

**IMMIGRATING TO AND AGEING IN  
AUSTRALIA: CHINESE EXPERIENCES**

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**This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at Murdoch University**

**2005**

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

Chinese communities, large or small, exist in almost every country in the world. The huge Chinese diaspora has played a big role in the global economy. Those in Australia are no exception. The first significant Chinese immigration to Australia came in the 1850s during the gold rush era. Since then Chinese immigration to Australia has gone through up and down periods. However, only after the diplomatic relationship between Australia and China was established in 1972, did mainland Chinese begin to come to Australia directly from China. Since 1978 when China opened its door to the world and started its economic reform, more and more Chinese students have come to Australia. In particular, after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, a significant number of Chinese became Australian permanent residents and contributed to the fast growth of the established Chinese community in Australia.

This thesis analyses immigration and ageing issues relating to the Australian Chinese community, which is now not only one of the oldest in Australia, but also one of the biggest, and economically, one of the most dynamic communities. It draws a historical and contemporary picture of overseas Chinese in Australia, including the Chinese migrants who remained in this country after the Tiananmen Square Incident. This study developed a model to investigate a wide range of factors that drive population movement between Australia and China. The determining factors include a wide range of push and pull forces that change constantly with the overall political, economic and environmental developments. The research findings claim that the pull, push and enabling factors interact with each other to influence Chinese people's decision to migrate from China to Australia. It becomes apparent that there are certain determinants which can help explain, understand and project this complex process in the future.

This study further proves that Chinese migrants in Australia have made the smooth, but challenging transition between their native and adopted countries. Being involved into the Australian mainstream society, Chinese Australians have achieved economic adaptation and enjoy living in their new country. In addition, Chinese citizens who are studying as international students in Australia are potential skilled migrants and they are likely to apply for migration status after completing their studies. It is believed that Australia continues to be one of the most desired Western migration destinations for Chinese nationals and the magnitude of the Chinese ethnic community in Australia will continue to grow. In the future, the number of elderly Chinese in Australia is likely to increase as the majority of current economically active Chinese intend to retire in Australia and more older Chinese are expected to migrate to Australia for family reunion. As part of the general issues of Australian ageing population, this study attempts to raise the awareness of the challenging life-style of the Chinese elderly in Australia now and future.

This study offers convincing evidence that Chinese immigrants play a vital bridging role in promoting business and trade between Australia and China. Due to China's economic growth, their movement between these two countries will be more frequent. Overall, this study provides important considerations for policy makers and will benefit the broad communities, migrants and policy planners in understanding the model of Chinese immigration into Australia. The insights gained from this study should have important policy implications for a more sustainable way of living not only in Australia, but also in China and other countries with Chinese immigrants.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>1.1 Reasons for the Research</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>1.2 Research Questions</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>1.3 Research Objectives</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>1.4 Thesis Structure</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>2.1 Introduction</b>  | <b>16</b> |
| <b>2.2 Literature Review</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>2.3 Internet</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| <b>2.4 Fieldwork</b>   | <b>18</b> |
| <b>2.5 Interviews</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>2.6 Quantitative Data</b>   | <b>25</b> |
| <b>2.7 Conclusion</b>  | <b>26</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF<br/>CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA</b>     | <b>28</b> |
| <b>3.1 Introduction</b>  | <b>28</b> |
| <b>3.2 Demographic comparison between Australia and China</b>                            | <b>29</b> |
| <i>3.2.1 Natural Population Changes in China and Australia</i>                           | <i>30</i> |
| <i>3.2.2 Population Ageing in Australia and China</i>                                    | <i>35</i> |
| <i>3.2.3 Population Projections</i>  | <i>37</i> |
| <b>3.3 Population of Chinese Ancestry in Australia</b>                                   | <b>39</b> |
| <i>3.3.1 Definition</i>  | <i>39</i> |
| <i>3.3.2 Contemporary Chinese in Australia after 1972</i>                                | <i>46</i> |
| <b>3.4 Geographical and Language Characteristics of Current<br/>Chinese in Australia</b> | <b>50</b> |
| <i>3.4.1 Geographic Distribution of Chinese in Australia</i>                             | <i>50</i> |
| <i>3.4.2 Chinese Language Demography</i>   | <i>53</i> |
| <b>3.5 Conclusion</b>  | <b>59</b> |

## CHAPTER FOUR: DETERMINANTS OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

|            |  |    |
|------------|--|----|
| <b>4.1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>                                    | 61 |
| <b>4.2</b> | <b>Migration Model</b>                                 | 64 |
| <b>4.3</b> | <b>Push and Pull Factors</b>                           | 70 |
|            | <i>4.3.1 Economic Reasons</i>                          | 70 |
|            | <i>4.3.2 Social Reasons</i>                            | 72 |
|            | <i>4.3.3 Political Factors</i>                         | 77 |
|            | <i>4.3.4 Business Investment</i>                       | 85 |
|            | <i>4.3.5 Educational Opportunities</i>                 | 87 |
|            | <i>4.3.6 State of the Natural Environment</i>          | 93 |
| <b>4.4</b> | <b>Enabling Environment</b>                            | 94 |
|            | <i>4.4.1 Migration Policies of Australia and China</i> | 95 |
|            | <i>4.4.2 Communication Technologies</i>                | 98 |
| <b>4.5</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>                                      | 99 |

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| <b>5.1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>   | 103 |
| <b>5.2</b> | <b>Cultural Characteristics</b>   | 104 |
|            | <i>5.2.1 Chinese Organisations and Their Activities</i>                       | 105 |
|            | <i>5.2.2 Case Study: the Chung Wah Association (CWA) in Western Australia</i> | 108 |
|            | <i>5.2.3 Informal Organisations and China-towns in Australia</i>              | 119 |
|            | <i>5.2.4 Media and Newspapers</i>   | 123 |
|            | <i>5.2.5 Education</i>  | 126 |
|            | <i>5.2.6 Citizenship</i>  | 130 |
|            | <i>5.2.7 Religion</i>   | 134 |
| <b>5.3</b> | <b>Economic Characteristics</b>   | 136 |
|            | <i>5.3.1 Employment</i>   | 137 |
|            | <i>5.3.2 Occupation and Industry</i>  | 142 |
| <b>5.4</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>   | 156 |

|  |   |         |
|--|---|---------|
| <b>CHAPTER SIX: THE ROLE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS<br/>IN THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS<br/>BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA</b> |   | 158     |
| <b>6.1</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>   | 158     |
| <b>6.2</b>   | <b>Overview of Current Trade between Australia and China</b>                                    | 159     |
|  | <i>6.2.1 Impacts of China's Access to the World Trade Organisation</i>                          | 162     |
|  | <i>6.2.2 Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement</i>   | 164     |
| <b>6.3</b>   | <b>The Role of Chinese Immigrants in the Trade Relationship<br/>between Australia and China</b> | 168     |
| <b>6.4</b>   | <b>Tourism Between Australia and China</b>  | 179     |
|  | <i>6.4.1 Australia – Approved Destination Status for Chinese<br/>Tourists</i>                   | 179     |
|  | <i>6.4.2 Role of Chinese Immigrants in the Tourism Industry</i>                                 | 181     |
| <b>6.5</b>   | <b>Conclusion</b>   | 182     |
| <br><b>CHAPTER SEVEN: AGEING OF THE AUSTRALIAN<br/>CHINESE COMMUNITY</b>   |   | <br>184 |
| <b>7.1</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>   | 184     |
| <b>7.2</b>   | <b>Ageing in China, Australia and the Australian Chinese<br/>Community</b>                      | 187     |
|  | <i>7.2.1 Comparison of Population Ageing between China and<br/>Australia</i>                    | 189     |
|  | <i>7.2.2 Ageing of the Australian Chinese Community</i>   | 197     |
| <b>7.3</b>   | <b>Ageing of the Western Australian Chinese Community</b>                                       | 206     |
|  | <i>7.3.1 Demographic Profile of Chinese Population in WA</i>                                    | 207     |
|  | <i>7.3.2 Economic Profile of Chinese Population in WA</i>                                       | 214     |
| <b>7.4</b>   | <b>Cultural and Social Profile of Chinese Elderly in Australia</b>                              | 218     |
|  | <i>7.4.1 English Proficiency</i>  | 218     |
|  | <i>7.4.2 Social Life</i>  | 225     |
|  | <i>7.4.3 Living Arrangements for Chinese Elderly in Australia</i>                               | 227     |
|  | <i>7.4.4 Community Service and Care</i>   | 230     |
| <b>7.5</b>   | <b>Future Needs and Trends</b>  | 236     |
| <b>7.6</b>   | <b>Conclusion</b>   | 239     |

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
|            | <b>CHAPTER EIGHT: TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE<br/>FUTURE</b> | 242 |
| <b>8.1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>   | 242 |
| <b>8.2</b> | <b>Summary of Findings</b>                                  | 243 |
| <b>8.3</b> | <b>Policy Implications</b>                                  | 247 |
|            | <i>8.3.1 Immigration policy</i>                             | 249 |
|            | <i>8.3.2 Economic Policy</i>                                | 252 |
|            | <i>8.3.3 Social Policy</i>                                  | 258 |
|            | <i>8.3.4 Ageing</i>   | 261 |
|            | <i>8.3.5 Environmental policy</i>                           | 265 |
| <b>8.4</b> | <b>Future Research Recommendations</b>                      | 274 |



## LIST OF TABLES

|           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Table 1.1 | Census Population by Country of Birth, 1981-2001, ('000), Australia   | 4   |
| Table 3.1 | Life Expectancy in China and Australia, 1990 and 2000   | 36  |
| Table 3.2 | China's Population Projections, 2010-2050 (billion persons)   | 37  |
| Table 3.3 | Population Projections, Australia   | 38  |
| Table 3.4 | Chinese Languages Spoken at Home, Australia, 1996-2001  | 56  |
| Table 4.1 | Total Number of Class 815 and Class 816 Visas   | 82  |
| Table 5.1 | Education for Selected Countries of Origin (%), 2001 Census, Australia  | 128 |
| Table 5.2 | Employment, Selected Countries of Origin, 2001 Census, Australia  | 139 |
| Table 5.3 | Participation in the Labour Force: China-born, Chinese Ancestry and Total Western Australian, Western Australia, 2001 | 141 |
| Table 5.4 | Type of Businesses in China-town, Melbourne, 2000   | 145 |
| Table 7.1 | Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China, 1964 –2004   | 190 |
| Table 7.2 | Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China, 1997, 2001 and Australia, 2001                             | 192 |
| Table 7.3 | Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China-born, Australian States and Territories, 2001               | 202 |
| Table 7.4 | Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China-born and total Western Australian Population, 2001          | 208 |
| Table 7.5 | Language Spoken at Home by Persons Who Speak English Not Well or Not at All, 65+, Australia                           | 220 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|             |  |     |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Figure 3.1  | Crude Birth Rates, China and Australia, 1949 – 2002  | 31  |
| Figure 3.2  | Crude Death Rates, China and Australia, 1949 – 2002  | 31  |
| Figure 3.3  | Total Fertility Rates of China and Australia, 1950 – 1979  | 32  |
| Figure 3.4  | Percentage of Population with Chinese Ancestry,<br>2001 Census Australia                                       | 41  |
| Figure 3.5  | Number of Chinese in Victoria, Australia, 1854 -1921   | 43  |
| Figure 3.6  | Number of Full Blood Chinese by State and Territory,<br>Australia, 1881-1921                                   | 43  |
| Figure 3.7  | Number of Full Blood Chinese in Australia, 1881 – 1921   | 45  |
| Figure 3.8  | Australian Population Change by Country of Birth,<br>1981-2001 (Thousands)                                     | 47  |
| Figure 3.9  | Census Population, Hong Kong-born and China-born<br>(Thousands), Australia, 1981 – 2001                        | 50  |
| Figure 3.10 | China-born and Hong Kong-born Population by State and<br>Territory, 2001 Census, Australia                     | 51  |
| Figure 3.11 | Top Seven Language Groups in Australia, 2001 Census  | 54  |
| Figure 3.12 | Chinese Language Spoken at Home by Persons Who Speak<br>English not well or not at all, 2001 Census, Australia | 58  |
| Figure 4.1  | Routes to Australia from China   | 61  |
| Figure 4.2  | Determinants of Chinese Immigration to Australia   | 67  |
| Figure 4.3  | Ten Major Source Countries for Students Granted Student<br>Visas Offshore in 2002-2003                         | 91  |
| Figure 4.4  | International Students from China, Curtin University of<br>Technology, First Half Activity, 2000-2004          | 91  |
| Figure 4.5  | Population of China-born, Australia (Thousands),<br>1981-2001  | 96  |
| Figure 5.1  | Persons Granted Australian Citizenship, China-born,<br>1990-91 to 1999-00                                      | 130 |
| Figure 6.1  | China's Foreign Trade with Australia, US\$10 000,<br>1999-2002   | 161 |
| Figure 6.2  | China's Actual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in<br>Australia, US\$10 000, 1999-2002                          | 161 |
| Figure 7.1  | Population Pyramid for China-born and Hong Kong-born<br>Population in Western Australia, 1996 Census           | 210 |
| Figure 7.2  | Population Pyramid for China-born and Hong Kong-born<br>Population, Western Australia, 2001 Census             | 210 |
| Figure 7.3  | Top Local Government Areas of China and Hong Kong-<br>born Population in Western Australia, 1996 Census        | 212 |
| Figure 7.4  | Top Local Government Areas of China-born and Hong<br>Kong-born Aged 65+ in Western Australia, 1996             | 213 |
| Figure 7.5  | Top 5 Local Government Areas of Chinese Ancestry, 2001<br>Census, Western Australia                            | 213 |
| Figure 7.6  | Weekly Individual Income, China-born, Chinese Ancestry<br>and Total Western Australian Population, 2001        | 215 |

|             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Figure 7.7  | Proficiency in Spoken English, Chinese Ancestry, Australia, 2001  | 218 |
| Figure 7.8  | Speak English Not Well/Not at All, Aged 65+, Selected Language Groups, Western Australia, 2001 Census                   | 220 |
| Figure 7.9  | English Proficiency of China-born Aged 65+, Australia, 1996   | 221 |
| Figure 7.10 | Speak English Not Well/Not at All, Cantonese Speaking Groups, 65+, Top LGAs of Chinese Ancestry Groups, WA, 2001 Census | 222 |
| Figure 7.11 | Language Spoken at Home, China-born, 65+, Western Australia, 1996   | 224 |

## LIST OF BOXES AND EXHIBITS

|          |   |     |
|----------|---|-----|
| Box 3.1  | Moving Within Australia   | 53  |
| Box 4.1  | An Economically Successful Migrant                              | 71  |
| Box 4.2  | Helping a Friend or Relatives to Migrate to Australia           | 73  |
| Box 4.3  | Falling in Love   | 75  |
| Box 4.4  | No more Broken Marriages  | 76  |
| Box 4.5  | Mother and Son Separated by Inter-marriage                      | 77  |
| Box 4.6  | Coming to Australia after The Tiananmen Square Incident         | 83  |
| Box 4.7  | A Student from the Tiananmen Square Cohort                      | 84  |
| Box 4.8  | Immigration Through Investment                                  | 86  |
| Box 4.9  | Becoming a Permanent Resident after Obtaining a Master's Degree | 88  |
| Box 4.10 | Concern about China's Pollution and Industrialization           | 94  |
| Box 4.11 | The Story of a Skilled Migrant                                  | 98  |
| Box 4.12 | E-mail Communications   | 99  |
| Box 5.1  | Returning to Australia from China                               | 114 |
| Box 5.2  | Volunteers Are Welcome  | 115 |
| Box 5.3  | A Life of Volunteering  | 116 |
| Box 5.4  | Benefits from the Chung Wah Association                         | 117 |
| Box 5.5  | University Career   | 129 |
| Box 5.6  | Australian Passport   | 131 |
| Box 5.7  | Business in Hong Kong   | 133 |
| Box 5.8  | Christianity  | 135 |
| Box 5.9  | Degree in Marketing   | 138 |
| Box 5.10 | Taxi Driving  | 150 |
| Box 5.11 | Working Mother  | 152 |
| Box 5.12 | Business and Housework  | 154 |
| Box 5.13 | Selling at Market   | 155 |
| Box 6.1  | A Chinese Australian Working in China                           | 176 |
| Box 7.1  | An Elderly Couple from China                                    | 185 |
| Box 7.2  | Owning a House in Australia                                     | 186 |
| Box 7.3  | Coming Back to Australia for Health Care                        | 194 |
| Box 7.4  | Settling in Australia for Old Age                               | 204 |
| Box 7.5  | An Elderly Woman from China                                     | 216 |
| Box 7.6  | Daily Routine of an Elderly Chinese Couple from China           | 217 |
| Box 7.7  | An Elderly Woman from Brunei                                    | 223 |
| Box 7.8  | An Elderly Man from Hong Kong                                   | 226 |
| Box 7.9  | A Senior Man from China   | 226 |
| Box 7.10 | A Senior Woman from China                                       | 227 |
| Box 7.11 | A Chinese Elderly at a Social Club                              | 227 |
| Box 7.12 | An Elderly Woman from Malaysia                                  | 228 |
| Box 7.13 | Depending on Relatives  | 229 |
| Box 7.14 | An Elderly Woman Born in China                                  | 229 |
| Box 7.15 | A Chinese Elderly Who Lacks Social Life                         | 233 |
| Box 7.16 | Enjoying Celebrating Chinese New Year                           | 234 |
| Box 7.17 | Coming Back to Australia from Overseas for Retirement           | 238 |

|             |  |     |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Exhibit 5.1 | Celebrating Chinese New Year, 2003   | 108 |
| Exhibit 5.2 | The Chung Wah Chinese Association in Western Australia                                     | 110 |
| Exhibit 5.3 | Chung Wah Cultural Centre of Western Australia   | 112 |
| Exhibit 5.4 | A Media Conference Organized by the CWA after Three<br>Chinese Restaurants were Firebombed | 118 |
| Exhibit 5.5 | Australia's Famous Careline Products   | 153 |
| Exhibit 7.1 | Newspaper clippings tell the story of a 104 year old woman<br>from China                   | 200 |
| Exhibit 7.2 | Activities of Ethnic Melville Active Club (Chinese Group)<br>in the City of Melville       | 232 |
| Exhibit 7.3 | Chinese New Year Concert Posters from 2004 and 2005  | 235 |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ABC   | Australian Broadcasting Corporation                                |
| ABS   | Australian Bureau of Statistics                                    |
| ACC   | The Australia-China Council  |
| ACFS  | Australia-China Friendship Societies                               |
| ACT   | Australian Capital Territory                                       |
| ADS   | Approved Destination Status  |
| APEC  | Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation                                  |
| A\$   | Australian Dollars   |
| ATEC  | Australian Tourism Export Council.                                 |
| CSS   | Chinese Students and Scholars                                      |
| CSSA  | Chinese Students and Scholars Association                          |
| CNOOC | China National Offshore Oil Corp                                   |
| CWA   | Chung Wah Association  |
| DEET  | Department of Employment, Education and Training                   |
| DEST  | Department of Education, Science and Training                      |
| DIMA  | Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs                |
| DIMIA | Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs |
| DTFA  | Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs                            |
| EAAU  | East Asia Analytical Unit  |
| EMAS  | Ethnic Melville Active Seniors                                     |
| ETM   | Elaborately Transformed Manufacture                                |
| FDI   | Foreign Direct Investment  |
| FTA   | Free Trade Agreement   |
| GDP   | Gross Domestic Product   |
| HK    | Hong Kong  |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| IMF   | International Monetary Fund                                     |
| ITOA  | Inbound Tourism Organisation of Australia                       |
| LGA   | Local Government Areas  |
| LNG   | Liquefied Natural Gas   |
| LOTE  | Language Other Than English                                     |
| LSIA  | Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia                  |
| NBSC  | National Bureau of Statistics of China                          |
| NEMCA | North Eastern Melbourne Chinese Association Inc.                |
| NSW   | New South Wales   |
| OMI   | Office of Multicultural Interests                               |
| PD    | Productive Diversity  |
| PR    | Permanent Resident  |
| PRC   | The People's Republic of China                                  |
| PV    | Protection Visa   |
| QCASE | Queensland Chinese Association of Scientists and Engineers Inc. |
| RRT   | Refugee Review Tribunal   |
| SA    | South Australia   |
| SAR   | Special Administrative Region                                   |
| SBS   | Special Broadcasting Service                                    |
| TEC   | Turnover of Economic Cooperation                                |
| TFR   | Total Fertility Rate  |
| US\$  | United States Dollars   |
| WTO   | World Trade Organisation  |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would never have been completed without the active support and timely encouragement of my supervisor, Associate Professor Dora Marinova. I am deeply grateful to Dr Marinova for her patience, advice and untiring help throughout the years. She painstakingly read the drafts of my thesis. Her experience and wisdom were very helpful in enabling me to finish my thesis. I particularly thank Associate Professor Jeff Kenworthy, who was my acting supervisor. I benefited from his advice and support at various stages of my study. I also acknowledge assistance from Professor Peter Newman.

