



Migration from El Salvador and the dynamics of integration

Summary

- > The Salvadoran-born population is the sixth largest migrant group from Latin America resident in Australia. Over the last 20 years, Salvadorans have moved from the fourth largest migrant group from Latin America to the sixth largest.
- > In 2018 there were an estimated 11,420 Salvadoran-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 8.0% since 2001.
- > In 2019 there are 162 Salvadoran migrants on temporary visas in Australia.
- > 33.1% of Australia's Salvadoran-born population resides in Victoria, followed by 24.1% in Queensland.

Dynamics of migration

History of migration to Australia

Australia's first recorded migrants from El Salvador arrived in the 1940s, and it is estimated that before 1975 only 54 Salvadorans arrived as permanent migrants. Civil war in El Salvador resulted in approximately 1,200 Salvadorans travelling to Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program between 1983 and 1986. Some of the early refugees came directly from El Salvador, but later arrivals had often initially first settled in Mexico and Costa Rica before travelling on to Australia. By 1986, the Salvadoran-born population of Australia was 2,103 persons, making it the largest migrant population from Central America and the fifth largest from Latin America.

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. Salvadoran-born population of Australia by year of arrival, 2016

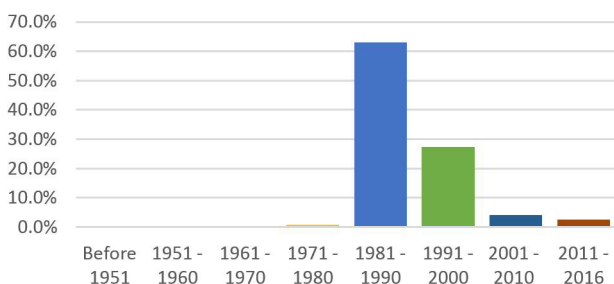
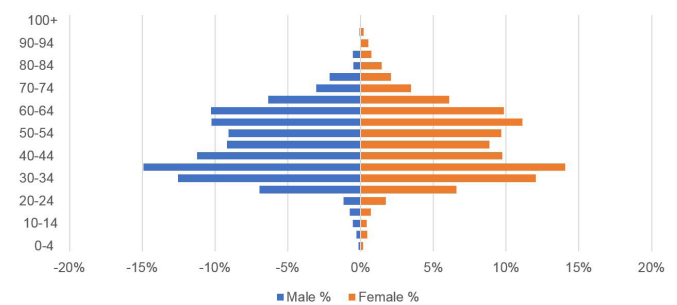


Figure 2. Salvadoran-born population of Australia by age and sex, 2016



in Australia for less than a year, re-migrated or those who died. In 2016, almost two-thirds (63.0%) of Salvadorans living in Australia had arrived between 1981 and 1990. Approximately 2.6% of Salvadorans residing in Australia in 2016 arrived after 2010. In December 2017, 30 refugees from El Salvador arrived via the United States as part of the Australia–United States Resettlement Arrangement (2016).

Demographic composition

The median age of the Salvadoran-born population of Australia was 46, whereas the median age of the Australian population was 38 in 2016. Almost a quarter (24.9%) of the Salvadoran-born population was between the ages of 35 and 44 years. The largest age group for both Salvadoran men and women was the 35 to 39 years age group. Among the Salvadoran population, 13.6% were 65 years old and over, and 1.0% were under 15 years old.



Of the total Salvadoran-born population of Australia 47.7% were men and 52.3% 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 33.2% of Salvadoran migrants resided in Victoria. The second leading state of residence was Queensland, where 24.1% of Salvadorans lived. Australia-wide, the most popular areas for residence were Deer Park, Derrimut, Hampton Park, Lynbrook and Narre Warren South in Victoria.

