

## Recent Dutch Immigrants' Experiences (DIMEX 2) - Differences with earlier Dutch Immigrants' Experiences (DIMEX 1).

The Dutch Australian Cultural Centre (DACC) in Sydney has recently promoted a survey of mostly Post -1990 Dutch migrants, DIMEX 2. The early results are out. An academic article by two academics specifically involved with this research is expected to be published later in the year. They are Prof. Dr. Tineke Fokkema (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute) and Dr. Jose van den Akker (Central Queensland University). In this article a brief early summary as well as a broad comparative assessment is provided. The DACC did an earlier survey in 2005, based on comparable questions, known as DIMEX 1, organised by Klaas Woldring Ph. D.

Unlike the earlier research (307 returns), which concentrated on NSW, DIMEX 2 respondents reflect a national spread, fairly evenly divided amongst the states. Although 235 responses were collected, 167 (or 71%) could be regarded as strictly Post-1990 respondents migrating directly from the Netherlands. Some of the Post-1990 migrants had been in Australia before, were married to an Australian or NZ born partner or had lived in other countries. The reasons why the Post-1990 migrants were attracted to Australia had much more to do with climate (38.9%) as compared to earlier migrants for whom it was a minor pull factor really (5%). Post-War migrants were driven much more by economic necessity (27%), against 8.4% of the Post-1990 group. Post-1990 migrants were better educated, had a better knowledge of the English language and most landed better jobs. Adventure, rather than economic need, also played a significant role for them (32.9%). Population Density in the Netherlands (18%) and Lack of Space (17.4%) were strong push factors now. With the earlier migrant group Population Density rated only 2% but Lack of Accommodation in the Netherlands in the 1950s was a fairly major push factor (9%).

The 1950s and 1960s migrants were strongly encouraged by the Dutch Government to leave the Netherlands as economic opportunity was very limited, accommodation for young couples quite scarce and a Third World War was considered a possible threat to be avoided. Australia initially also only encouraged immigration by Europeans, but that source dried up by the end of the 1960s when economic conditions in most European countries had improved considerably. The Post-War migrants were financially supported for the journey but had to stay two years. This did assist the success rate. However, Dutch trade qualifications were not recognised in Australia while they were increasingly in demand in Europe. On account of that and some other, social reasons approximately one third of the Dutch post-war migrants had returned to the Netherlands by 1970; some other Europeans were only marginally below that figure. After 1970 emigration to Australia comprised a much greater variety of countries of origin, including the Middle East, Vietnam, other Asian countries as well as African countries. Political refugees, annually comprising between 5% and 10% of the total intake, also added to the growing multi-cultural diversity.

Another major difference was that the old migration policy system after WWII had ended (probably around 1970). The Dutch Post-War migrants were financially in a weaker position than the Post-1990 cohort. The latter could more easily return if the experience was not to their liking. However, several reported to be in managerial positions (29.9%) or started small businesses (17.1%); 15% were in education and 13.2% in care-related positions. In terms of age on arrival the Post-1990 group was older, 77.2% between 20 and 40. Less than 5% were under 20. In the Post-War group 29% reported (in 2005) that they were children when they arrived.

Both groups had mostly positive to very positive impressions of Australia on arrival, the later cohort more so than the Post-War group, who were temporarily accommodated sometimes in far from comfortable camps.

How many became naturalised Australians? By 2005 the Post War group reported 80% (but this excluded those who had returned to the Netherlands). In 2018 the Post- 1990s group reported 24.6% (in a shorter period but, again, not counting those who returned, probably a smaller percentage).

English spoken at home in 2005 was 70% by the Post-War group and 72.4% by the Post-1990 migrants. However, both groups continue to speak Dutch outside the home, where appropriate.

The earlier migrants could be found in a very wide spectrum of occupations, suggesting a preparedness to take on just about anything and were also ready to study part or full time. The later migrants demonstrate the same readiness and did find, again, that additional education/courses were often required to complete as some Dutch qualifications were not accepted. Some 35% of the Post-1990s group were required to undertake additional training.

How often did the migrants travel back to the Netherlands for a visit? The Post-War group posted the following variations: 1- 3 times (40%); 4 - 6 times (26.6%); 7-9 times (13.3%). The Post-1990 group showed a somewhat different frequency, even though flying had become cheaper and they had better incomes: 1- 3 times (34.1%); 4- 6 times (28.7%); 7 - 11 times (18.6%). However, this was recorded over a much shorter period - approximately 45 years versus 25 years, on average.

Contact between the two groups is fairly limited. In percentage terms it breaks down to 51.8% Yes, against 48.2% No. Most Post-1990 migrants have not joined the existing Dutch Clubs or organisations formed by the Post-War migrants. They are somewhat reluctant to mix with the earlier migrants. There is of course a huge age difference, although not with the second Post-War generation. Many earlier Dutch migrants keep to their Dutch customs and ways while the later migrants are more flexible and adaptable to socialising with Australians. Comments like "stuck in the

1950s" and sometimes "Dutcher than Dutch" were made by the Post-1990s group to illustrate their impressions and sentiments. However, some do also have reservations about socialising with Australians. Overall, there is little doubt that the Post-War migrants experienced greater difficulties to succeed than the Post-1990s group. Nevertheless, both groups have settled in Australia successfully. All Dutch migrants are often described as the "invisible migrants". The research does not provide clues why but it suggests a high degree of satisfaction amongst and with these migrants.

In this article responsibility for the DIMEX 2 figures is taken by Professor Fokkema and Dr. van den Akker. DIMEX 1 results come from earlier DACC research. Comparative assessments were made by Klaas Woldring, Secretary of the Dutch Australian Cultural Centre, Sydney.