I am grateful to Murdoch University, which provided me with a PhD scholarship and professional support to undertake this study. The financial support from Murdoch University allowed me to conduct my fieldwork, present papers at domestic and international conferences and go through the most challenging completion stages of my research.

I am exceptionally grateful to the academics and research students of the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy (ISTP), Murdoch University, with special thanks to Margaret Gollagher, John Davis, Sally Paulin and Paul Pule for their valuable ideas, suggestions or for polishing my language. My thanks also go to John Davis and Susan Davison for their friendliness, assistance and support in dealing with administrative procedures. I also want to thank Amin, Siraj and other colleagues at ISTP, who helped me in one way or another at the last stage of my thesis.



I am most obliged to the Australian Chinese community, Chung Wah Association, City of Melville in Western Australia and all the people who shared their personal stories and life experiences with me.

Finally, but not the least, I am indebted to my parents and my extended families in China for their enormous support and encouragement. I am also deeply indebted to my loving husband Yanrui who endlessly provided moral support during many intense study periods. I am particularly indebted to my young wonderful children Amy and David who grew with the progress of my thesis, for their great understanding, patience and forbearance during my thesis research. They are my inspiration.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

International migration is an issue of constantly increasing importance in the world. In fact, the United Nations' *2003 Revision of the Total Migrant Stock* indicates that the number of international migrants in the world increased from an estimated 75 million in 1960 to almost 175 million in 2000, making migrants 3 percent of the world's residents who were living outside their country of birth (United Nations, 2003). Papademetriou (2003, p.39) points out that almost no country in the world is untouched by international migration. But some countries such as Australia have proactively invited people to settle within their territories with the expectations that population growth will also fuel economic development. Migration policies have changed over time and the current Australian non-discriminatory laws and regulations allow equal access for people from any ethnic origin. Consequently immigration has influenced and continues to have an enormous impact on Australia's society.

Immigration is an important component of Australia's population growth (Murphy and Williams 1997, p.16) and has brought many changes to Australia's population size and composition. The impact of immigration on Australia's economic development, including building of infrastructure, provision of skilled and unskilled labour, widening of the markets, and environment is also significant. Immigration has reshaped Australia's demography, society, culture and economy, and has left its prints on the country's natural environment (Khoo,

2002). In particular, immigration has made vital contributions to Australia's economic prosperity and, overall, played an important part in all walks of life.

As a key contributor to Australian population growth, immigration puts additional demands on social and physical infrastructure and immigrants add to labour supply both in terms of numbers and skills. A noticeable source of population increase for Australia among others has been its neighbouring Asian countries.

The Asian countries are important for Australia for the following reasons:

- Their geographic proximity makes population movement relatively easier;
- They provide a large share of the new migrant intakes since 1970s;
- The still unstable political and economic conditions in these countries encourage migration;
- Their fragile natural environment can potentially generate waves of environmental migrants;
- Zones of conflicts in Asia (such as Iraq, Afghanistan, etc) also trigger migration.

Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam have consistently been source of new migrants. China has also contributed towards Australia's population growth. The Australian Chinese community is one of the largest ethnic communities in Australia's multicultural society and continues to experience substantial growth.

Table 1.1 summarizes census data for Asian-born and European-born population in Australia from 1981 to 2001. The latest Census in 2001 recorded that 21.9 per cent of Australian population were born overseas, including 142,780 China-born persons, an increase of 29 per cent from the 1996 Census<sup>1</sup>. In 2001 the China-born population amounts to 0.8 per cent of the total Australian population. It also represents 3.5 percent of the overseas born population in Australia, a significant increase from the compared with 2.8 percent in 1996. This was the second highest Asian-born ethnic group, just behind Viet Nam (see table 1.1). However, if the Hong Kong-born population is added to the China-born population to form the group of overseas Chinese, the percentage of the Chinese becomes the highest in the group of Asian countries. It is very close to the figure of Italy-born and higher than the Greece-born population which have both been traditionally leading the Australian overseas-born population.

The percentage of China-born population among the overseas Chinese is also increasing. An examination of the population change between 1981 and 2001 shows that the population born in China experienced the highest increase and is now 4.5 times its 1981 size. It had the highest change among the major Asian-born population groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The China-born population in 1996 was 111,009.

**Table 1.1 Census Population by Country of Birth, 1981-2001, ('000),  
Australia**

| Country                         | 1981  | 1986  | 1991  | 1996  | 2001  | % change<br>from 1981 to<br>2001 | % of all<br>overseas<br>born, 2001 |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| China                           | 25.9  | 37.5  | 77.8  | 111.0 | 142.8 | 451.4                            | 3.5                                |
| Greece                          | 146.6 | 137.6 | 135.9 | 126.5 | 116.4 | -20.6                            | 2.8                                |
| Hong Kong <sup>2</sup>          | 15.7  | 28.3  | 59.3  | 70.4  | 67.1  | 327.4                            | 1.6                                |
| Indonesia                       | 16.2  | 24.2  | 32.6  | 44.2  | 47.2  | 191.4                            | 1.1                                |
| Italy                           | 275.9 | 261.9 | 253.9 | 238.2 | 218.7 | -20.7                            | 5.3                                |
| Malaysia                        | 31.6  | 47.8  | 71.7  | 76.2  | 78.9  | 149.7                            | 1.9                                |
| Singapore                       | 12.0  | 16.4  | 24.0  | 29.5  | 33.5  | 179.2                            | 0.8                                |
| Viet Nam                        | 41.1  | 83.0  | 121.8 | 151.1 | 154.8 | 276.6                            | 3.8                                |
| Hong Kong<br>and China-<br>born | 41.6  | 66.8  | 137.1 | 181.4 | 209.9 | 778.8                            | 5.1                                |

Sources: 1981-1996 data are drawn from DIMIA (2002)<sup>3</sup> and 2001 data from Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (2003)

The Australian Chinese community is one of the oldest and largest ethnic communities in Australia. The history of Chinese arrivals to this continent reflects the various stages of economic and political development of the world's most populous country. The composition of the Chinese minority in the very multicultural Australian society is extremely diverse in terms of their linguistic, cultural and socio-economic characteristics. Chinese migration to Australia has concentrated in two periods: early migration in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and more recent migration in the three decades after the 1960s. Wang (1978) was one of the first to study the massive emigration of Chinese to Australia during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Several more recent history books about

<sup>2</sup> Hong Kong (SAR of China), SAR is an abbreviation of "Special Administrative Region". Hong Kong and Macau were not recorded separately before the 1991 Census SARs comprise "Hong Kong and "Macao (SAR of China)"

<sup>3</sup> DIMIA (2002), Australian Immigration Consolidated Statistics Number 21 1999-00, Commonwealth of Australia

Chinese ancestors in Australia (Ryan, 1995, Fitzgerald 1996, 1998) analyse how the early settlers were attracted by the discovery of gold since the 1850s but struggled in their new country. Giese (1997) recorded conversations with Chinese Australians in her book “*Astronauts, Lost Souls and Dragons*”, which presents a fascinating array of interesting stories of the struggle, hopes and successes of Chinese Australians. Zhang (1998) also studied the history of Chinese migration to Australia and found that Chinese immigrants in Australia have made a great contribution to the Australian society for a long historic period. They have also played an important part in building the diplomatic relationship between Australia and China.

Despite these isolated efforts, there are overall very few publications presenting research on Chinese Australians, their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and in particular on new Chinese immigrants who migrated to Australia since the 1970s<sup>4</sup>. However, research into overseas Chinese has been carried out in China, USA and Europe (Zhuang, 2001; Zhang, 1998; Lai, 1992; Benton and Pieke, 1998). In China, studies such as the one by Zhuang (2001) have investigated the relationships with overseas Chinese and overseas migration and their impact on the Chinese society. Benton and Pieke (1998) studied the role Chinese play in Europe where they have settled in traditional bastions of European culture, such as in Italy or the Netherlands.

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<sup>4</sup> New Chinese migrants are the China-born persons who migrated to Australia since 1970s. It is analysed further in Chapter 3.

Being one of the oldest communities in Australia, and now one of the biggest and economically most dynamic, the Chinese community is of research interest because its migration experiences lead to a better understanding of the issues related to cultural adjustment and population ageing in a new country. It is hoped that such studies will promote and enable harmony between Australia's ethnic communities. However, there are very few studies that present both a historical and a contemporary picture of overseas Chinese in Australia. There is little detailed research on the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of Chinese immigrants, on factors determining population movement and demographic distribution of overseas Chinese in Australia.

This lack of research is in sharp contrast with the tremendous increase in the number of China-born immigrants in Australia. Since 1978, numerous migration applications from Chinese citizens have been approved and the successful applicants have settled in Australia. In addition, since the mid-1980s, the Australian government has been actively promoting its educational programs abroad. A large number of students from China have since come to Australia to study. Many of them have and are likely to apply for a migration status upon completion of their studies. More than 40 thousand students and their family members remained in Australia as permanent residents after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989. Following political changes and with the opening of China's economy, many Chinese have migrated to Australia as skilled and qualified personnel, as well as through business migration. Immigration from China has changed many people's lives and has also changed the composition of

the Chinese community in Australia. Immigrants from mainland China have contributed to Australia's population growth, economic prosperity, social fabrics, the composition of Australian cities, the farming of the land and the use of the country's natural resources.

The remaining section of this chapter describes the reasons for undertaking this research, the research question and the aims of the study. In addition, a brief outline of the following chapters is also presented.

### **1.1 Reasons for the Research**

With the increasing number of Chinese immigrants in Australia, research on the growing Chinese community becomes important not only for understanding the role and place of this ethnic community in Australia but also for its future development. The Chinese community in Australia is very active and alive. Its influence in all areas of life in Australia and economic contribution to the Australian society are becoming more pronounced. Most Australians have some knowledge about the Australian Chinese whose ancestors settled in this country more than 150 years ago and they are aware of their distinctive culture they have brought to Australia. However very little is known about the new Chinese immigrants in Australia. There has not been enough research on this large and active community. This thesis attempts to present a study of both old and new Chinese immigrants in Australia, examining demographic trends as well as how Chinese migrants adjust to a new lifestyle in Australia.



There are several reasons underlying the research on the Chinese community in Australia. First, the number of Australians with Chinese ancestors is growing rapidly. According to the 2001 Census, 3 per cent of Australia's population have Chinese ancestors and the China-born now represent a significant proportion of Australia's Chinese population. If Chinese migrants from Mainland China are combined with ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong and other parts of Asia such as Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, the total number of people in the Australian Chinese community as a group is the largest among all ethnic communities.

Since the 1990s, most Australian universities have actively encouraged international students to study in Australia. China has responded particularly well to these opportunities because of its geographic proximity, comparatively low educational costs in Australia and expanding trade between these two countries. For example, Australia provides resources such as iron ore and other metals to China and in return China exports a large amount of manufacturing products to Australia. Since the early 2000s, the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs introduced new arrangements for obtaining Australian permanent status upon completion of university studies in Australia, making it much easier to apply for permanent residence and reducing the waiting time. Substantially, these two developments have had a simultaneous positive effect on increasing the number of Chinese migrants to Australia. Being the most populous country in the world, China is likely to continue to generate a large number of migrants and this will have continuous impact on Australia.

The third reason for researching on the Chinese community is my own personal interest in the long history of Chinese migrants who first arrived in Australia in the 1850s. As a member of the Chinese community, I have witnessed and experienced the transition from a Chinese to an Australian Chinese. My personal experience has been shared by many others as the number of Chinese immigrants has increased very rapidly and is likely to continue to grow. The Chinese community in Australia and the Chinese migrants in particular provide unique insights into the experience of immigrants with distinctive social, cultural and economic characteristics. With the advantage of being a member of the Chinese community, I was able to meet a distinctive group of interesting people with whom I have communicated and whom I befriended. This study is based on interviews conducted in this friendly Chinese community either in my own language, Mandarin or my second language, English. Some interviews were also conducted in various Chinese dialects such as Shanghai, Cantonese, or Hokkien dialects of which my command is very limited. To do so, I have of course benefited from the help of my multilingual Chinese friends. I myself along with many other Chinese age and intend to spend the old age years in Australia. The ageing issues in the Chinese community will be an important part of population ageing picture in Australian. How does the Australian government along with the Chinese community prepare for the forthcoming huge demand for aged care and other socio-economic services? Is the Australian society ready to cater for elderly people of Chinese origin?

The insights gained in this study provide some understanding of the main research question posed in this study, which is described in the following section. It is hoped that, by examining the migration stories of Chinese Australians, the thesis will contribute to the improvement of social harmony and sustainable development of the multicultural Australian society.

## **1.2 Research Question**

This thesis is concerned with the broad topic on immigrating and ageing in Australia, using the Australian Chinese community as its setting. The research question, which guides the entire analysis in this thesis, is: how important the Australian Chinese community is for immigrating and ageing in Australia. In order to answer this question, this thesis specifically deals with the following issues:

- Demographic picture of the Chinese community in Australia
- Factors influencing Chinese immigration to Australia
- Expectations of Chinese people when migrating to Australia
- Problems faced by Chinese migrants in Australia
- Characteristics and features of the life style of the Chinese community in Australia, including ageing in Australia
- Policy recommendations in relation to Chinese and other migrant communities in Australia.

In addition, this thesis also analyses the population movement of ethnic Chinese between China and Australia, which has been made easier recently because of political, social and economic changes in both countries. In the current political and economic climate, migration from China to Australia is not always a single unidirectional act. The connections established between these two countries via the Chinese migrants act as a catalyst for future business activities, educational opportunities, job prospects and expansion of family networks. The study examines whether maintaining links with mainland China, including return migration and temporary residence are beneficial to both countries and Australia, in particular. In doing so, this study aims to draw policy implications from population movement between Australia and China and provide a broader picture of migration.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

In this study, the working definition of “Chinese” in Australia is people of Chinese ancestry. In particular, the China-born and Hong Kong-born Australians are the focus of the analysis. The size of the Australian China-born and Hong Kong born population has increased significantly since the mid-1980s and after the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. It accounts for 209,901 people in 2001 or 1.2 % of Australia’s total population. By its sheer volume this ethnic community represents an important part of Australia’s society. The thesis analyses its role in attracting new migrants, settling and also ageing in Australia. This has

several objectives. Specially, this thesis aims to:

- identify the reasons why Chinese migrants chose Australia as a country of destination;
- explain how they make the transition between their native country and Australia;
- what the expectations of Chinese migrants of Australia are and whether these expectations have been met;
- discuss the difficulties Chinese migrants face in their everyday life in Australia and how they see their future in Australia;
- contrast the difference between how those people live now and how they would have lived in China;
- analyse further population movements between China and Australia;
- make suggestions and recommendations to facilitate Chinese migrants' needs and increase the benefits from population movement between China and Australia.

Overall, the goal of this study is to achieve a better understanding of why Chinese immigrants, especially those born in the People's Republic of China, chose Australia as their destination and what their expectations are from their new home country. Further more, this study also focuses on the socio-economic activities of the Chinese migrants and their life styles. It also provides a demographic profile of Chinese migrants in Australia and examines issues related to population ageing,

cultural and ethnic activities and sustainability. The findings of the analysis are used to draw policy implications for Australia.

Although the thesis only deals with the issues surrounding one ethnic community in Australia, there is potential to draw parallels and make conclusions which expand beyond the specifics of the Australian Chinese. The concerns about ethnic identity, sense of belonging, economic, social and environmental sustainability in Australia transcend the boundaries of specific communities and require to cross cultural, economic, political and policy borders. It is hoped that this thesis makes a contribution to these issues and thus adds to the knowledge which will make Australia, the country we love and have chosen to call home, a better place for everyone.

#### **1.4 Thesis Structure**

The structure of the thesis attempts to present a whole picture of the Chinese community in Australia. It is organised in 8 chapters. Following this introductory Chapter, Chapter 2 describes the methodology used in the study, including the role in the process of investigation of literature review, setting research questions, and data analysis play. Chapter 3 then provides an overview of demographic changes and trends occurring within the Chinese community in Australia over the past 150 years. It firstly compares the population trends between China and Australia which are Chinese migration's origin and destination. It is mainly based on data from the Australian Population and Housing Censuses, particularly the

1991, 1996 and 2001 Censuses, current ABS estimates as well as China's official statistical publications. This Chapter also looks at the population characteristics of Chinese immigration from historical and contemporary perspectives. Following this overview, Chapter 4 analyses the factors determining Chinese immigration to Australia. It examines the factors which have influenced Chinese people to make the decision to settle in Australia. A framework has been produced to examine the determinants of population movement between China and Australia on the basis of pull and push factors. Chapter 5 then analyses the socio-economic characteristics of Chinese immigrants in Australia. It introduces the immigrants' resources and socio-economic activities in Australia.

Chapter 6 investigates the economic relationships between Australia and China with a focus on the role of Chinese migrants in the trade relationship between the two countries. The main focus of the thesis is the long-term consequences from Chinese migration which is represented through their economic activities (see Chapter 6), but most importantly through the issues of population ageing.

Chapter 7 discusses the ageing of the Chinese community in Australia. In this chapter, a case study is based in Western Australia where most research has been conducted. In particular, it highlights the life-style challenges and chances for Chinese elderly in Australia. The analysis is based on interviews with older Chinese across Australia (mainly in Western Australia). Finally, Chapter 8 presents the conclusion and describes the policy implications of this study. It summarizes the main findings, and draws policy implication for immigration, social and economic development and environmental issues. The research is

found to have significant implications as to how China and Australia perceive immigration and population movement between these two countries. Finally, the last chapter presents concluding comments on the case studies and a summary of answers to the research question. In addition, the concluding chapter summarizes the whole thesis, and. This concluding chapter also sheds light on the direction for further research into the Chinese immigration to Australia.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to understand and highlight the issues surrounding Chinese migration to Australia, the approach used in this study is to combine quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis is based on statistical data from reputable sources, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and sets up the scene for the qualitative analysis. The demographic information is used to describe population trends and to present a quantitative picture of the Australian Chinese community. The main source of qualitative data is the information collected through case studies, including one-to-one interviews with people of Chinese origin. The main use of interviews conducted for this study is in support to quantitative trends as drawn from ABS and DIMIA data. No statistical generalizations are made from these interviews, as the focus is on the individual experiences and the underlying assumption that Australia should offer a home and opportunities for everyone. More details on the literature review, use of the Internet, fieldwork, interviews and quantitative data are provided below.

#### **2.2 Literature Review**

As with every research project, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible without reading and studying a wide range of literatures. The literature

review is based on published studies and information from refereed and non-refereed sources, including government reports, studies carried out by various institutions (such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and so on), newspaper reports, recorded discussions, interviews, academic and informal observations presented in a number of seminars and workshops. The extensive literature review covers a mix of qualitative and quantitative materials, including a variety of policy and planning documents. Copies of community and in particular Chinese newspapers and magazines are also very important sources about the magnitude and scope of the problems covered in this study. The existing publications reviewed in this thesis, including those in electronic format, provide the background for the original research conducted in this study through fieldwork and interviews. Both literature in English and Chinese was used.

