



Migration from Costa Rica and the dynamics of integration

Summary

- > The Costa Rican-born population is the sixteenth largest migrant group from Latin America resident in Australia. Over the last twenty years, Costa Ricans have moved from the thirteenth largest migrant group from Latin America to the sixteenth largest.
- > In 2018 there were an estimated 550 Costa Rican-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 57.1% since 2001.
- > In 2019 there are 148 Costa Rican migrants on temporary visas in Australia.
- > 41.9% of Australia's Costa Rican-born population resides in New South Wales, followed by 22.3% in Victoria.

Dynamics of migration

History of migration to Australia

Small numbers of Costa Rican migrants arrived in Australia between the 1960s and 1980s before a decrease in arrivals during the 1990s. The steady growth of migration from Costa Rica has resulted in a 57.1% increase in Costa Rican-born residents in Australia to an estimated 550 persons.

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, 28.2% of all Costa Ricans living in Australia had arrived after 2010. Another 41.1% of Costa Rican-born migrants had settled in Australia between 1971 and 1990.

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

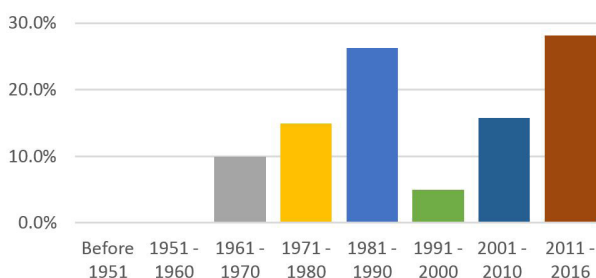
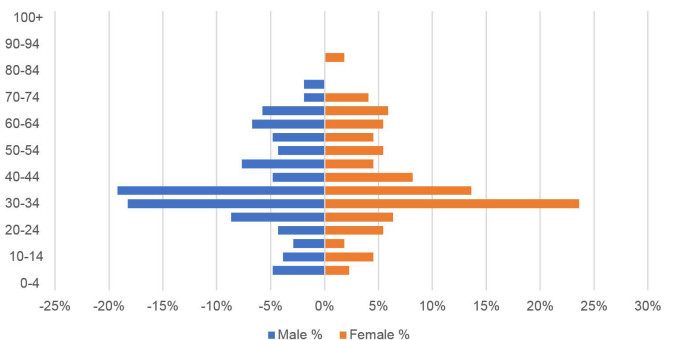


Figure 2. Costa Rican-born population of Australia by age and sex, 2016



Demographic composition

Approximately half of all Costa Ricans in Australia in 2016 were between the ages of 20 and 39 years (50.5% of men and 49.1% of women). Of this population, 28.4% of men and 28.2% of women were aged between 40 and 65 years old. The largest age group for Costa Rican men was the 35 to 39 years age group and the largest group for Costa Rican women was the 30 to 34 years age group. Among the Costa Rican-born population, 10.7% were over 65 years old and 10.1% were under 20 years old.

Of the total Costa Rican-born population of Australia 48.6% were men and 51.4% were women. The sex ratio was 94.5 males per 100 females, which compared to a sex ratio of 97.2 for the total Australian population.

Geography of settlement

In 2016, 43.4% of Costa Rican migrants resided in New South Wales (NSW). Of these, 80.11% lived in greater Sydney. The second leading state of residence was Victoria, where 20.8% of Costa Rican migrants lived.

Australia-wide, the most popular areas for residence were St Ives and Mosman in NSW, and Lynbrook/Lyndhurst in Victoria.

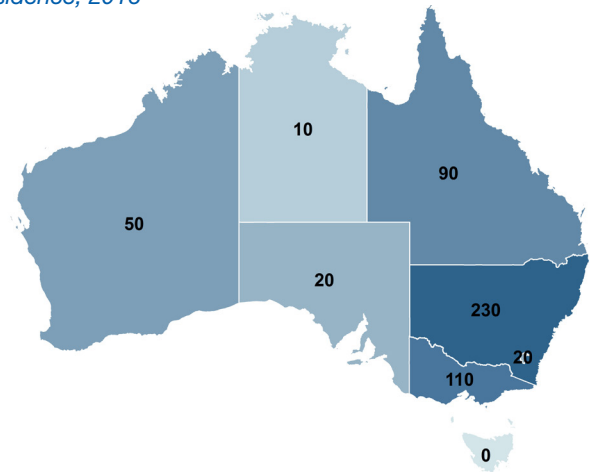
The distribution of Costa Rican migrants across Australia has remained relatively stable over time. NSW hosted the largest proportion of Costa Rican migrants between 2001 and 2016. The proportion of Costa Rican migrants in NSW has decreased from 51.4% in 2001 to 43.4% in 2016. Victoria and Queensland almost doubled their state populations of Costa Rican migrants during the same period.

Pathways to integration

Economic impact

The 2016 Census recorded that the health care and social assistance industry was the largest employer of Costa Rican workers, comprising 14.5% of Costa Rican employment across all industries. Of those Costa Ricans employed in the industry, 76.32% were female. This industry was the largest employer of female Costa Ricans, with 22.48% of working women employed in the industry.

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



The education and training industry (10.3%) and professional, scientific and technical services industry (9.5%) were the second and third largest sectors of Costa Rican employment. The professional, scientific and technical services industry was the largest employer of Costa Rican men across all industries, employing 15.71% of all male workers.

In 2011, the leading industries of Costa Rican employment were shared equally between the education and training and health care and social assistance industries, followed closely by the manufacturing industry.

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



Education

Two-fifths (40.5%) of Australia's Costa Rican-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.

