017, with US\$31 million of this being remitted from Australia.

Data sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) *Migration, Australia 2017–18*; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) *Census*; Department of Home Affairs (2019) *Temporary Visa Holders in Australia Dataset*; Department of Home Affairs (2018) *Historical Migration Statistics*; United Nations (2017) *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision*; World Bank (2018) *Bilateral Remittance Estimates for 2017*.

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Authors: Pippa Kuhnel, Tanya Sim, Tatiana Guevara | Editor: Laurence Brown | Graphic designer: Jasmine Henkel | July 2019

The Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS), The Australian National University

The Australian National Internships Program (ANIP), The Australian National University

Beryl Rawson Building, 13 Ellery Crescent, Acton ACT 2601, Australia | T +61 2 6125 8540 | E internships@anu.edu.au