### **2.3 Internet**

The amount of on-line resources available through the Internet (or the web) has grown faster than any other technology in history (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1999 p.x, pxix). On-line resources and their accessibility have made resource gathering significantly richer and less time consuming. The Internet was particularly valuable to access a range of government reports and institutional descriptions, such as Chinese web pages, information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, other government reports, and institutional information.

It is however noticed that both countries had a large amount of web resources available, but Australia was more advanced. For example, most Chinese community groups in Australia have their own web pages which direct to other pages belonging to Australian or Chinese government and other organisations. The benefits from the Internet or web to this study are dramatic. For example, I have been able to build some of the case studies from web resources, or through contacting people on line. The on-line magazines and journals are also important sources to this study.

Apart from being a rich source of information, the global connectivity provided through the Internet plays an essential part in establishing migration. Hence, the web has also been studied as a factor influencing migration patterns.

## **2.4 Fieldwork**

The fieldwork research carried out during the study consists of two types of different settings: one in China and one in Australia. A trip to China was undertaken in July 2002 with the purpose of observing the activities carried out by Australians in China, Australian Chinese in China, as well as companies, all of which provided numerous materials for this study. The fieldwork undertaken within Australia included interviews and observations made in Perth, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne during 2002-2004. The field research in Australia, which was carried out over several years, allowed for monitoring of a variety of

activities and developments related to the Chinese community, such as Chinese clubs and business groups, for example.

My attendance of a number of meetings, conferences (for example, Chinese New Year celebrations, Chinese Chamber of Commerce meetings, Chinese School and classes and meetings of the Chinese Teachers' Association), seminars, and workshops made it possible to gather information through observation and discussions. My own background as a native Chinese speaker has been an advantage for this research, as I myself have experienced cross-cultural changes after settling in Australia more than ten years ago. I was in a position to fully understand the issues which were raised in official documents as well as by the people I met. In the course of meetings and visits to various institutions, I collected a large volume of documents including academic papers, policy briefings and reports both in English and Chinese, which outline different aspects of my research question. The constant contact with the Chinese community in Perth, Western Australia, allowed me to keep the finger on the pulse to any changes that they were experiencing as well as analyse the causes, outcomes and potential solutions.

Pictures were also used to demonstrate differences or similarities between the living arrangements and life styles of Chinese migrants in Australia and Chinese citizens in China. For example, pictures of streets, neighbourhoods, markets, houses, social clubs, gardens, meeting places and others were taken during the fieldwork. Some photos used in this thesis were taken by myself and others were

drawn from newspapers and magazines, with the copyright acknowledged.

More information about the interviews undertaken as part of the fieldwork is provided below. I am most obliged to the Australian Chinese community and all the people who shared their personal stories and life experiences with me.

## **2.5 Interviews**

According to Sarantakos (1998, pp.246-247), interviewing is a form of questioning characterised by the fact that it employs verbal questioning as its principal technique of data collection. Interviews can be perceived as part of the commonly used survey techniques of social research or can be seen as a source of data in conducting individual case studies. In this case, there was not an intention to survey a particular section of the Australian Chinese community. My intention was to conduct randomly interviews about people's experiences of the transition and settling in the Australian society and way of life. The interviews were unstructured, as most commonly used in qualitative research. They allowed for the conversation and stories to follow without restrictions in the wording and order of thoughts and events. The interview schedule was easy to follow. All the interviews were conducted in a flexible and friendly atmosphere. Interviewees responded in a very favourable way providing insights into their lives, past, present and future plans and aspirations. I have conducted 50 interviews in Perth, Canberra, and Melbourne, and 44 distinctive interviews were used in this thesis.

The interviews were conducted in English and Chinese. The targeted age groups of interviewees were male and female adult Chinese migrants and Chinese elderly in Australia. Interviewing in Chinese was essential for this study. Receiving an input from people who are not native English speakers and who often cannot speak English well or even do not speak English at all can help Australian society and government listen better to the voice of migrants who are often left unheard. The experience of selected interviewees clearly illustrates certain processes in the population movement between China and Australia, and these aspects are discussed later on in this thesis.

The selected interviewees were directly involved in a range of activities within the Chinese communities in the various Australian cities. They were people who have direct knowledge and often play leading roles in these activities. As each interview was conducted in a conversational mode, the schedule of questions was treated with flexibility. However all interviews covered issues relevant to the research questions of this thesis and contributed to better understand not only the personal story but also the broader picture of Chinese migration. Each interview is a case story that brings out distinctive features of the Chinese community in Australia.

A personal network was used as the starting basis for the random selection and consequent contacts with the participants. This also gave me more opportunities to be involved in the activities carried out by the Chinese community and communicate with the people within the community. The interviews were

conducted in informal settings, such as people's homes or Chinese gatherings, which allowed for easiness of interaction and willingness from the people to tell their stories. Detailed verbal information about the purpose and aims of the research was provided to all participants who reciprocated with sharing their experiences.

### *Interview Questions*

The interview questions focus on why people born in the People's Republic of China chose to migrate to Australia and how they are making the transition to living in their new home country. The questions also cover what Chinese migrants expect from their future years in Australia. It was explicitly intended to ask questions that are easy to understand as the educational level and life experiences varied greatly among the interviewees. The areas canvassed during the interviews are related to issues common to everybody, but particular care was taken not to intrude on privacy or solicit feedback that could be emotionally hurtful. In most cases, I had a very passive role as a listener and recorder of what these people willingly wanted to say.

The general areas covered during the interviews are divided into five sections, namely personal information, general experiences in Australia, specific living arrangements, business activities, comparison between expectations and reality of life in Australia. Interviewees were also asked for any recommendations or additional information they are willing to provide in order to facilitate the

transition to living and ageing in Australia for Chinese migrants. The outline of the question is described below.

***Section 1: Personal information***

- How long have you been in Australia? Why did you come to Australia?
- Where were you born? Where are you originally from?
- What education do you/your children have?
- Are you a pensioner?
- How many children/grandchildren do you have? How old are they and from which sex?

***Section 2: Experiences in Australia***

- What visa did you use to come to Australia?
- Do you speak English?
- With whom do you live?
- What is your main source of income?



### ***Section 3: Living arrangements***

- Where do you live? Please describe your home.
- Do you feel secure at home?
- Do you feel isolated in Australia? And why?
- Do you like Australian lifestyle? And why?
- Do you drive? If not, do you want to learn to drive?
- Are you happy with your accommodation?
- What do you think about Australian nursing homes?
- Are you happy with the Australian health system? Why or why not?

### ***Section 4: Business***

- What is your occupation?
- Is it easy to do business in Australia?
- Do you do business with China?
- How do you spend your day?
- What do you do in your free time?

### ***Section 5: Expectations and Reality***

- What were your expectations when you decided to settle in Australia?
- Have your expectations been met since you have settled in Australia? Why?

## *Section 6: Recommendations*

- How can accommodation policies for Chinese migrants and Chinese elderly in particular be improved in order to benefit you and your family?
- What do you suggest about policy changes related to:
  - Business
  - Health and medication
  - Education?
- Do you have any suggestions about how to improve your personal quality of life?
- How can your cultural needs be met in Australia?

## **2.6 Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data were used to describe certain existing trends and patterns which support the importance of the questions studied in this thesis. The interpretation of results depends on the quality of data. This study mainly uses reliable demographic and statistical information from official government publications. A number of issues covered in the research question are of a demographic nature and where available, supportive quantitative information was analysed. The published Census data for 1981-2001 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the yearbook data from National Bureau of Statistics of China are the main sources for this study, while other data published in related statistics books or research papers, such as the publications from the ABS and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, have also been used.

The ABS censuses and its publications have detailed demographic coverage of Australia's multicultural communities and make it possible to conduct sound and comparable analyses. However, particular statistics in relation to activities of migrants or various ethnic communities are not available. In some cases, I have used telephone directories and other alternative data sources to try to ascertain the size of certain activities, such as Chinese restaurants, China-towns or Chinese cultural organizations. In all cases the quantitative information was used mainly as a background and support of the qualitative issues addressed in this study.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The methods used allowed to establish and maintain strong links with the Australian Chinese community. In particular, I learnt a lot through my participation in the local Western Australian Chinese community. I have taken part in a wide range of activities, including working as a Chinese teacher in Saturday Chinese schools, and also as a lecturer/tutor in Chinese studies at Murdoch University and Curtin University of Technology. As a result, my research was enhanced by personal observations over a period of more than ten years since my arrival in Australia, and particularly since I started my PhD studies four years ago. As a member of the Chinese community, I have made a conscientious effort to prevent any bias to interfere with the analysis of the collected information or the comparative analysis between the Chinese migrants' stories.

This research methodology has proved to be successful. All interviewees were chosen carefully and each interview constitutes a special case study. The literature review, data collection, fieldwork, interviews and their analysis are all very valuable resources for this research as well as for further attempts to develop a more sustainable way of living in Australia for migrants and migrant communities.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

#### 3.1 Introduction

China is currently the most populous country on earth. Although the rate of its population growth is close to being arrested, the population momentum continues contributing to the overall global population increase. Accounting for one sixth of the world's population, China is also important as a source of regional migration to its neighbouring and other Asian countries as well as to destinations such as USA, Canada and Australia. The impact of Chinese migration on Australia has been felt particularly in most recent years. On 4 December 2003, Australia celebrated its record of 20 million Australians (ABS, 2004a). According to the 2001 Census, the overseas-born population was 4,105,468 persons, which was 21.9 per cent of the total population. In the same Census, the total number of responses about Chinese ancestry was 556,554, which was 3 per cent of Australia's total population ranking this ethnical group sixth by size in Australia (ABS, 2003, p.28)<sup>1</sup>. In comparison, Chinese ranked only twelfth with 172,483 persons or 1.1 per cent of Australia's population in the 1986 Census (ABS, 1995).

What has led to these changes and how do Australian Chinese compare with the rest of the population? What are the differences and similarities between the demographic characteristics of China – the country seeding the migrants, and

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<sup>1</sup> Except, this, there were another 500 responses of Chinese Asian n.e.c., (which include Hui, Manchu and Yi)

Australia – the country accepting them? These are some of the questions to be explored in this Chapter.

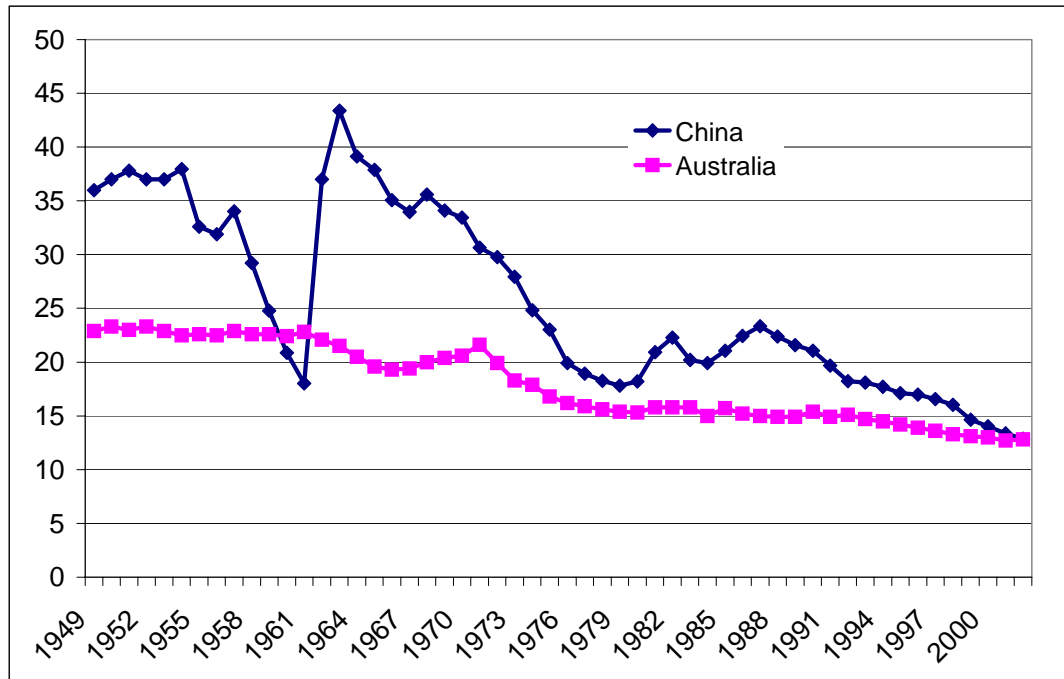
### **3.2 Demographic Comparison between Australia and China**

Immigration of people with Chinese ancestry in Australia is the major focus of this thesis. Before studying Chinese immigration to Australia, a comparison between the population characteristics of China, the country of origin and Australia, the country of destination can put into perspective the issues about migration pressure and population movement. At the beginning of the year 2005, China, the most populous country in the world, welcomed its 1.3 billionth baby, while Australia's population just reached 20 million in the year 2003, which is only about 3 million more than Shanghai's population (population of Shanghai was 17.11 million in 2003) and 6 million more than Beijing's population (population in Beijing was 14.56 million in 2003), two of the biggest cities in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2004a). According to the 2001 Australian Census, there are 142,780 China-born living in Australia and they make up 3.5 percent of the overseas-born population in Australia. This chapter investigates the demographic background of Chinese immigration to Australia. How do Australia and China compare demographically? Do the size differences translate into differences in other demographic indicators? What are the factors behind Chinese immigration to Australia? These questions are explored in the sections to follow.

### ***3.2.1 Natural Population Changes in China and Australia***

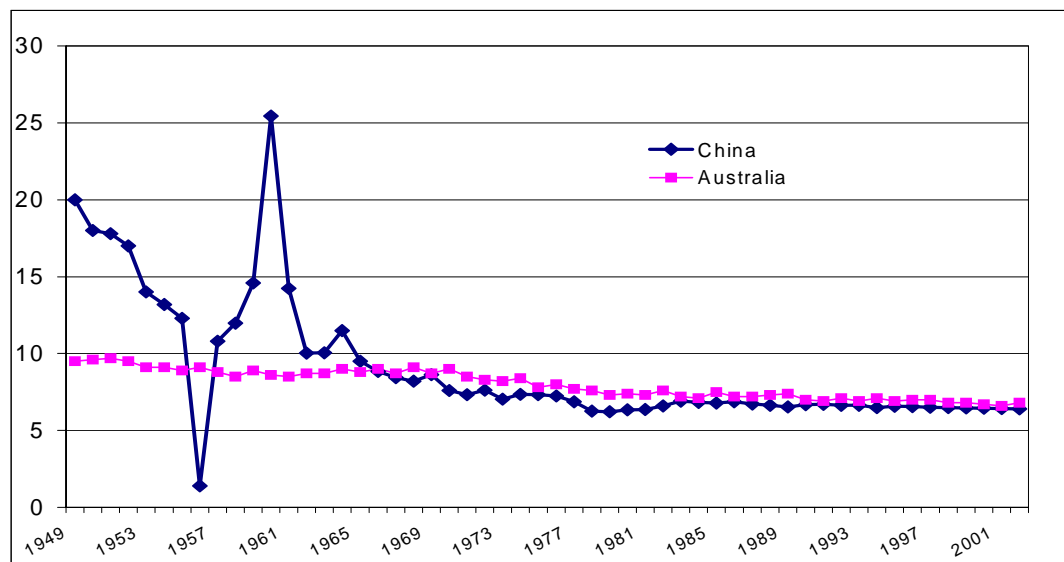
Figures 3.1 and 3.2 compare the crude birth and death rates in China and Australia for the past 53 years since 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. Over the past fifty years, China's birth and death rates have experienced dramatic up and down periods. Compared with China, Australia's birth and death rates have been declining steadily. Overall, both China's birth and death rates over the past 50 years have declined dramatically due to the implementation of revolutionary and controversial policies for the purpose of improving health and controlling population. In 1958, the Chinese government launched the Great Leap Forward policy in order to rapidly increase agricultural and industrial production. It is well known that this policy has caused the highest death rate due to the largest famine in human history. As a result, the mortality rate increased from 11.98 per thousand in 1958 to the unbelievable 25.43 per thousand in 1960. China's socio-economic, political and family planning policy changes over the past 50 years have strongly influenced this country's population growth rate. Due to the strict family planning policy, especially the one-child policy in the past 20 years, the country's fertility rate has decreased dramatically (Riley 2004).

**Figure 3.1 Crude Birth Rates, China and Australia, 1949 – 2002**



Sources: Chinese data for 1949-1998 are drawn from National Bureau of Statistics of China (1999) and those for 1999-2002 are from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2003). Australian data are drawn from ABS (2004b).

**Figure 3.2 Crude Death Rates, China and Australia, 1949 - 2002**

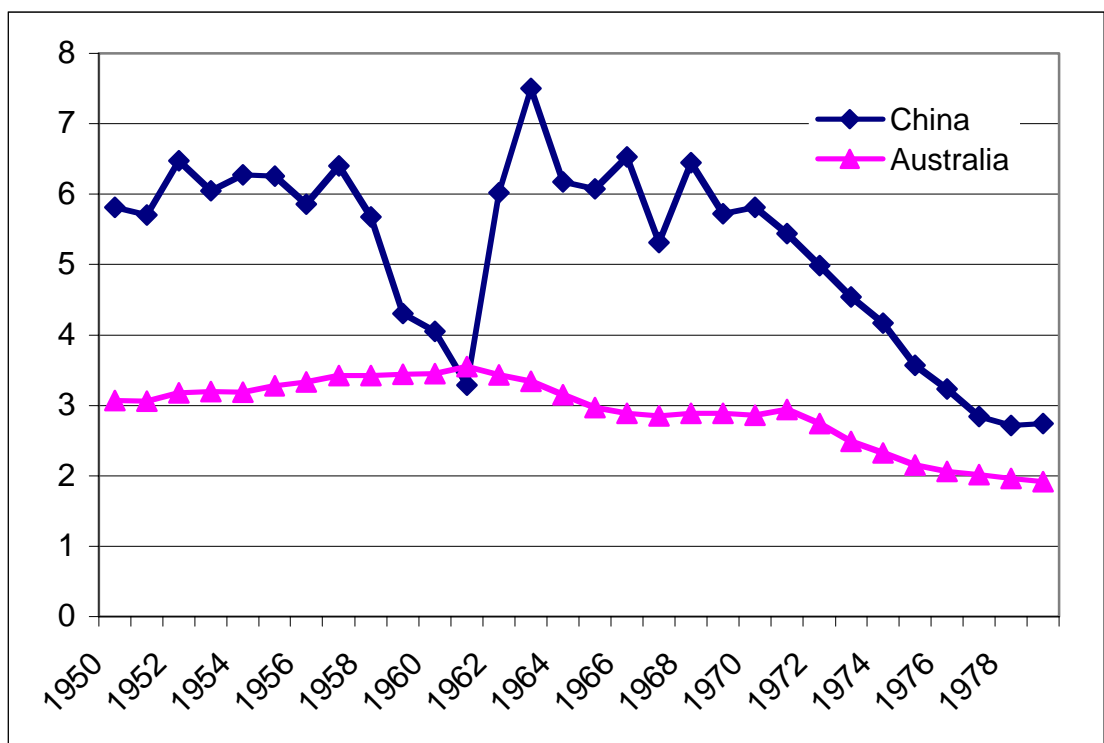


Sources: Chinese data for 1949-1998 are drawn from National Bureau of Statistics of China (1999) and those for 1999-2002 are from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2003). Australian data are drawn from ABS (2004b).



China's slow population growth, but rapid economic growth has drawn a lot of attention in the world. The one-child policy is one of the important factors that helped China to achieve a rate of population growth of 1.06 percent for more than two decades. The birth rate of China in 2002 was 12.86 per thousand, the death rate was 6.41 per thousand, and the natural growth rate was 6.45 per thousand (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2003). The births in the same year were 16,519,56 (16 million persons), and the net increase in population was 8,285,219 (8 million persons). China's one-child policy has helped to slow down the nation's population growth rate, but it has also brought about a lot of challenges to China.

**Figure 3.3 Total Fertility Rates of China and Australia, 1950-1979**



Source: Chinese data are drawn from Research Institute of All China Women's Federation and Research Office of Shaansi Provincial Women's Federation (1991), Australian Data are from ABS (2004b).