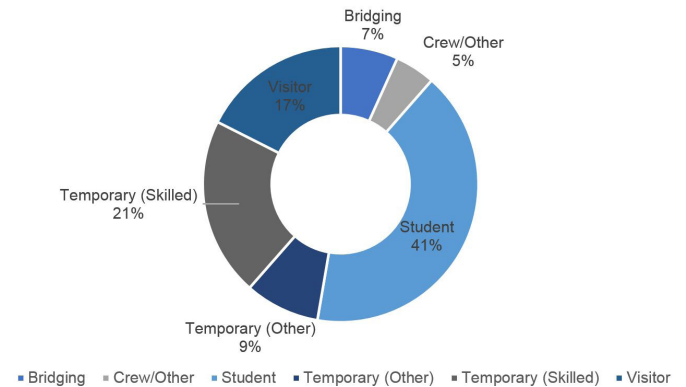
Contemporary migration

The number of Costa Rican migrants in Australia on temporary visas has seen a slight increase from 104 in 2014 to 148 in 2019. The main types of temporary visas are bridging visas and student visas. The number of Costa Ricans in Australia on bridging visas has increased from 6 in 2014 to 10 in 2019. The number of Costa Ricans on student visas has seen a slight increase from 55 in 2014 to 61 in 2019.

Identity and community

The Australian Census captures data from both people born in Costa Rica who have migrated to Australia (known as the First Generation) and those who have one or both parents born in Costa Rica (Second Generation). In the 2016 Census, 69.5% of Australia's Costa Rican-born population were Australian citizens. As a bilingual population, 72.7% of First Generation Costa Ricans speak Spanish at home.

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



In 2016, the total size of the Second Generation Costa Rican population in Australia was 246 persons. The largest group was those aged between zero and four years, totalling 46 persons. The second largest group was those aged between 25 and 29 years, totalling 34 persons. There were 119 Second Generation persons aged under 20 and 103 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).

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

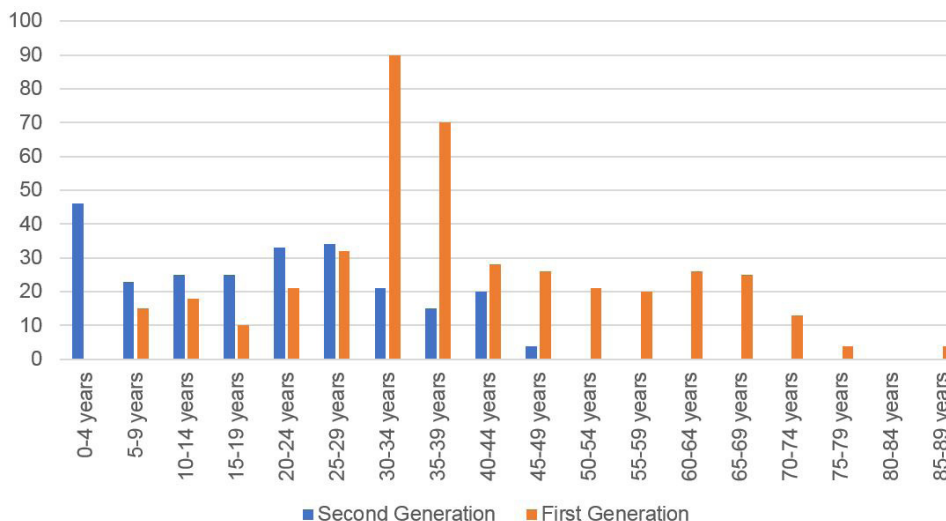
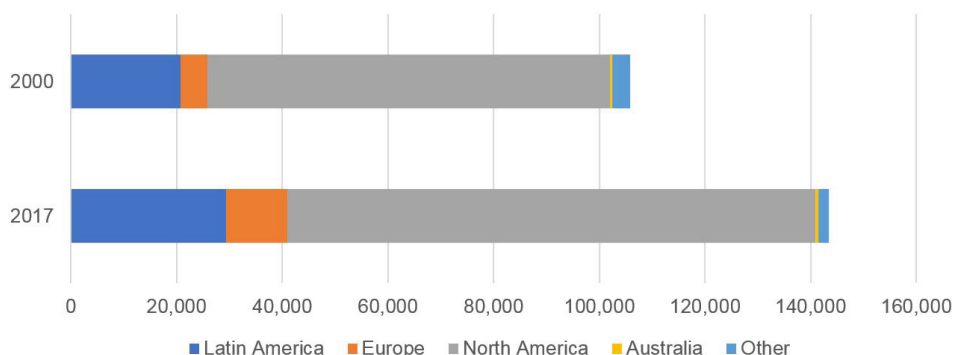


Figure 7. Global distribution of Costa Rican migrants in 2000 and 2017



There were 390 persons who identified in the 2016 Census as having Costa Rican ancestry of whom 4.6% had both parents born in Australia and 24.6% had one parent born in Australia.

Global connections

Recent migration to Australia from Costa Rica 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 Costa Rica in 2017 was 4,905,769. Another 143,465 Costa Ricans are estimated to have migrated overseas. Of this diaspora:

- > 29,333 Costa Rican-born migrants were resident in Latin America
- > 11,547 Costa Rican-born migrants were resident in Europe
- > 99,975 Costa Rican-born migrants were resident in North America

The number of Costa Rican migrants has increased by 35.6% between 2000 and 2017. The geographic distribution of the Costa Rican diaspora has remained relatively constant. North America still hosts the majority of the Costa Rican diaspora—72% in 2000 and 70% in 2017. Europe has seen an increase in its proportion of the Costa Rican diaspora, rising from 5% in 2000 to 8% in 2017. This increase can mostly be attributed to growing migrant populations in Europe.

According to the World Bank, remittances to Costa Rica totalled US\$562 million in 2017, with US\$2 million of these funds being sent 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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