



# Migration from Cuba and the dynamics of integration

## Summary

- > The Cuban-born population is the 12th largest migrant group from Latin America resident in Australia. Over the last 20 years, Cubans have moved from the 13th largest migrant group from Latin America to the 12th largest.
- > In 2018 there were an estimated 950 Cuban-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 86.3% since 2001.
- > In 2019 there are 73 Cuban migrants on temporary visas in Australia.
- > 39.9% of Australia’s Cuban-born population resides in New South Wales, followed by 21.8% in Victoria.

## Dynamics of migration

### History of migration to Australia

In 1911 the Census recorded 19 Cuban-born migrants in Australia. Between 1960 and 1976 over 750,000 refugees left Cuba for the United States, however few of these travelled to Australia. During the first half of the 1980s, 111 Cubans were admitted for permanent settlement in Australia and between 2008 and 2013 another 218 Cuban migrants settled in Australia. By 2018, it was estimated that there were 950 Cuban-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 86.3% since 2001. In September 2017, 17 refugees from Cuba arrived via the United States as part of the Australia–United States Resettlement Arrangement (2016).

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

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

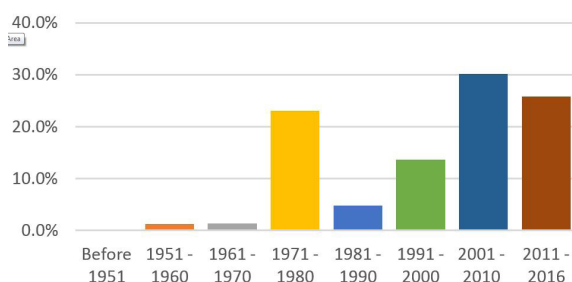
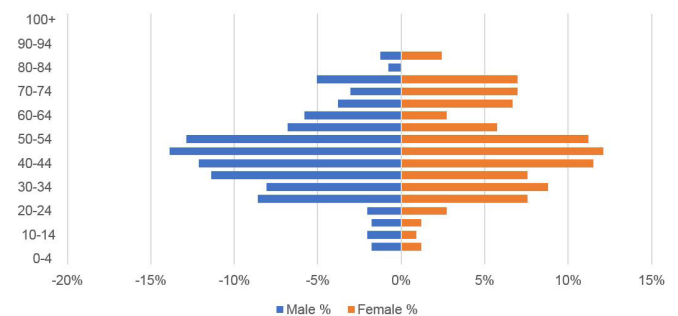


Figure 2. Cuban-born population of Australia by age and sex, 2016



in Australia for less than a year, re-migrated or those who died. Almost a third (30.2%) of Cuban migrants arrived during the period between 2001 and 2010. Over half (56%) of Australia’s Cuban-born population migrated to Australia after 2000.

### Demographic composition

Approximately half of the Cubans in Australia in 2016 were between the ages of 40 and 65 years old—51.5% of Cuban men and 43.3% of Cuban women. Of the Cuban-born population, 30.1% of men and 26.7% of women were between 20 and 39 years old. The largest age group for both Cuban men and women in Australia was the 45 to 49 years age group. Among the Cuban-born population, 18.1% were over 65 years old and 4.5% were under 20 years old.

Of the total Cuban-born population of Australia, 54.5% were men and 45.5% were women. The sex ratio was



120 males per 100 females, which compared to a sex ratio of 97.2 for the total Australian population.

### Geography of settlement

In 2016, 40% of Cuban migrants were living in New South Wales (NSW). The second leading state of residence for Cuban migrants was Queensland where 23.3% lived.

Australia-wide, the most popular areas for residence were Mascot/Eastlakes and Rosemeadow/Glen Alpine in NSW, and Wacol in Queensland.

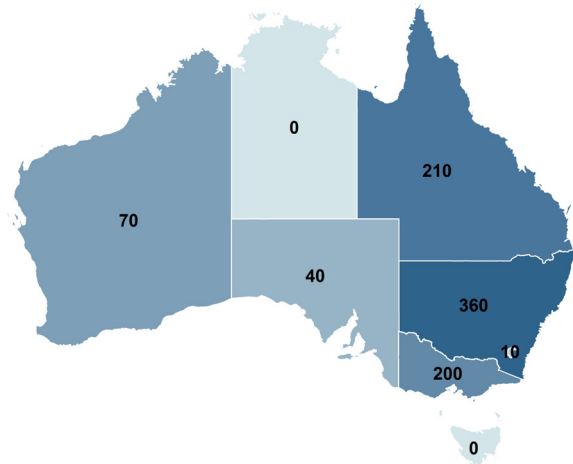
The distribution of Cuban migrants across Australia has changed over time. The proportion of Cuban migrants in NSW has decreased from 56.9% in 2001 to 40% in 2016. Victoria was the second most largely populated state in 2001, but Queensland has become the second leading state of residence with its share of Cuban migrants rising from 15.7% in 2001 to 23.3% in 2016.