By comparison, the demographic changes in Australia have been much more subtle. However, by 2001 the two countries have reached amazingly similar rates. Figure 3.3 can be used to compare the total fertility rates between Australia and China from 1950 to 1979 when China initiated its one-child policy. In comparison with China, Australia's fertility rate has been declining more steadily.

The drop in the Australian total fertility rate in the 1960s and early 1970s was the result of falls in fertility at nearly all ages (Kippen, 2003, p.2). In contrast, the fertility rates in China in the same period, just before the one-child policy, were very high for all ages and the total fertility rate reached as high as 7.5 in 1964. In 2003 the Australian total fertility rate was 1.75 births per women, and rates between 1.73 and 1.76 births per women have been recorded since 1998 (ABS, 2004e, p.1). Although China's total fertility rate in 2005 is 1.7 births per woman which is a little bit lower than that in Australia, i.e. 1.8 births per woman (United Nations, 2005), the major urban areas such as Shanghai and Beijing, amazingly have rates of 0.74 and 0.73, respectively, which are almost a third of the population replacement level.

The dramatic fall in fertility in Australia and China is associated with socio-economic factors, for example, women's higher levels of education, family size and income, marriage and childbearing patterns, and women's labour force participation and their roles in the family, the changing nature of relationships and greater availability of effective fertility methods (Riley, 2004; Jain and McDonald 1997 cited in Kippen, 2003, p.7). However, "China's strong family planning

program has tempered some of those socio-economic influences” and “China’s experience gives demographers a unique opportunity to evaluate the effects of tough policies and birth planning in addition to socio-economic influences on fertility” (Riley, 2004, p.14). During recent years, Australia’s and China’s fertility and mortality rates tend to merge (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2), but Australia’s fertility is not influenced as much as China’s by family planning policies.

Chinese women migrants in Australia are no longer under the control of China’s family planning policy. In 2003, the Australian total fertility rate was 1.7 children per women. Kippen (2003) notes that fertility by country of birth indicates that many women in Australia who were born overseas appear to adopt a similar fertility level as those who were born in Australia. In other words, they do not necessarily keep the same level of fertility as women in their country of birth”. For example, it was observed that most Chinese families from the People’s Republic of China have on average 2 children. Although these fertility patterns are similar to Australian women, they are no longer subjected to the restrictive family policies of China. There is no specific data available on mortality rates for Chinese immigrants. It can however be assumed that they are lower than the average in Australia as migrants are generally required to be in good health and to pass successfully a comprehensive medical check before a permanent visa is granted.

### ***3.2.2 Population Ageing in Australia and China***

According to McDonald and Kippen (1999, p.31), “as fertility and mortality rates fall, populations age.” Australia and China both face the problem of population ageing. However, the fertility in China has only been falling for about 25 years, while in Australia it had been falling for more than a century (McDonald and Kippen, 1999). China has been controlling its population growth since the late 1970s and only recently has reverted its one-child policy. In contrast, Australia is attempting to encourage more births in families. Australia and China are both facing an ageing crisis. In addition, a number of Chinese elderly have migrated to Australia,<sup>2</sup> making the ageing issues in this country even more complex. A recent example is a 104-year old Chinese mother who has overstayed her Australian visa while visiting her only relative - her adopted daughter. She was ordered by the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to return to China (her country of residence) but consequently an appeal to the high court overturned this decision on humanitarian grounds.

China’s life expectancy at birth has increased from 35 years in 1949 to 71 years in 2000 (with male life expectancy at 69.63 and female at 73.33). Table 3.1 gives a clear comparison of life expectancy between Australia and China. Compared with 1990’s life expectancy, the 2000 life expectancy for China increased by 2.85 years, which demonstrates that with the fast development of its economic and health systems, the quality of people’s life has also improved significantly. With the improvement of medical conditions, the mortality rates of elderly people have also been falling. Even though China’s life expectancy is 5 years higher than the world’s average level of 66 years in 2000 (National Bureau of Statistics of China,

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<sup>2</sup> The ageing issues in Australia’s Chinese community will be detailed in Chapter 7.

2002, p.281), it is 10 years lower than that for Australia. Shanghai's life expectancy as an example of urbanised population highlights a positive picture with its life expectancy being very close to Australia's – the gap is reduced to only three years. The general patterns between the two countries are also similar (see Table 3.1). With continuing economic development, China's life expectancy is expected to increase, which is good but will also challenge China's ageing crisis.

**Table 3.1 Life Expectancy in China and Australia, 1990 and 2000,**

|           | <i>1990</i> |       |        | <i>2000</i> |       |        |
|-----------|-------------|-------|--------|-------------|-------|--------|
|           | Total       | Male  | Female | Total       | Male  | Female |
| China     | 68.55       | 66.84 | 70.47  | 71.40       | 69.63 | 73.33  |
| Shanghai  | 74.90       | 72.77 | 77.02  | 78.14       | 76.22 | 80.04  |
| Australia | 75.25       | 73.90 | 76.60  | 81.05       | 80.10 | 82.00  |

Source: compiled from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2003), ABS (2004b)

Changes in life expectancies in Australia have not been so dramatic. Nevertheless, with a closing gap between males and females and total expectancy at 81 years, the country is one of the world's leaders. Lower fertility and mortality and longer life expectancy make both Australian and Chinese populations age sooner.

Australia, as one of the developed countries in the world, is already concerned with the ageing population "crisis". For China, a developing country, it can be imagined what this situation will bring in the near future.

### 3.2.3 Population Projections

Table 3.2 presents three population projection scenarios for China. According to Hu and Wu (1997), the low scenario assumes a total fertility rate of 1.6, the medium scenario is projected according to the total fertility rate of 1.9 and the high scenario projection uses total fertility of 2.2 (equal to the total fertility rate at the end of 1980). It is projected that China's population with the medium scenario will grow from 1.365 billion in 2010 to 1.421 billion by 2050. This figure is already very high, but the high scenario shows that the population will rise to the unbelievable 1.703 billion by 2050.

**Table 3.2 China's Population Projections, 2010-2050 (billion persons)**

| <i>scenarios</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>2020</i> | <i>2030</i> | <i>2040</i> | <i>2050</i> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| high             | 1.428       | 1.547       | 1.635       | 1.682       | 1.703       |
| medium           | 1.365       | 1.443       | 1.476       | 1.468       | 1.421       |
| low              | 1.326       | 1.377       | 1.371       | 1.325       | 1.234       |

Source: Hu and Wu (1997)

Australia's estimated resident population (ERP) at June 2002 of 19.7 million is projected to grow to between 23.0 million and 31.4 million by 2051, and to between 18.9 million and 37.7 million by 2101. As Table 3.3 shows these Australian population projections are based on assumptions about life expectancy, fertility rates and levels of net overseas migration (ABS, 2003g and ABS, 2004f).

Unlike China, migration is major contributor to the growth of Australia's population. Chinese immigration is an important part of overseas migration in Australia. Once China's door is open to Australia and Australia's immigration policy keeps Australia open to China, immigration from China to Australia will continue and Chinese in Australia will continue to contribute towards that country's population growth. China's population is projected to grow continuously and combined with social, economic and environmental pressures that the country experiences, migration to Australia should be more active than ever, and its impact on Australia will be significant.

**Table 3.3 Population Projections, Australia**

**ABS Main Projection Series, Australia**

|          | Assumptions  |   |   |                | Population as at 30 June |                        |
|----------|--|---|---|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
|          | Total Fertility Rate <sup>(a)</sup><br><i>Babies per woman</i> | Net Overseas Migration <sup>(b)</sup><br><i>Persons</i> | Life expectancy at birth (years) <sup>(c)</sup> |                | 2051<br><i>million</i>   | 2101<br><i>million</i> |
|          |  |   | <i>Males</i>                                    | <i>Females</i> |                          |                        |
| Series A | 1.8  | 125,000   | 92.2  | 95.0           | 31.4                     | 37.7                   |
| Series B | 1.6  | 100,000   | 84.2  | 87.7           | 26.4                     | 26.4                   |
| Series C | 1.4  | 70,000  | 84.2  | 87.7           | 23.0                     | 18.9                   |

(a) From 2011 (b) From 2005-06 (c) From 2050-51

Source: DIMIA (2004e, p.1)

In the coming 50 years for Australia, it is predicted that ageing will be the most dramatic change of all the changes in the Australia's population, which is due to major changes in the age structure of the population (ABS, 2003f, p.6).

### **3.3 Population of Chinese Ancestry in Australia**

Australia already has a large contingent of people whose ancestors are from Chinese origin. The origins of Chinese Ancestry are a diverse range of countries, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, China (including Hong Kong and Macau SARS), Singapore and so on (Hon and Coughlan, 1997). Chinese migration spans over more than two centuries and according to Pan (1999, p.274), it has been concentrated in two periods: the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the three decades since 1960s. The following sections draw a demographic picture of Chinese in Australia but before that some definitions need to be clarified.

#### ***3.3.1 Definitions***

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines “*Overseas-born*” as people born overseas who have migrated to Australia. Their birthplace group is their country of birth and their birthplace is also their country of birth (ABS, 2000, p.1). For example, the China-born are people born in the People’s Republic of China who have migrated to Australia.

“*Ancestry*” is reported by the way in which a person reflects their own assessment of their cultural and ethnic background. Hence people of Chinese ancestry are those who assess their Chinese cultural and ethnic background as Chinese.

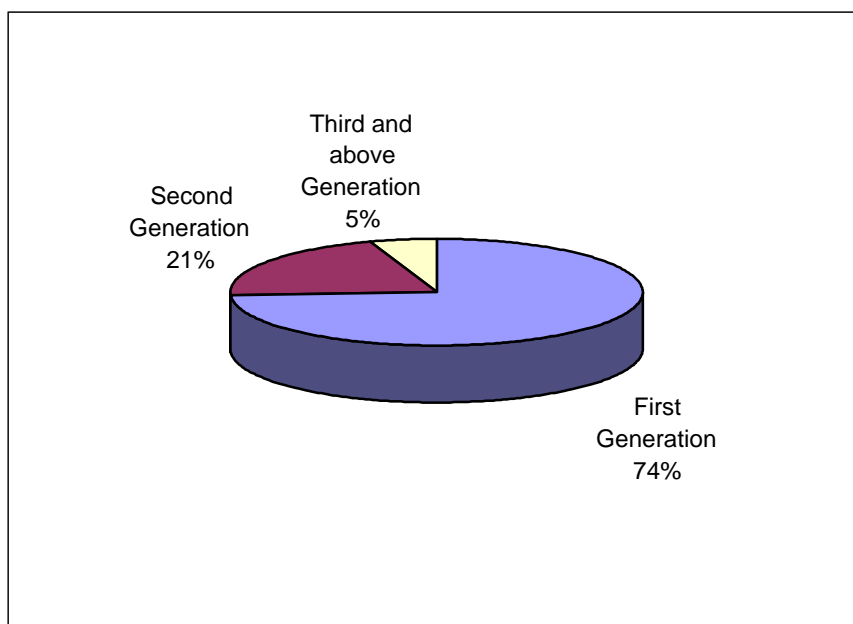


*“First generation Australians”* are people living in Australia who were born overseas, i.e. similar to overseas-born, and *second generation Australians* are Australian-born people living in Australia, with at least one overseas-born parent (Jain and McDonald 1997, p.1). However, first generation Australian Chinese is a larger group than the China-born as it includes people living in Australia who were born in mainland China, Hong Kong, as well as South-east Asian or other which have Chinese populations. Second generation Chinese Australians are Australian-born people, with at least one parent being overseas first generation Australian Chinese. Data in Figure 3.4 shows that nearly three quarters of Australian Chinese (i.e. 74%) are first generation, which means that 74 percent of Chinese Australians were born overseas. The Chinese ethnic group has been in Australia for more than 150 years but there are a large number of recent Chinese migrants in this ethnic group which explains the high share of first generation Chinese. Twenty one per cent of Australian Chinese are second generation (which means that 21 percent of Australian Chinese are Australian-born people, with at least one overseas-born parent) and only 5% (see Figure 3.4) Chinese were born to both Chinese Australian-born parents (which means that there are relatively few third and higher generations Chinese Australians).

The Australian Censuses since 1986 show that the fastest growth among the leading ancestries has been associated with groups from South and East Asia, with the number of migrants of Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian ancestries more than doubling in number by 2001. Due to the historic patterns of migration from China, especially to Southeast Asia, Chinese ancestry is associated not only with

Australia (26%), China (25%) and Hong Kong (11%)<sup>3</sup> but with several other birthplaces, such as Malaysia (10%) and Viet Nam (8%) (ABS, 2003a).

**Figure 3.4 Percentage of Population with Chinese Ancestry, 2001 Census, Australia**



Source: ABS, (2003a)

### ***3.3.2 Chinese in Australia before 1921***

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1925), information on Chinese prior to 1881 is only available for the States of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. It is likely that there were also Chinese in other States but their numbers were smaller and appropriate records were not kept. The earliest record of Chinese population was in 1854 in Victoria, where there were only 2,341 “full

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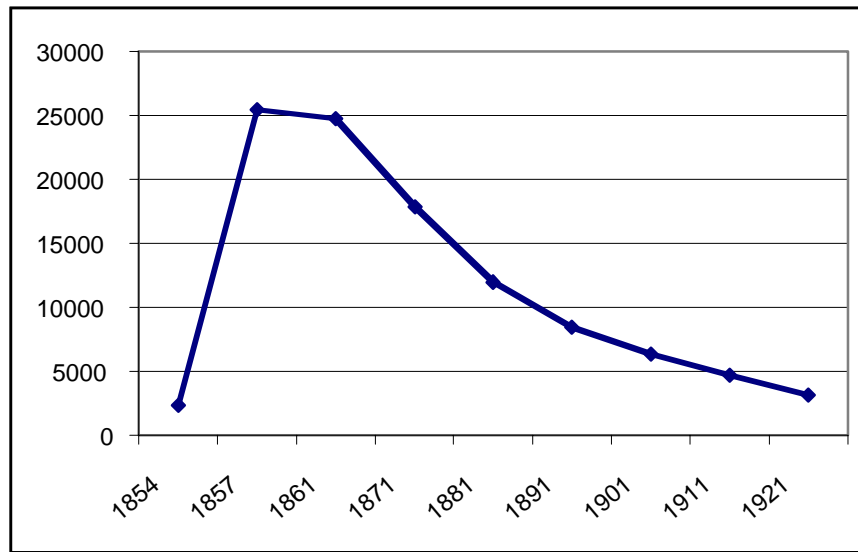
<sup>3</sup> The place of birth for Hong Kong-born population is not necessarily indicative of ancestry because one or both of the parents could be of Caucasian origin. However this is very rare.

blood” (or first generation) Chinese. Three years later, in 1857, the total number of Chinese sharply grew to the figure of 25,421 (see Figure 3.5). Between the years of 1857 and 1861, there was a steady decrease of the number of Chinese. Since 1861, the decrease was very sharp, reaching a record low number of 3,162 in 1921 which was comparable to the figure in 1854. The greatest influx of Chinese immigrants to Australia in the 1850s and 1860s was to Victoria, where the richest goldfields were located. To evade the Victorian Act of 1885 which restricted Chinese immigration, the shipping companies landed their Chinese passengers in Guichen Bay, South Australia, from where they travelled overland to the Victorian goldfields.

The ABS (1925) reported that the reduction in the number of Chinese in Victoria in the year 1921 was caused by political decisions:

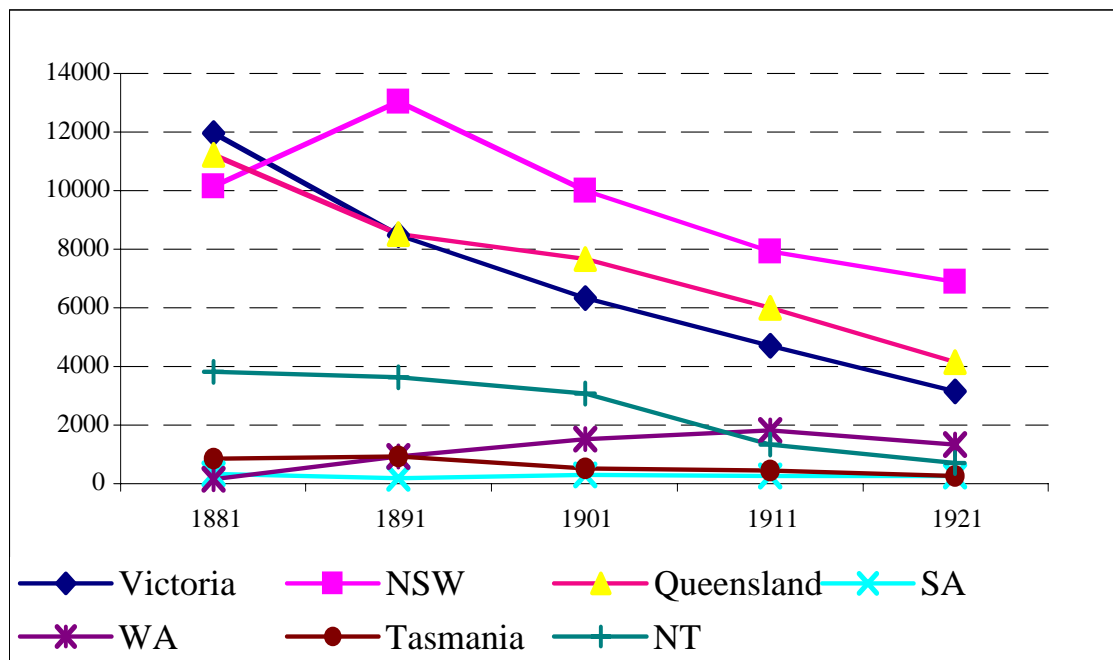
In consequence of friction between the European and Chinese gold-miners, the Government in the beginning of 1853 appointed a Royal Commission to report on the matter, and the Commissioners recommended a restriction in the number of Chinese to be allowed entry. In June of the same year "An Act to make Provisions for Certain Immigrants" was passed, and the number of Chinese passengers that could be brought to the colony in any vessel was thereunder limited to one for every 10 tons registered tonnage, while a capitation tax of £10 was imposed. In 1857 a Residence Tax of £1 per month later reduced to £4 a year was imposed on Chinese residents. In 1862 the Residence Tax was abolished, and the passenger limitations temporarily suspended. In 1865 the Act, which was considered to be no longer necessary, was repealed. After the Intercolonial Conference in 1880-81, restrictive measures were again adopted, and after the 1888 Conference, they were made more stringent. In the case of Victoria the passenger limitation was 'fixed at one Chinese passenger to every 500 tons of a ship's burthen (p.2).

**Figure 3.5 Number of Chinese in Victoria, Australia, 1854 – 1921**



Source: Compiled from ABS, (1925)

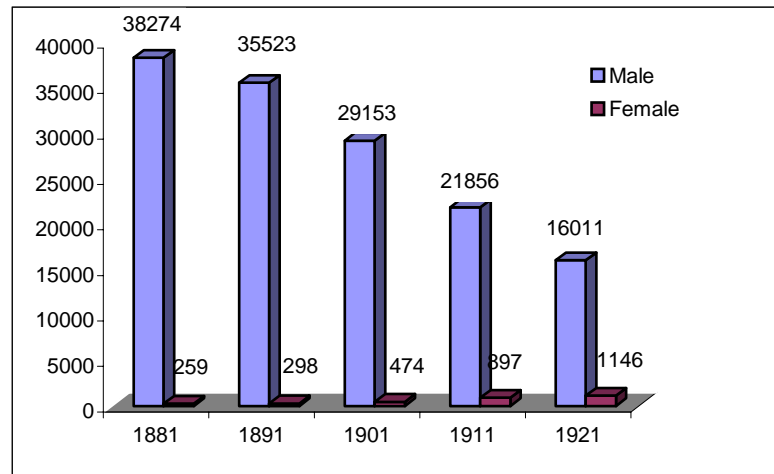
**Figure 3.6 Number of Full-Blood Chinese by State and Territory, Australia, 1881-1921**



Source: Compiled from ABS (1925)

Information on Chinese since 1881 is available for all States in Australia and Figure 3.6 gives the distribution of the Chinese population by State and Territory between 1881 and 1921. Attracted by the gold discoveries, the number of Chinese rapidly increased in New South Wales in the later half of the 1850s, and at the time of conducting the census in 1861, they numbered nearly 13,000. New South Wales had consistently the largest number of Chinese, the numbers in Victoria and Queensland were also high. The other States and the Northern Territory accounted for the remaining Chinese. According to various Censuses, the maximum total number of Chinese in Australia was 38,274 persons with full blood in 1881 and they were predominantly male (see Figure 3.7). The number of male Chinese in Australia started to decrease from 1881 due to the restrictions on Chinese immigration adopted by Victoria and New South Wales between 1855-1861. The effect of the restrictive measures adopted by Victoria in 1855, and by New South Wales in 1861, is shown by the reduced numbers in those States in 1871. Even though the number of female Chinese slowly increased, the sex ratio of Chinese in Australia was seriously unbalanced. It was recorded that many\*\*\* intermarriages between male Chinese and female non-Chinese existed in Australia. Only a few rare “lucky” male labourers had their wives with them. This reflected the hard lives and poor social environment that Chinese labourers experienced.