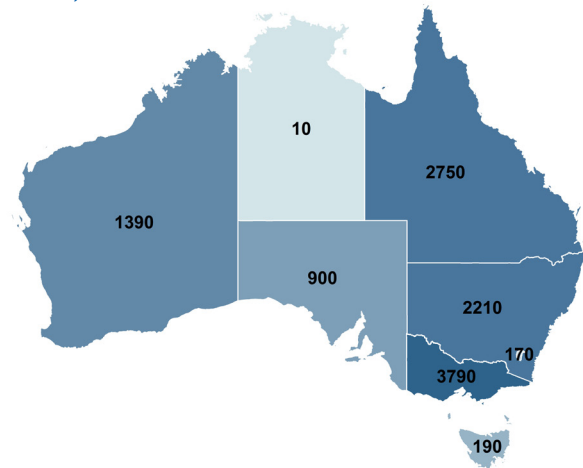
The distribution of Salvadoran migrants across Australia has remained relatively constant over time, with Victoria hosting about a third of the Salvadoran-born population. The distribution of Salvadorans across all Australian states has remained relatively unchanged between 2001 and 2016.

Pathways to integration

Economic impact

The 2016 Census recorded that the health care and social assistance sector was the largest employer of Salvadoran workers, employing approximately 22.6% of all Salvadoran employees. Approximately 76.7% of the Salvadoran employees in this sector were female. This industry was the largest employer of Salvadoran women in 2016.

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



The administrative and support services and public administration and safety industries were the second and third largest industry-employers, comprising 8.7% and 8.6% of the total employment share respectively. Both industries were evenly shared between male and female Salvadoran workers. The manufacturing industry was the largest employer of Salvadoran males in 2016.

In 2011, the health care and social assistance industry was the leading employer of Salvadoran migrants, with manufacturing being the second largest industry of employment, followed by the administrative and support services industry.

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



Education

Almost a quarter (23.1%) of Australia’s Salvadoran-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. The share of the Salvadoran migrant population that is university educated has increased from 2011, when the Census recorded that 20% of Australia’s Salvadoran-born population had Bachelor degree level qualifications or above.

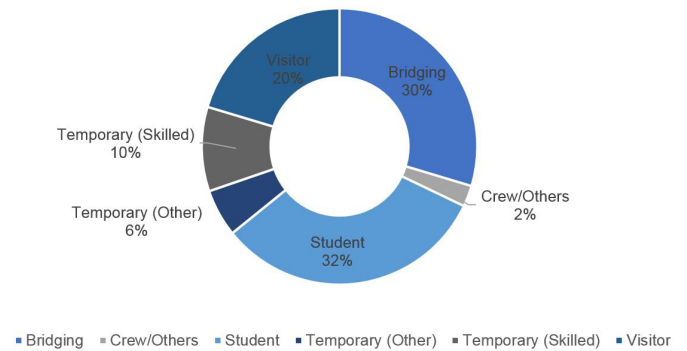
Contemporary migration

The number of Salvadoran migrants in Australia on temporary visas has seen a slight increase, from 120 in 2014 to 162 in 2019. The main types of temporary visas are bridging visas and student visas. The number of Salvadoran migrants on student visas has remained constant, from 56 in 2014 to 52 in 2019. There has been an increase in Salvadoran migrants on bridging visas, increasing from 15 in 2014 to 48 in 2019.

Identity and community

The Australian Census captures data from both people born in El Salvador who have migrated to Australia (known as the First Generation) and those who have one or both parents born in El Salvador (Second Generation). In the 2016 Census, 93.6% of Australia’s Salvadoran-born population were Australian citizens. As a bilingual

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



population, 84.5% of First Generation Salvadorans speak English well or very well, while 89.7% also speak Spanish at home.