### Pathways to integration

#### Economic impact

The 2016 Census recorded that the health care and social assistance industry was the largest employer of Cuban workers, comprising 17.5% of the Cuban workforce. Of these employees, 63.9% were female. This industry was the largest employer of Cuban women.

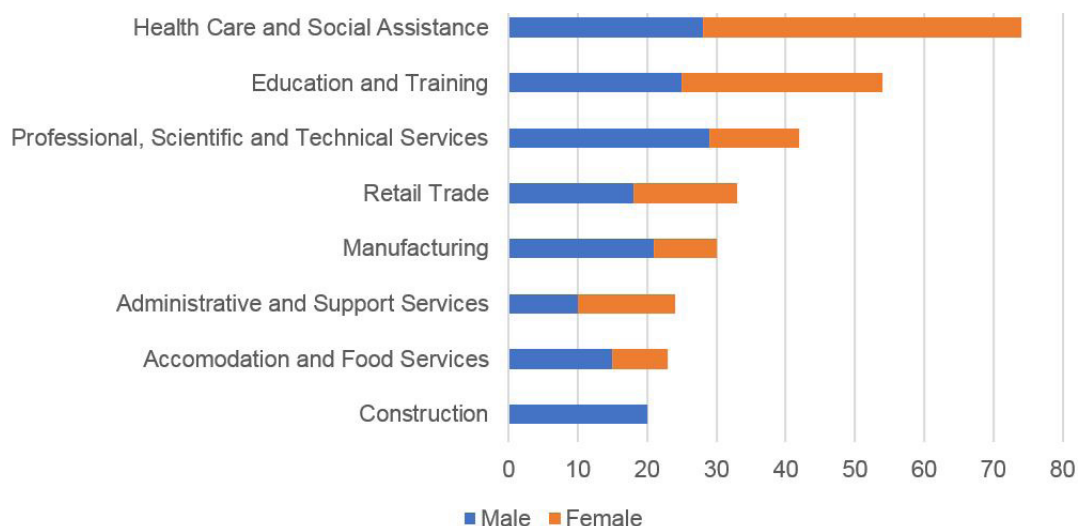
Figure 3. Cuban-born population of Australia by state of residence, 2016



The second and third largest industry employers of Cuban migrants were the education and training industry (12.7%) and the professional, scientific and technical services industry (9.3%). The professional, scientific and technical services industry was the largest employer of Cuban men, employing 12.1% of the Cuban male workforce.

In 2011, the three largest industries of employment for Cubans were the health care and social assistance industry, the education and training industry and the accommodation and food services industry.

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



## Education

Over a third (35.4%) of Australia's Cuban-born population aged 15 and over completed a university Bachelor degree level qualification or above. This compares to 20.4% for the Australian-born population.

## Contemporary migration

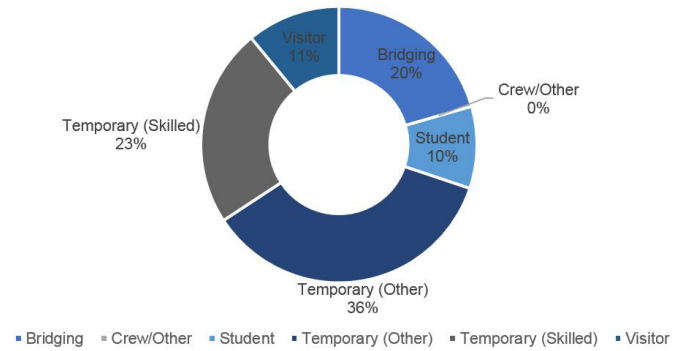
The number of Cuban migrants in Australia on temporary visas has seen a slight increase from 54 in 2014 to 73 in 2019. The main types of temporary visas are bridging visas and student visas. The number of Cubans in Australia on bridging visas has increased from seven in 2014 to 15 in 2019. The number of Cubans on student visas has decreased from 18 in 2014 to seven in 2019.