**Figure 3.7 Number of Full-Blood Chinese in Australia, 1881-1921**



Source: Compiled from ABS (1925)

ABS (1925) gives further explanation about the demographic changes among Chinese in Australia since 1881:

Since 1881 the decline in the number of Chinese in Australia has been consistent, and only 2,026 of the 17,157 Chinese recorded in 1921 were born in this country. Up to the last decade of the 19th century the action of the various colonies towards Chinese immigration was directed to avoiding the evils which were supposed to be connected with a large Chinese element in the community; between 1891 and 1901 the feeling evinced gradually developed the "White Australia" policy which excludes all coloured people. On the consummation of federation this policy was expressed in the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1901 (p.6).

For the next half century, the Chinese population continued to decline as the older immigrants died and restrictions reined in immigration (Pan, 1999, p.256). During the World War II, Chinese refugees from New Guinea and the Pacific Islands arrived in Australia, but despite this by 1947, the Chinese population was just over 12,000. In the 1950s and 1960s, a gradual easing of the White Australia Policy allowed Australian citizens to bring in their non-European spouses, and

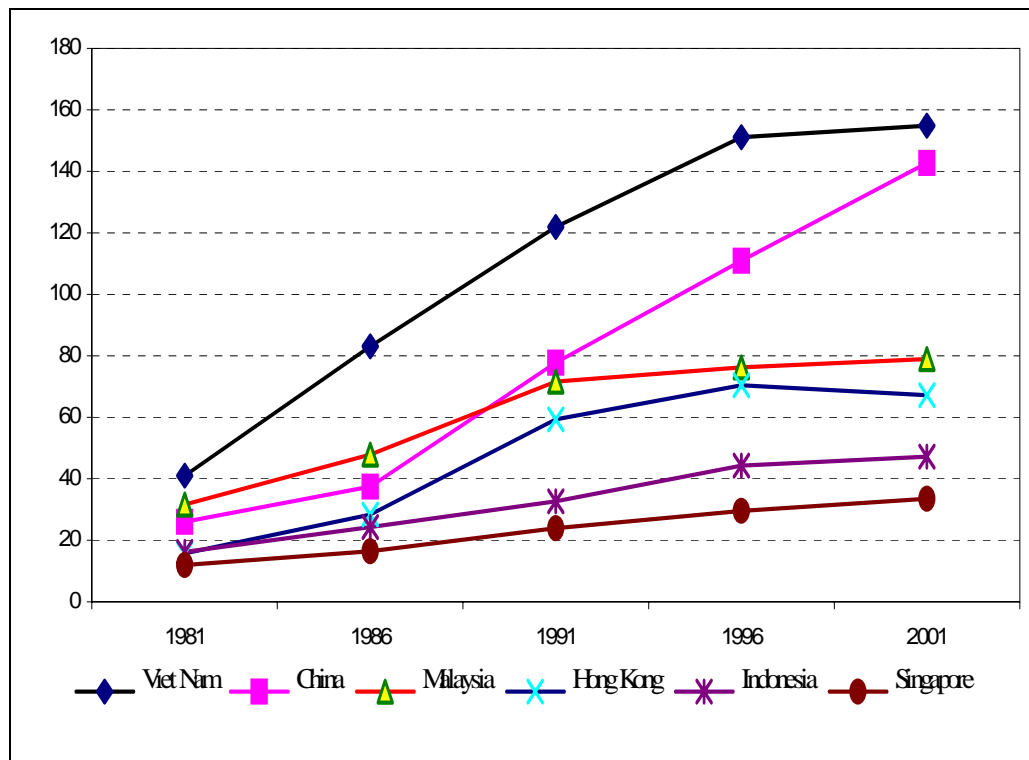
overseas-born Asians to become once again naturalized citizens whose spouses could be admitted. The Chinese population expanded, but its size remained unremarkable. By 1971, just prior to the complete abandonment of the White Australia Policy the Chinese population was not much changed from the 1960s at 26,000 (Pan, 1999 and Zhang, 1998).

People of Chinese origin have been part of Australia's population for more than 150 years. Earlier Chinese migrants went through very hard experiences socially, politically and physically, but only recently have they become a viable and significant ethnic minority contributing to all walks of life.

### ***3.3.2 Contemporary Chinese in Australia after 1972***

The election of a Labour government in 1972 was followed by the final abandonment of the White Australia Policy and the introduction of a non-racially discriminatory immigration and naturalization policy. An important decision for the Chinese community was the diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China and the migration choice was opened to Chinese in the 1970s. Even though a slow but steady increase in ethnic Chinese immigration to Australia had already been occurring before 1973, mainly from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, this established the contact and removed the final barriers to significant Chinese entry (see Pan, 1999). Figure 3.8 gives comparative data on the overseas-born Australian population from some of the Asian countries that have the most significant presence.

**Figure 3.8 Australian Population by Country of Birth, 1981-2001  
(Thousands)**



Source: Compiled from 1981-1996 data from Australian Immigration Consolidated Statistics No. 21, 2001 Data from ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing

The share of China-born population as a percentage of total overseas-born was 3.5 percent in 2001, which was the second highest in comparison with the other Asian countries, just behind the Viet Nam-born population (3.8 percent, see Figure 3.8). However, if Hong Kong-born population is added to China-born population as overseas Chinese, the percentage of Chinese becomes the highest in the group of the chosen Asian countries (i.e. 5.1 per cent). The share of people from mainland China among the overseas Chinese has dramatically increased between 1981 and 1991. If we examine the population change during this period (see Figure 3.8), it is noticeable that the population born in China experienced the highest increase among the group of Asian countries and it had the highest change among the overseas born population. As in 1996, there were 111 thousands China born



people living in Australia. The latest Census in 2001 recorded 142,780 China-born persons in Australia, an increase of 29 per cent from the 1996 Census. However there was only 5.2 per cent increase of overseas-born population in Australia between 1996 (3,901,882) and 2001 (4,105,468).

The strong increase of Chinese migrants in Australia is in contrast to the trends experienced in mainland China. For example, Shanghai's population growth rate has been negative for 11 years between 1983-2004. In 2002, the birth rate in Shanghai was 5.41 per thousand, the death rate at 5.95 per thousand was higher than the birth rate, therefore the natural growth rate was negative at 0.54 per thousand (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2003, p.98)<sup>4</sup>. However, emigration was not the main factor behind the decrease of Shanghai's population. The changes were mainly due to the family planning policy. In Shanghai, the rate of families covered by the one child's policy reached 99% in 2004 (People's Daily, 2004, p.4).

In 2001, the China-born population amounts to 0.8 per cent of the total population and 3.5 percent of overseas born population in Australia compared with 2.8 percent in 1996. Figure 3.9 shows the changes of China-born and Hong Kong-born population in Australia during 1981-2001. During these 20 years, the Hong Kong-born population grew much slower than the China-born one and it even decreased in 2001 The Hong Kong-born population was 67,121 persons in 2001 Census, 0.4 per cent of the total Australian population. Compared with its level in

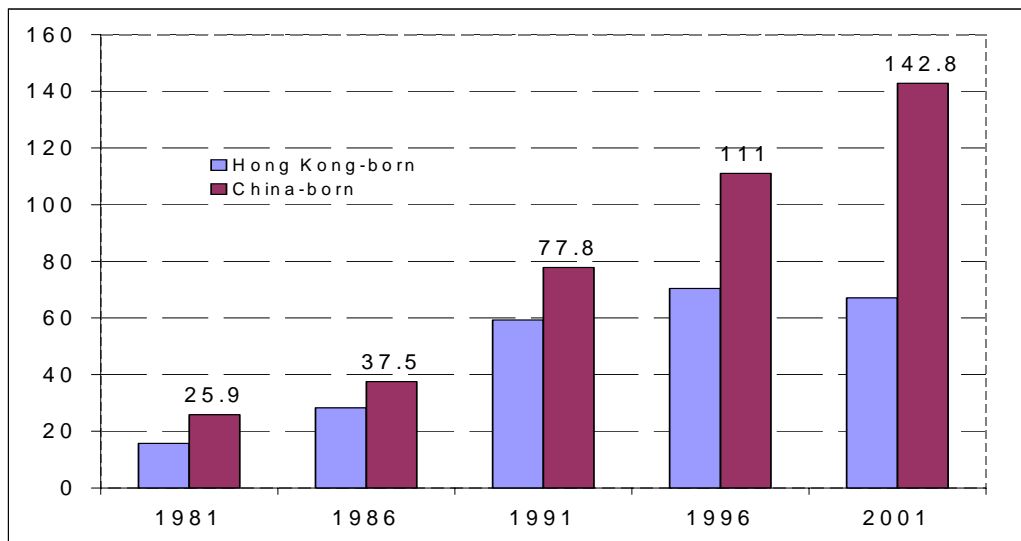
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<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China (2003, p. 98), *China Statistical Yearbook*, China Statistics Press

1996, the Hong Kong-born population has declined by 1309 persons. This is mainly due to the reversion of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Many Chinese preferred the investment opportunities offered in China to migrating or staying in Australia.

In contrast, the China-born population has soared in the 20 years since China started its open door policy and economic reform in 1979. Among this China-born population, there are 138,352 people with both parents born overseas (mostly in China); 265 with Australian born fathers and overseas born mothers; 169 with Australian born mothers and overseas born fathers; 163 with both parents born in Australia (0.1 per cent of the China-born population); and 3,881 with parents birth place is not stated. The China-born population is the sixth of the top 10 overseas birthplace groups and second of the top five overseas Asian groups, just behind Viet Nam. What happened within the 20 years between 1981 and 2001? Why did people in China start to select Australia as their desirable migration destination? How easy was it for them to come to Australia? Why did they choose Australia instead of other developed countries? These questions are discussed in detail later in this thesis.

**Figure 3.9 Census Population, (000'), Hong Kong-born and China-born (thousands), Australia, 1981 – 2001,**



Source: 1981-1996 data compiled from DIMIA (2002c), 2001 data from OMI (2003)

### **3.4 Geographical and Language Characteristics of Current Chinese in Australia**

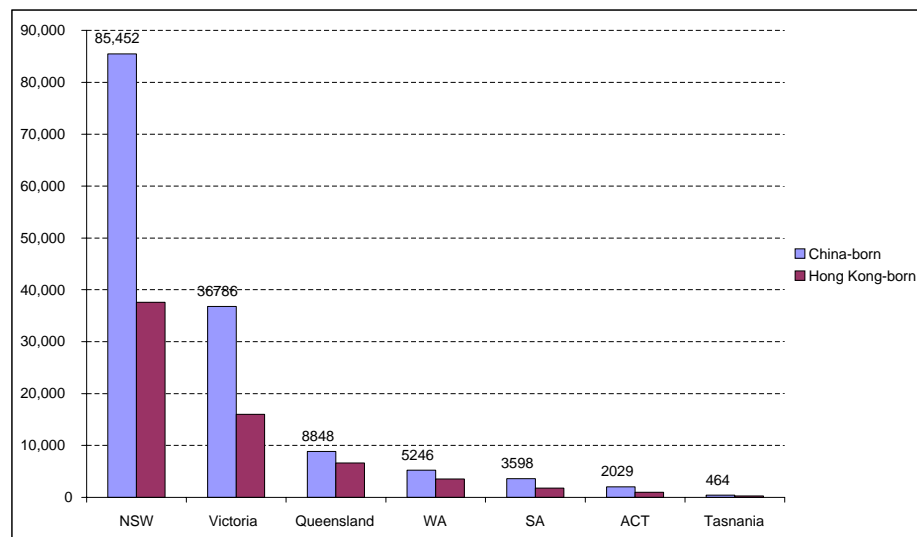
This section examines the geographical distribution of current Chinese migrants and their settlement patterns. It also analyses the languages that Chinese migrants are using, their diversity and how Chinese languages change with migration pattern.

#### ***3.4.1 Geographic Distribution of Chinese in Australia***

Figure 3.10 presents the China-born and Hong Kong-born population by state and territory from the 2001 Australian Census. In 2001, New South Wales had the largest number of China-born and Hong Kong-born people, namely 123,066 with

85,452 China-born and 37,614 Hong Kong-born. This is followed by Victoria - 52,791 with 36,786 China-born and 16,005 Hong Kong-born, Queensland 15,494 with 8,848 China-born and 6,646 Hong Kong-born, Western Australia – 8804 with 5,246 China-born and 3,558 Hong Kong-born, South Australia - 5,399 with 3598 China-born and 1801 Hong Kong-born, and the Australia Capital Territory – 3017 with 2029 China-born and 988 Hong Kong-born. The presence of Chinese in Tasmania and the Northern Territory is negligible.

**Figure 3.10 China-born and Hong Kong-born Population by State and Territory, 2001 Census, Australia**



Source: Compiled from Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural New South Wales (2003); Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (2003); Office of Multicultural Interests (2003), Multicultural Affairs Queensland (2003); Multicultural South Australia (2003) and ACT Office of Multicultural and Community Affairs (2003)

The 2001 distribution of Chinese immigrants in Australia confirms similar early findings by Murphy and Williams (1997) who concluded that variations in locational choices by immigrants have resulted in different population growth. Immigrants tend to settle in large cities, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne (Murphy and Williams, 1997, p.16) and Chinese are not an exception. In terms of deciding the initial location of immigrants, Murphy and Williams (1997, pp.21-22) claim that 60 per cent of all immigrants arriving in the business or skilled categories choose their location based on location of employers and job opportunities. Those arriving in the independent category base their decisions on a combination of job and family/friends related factors, with the presence of friends being the main factor (30 per cent), followed by job opportunities (22 per cent). The location decisions of entrants in the humanitarian category are also dominated by the location of family and friends, but in this case family is more important (p.21). According to Murphy and Williams (1997):

“Overall, the overwhelming determinant of new immigrants’ location decision is the location of a spouse partner, family or friends. However, there are some differences between States and Territories and these differences can help predict future settlement patterns of new immigrants. In particular, it is likely that immigrants will increasingly be attracted to Sydney’s employment opportunities, and to Queensland’s and Western Australia’s climate and lifestyle. In contrast, the Victorian intake is dominated by those joining spouse, partner, family or friends (86 per cent compared with the average of 78 per cent). It is likely that the share of the immigrant intake settling in Victoria will decline as this chain migration effect peters out” (p.22).

New migrants are mobile depending on their job opportunities. Box 3.1 presents the story of a migrant family from mainland China who migrated to Australia in

the early 1990s. Moving within Australia in order to find better employment is very common for Australians and also for Chinese migrants.

***Box 3.1 Moving within Australia***

*I did my PhD in Adelaide and worked there for another three years. After my contract finished, I found another job in Perth also on a contract. At the same time my wife found a job in Canberra (if I had a permanent job, she wouldn't have had to go to Canberra), so she left for Canberra for her job. In order to join my wife, I had to look for another job in Canberra and I was eventually offered a job in Canberra. The whole family reunited in Canberra for a short period of time. Then we left Canberra and are now living in Queensland and hunting for permanent jobs. Hopefully we can settle in Queensland and get an "iron bowl"<sup>5</sup>.*

***3.4.2 Chinese Language Demography***

The Chinese language group is very different from other foreign languages due to its diversity within the language. It is very important as it is a major ethnic and cultural characteristic of this ethnic community (see chapter 5 for further discussion). Also, providing services to the non-English speaking sections of the Chinese community is more complex.

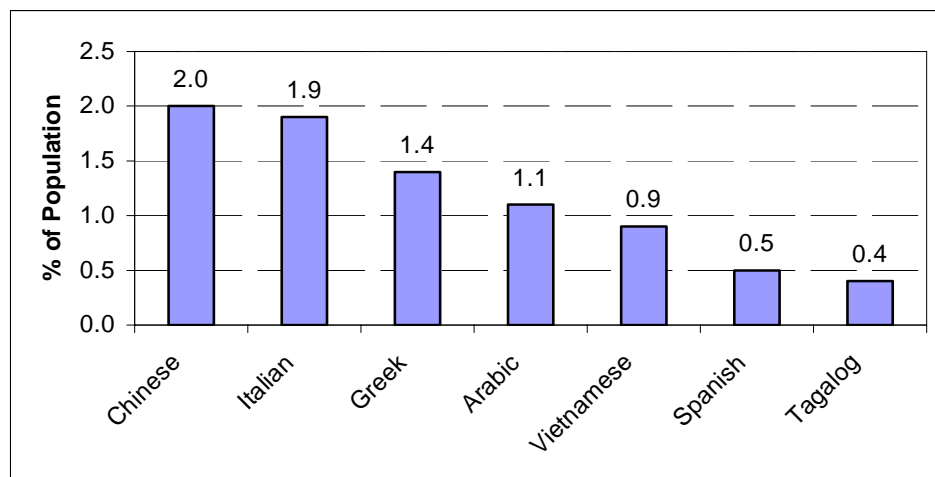
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<sup>5</sup> The phrase "iron bowl" is used in China as a reference to a permanent job.

### *Chinese Community Languages*

Language demography is the best way to demonstrate how significant Chinese languages are. For example, according to the 2001 Census, the most widely used community languages throughout Australia are Italian (1.9%), Greek (1.4%), Cantonese (1.2%), Arabic (1.1%), Vietnamese (0.9%) and Mandarin (0.7%) However, if Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects are added together, Chinese jumps up to first place in the ranking list of the top language groups (see figure 3.11). Chinese has experienced a 51.3 per cent increase in home users since 1996 (on top of a 68.5 per cent increase between 1991 and 1996). The growing number of Mandarin speaking people is evidence of the continuing mainland Chinese immigration to Australia.

**Figure 3.11 Top 7 Language Groups in Australia, 2001 Census**



Source: Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (2003)

In comparison with the 1991 and 1996 censuses, the 2001 migration from Hong Kong (largely Cantonese-speaking) has levelled off since the reversion of Hong Kong to China. In contrast, the number of Mandarin speakers continues to grow rapidly (also see Clyne and Kipp, 2002, pp.29-35). Chinese languages in Australia can be classified into several dialects (see Table 3.4), the main three being Cantonese, Mandarin and Hokkien. According to the 2001 Census, Cantonese was spoken by 225,307 people, Mandarin by 139,286 and Hokkien by 8,293.

Mandarin (which has increased more than 50% since the 1996 Census) is the official language of China. Cantonese (which has increased about 12% since the 1996 Census) is normally spoken by the people originally from the Guangdong province of China and Hong Kong. In addition, people from the Hainan province speak Hokkien and people from Chang Zhou and Hunan origins speak Chang chow and Hunan respectively. There are also other dialects, such as Shanghai, Kan etc. These various dialects reflect the diversity of languages, culture and tradition within the Chinese community and the regions in China where they are from.



