Settlement Data

Frequently Asked Questions

This Help Booklet was created by the Settlement Data and Reporting Team, Department of Social Services. If you have any queries regarding this Booklet please contact settlement.data.request@dss.gov.au

Topics covered in this document

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What is the Settlement Database (SDB)?

The SDB was developed to provide statistical settlement data for government and community agencies involved in the planning and provision of settlement services. It brings together data from various government departments such as Department of Home Affairs, Medicare Australia etc. The SDB is a repository of information on **permanent**, and **some temporary**, settlers who have arrived in Australia since 1 January 1991. Settlement data held on the SDB is updated on the 5th day of every month.

What does 'some temporary migrants' mean?

The SDB collects data on certain temporary visa subclasses. These subclasses are likely to lead to the grant of a permanent visa subclass.

More information about the subclasses held on the SDB can be found in the Settlement Data Dictionary

What information is available from the SDB?

A range of visa, geographic and demographic information is available for extract from the SDB. For further reference on available data items, please see Settlement Data Dictionary

What information is not available from the SDB?

Settlement geographical data **cannot** provide information on settlement patterns or trends. For example, SDB cannot produce answers to the following types of questions:

- How many skilled migrants have arrived in Tasmania over the past 10 years?
- How many Burmese migrants have settled in Brisbane over each of the past 5 years?
- How many migrants of Samoan background were living in Sydney between 2005 – 2010?

Any Settlement Data that includes geographic data will only ever tell you the number of settlers who are **currently recorded** as residing in a particular location.

What can Settlement Data be used for?

Settlement Data can be used to analyse the characteristics of different groups of settlers, whether Australia-wide or in specific geographical locations.

The data can be used to support policy making, program planning and program management across a range of contexts, including:

- Provision of settlement services to particular settlers by countries of birth or ethnicities.
- Provision of education services to settlers and their children.
- Targeting health services for vulnerable client groups.
- Identifying languages for translation of information and for targeted mail/handouts.

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What is the Date Type?

In the SDB there are two Date Type options. These are:

- Arrival Date
- Visa Grant Date

Arrival Date uses data captured in the Arrival Date field to select settler records within a selected Date Range.

Visa Grant Date uses data captured in the Current Grant Date field on the SDB to select settlers within a selected Date Range.

By using either Date of Arrival (default when extracting data) or Visa Grant Date, you can limit the number of records for your extract. The SDB holds data from 1991 and currently holds over 3.8 million-settler records it is advisable to limit the records extracted.

Location-specific data

Settlement Data can only ever provide a 'snapshot' of settlers **currently recorded** as residing in requested location/s as at the date of the last SDB data extract (the 5th of each month). Settlement Data will not show migration or settlement patterns for specific areas because it cannot report on numbers of settlers living in locations for past years.

Location reports can answer the following types of enquiries:

- How many Sudanese migrants, arriving in Australia after 01/01/1991, are **currently recorded** as living in Liverpool LGA?
- How many skilled migrants, arriving in Australia after 01/01/1991, are **currently recorded** as residing in the Gold Coast (C) area, and what are their countries of birth?
- How many refugee children are **currently recorded** as residing in Queensland, and what are their countries of birth and ethnicities?

Data which use geographic locations should be interpreted with care. This is due to the Settlement Data reporting on each settler's most recently captured or recorded address. For some settlers the address details recorded may be out-of-date and for others, no address details may be present.

The geographical standards used in the SDB is Australian Standard Geographical Classifications 2011.

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How complete and accurate is the data?

Due to differences in the way source data is collected, some data is not complete for all migrants. Certain data will tend to be more complete for certain migration streams. For example, Religion and Main Language have a higher proportion of Humanitarian entrants than for migrants in the Skilled or Family streams. As such, interpretation of reports with a high proportion of not stated, invalid or not recorded values should be approached with care.

Also, some criteria, such as English Proficiency, may be self-assessed and many others are self-reported (i.e., Main Language and Religion), during the visa application process. This means that this type of data cannot be considered a standardised measure of the criteria in question.

A level of inaccuracy should be assumed in reports which count the numbers of migrants in specific geographical areas, particularly smaller areas such as Statistical Local Areas, Statistical Divisions or Local Government Areas. This is due to the difficulty in sourcing up to date address information.

It is important that when interpreting data from the Settlement Reports that you take into consideration issues outlined in the Caveats. The Settlement Data Caveats are available online at Settlement Data Caveats.

What does a Country of Birth of 'Australia' mean?

If a migrant's Country of Birth is listed as 'Australia', it indicates that the individual was actually born in Australia from parents who had arrived in Australia prior to the birth but were not permanent residents.

Since 1987, Australian citizenship is gained when a child either has one citizen parent, permanent resident parent or has been in Australia for 10 consecutive years since birth. Where a child is born to parents holding only temporary visa/s, that child is granted the same visa as the parent and added to any permanent visa application at the request of the parent. When that permanent visa is granted, the child is also granted the permanent visa as a dependent and considered a permanent 'migrant' as part of the family regardless of their birth in Australia.

Interpreting Humanitarian migrant information

Care should be taken when interpreting Humanitarian migrant information as the country of birth recorded may not necessarily indicate the ethnicity. These migrants may have been born in foreign refugee camps. While we are unable to identify all country of birth groups which may have significant proportions of foreign ethnicities, the following groups are known to be affected and should be interpreted with caution:

- Thailand (most migrants are of Burmese ethnicity);
- Bhutan (most migrants are of Nepalese ethnicity); and
- Kenya (most migrants are of Dinka ethnicity).

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For further assistance:

To get further information please send your queries to settlement.data.request@dss.gov.au