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Who lucks out in the lucky country? Early settlement indicators of recent arrivals in Australia.

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Abstract

It is uncontested that migrant settlement is a long process and that socio-economic parity with the Australian born population inevitably takes time. However, there is a growing concern that early settlement experiences have long-term implications for settlement. While Australia continues to be viewed as the 'lucky country' and a 'land of opportunity' for immigrants, some groups of recent arrivals 'luck out' more than others in the past and present. This paper explores the early settlement experiences of specific groups of recently arrived migrants in Australia. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (cohort 2) wave one and two principal applicant responses are analysed. A set of early settlement indicators is used to form an analytical framework, which directs discussion. These indicators are grouped into five categories; social participation, housing, health, economic participation and economic well-being. Variables include age, sex, visa category, country of origin, sponsorship status and state of residence. Groups who have historically been found to take longer to settle successfully (humanitarian entrants, migrants with low qualifications and migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse countries) are found to continue to experience problems during early settlement. In addition new groups with possible early settlement difficulties will be identified. The implications for Australian policies on immigration, settlement and welfare will be discussed.

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