**Table 3.4 Chinese Languages Spoken at Home, Australia, 1996-2001**

| <i>Language</i>    | <i>Number</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>% change</i>  |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|------------------|
|                    | <i>2001</i>   |          | <i>1996</i>   | <i>1996-2001</i> |
| Cantonese          | 225,307       | 1.2      | 202,494       | 11.3             |
| Mandarin           | 139,286       | 0.7      | 92,360        | 50.8             |
| Hokkien            | 8,293         | 0.0      | 10,136        | -18.2            |
| Chinese, n.e.c.(a) | 746           | 0.0      | 288           | 159.0            |
| Chinese, n.f.d.(b) | 14,561        | 0.1      | 25,982        | -44.0            |

Source: Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (2003), pp.14-18

(a) including Chang Chow, Hunan, Kan, not elsewhere classified

(b) no further defined

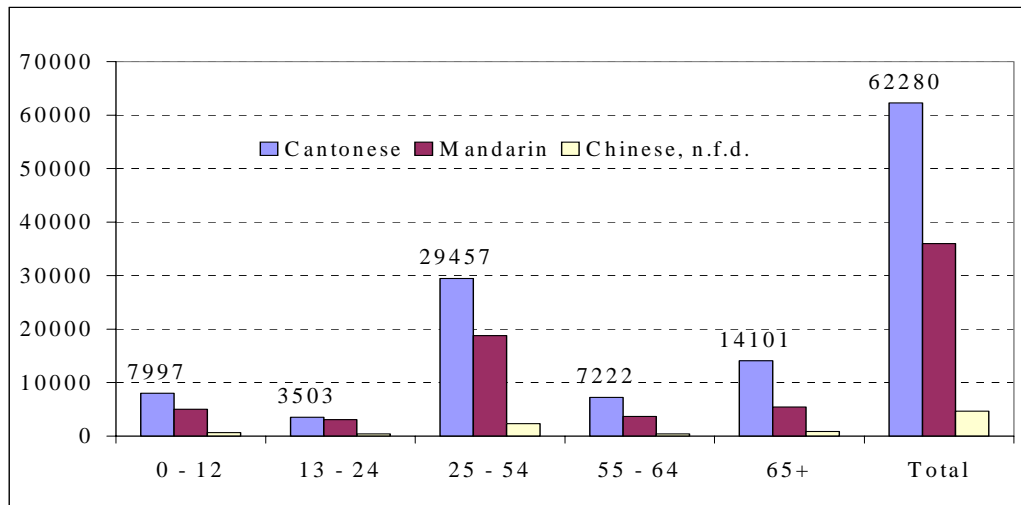
The demographic change in Chinese languages has an influence on the cultural life in the Chinese community. Even though the Cantonese language currently dominates the Chinese community in Australia, the situation is changing with Mandarin becoming more popular. For example, some local Chinese newspapers have already replaced the traditional Chinese characters (used in Hong Kong and Taiwan) with simplified Chinese characters (used in mainland China). In addition, movies in Mandarin or books with simplified characters are becoming more sought after in Australia.

### ***Language Spoken at Home***

According to the 2001 Census, among the China-born population in Australia, 48 per cent of them speak Mandarin at home and 36.8 per cent speak Cantonese. Of the 136,220 China-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 58.6

per cent spoke English very well or well and 40.4 per cent spoke English not well or not at all”(DIMIA, 2003a). From the same source, the main languages spoken at home by Hong Kong –born people in Australia were Chinese-Cantonese (85.9 per cent), English (10.3 per cent), and Vietnamese (1.4 per cent). Of the 60,160 Hong Kong-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 83.2 per cent spoke English very well and 16.1 per cent spoke English not well or not at all” (DIMIA, 2003b). Language demography clearly reflects not only new arrivals but also the varying age profiles of the language communities (DIMIA, 2003a). A large share of the Chinese population has adapted to English and the type of culture it represents but they also maintain their distinctive characteristics. More than 100, 000 Chinese speaking immigrants in Australia speak English not well or not at all, which implies that most of their socio-economic activities would be restricted to the Chinese community and they may experience a slow integration into the Australian mainstream society. Figure 3.12 presents Chinese languages spoken at home by these persons as in 2001.

**Figure 3.12 Chinese Language Spoken at Home by Persons Who Speak English not well or not at all, 2001 Census, Australia**



Source: Office of Multicultural Interests (2003)  
n.f.d: no further defined

The significance of this group is that these people have to rely on support from their ethnic community for their life in Australia. For example, in the age group of 25-54, there are a large number of people (18,802, 52 %), who speak English not well or not at all and speak Mandarin and Cantonese at home (see Figure 3.12).

As a result, their children also learn to speak Mandarin, Cantonese or another Chinese language at home<sup>6</sup>. However if this group of people is not encouraged to learn English including through their own communities, they may continue to experience difficulties with employment opportunities in Australia. These problems could be further aggravated when they age.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is important to encourage the group of Cantonese, Mandarin and other Chinese speaking people

<sup>6</sup> Among the languages spoken at home by persons who speak English not well or not at all, Cantonese is the third most popular language in Australia, and Mandarin is the sixth (OMI, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> The issues about the ageing of Australian Chinese community are studied in more detail in Chapter 7.

who speak English not well or not at all, to learn English. In particular, they may be able to benefit from learning English for the purpose of employment opportunities in Australia. This will also allow them to have a better lifestyle in Australia as they could be involved more in the Australian multicultural society.

Since 1978 new immigrants from mainland China have increased the diversity of Australia's existing Chinese communities, and replenished their stock of Chinese language, business and cultural skills. A large number of those people are Chinese students who applied for residence in Australia after the Tiananmen Square incident. Their command of the English language is generally good but they have contributed a lot to the language demographic change in Australia. However, there are also significant implications of this migration for Australia's economic links to the region (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.116) as well as for the sustainability of Australia's economy, ecology and society.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Attracted by the gold discoveries, Chinese started to arrive in Australia prior to 1854. The number of Chinese experienced sharply fluctuating periods with the change of Australian migration policies. The "White Australia" policy delineated in the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1901 caused a significant decrease in the number of Chinese due to restrictions on Chinese immigration. This trend reverted in 1972, when Australia abolished its explicit "White Australia" policy and China and Australia established diplomatic relationships. Since 1978 Chinese

students from the People's Republic of China were allowed to come to study in Australia and many of them became Australian residents. As a result, the population of Chinese ancestry in Australia is growing faster than ever. After the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, a significant number of mainland Chinese was added to the total number of Chinese in Australia. The number of people of Chinese ancestry reached a record high of 3 per cent of Australian population in the 2001 Census.

The new Chinese immigrants have reshaped the demographic characteristics of the overseas Chinese and overseas-born population in Australia. The significant implications of Chinese migration are reflected in language skills, businesses, foreign trade and cultural life in Australia, which are discussed in detail in the following five chapters.

## CHAPTER FOUR

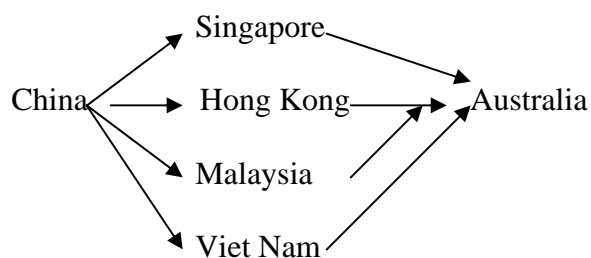
### DETERMINANTS OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

#### 4.1 Introduction

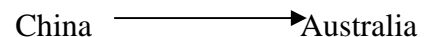
The voluntary settlement of Chinese in Australia started more than 150 years ago. Chinese earlier settlers came to Australia through Hong Kong as gold seekers during the 1850s, and most of them were Cantonese. After them, more and more Chinese people have arrived in Australia as labourers through Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and other Asian countries (Ryan, 1995). These Chinese communities have been in Australia for generations. However direct emigration from mainland China to Australia only started from the late 1970s when China began to slowly open its doors to Western countries. The two migration routes (see Figure 4.1) contributed to the establishment of the Chinese community in Australia. However, the new migrants and the reasons for their population movement were substantially different.

**Figure 4.1 Routes to Australia from China**

**Route to Australia from China before 1978**



**Route to Australia from China after 1978**



Source: Ryan, (1995) and Zhuang, (2002)

The old-timers who arrived to settle in Australia via a third country, were already exposed to a different foreign culture. They have made a transition to a new society and although ethnically representing the largest world population group, old-comers' connections with the typical Chinese lifestyle were weaker. The new migrants on the other hand came straight from mainland China. They still had and have very strong links with the Chinese traditions while establishing themselves in a new western style of social environment. With Australia's ageing population, the Chinese community here is also concerned with its rapidly increasing number of old people. However young faces of Chinese migrants from the People's Republic of China have injected fresh air into the Chinese community in Australia. The two trends are likely to continue in the future: there will be more and more older Chinese in Australia while further new younger migrants will be trying to find ways to settle in this country.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how and why Chinese have migrated directly from mainland China and settled in Australia since 1978, and to shed light on what are the driving forces determining such a voluntary population movement. The focus here is on the Chinese migrants who arrive in Australia from the People's Republic of China, also referred to as mainland China, as this is very likely to remain the major source of population influx from this ethnical and cultural background. This chapter refers to the China-born people who migrated to Australia after 1978 as "new" immigrants.

In 1978, the Chinese government initiated its economic reforms and open door policy. As a result, mainland Chinese people were given more opportunities to move to foreign countries including Australia. During this period of more than 25 years since 1978, the population movement from China to Australia has been significant, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. For example, 27,373 people who came to Australia from the People's Republic of China at the time of the Tiananmen Square uprising have received permanent residence visas by 1993 (DIMIA, 1993). These new migrants have totally different socio-economic characteristics from the earlier cohorts and they have also changed the history of Chinese immigration to Australia.

The ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing recorded the total number of the China-born population in Australia at 142,780 persons, an increase of 29 percent from the 1996 Census (OMI, 2003). The Chinese community played and continues to play a substantial role in the development of Australia. The objective of this chapter is to investigate the factors that determine Chinese immigration to Australia, and explore questions such as what lead the new migrants to make the decision to stay in Australia permanently and how they see their future in their new country.

According to Stahl et al. (1993 p.6), migration is usually motivated by economic and socio-political considerations from both supply side and demand side: "Forces both internal to the relatively poor, less developed countries (LDCs) and their external relations with the relatively wealthy, more developed countries (MDCs) contribute to growing inequalities between them and hence the desire to emigrate" (Stahl, et al.,



1993, p. 6). They also point out that these inequalities are one of the important general “push” factors in migration.

Similar range of factors influences voluntary emigration from China to Australia. Australia’s non-discriminatory immigration policy seems to be a key condition for population movement from China to Australia, but there are many other factors originating from the country which sends the migrants. They are analysed in this chapter. Firstly, in Section 4.2, a migration model is used to explain how Chinese people select Australia as their migration destination. This is followed by an analysis of the push and pull factors of population movement from China to Australia in Section 4.3. Enabling environmental factors are drawn in Section 4.4 before concluding in Section 4.5.

## **4.2 Migration Model**

Madden and Young (1993) argue that immigration decisions are often determined by the “push” and “pull” factors. The push factors motivate people to leave their home country and the pull factors attract them to a particular country of resettlement. The traditional “push” and “pull” factors for voluntary population movement strongly emphasise economic reasons for population movements, such as the potential for higher earnings and avoiding economic hardship. However, Betts (1996) argues that:

Economic theory predicts that people will migrate to areas where wages are higher. But wage differentials cannot explain migration decisions when work is scarce and there are few immediate labour-market gains from moving. For economists, movement in these circumstances seems ‘irrational’. But people do not migrate solely to look for paid work. They want to move to a country with political rights, a welfare safety net and hope of better time for children, and they want to settle near family and friends. The immigration outcomes seem strange only if we expect contemporary immigration to be like that of

1950s and 1960s, a period when these aspirations could be met and breadwinners could find well-paid work as well. (pp.19-24)

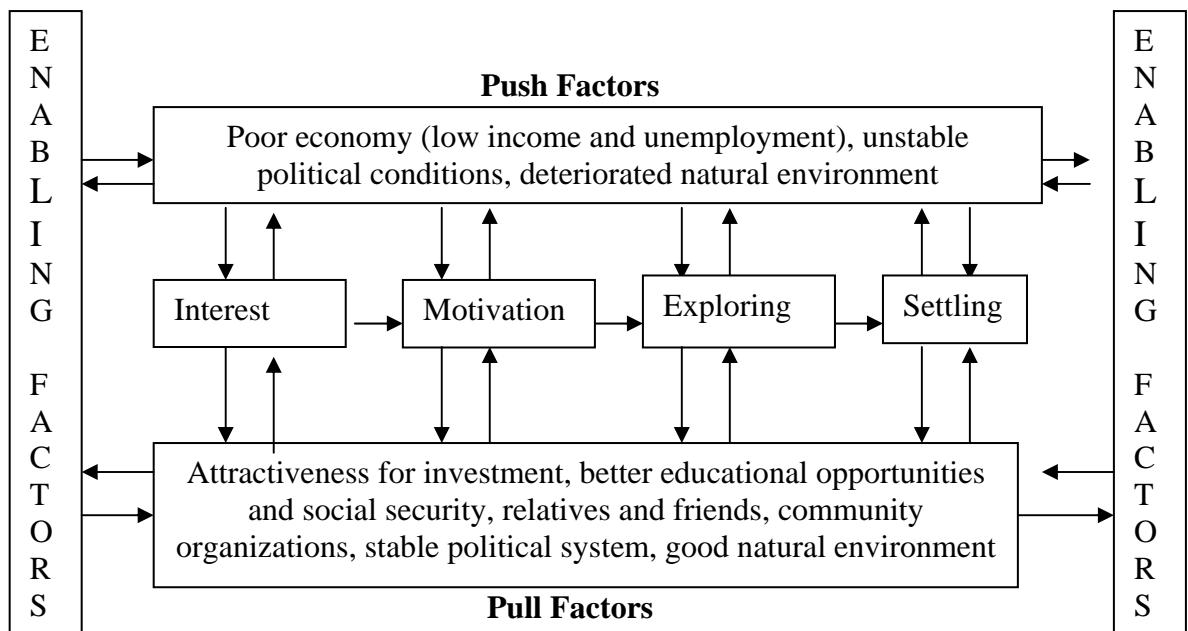
Hence, in general, a combination of a wide range of factors, including political, socio-economic and more recently, factors related to the health of the natural environment determine population movement. Appleyard (1998, p.1) suggests that “patterns of international migration were clearly being affected by profound economic, social and political transformation in many countries and regions, rapid growth of populations in developing countries, expanding urbanization and increasing degradation of the environment”. In the case of China, the push factors originated from its political and economic environment after 1978 (Betts, 1996). There are important reasons, which push Chinese citizens to seek a brighter future abroad and in particular, supply Australia with wanted immigrants. These include China’s political instability and relatively low average income. The pull factors originate from Australia’s immigration policy, the social and economic attractiveness of the country, environmental advantages and Australia’s overall demand for new migration. The pull factors influencing the decision by Chinese to migrate to Australia also include perceived better business opportunities, better education and a safer socio-political environment. Further more, family reunion and intermarriage also play a key role in encouraging Chinese people to move to Australia.

A push-pull model however is a relatively simplistic explanation of immigration decisions. A more comprehensive model is needed in order to deal with the complexities of population movement and to reflect the dynamics of the processes

involved. A good basis for such a model is provided by the interactive model used in understanding innovation (Marinova and Philimore, 2004), which argues that decisions are made in an interactive environment shaped by the push and pull factors as well as a wide range of additional enabling circumstances. The related concepts of communication chains and strategic networks can also be incorporated into the interactive model to explain population movement.

The model used for the analysis to follow is presented in Figure 4.2. It includes the traditional “push” and “pull” factors together with other supporting factors to explain the reasons for population movement from China to Australia.

**Figure 4.2 Determinants of Chinese Immigration to Australia**



\* Examples of enabling factors include: information technology, social networking, and migration policies both in China and Australia.

The migration process is arbitrarily divided into four stages, namely interest, motivation to consider migrating, exploring the migration conditions and settling in the new country. This process can be interrupted at any stage and not every potential interest will result in a move to Australia. The exploring stage includes addressing personal family considerations and meeting migration requirements of the accepting country. A large pool of people who have passed the motivation stage may find that they do not qualify, cannot meet the migration criteria or that their perspectives in the new country are not as attractive as originally expected. The exploration stage can be carried out without or with physically moving to the new country. In the past it was more common to explore the migration opportunity in particular in Australia from overseas. Nowadays opportunities to study, work permits or tourism among

others allow for in-situ exploration. Settling is also a big move and it is not impossible for potential migrants to return to their country of origin much earlier and for settlement not to occur. During all these stages people's behavior is influenced by the factors discussed below.

Push factors for Chinese emigration to Australia motivate Chinese nationals to leave China and look for a better living in Australia. They may include low income and unemployment, unstable political conditions and deteriorating natural environment. Pull factors in the migration process are those conditions in Australia that are attractive to Chinese. They could be Australia's attractiveness for investment, better education opportunities, relatives and friends of Chinese citizens who have already settled in Australia, the existence of Chinese community organizations and the perceived good state of the natural environment. They all contribute to Chinese citizens in China being interested and motivated to migrate to Australia. The push and pull factors do not act independently and they are constantly changing depending on the overall political, economic and environmental developments. The dynamics between the push and pull factors can only be understood in our day and age in the context of a range of global developments. These enabling factors include information technology, educational opportunities, social networking and migration policies both in China and Australia. They allow Chinese citizens to make an informed decision to come to Australia for study, work or directly as migrants. After exploring and experiencing Australia, most of them become Australian permanent residents or citizens. Only recently Chinese citizens have been allowed to apply for permanent resident visas from China, and a number of them are willing to move to

Australia directly without prior experience of the Australian lifestyle. The pull, push and enabling factors interact with each other to make this population movement possible.

Richardson (2002, pp. 165-199) uses the wealth of information from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigration to Australia (LSIA) to report on the migrant settlement experience. He studies the reasons for migration, migrants' experience in obtaining employment and housing, their levels of expenditure, their language skills, health and qualification. Regarding immigration choices, he points out that: "Overall, negative aspects of life in the former home country in respect to the social, political and economic conditions, as well as employment, were not given as important reasons for migrating. It is quite apparent that the attraction of Australia and the opportunities, natural attributes and lifestyle in Australia, together with family who had already migrated, were the predominant reasons for migration, with the so-called 'push' factors less important (p.177)." He further observes that: "Material standards of living (including poverty and poor public services) were not high on the list of reasons for leaving. Much more significant were the context of people's lives, the climate, the political system and pollution and overcrowding" (p.178). Thus he concludes that: "Migrants came to Australia for positive reasons that are related mainly to the desire to join family already here, or to enjoy the greater opportunities, the uncrowded, unpolluted, attractive environment and delightful climate. They appreciated also the peaceful, friendly and democratic civil life" (p.198).

### **4.3 Push and Pull Factors**

This section examines in detail the push and pull factors of Chinese immigration to Australia. Both groups of factors are analysed together because they can be only understood in comparison, comparing the levels between the two countries while the nature of the factors remains the same. The push and pull factors for the Chinese immigration to Australia examined here include economic reasons, social reasons, political and business investment reasons, educational opportunities and state of natural environment.

#### ***4.3.1 Economic Reasons***

Lucas et al. (1980) summarize that international migration streams show people moving out of regions, which they feel are relatively disadvantaged in comparison with others. They point out that the most obvious type of disadvantage is economic, and in general, migration takes place from poorer to richer regions. Chinese migrants are keen to explore the opportunities in the Australian job market and consequently improve their economic standard of living. Generally speaking, economic differences are the major factors causing population flows to places with more developed economies. Zhuang (2001, pp349-350) points out that regional economic differences are also the major reason for Chinese emigration to developed countries. Even though the Chinese economy has experienced spectacular growth since the economic reform and open-door policy were initiated more than two decades ago, China is still a developing country with a much lower gross domestic product (GDP) per capita than that in Australia and other western countries. For example, the GDP per capita (current prices) in Australia in 2004 was US\$29,712, while that in China was

US\$1227 (IMF, 2005). Chinese migrants are keen to explore opportunities in the Australian job market and, consequently, improve their economic standard. The following interview (see Box 4.1) gives an example of many economically successful migrants.