## Identity and community

The Australian Census captures data from both people born in Cuba who have migrated to Australia (known as First Generation), and those who have one or both parents born in Cuba (Second Generation). In the 2016 Census, 67.8% of Australia's Cuban-born population were Australian citizens. As a bilingual population, 84% of First Generation Cubans in Australia speak Spanish at home.

In 2016, the total size of the Second Generation Cuban population in Australia was 515 persons. The largest group was those aged between zero to four years, totalling 101 persons.

Figure 5. Types of temporary visas held by Cubans in Australia,



There were 290 Second Generation persons aged under 20 and 158 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 1,114 persons who identified in the 2016 Census as having Cuban ancestry of whom 4.2% had both parents born in Australia and 21.2% had one parent born in Australia.

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

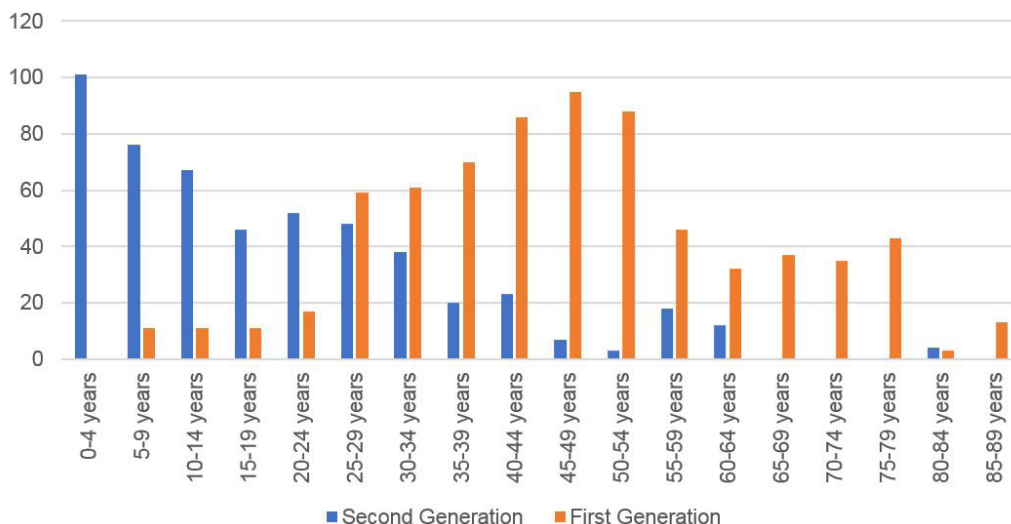
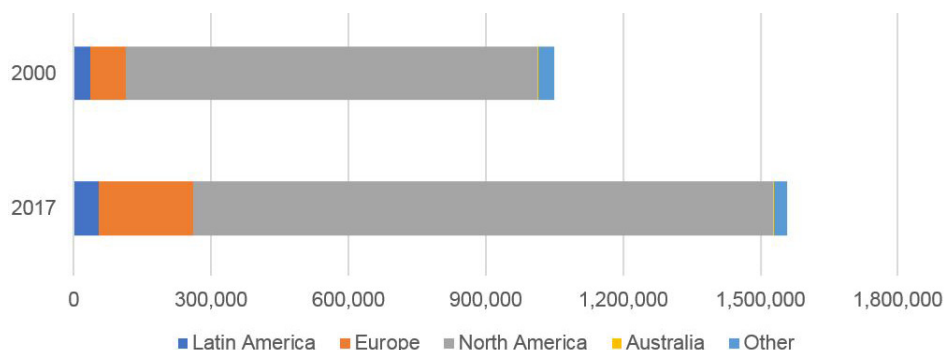


Figure 7. Global distribution of Cuban migrants in 2000 and 2017



## Global connections

Recent migration to Australia from Cuba 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 Cuba in 2017 was 11.5 million. Another 1,558,312 Cubans are estimated to be living outside their country of birth. Of this diaspora:

- > 55,474 Cuban-born migrants were resident in Latin America
- > 205,816 Cuban-born migrants were resident in Europe
- > 1,266,575 Cuban-born migrants were resident in North America

The number of Cuban migrants has increased by 48.4% between 2000 and 2017. The geographic distribution of the Cuban diaspora has remained relatively constant. North America still hosts the majority of the Cuban diaspora—86% in 2000 and 81% in 2017. Europe has seen an increase in its share of the Cuban diaspora, rising from 8% in 2000 to 13% in 2017.

**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*.

### This briefing is one in a series: Latin America in Australia

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