In 2016, the total size of the Second Generation Salvadoran population in Australia was 7,512 persons. The largest group was those aged five to nine years, totalling 1,675 persons. There were 5,513 Second Generation persons aged under 20, and 1,729 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

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

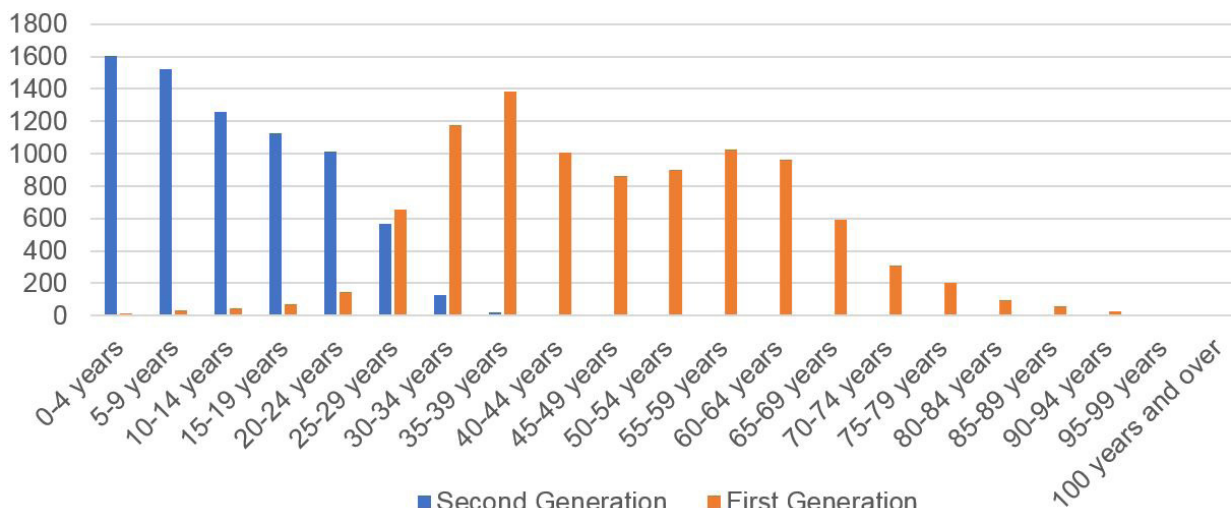
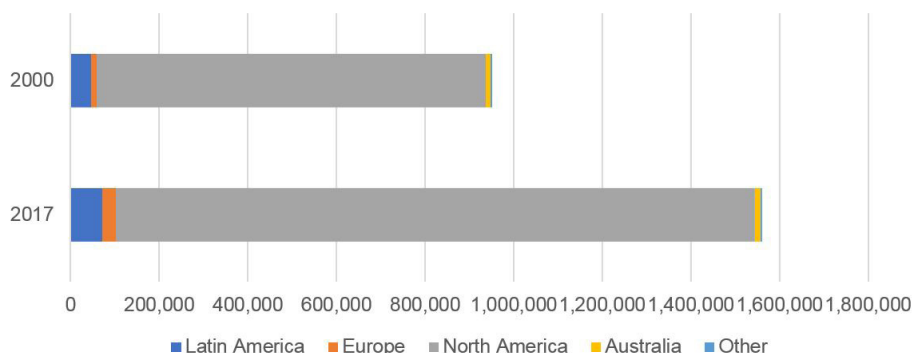


Figure 7. Global distribution of Salvadoran migrants in 2000 and 2017



(such as Mayan), a regional identity (South or Central American) or other types of ancestry (for example European, Asian, African or American). There were 8,720 persons who identified in the 2016 Census as having Salvadoran ancestry, of whom 1.4% had both parents born in Australia and 14.5% had one parent born in Australia.

Global connections

Recent migration to Australia from El Salvador has been affected by broader changes to the internal economies of Latin America and to their external migration flows, caused by globalisation. The population on El Salvador in 2017 was 6.4 million persons. Another 1,559,924 Salvadorans are estimated to be living outside their country of birth.

Of this diaspora:

- > 71,840 Salvadoran-born migrants were resident in Latin America
- > 30,168 Salvadoran-born migrants were resident in Europe
- > 1,443,419 Salvadoran-born migrants were resident in North America

The number of Salvadoran migrants has increased by 64.4% between 2000 and 2017. The geographic distribution of the Salvadoran diaspora has remained relatively unchanged.

According to the World Bank, remittances to El Salvador totalled US\$5 billion in 2017, with US\$37 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*.

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

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