***Box 4.1 An Economically Successful Migrant***

*I came to Australia with a student visa in 1987. As a student in China, I didn't have any income. In Australia, I depended on university scholarships to finish my Master and PhD degrees. Later on, I found a permanent job and migrated to Australia. As a migrant in Australia, my economic standard has been improved a lot. I have paid up all the mortgage and own my house now. I also have investment properties and a new car for my family. All these wouldn't be possible for me to achieve in China.*

For economic reasons, more and more Chinese students from relatively wealthy families are sent to Australia for education. Australia is chosen simply because it is easier and cheaper to enter than, for example, the USA or Canada. For developing countries, it seems that the economic reason is crucial in people's decision to move. In common with people from other developing countries, Chinese people, who have come to Australia, predominantly want to improve their economic status and wealth.



### ***4.3.2 Social Reasons***

According to Lucas et al. (1980), migration also takes place for social reasons, often because people want to join relatives and friends. This process of chain migration results in population movement between highly specific origins and destinations. The original place needs to have open policy and the destination to allow migration and to be attractive; these factors combined have recently made Chinese population movement to Australia more active than ever.

Social networks are an important source of migration information and are critical in determining the continuing flow of migrants. They play especially a very important role in chain migration and intermarriage. China's culture is socially oriented (as distinct from the individualistic focus in the West), which means that there are always people in China who want to join their relatives and friends in Australia. Burney (2001, p86) rightly points out that: "chain migration is reinforced by the strength of kinship and wider social networks in the communities and societies of origin. People took the values of family ties, responsibilities and mutual aid with them in their migration to Australia and these influenced their settlement processes within Australia". In comparison with other ethnic communities, Chinese people have closer community networks and they share traditional values of family ties, responsibility and mutual aid. For example, if one family member comes to Australia and finds that there are more opportunities in this country, he or she would think it is his or her responsibility to help other family members to come to Australia. Chinese migrants actively encourage other relatives and friends to join them (see Box 4.2).

***Box 4.2 Helping a Friend or Relatives to Migrate to Australia***

*I have lived in Australia for about 10 years. As an immigrant, I am happy with my life here. I am also pleased to provide information to my friends and relatives about how to come to Australia. I have helped one of my friends in China to come to Australia as a visiting scholar. Her whole family later on migrated to Australia and she found a government job now. At the moment, I am also supporting two relatives to study in Australia and they also hope to pursue further opportunities in Australia.*

Chinese community organizations also play an important role in providing network information. For example, the Chung Wah Chinese Association in Western Australia has a history of more than 80 years. Its members help to develop and build up “bridges” between China and Australia with information and resources, which can be used by the wider Chinese community. The development and maintenance of social networks within the Chinese communities in China and Australia are critical in determining the continuing flow of migrants.

Chinese immigration to Australia accelerated in the late 1980s. Since many of the migrants were young people and started families shortly after arrival, there is now a large and rapidly growing second generation. On the other hand, family reunion has also helped significantly to enlarge the Chinese community. The new migrants are sponsoring their older parents and relatives who are likely to spend most part of their remaining years in Australia. Chapter 7 discusses in more detail the issues surrounding Chinese elderly in Australia.

Most people who were observed or interviewed for this study had experiences of helping their family members and friends to come to Australia. Chinese people have in their nature the desire and the commitment of helping each other. Good social security system, beautiful weather and clean air offer migrants a better life in Australia and they want to share this kind of happiness with their family members and friends.

### *Australian-Chinese Intermarriages*

When analysing the determinants of Chinese immigration to Australia, the intermarriage between Australians and Chinese citizens should not be underestimated. Penny and Khoo (1996) state that intermarriage brings together two people from different origins or different race, ethnicity or religion. Intermarriage between an Australian and a Chinese plays an important role in Chinese people's decision to immigrate to Australia, as this country seems to offer more opportunities and better living conditions. During the 1980s, the open-door policy changed the political air in China and it was possible for its citizens after a long period of closed-door policy to contact western countries. Many Chinese people became very interested in western culture including Australia's and at the same time some Australians also discovered and became fond of the Chinese culture. China's openness started to provide a lot of opportunities to Chinese citizens and foreigners to know each other through travel and business contacts. Among others, such contacts resulted in people's meeting and marrying. Such social and individual reasons increase the total number of Australia-Chinese intermarriages and have a

significant impact on the Australian Chinese community. For cultural reasons, intermarriage with an Australian is more common for Chinese women than Chinese men. Chinese women have a reputation of being good wives or housewives and the high divorce rate in Australia has pushed Australian men to seek stable families with Chinese women. The observations through the fieldwork for this study also confirmed that there are more Chinese women than Chinese men among the Australian-Chinese intermarriage couples.

Some immigrants are said to marry Australians as a shortcut to permanent residence in Australia. However, Penny and Khoo (1996) suggest that such popular assumptions are not always justified. Most Australian-Chinese intermarriages are based on genuine interpersonal relationships. The move to Australia is a decision based on a combination of factors with an intention to provide better opportunities for the family. Such families also have the advantages of both Australian and Chinese cultures. The interviews presented in boxes 4.3 and 4.4 are examples of happy intermarried couples.

***Box 4.3 Falling in Love***

*I came to Australia to learn English in 1995. I met my boyfriend here. After six months, I went back to China. My boyfriend missed me so much that he came to China to visit me. We fell in love deeply, so we decided to get married in China. He supported me to come to Australia again. We have lived together happily after and have two beautiful children. My children speak both English and Chinese and love both western and Chinese food.*

#### ***Box 4.4 No more Broken Marriages***

*I married my Chinese wife five years ago. She is such a good housewife and I feel very proud of her. I had two broken marriages before. But this time I feel much more secure with her.*

Intermarriage helps people to make the decision to settle in Australia, but this factor is not very significant in the overall immigration decision. For example, ABS (2004a) reported that brides and grooms born in China, Viet Nam, Hong Kong and the grooms born in the Philippines were the least likely to marry long-time Australians. Brides and grooms born in Viet Nam and China were the most likely to have married within their own birthplace group. The rise in mixed marriages has been even and steady between 1974 and 1998. In contrast, marriages of brides born in China and Viet Nam to long-time Australians rose towards the end of the period. For China, this peaked around 1990 for China-born brides, possibly associated with the extensions of visas and the granting of residence status to Chinese students in Australia, following the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989.

McNamara and Coughlan note that (1997, p.303): “Intermarriage does not necessarily mean marriage between partners of different ethnicities. Many intermarriages are between people of the same ethnicity, but born in different countries. This is particularly common among the ethnic Chinese, who are spread across many birthplaces, including Australia.” It is quite common for the new Chinese migrants to marry a Chinese partner in China and bring them to Australia. It is also common for a new Chinese migrant to marry a Chinese student who holds a

student visa in Australia. This phenomenon has helped the increasing number of intermarriages between a Chinese migrant and a non-Chinese migrant. However, intermarriages are not always perfect. The following story (Box 4.5) has broken my heart.

***Box 4.5 Mother and Son Separated by Intermarriage***

*I came from China. I married my husband who is Australian citizen with European origin six years ago. I love Australia and I am glad that my children can grow up here, but life is not always perfect. For example, I wanted to go to work, but my Australian husband prefers me to stay at home as a housewife for the sake of children. I have a 14 year old son in China from my first marriage, but I feel devastated that I am not able to bring him to Australia because my husband doesn't want to support him. I wish he could come to Australia to live with us. I just spent a short time with him in China recently. My heart has been torn apart by my loved ones both in Australia and China.*

***4.3.3 Political Factors***

In addition to socio-economic factors, political factors also play a very important role in the decision to emigrate from China to Australia. Political factors can lead to both voluntary and non-voluntary migration. In the case of China, the two major political factors, which are discussed later in this section, triggered voluntary population movement. The nature and extent of the impact of these events however have qualified most migrants for a refugee status. This section covers the two important political reasons which pushed Chinese citizens to seek refugee status in Australia.

One was the population policy implemented in 1979 when China started to control its population size with a policy of “one-child” only per couple. The second was the incident that happened at the Tiananmen Square in 1989.

### ***One-child Policy***

One-child policy was established in 1979 to control China’s population growth. A couple in China was allowed to have only one child. Fines, pressures to abort a pregnancy, and even forced sterilization accompanied second child or subsequent pregnancies. Only couples in some rural areas were allowed to have more than one child if their first child was a girl<sup>1</sup>. China’s efforts to stop and eventually reverse population increase have been highly praised by demographers and environmentalists but severely criticized by civil rights movements (Guo and Marinova, 1999, p.31). Although China’s one-child policy has been relaxed recently and replaced with a two-children policy for some special circumstances, e.g. if both parents are single children in their perspective families, this effect has had a profound impact on the country’s demography.

There were cases when Chinese couples in Australia were successful in seeking asylum due to the fact that they had more than one child in Australia. They have applied for a refugee status because they were afraid that the Chinese government would punish them and their children were they to return to China. They would be exposed to the risk of losing jobs and other social security support for their children and themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently , urban couples who are both the only child in their families are allowed to have a second child.

Betts (1997) gives a detailed example of judicial activism, immigration and the background to a one-child policy case:

On 5 December 1993 a husband and wife, both nationals of the People's Republic of China (PRC), arrived by boat in Australia. They had no visas and so were detained as illegal entrants. The wife gave birth to her first child the following day and, shortly afterwards, the couple asked to be recognised as refugees because they feared sterilisation under China's one-child policy. The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, through his delegate, refused this recognition. The couple appealed to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) which reversed the Minister's decision. The Minister then appealed to the Federal Court where Sackville upheld the RRT's decision. The Minister then appealed to the full bench of the Federal Court which found that the couple were not refugees, thus reversing Sackville's decision. The appellants then sought, and were granted, special leave to appeal to the High Court.

On the 24 February 1997, in 'Applicant A' & Anor v Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs & Anor, the High Court upheld the judgement of the full bench of the Federal Court, with the five members who heard the case split two to three. While Brennan and Kirby found for the appellants, Justices Dawson, McHugh and Gummow found for the respondents (the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs & Anor). The appellants were not named; they are simply referred to as 'Applicant A' (the husband) and 'Applicant B' (the wife).

There have been other successful cases, however, when families with two children have been given refugee status. Although the one-child policy may not have been a significant factor for a large influx of refugees, it had influenced people's decision to migrate to Australia where they could have more children.



### *Asylum Seekers after the Tiananmen Square Incident*

“Australia provides protection for asylum seekers who meet the United Nations definition of a refugee, as defined in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees”(DIMIA, 2004a). The Tiananmen Square Incident played a very important role in taking the total number of new migrants from the People’s Republic of China to a record high since 1989. This Section gives a more detailed explanation about the role of this political event as a push factor in Chinese immigration to Australia.

The Tiananmen Square Incident has not been recorded in many official documents as a great movement in China due to some political sensibility. However, this Incident also called as “June 4 Incident”, “the Tiananmen Square Massacre” or “the Beijing Massacre” (Mackerras, 1998), has been critiqued by Western countries much more than in China. Saich (1993, p.910) states that “the spontaneous students demonstration that filled Tiananmen Square<sup>2</sup>, the symbolic capital of China’s communist revolution in the spring of 1989 were unprecedented in the history of the People’s Republic of China”. The effect of the Incident on Chinese Immigration to

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<sup>2</sup> The demonstrations were caused by the death of the reforming ex-General Secretary Hu Yaobang. (Saich, 1993). On 13 May the students occupied Tiananmen Square and wanted more freedom and democracy, including freedom of the press, and opposed official corruption and inflation. The action aroused a great deal of interest around the world, especially when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev visited China from 15-18 May aimed at normalizing Sino-Soviet relations. With Gorbachev’s departure, Chinese premier Li Peng declared martial law in parts of Beijing. The mass student demonstrations which lasted about two months were brutally suppressed on 3-4 June by the troops of People’s Liberation Army with Western unclear estimated deaths of 1000 to 5000 people. As a result, Zho Ziyang, the main supporter of the students, lost his position as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and replaced by Jiang Zemin (CIRCA, 1994; Mackerras, 1998). Zhao Ziyang was held under house arrest for almost 16 years until his death in January 17 2005 (The Western Australian, 2005, p.33).

Australia and other Western countries has been tremendous. Political instability can make people feel unsafe for their future. According to DIMIA (2004a)

“Until mid 1989, there were fewer than 500 refugee applications a year from people in Australia. Over the following two years, there was an increase in people claiming refugee status, due primarily to the Tiananmen Square incident in the People’s Republic of China in June 1989. Refugee status (PV, Protection Visa) applications peaked at 16,248 during 1990-1991, with about 77 per cent coming from PRC nationals. At that time, and until 1995, each PV application was counted as a single case and did not take account of the number of people included in the application. This meant a single application could include several members of a family, or just one individual.” (DIAMA, 2004a)

In 1993, there were two important and crucial decisions (1 November 1993 Decisions) made by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA, 1993). The Department awarded permanent resident status to the following categories of people:

- People’s Republic of China (PRC) nationals in Australia at the time of Tiananmen Square uprising (Class 815 entry permits)
- Some highly qualified students undertaking post-graduate study in Australia (Class 818).

These decisions were primarily directed at PRC nationals who had earlier been granted four-year temporary permits following the events of 1989 in China. Since then, there has been a large increase in applications for political asylum by people from mainland China.

The Immigration Law of June, 1994 – Number #26 states:

“Australia will be increasing its number of immigrants in 1991-1995 by 10,000 to 86,000, including 13,000 refugees. Most of the additional immigration slots are reserved for Chinese students who came to Australia after the Tiananmem Square massacre.”

During 1990-1993, the No.815 entry visa was well known in Australia to the Chinese students and scholars who came from China before 1989. It was a bridging visa given to Chinese students before the 1 November 1993 Decisions of the Australian government. Four years after processing this visa, those students received their permanent resident status. Table 4.1 presents the total number of Chinese students and scholars who were granted permanent resident visas. It shows that the total number of visas granted of Class 815 is 27,121 persons. In addition, 18,955 applications were also received for Class 816 which covers a broader range of countries, not just Chinese nationals. Out of them, 67 per cent were applications from citizens of the People’s Republic of China, who came to Australia after 1989 (DIMIA, 1993). They have arrived to Australia lawfully as students and later on after the Tiananmen Square incident became asylum seekers.

**Table 4.1 Total Number of Class 815 and Class 816 Visas**

|                    | <u>Class 815</u> | <u>Class 816</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Applications       | 27,373           | 18,955           |
| Visas granted      | 27,212           | 13,247           |
| % of visas granted | 99.4             | 69.9             |

Source: DIMIA (1993)

The percentage of class 815 visas granted is as high as 99.4. The high success rate for class 815 visas granted shows that the students who came to Australia before 1989 were willing to stay and Australia was prepared to provide protection and offer a home for them. We could probably say that the Tiananmen Square Incident and this group of mainland Chinese people who settled in Australia since 1989 have brought a historical revolution to not only the Chinese immigration in Australia, but also in USA, Canada and even the entire world. Many postgraduate students in this group who were chosen by the Chinese government or Australian universities after a thorough assessment were very talented young people and they were well educated. As a result, their impact on the socio-economic characteristics of Chinese migrants has been significant and they have contributed to changes in educational, income and other characteristics of this ethnic group.

Many new migrants and students from China who arrived Australia after 1989 witnessed the Tiananmen Square Incident. My research has been deepened by the stories shared by my interviewees (see Boxes 4.6 and 4.7).

***Box 4.6 Coming to Australia after The Tiananmen Square Incident***

*I witnessed the Tiananmen Square Incident which happened in June 1989. I came to Australia right after the incident. I am very happy to live in here now. At the moment, I am helping my wife in her Chinese medical clinic and in the same time, I enjoy writing articles about early Chinese and new immigrants for newspapers.*

One interviewee, a new immigrant, remembered one of the students from his university in Beijing who was killed in the Incident. Another Chinese student, who just finished his postgraduate studies in Australia and is going to apply for permanent residence visa, also claimed that he had witnessed several deaths during the Incident. In addition, another new Chinese immigrant who is now an Australian citizen was still living with the potential ramifications from her participation in the Incident when she was applying for a Chinese passport allowing her to come to Australia at the end of 1990 (see Box 4.7).

***Box 4.7 A Student from The Tiananmen Square Cohort***

*In June 1989, I was in China and took part in demonstrations to support the students in Tiananmen Square. I also wrote slogans with my colleagues to support those students. As a result, in 1990 when I applied for a passport for coming to Australia, I was so nervous for not being able to get my “clearance paper” from my working place to show that I didn’t involve in any political demonstrations. Fortunately, my formal boss didn’t mention it and the regulation didn’t last long. Now I enjoy living in Australia.*

A large number of Chinese students immigrated to Australia after the period of the Tiananmen Square incident. Some of them received Chinese government’s support in Australia for their studies but they never returned back to serve the country. Was this a loss to the Chinese government? After graduating from Australian universities

those students were ready for the labour force and to contribute to the Australian society straight away. This was a win for Australia. However in the long term, those students are helping the two countries, including their government and business sectors, to build better relationships between Australia and China. For example, connections between academic institutions and joint ventures have been established through the immigrants who came to Australia around 1989. This is beneficial to both countries. These Chinese have the best of both worlds – the business opportunities in a large developing market and the stability of an established western democracy. If we consider the chain migration resulting from this population group, the total number of Chinese migrants who have and will settle in Australia through this channel is very large.

#### ***4.3.4 Business Investment***

Although China's political conditions have been improving steadily, a large number of business people (more often men than women) are still concerned about the possibility for a sudden change in the political air which may affect their fortunes. Some of them are interested in and invest money for business migration in Australia as a backup. Normally they do not continue to work in Australia after the required 2 years of stay in order to get Australian citizenship. Some refer to this experience as "staying in prison" for migration because they cannot take their capital out of Australia and during this period lose potential chances to make money in China. Their native country offers them the best place to make money and they feel safer to work in China as Australian citizens while leaving their families and children behind in Australia. Quite often this is also done so that their children can receive better education. In Australia, such business people have fewer opportunities because they

more often cannot speak English well and their qualifications are often not recognised. Although Australia also offers economic opportunities, most Chinese business people already have established social relationships and business networks in China which makes things more convenient for their business.

In the 1980s, it was very popular for rich business people from Hong Kong, Singapore and other Asian countries to bring a large amount of money into Australia as business migrants. Now this is also possible for Chinese business people from the People's Republic of China. During the past 20 years, China's economic reform and open door policy made a small proportion of the Chinese population rich and these people can afford to meet the investment migration category as a vehicle for immigration to Australia. As a result, the total number of investment migrants from China has increased much faster than ever. Chinese people are always eager to explore very quickly once they get an opportunity (see Box 4.8). Australia's immigration policy encouraged those people to invest in Australia at the right time and investment from those new migrants has helped to improve Australia's economy.

***Box 4.8 Immigration through Investment***

*I am from China and have been working in Hong Kong for several years. My business in Hong Kong is very successful, so I applied for investment migration. I have invested in some properties in Australia. After I get my Australian citizenship, I will travel a lot between Australia, China and Hong Kong for my business.*

This section so far described the push and pull factors in Chinese immigration to Australia, in terms of socio-economical, political and business reasons. The

attractiveness of Australia to Chinese citizens is not only the clear sky, but also the freedom to make decisions for the future. Even though China is carrying out the political reform towards democracy, Chinese people are still recovering from the historical political instability during the Cultural Revolution and the time of the Tiananmen Square Incident. Like their western counterparts, the Chinese people want to have more freedom of speech and to make decisions for their future. The Tiananmen Square Incident gave those Chinese students in Australia a dramatic push to seek permanent residence. Most migrants from China are not only enjoying Australia's fresh air but also having the freedom to decide on the number of children they have. In the business world they are able to explore and combine the advantages of both countries. All this makes Australia a very attractive migration destination for Chinese people. The educational opportunities and the good natural environment also add to this attractiveness. These two factors are also likely to have even higher importance for the future numbers of Chinese migrants.

#### ***4.3.5 Educational Opportunities***

This section focuses on Australia's overseas students from China. Even though there is a clear distinction between overseas students and immigrants, this section argues that the students from China, who are studying in Australia, could be a large source of potential immigrants in the future. According to McDonald (2002, p.12), "long-term temporary migrants are people who live in Australia for more than twelve months, but are not permanent residents". Most students from China live in Australia for more than twelve months, studying in TAFE and universities and they are long-term temporary migrants. McDonald also points out that policy has allowed business people to convert to permanent residents onshore and it has been changed so that



some students, particularly the ones pursuing post-graduate studies, are able to convert to permanent residence onshore. Therefore the number of people in the age group of 20-24 is expected to rise in the future (McDonald, 2002, p.15). Australia has provided more educational opportunities to students from China. Most of these students are seeking further opportunities of converting to permanent residence onshore if they can.

Chinese students who came to Australia before 1989 have been living in their new country for more than ten years. It now becomes clear that most Chinese students who arrived in Australia recently still have the intention of settling in Australia permanently if they have the opportunity. They are an important potential source of long-term temporary migrants and permanent residents to Australia. The interview in box 4.9 is an example showing the smoothness of a transition from a student to a permanent resident.

***Box 4.9 Becoming a Permanent Resident after Obtaining a Master's Degree***

*“My parents sent me to Australia to study information technology towards a Master's degree. Last year, during my study, I applied for a permanent visa. Luckily, it didn't take long to get it. My parents were so happy and proud of me even though they spent their life savings to support my studies. I found out that a lot of other Chinese students were doing the same as me, looking for opportunities to stay in Australia permanently.”*

Since 1985, Australia started accepting Chinese fee paying university students. The parents in China choose Australia for their children's education because they believe that Australia provides good quality education in English and they also consider that Australia is a society with lower criminal rates, which gives them a peace of mind. Another important reason is that they pay much lower fees for tuition and basic living in comparison with studying for example in UK, USA and Canada. With the political and economic changes in China, most parents prefer to send their children to western countries to receive formal western style education in English. Compared with UK, USA and Canada, Australia is closer to China in distance. In addition, Australia's beautiful natural environment and the government policy of encouraging education export make Australia to become the first choices for many Chinese students, who are willing to study abroad. Chinese people believe that Australian public and private educational institutions are world class and fully developed. The Chinese government and private sectors also fully recognise the qualifications obtained in Australia's tertiary institutions, public and private high schools. The most important factor in determining Chinese students' decision to study in Australia however is that the combined cost of tuition fees and living expenses are lower in Australia than in the other English speaking countries.

Dobson (1997, p.17) describes that there had been remarkable growth in the number of overseas students in Australia. In 1996 there were over 53,000 fee-paying overseas students in Australia and Chinese was the most common language among Australia's overseas students' population. According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA, 2004f), a record number of visas (162,575) offshore were granted to overseas students in 2002-03. In the year 2003, Australia gave the largest number of educational visas to Chinese

students. The majority of these visas were issued to students from the People's Republic of China, i.e. 14,215 student visas or 8.7%. According to the Australian Embassy in Beijing, by May 2003, the total number of Chinese students in Australian universities, TAFE and high schools were 17,153, 4,466 and 9,053, respectively. By the same time, there were also 4,275 students in language schools. Therefore, the total number of Chinese students was nearly 35, 000, which is almost 25 percent of all overseas students in Australia<sup>3</sup> All these students are potential migrants to Australia.

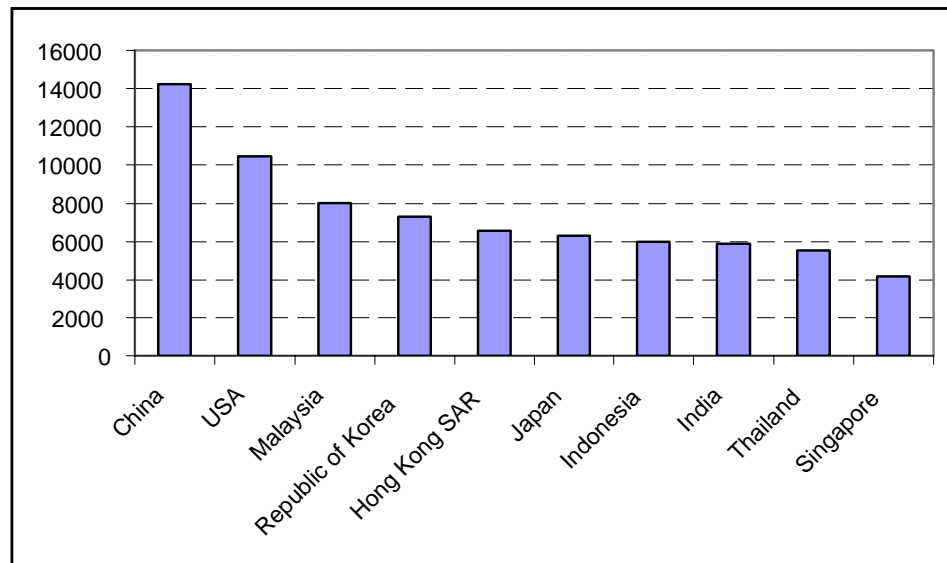
Figure 4.3 shows the ten major source countries of granted student visas offshore in 2002-2003. China is now the largest source of overseas students in Australia.

According to DIMIA (2004f), the major source countries for students granted student visas offshore were: the People's Republic of China (14, 215, 5 per cent increase over the previous program year), the United States (10,477, 17 per cent increase), Malaysia (8032, 8 per cent increase), Republic of Korea (7323, 69 per cent increase), Hong Kong SAR (6576, 4 per cent decrease), Japan (6319, 1 per cent increase), Indonesia (6004, 3 per cent increase), India (5901, 102 per cent increase), Thailand (5537, 4 per cent increase) and Singapore (4179, 9 per cent decrease).

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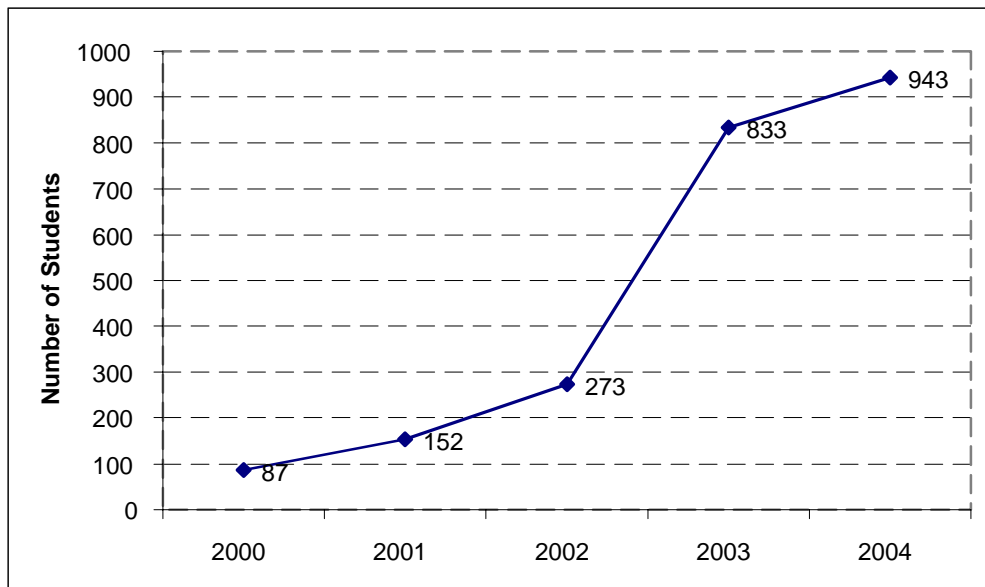
<sup>3</sup> China Education (Newspaper, 13/8/03)

**Figure 4.3 Ten Major Source Countries for Students Granted Student Visas Offshore in 2002-2003**



Source: Compiled from DIMIA (2004f)

**Figure 4.4 International Students from China, Curtin University of Technology, First Half Activity, 2000-2004**



Source: Compiled from Curtin University of Technology, (2004)

There is a continuing growth in the number of international students from China. For example, at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia, one of the most popular universities for overseas students in Australia<sup>4</sup>, the total number of students from China has been increasing sharply every year. Figure 4.4 demonstrates that the accumulated total of international students from China in the first half of 2000 was only 87. This number was more than tripled in 2002. A year later, the students' number was tripled again. By July 2004, the number of students from China has reached nearly 1,000, recording an increase of 245 percent in two years.

It is expected that there will be more and more Chinese parents sending their children to Australia, as the factors making this country attractive are unlikely to change. Overseas students provide an important link to a potential migration destination. Through their studies, the students gain a qualification, which is recognised by Australia. Eventually they develop a preference to stay in Australia, participate in employment and contribute to the Australian society. This trend is to a certain extent reversing the loss of Australian skilled emigration to overseas. This confirms that developed countries benefit from the brain drain of the developing countries (Luo, 2003, p.299). The potential migrants have paid their full tuition fees themselves. Government high schools are free and higher education is subsidised (PhD studies are even free) for Australian residents; this benefits Australia, while some Australian trained highly educated skilled population flows overseas.<sup>5</sup> Australia's immigration policy should be able to balance the gain and the loss.

Nowadays, with China's economic growth, many parents are sending their children to Australia to study and they can now afford to do so. There is also the social

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<sup>4</sup> The most popular universities for overseas students are Monash and RMIT (Victoria), the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and Curtin University (Dobson, 1997)

<sup>5</sup> There has been alarm raised about a "brain drain" from Australia.

acceptance that Australia offers better overall living conditions. My personal experience, observation and interviews through my social global networks make me believe that Australia is more or at least equally attractive to Chinese than any other countries.

#### ***4.3.6 State of the Natural Environment***

The State of the natural environment in Australia and China is considered to be one of the important factors for Chinese immigration to Australia. China's environmental problems, such as carbon emissions, land erosion and degradation, air, soil and water pollution are important pushing factors for Chinese people's decision of migrating overseas. On the contrast, Australia's good reputation of a cleaner environment pulls Chinese citizens to be willing to live in Australia permanently. Following the one-child policy, the relatively low number of young people in China not only have the heavier social burden of looking after the increasing number of elderly, but also face the deteriorating ecosystems and environment. Some of them are trying to escape this generational burden. More and more Chinese elderly also follow their children to move to Australia. They feel and believe that Australia's beautiful weather and good social security system allow them to enjoy a better retirement life in Australia.

China's average population density is 129 persons/sq.km in 1997 and this is already very high according to the world standard, but the population density in the coastal zone was 606 persons/sq km in 1997 which is almost five times the national figure. The population density in the Shanghai area is extremely high with 2,404 persons/sq.km and the Shanghai urban population density is unbelievably high at 3853 persons/sq.km which is almost three times the density of the Tianjin urban districts. By comparison, Australia appears much more attractive.

From a sustainability perspective, Guo and Marinova (1999) conclude that young people in China are concerned whether China can maintain economic growth and preserve its arable land, water and other limited natural resources. In the future, China has to face not only the problems of the increasing pressure on the environment from the large growing population, but also its deterioration from industrialization, urbanization and land degradation. China's expected population ageing makes it crucial to start resolving these ecological problems. Uncontrolled land degradation, air and water pollution can result in problems affecting not only the coastal zone but also the whole of China. The ecological burden on Chinese population is likely to further stimulate migration to Australia. An interviewee expressed concern about China's pollution and industrialisation (see Box 4.10).

***Box 4.10 Concern about China's Pollution and Industrialisation***

*I have migrated to Australia for several years now. I like to live in Australia because I love Australia's fresh air and blue sky. Every time I went back to China, I realized that my health was down due to the pollution. The sky in the city where I come from was always grey and I was concerned about the pollution and fast industrialisation in my hometown. I enjoy Australia's clean air and my health has improved a lot.*

**4.4 Enabling Environment**

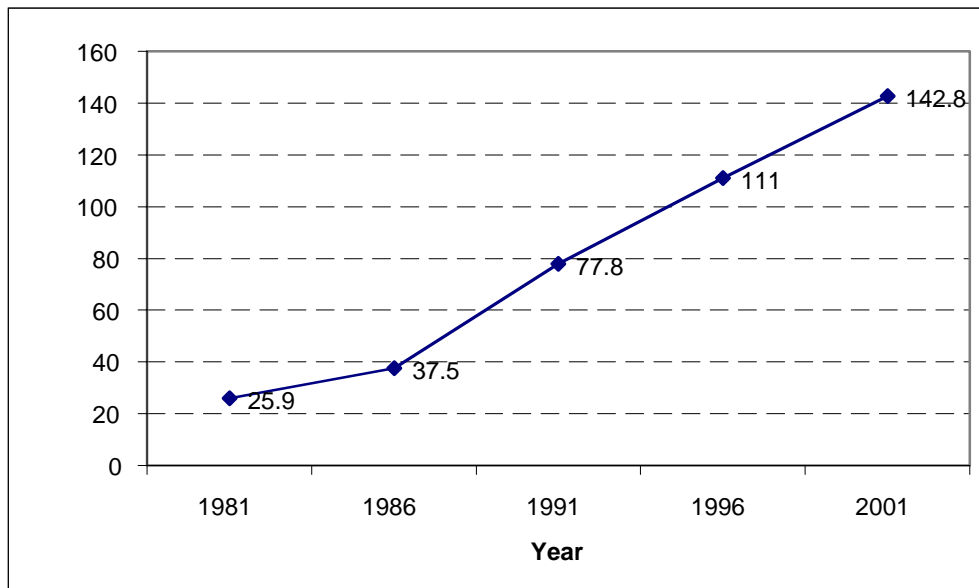
This section examines the enabling environment that facilitates Chinese migrants' movement. It includes the migration policies of Australia and China, communication technologies and legislation.

#### ***4.4.1 Migration Policies of Australia and China***

In 1978, Deng Xiao Ping, the former leader of China, addressed the nation at Qing Hua University, one of the top universities in China, and encouraged people to send more and more students abroad in order to learn new knowledge from foreign countries. He believed that investment in education would eventually benefit China and help the country improve its own quality of education. Thus, after decades of tight emigration control Chinese people gained considerable freedom to study abroad as well as move to different destinations that offer the perspective of better life. In another part of the world, Bob Hawke in the 1980s and early 1990s put a lot of effort to link Australia with Asia, including the formation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group. He argued that Australia is part of this region and should trade and develop business with Asia. Hence the Australian government policies encouraged movement of capital as well as movement of people. Since then, emigration from China has reached unprecedented levels (see Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.5 Population of China-born (thousands), Australia, 1981-2001**



Source: compiled from Australia Immigration Consolidated Statistics for 1981-1996 data and ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing for 2001 data

Most migrants come to Australia under the following three categories (DIMIA, 2004d):

- Skill migrants including special occupational skills and business migrants - they must have work skills or abilities that benefit Australia;
- Family migrants - they must have a relative in Australia who can sponsor them, or be in an interdependent relationship with a person eligible to nominate them;
- Refugee, humanitarian or special assistance migrants - for people overseas who are recognised as refugees or believe they may be eligible for assistance on other humanitarian grounds.

Current migration policy provides for permanent entry into Australia under the above three categories: family migration which allows migrants to join members of their families already living in Australia; skilled migration for people with special occupational skills or a business background which may be expected to make an economic contribution to Australia; and humanitarian migration including refugees; and special eligibility. It is also necessary to mention that the students who are allowed to change status after completing their studies. As discussed, this migration is significant because of the large number of students from China, who are potential migrants in Australia. China is the largest country in the world, with its current population of more than 1.3 billion. Since opening to the world in 1979, China has experienced dramatic growth and development in the past two decades of economic reform. China and its people are becoming more and more important in the global economy. The categories of Australia's migration policy are relevant to China, one of the most powerful countries in the world, and will significantly affect Australia.

### ***Skilled Migration***

Skilled migration is a relatively new phenomenon for Chinese people from mainland China. Even though China's open door policy was initiated 20 years ago, skilled migration directly from China became a significant phenomenon only recently. In reality, skilled migrants received a more direct access to the opportunities the Australian economy and society offer than the students who had sought political asylum and gone through a long and often painful migration process. The skilled migrants arriving directly from China do not have the uncertainty of not knowing what their long-term future is and can start establishing themselves from the very first day in Australia. An example of this is the following skilled migrant from China who was very happy to share his story with me (see Box 4.11)

#### ***Box 4.11 The Story of a Skilled Migrant***

*After graduation from a university in China, I had a government job. I was tired of doing the same thing every day. I wanted a new and exciting life. It was such a new thing that Chinese people could apply to migrate to Australia from China as skilled migrants. So I tried and my skills were recognised. I think that I am luckier than the other people who came to Australia in 1990. One of my friends spent almost ten years to get his permanent residence in Australia, and by the same time he missed the best opportunities of making money in China.*

A number of well-educated people came to Australia to take advantage of Australia's highly developed technology in the areas of chemistry, medicine, or information technology and have successful careers which were not very easy to pursue in China. The Australian government was able to attract part of the educated and rich population from China. This helps Australia build bridges with China in economic trade or industry cooperation, and is beneficial to both countries. The relatively geographical proximity of Australia to China combined with the right policies makes this country at least as attractive as other potential migration destinations, such as USA, Canada and New Zealand.

#### ***4.4.2 Communication Technologies***

The economic boom in China in the 1990s allowed for dramatic improvements in communication technology. For example, nowadays the Internet plays a very

important role in building up and maintaining social networks for Chinese people to communicate with the rest of the world, but it is also the most common source of information about migration agents, universities, supervisors, migration policies and all other questions related to migration. With China becoming a more open society, Chinese people have access to more information when making decisions about their future.

When I interviewed a new Chinese migrant about how he found the channel to migrate to Australia, he shared his story (see Box 4.12). It demonstrates the importance of computer technologies in enabling the migration process.

***Box 4.12 E-mail Communications***

*I kept in contact with one of my friends in Australia through e-mail. I obtained a lot of information from his e-mails. I learnt a lot about the Australian environment and its geography through the internet and I also found all the information about the university and my supervisor with whom I am now studying. I just received my Australian permanent visa few weeks ago. New technology is so amazing that it has shortened the distance between countries.*

**4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the determinants of Chinese immigration from the People's Republic of China to Australia since 1978 and discussed the push, pull and enabling

factors shaping this mobility. Socio-economic and political pull and push factors in China and Australia are the most important reasons for the majority of Chinese to choose Australia as their destination. However, the traditional push and pull factors are not enough to explain the Chinese immigration to Australia. Thus, a migration model has been produced on the base of the push and pull factors and enabling conditions. The determinants of Chinese immigration to Australia have become more complex over time. In the earlier days, the post war Chinese migration was due to the push of poverty and the pull of prosperity in Australia. Nowadays Chinese come to Australia because they want to have a better quality of life. Economic backwardness has pushed Chinese people to move to the relatively more developed Australia. Even though China is experiencing an unprecedented economic boom, with economic growth averaging recently 10 per cent a year, some people are dissatisfied with the living conditions, economic and political prospects in China. No matter how wealthy China is becoming, people still believe that greater opportunity and prosperity are available in a developed country such as Australia. A key facilitating factor is that Australia has made easier entry regulations for Chinese people at the right time when Chinese people gained more freedom to migrate overseas since 1979.

This chapter outlined some interesting changes in the migration determinants for Chinese and any other immigrants to Australia over time. There are important differences between the earlier settler arrivals and the contemporary migrants from China, in terms of migration purposes. The new immigrants from mainland China have entirely different ways and reasons to settle in Australia. Working as a labourer is no longer the major reason for them to come to Australia. Fifteen years after the

Tiananmen Square Incident, political factors alone do not seem to be a key factor for Chinese immigration to Australia. However, the enabling environment is getting more and more important when Chinese people pursue a better quality of life. In particular, when China has to face its environmental problems, Australia becomes more attractive to Chinese families, in terms of its beautiful geographical environment and favourable climate conditions. Chinese people have more choices nowadays. They come to Australia for the better quality of life and better education for their children. Some also have the possibility of reuniting with their family members in Australia.

The Tiananmen Square Incident has contributed significantly for the current new Chinese migrants numbers. China's open door policy allowed Chinese people to know and communicate better with the world. People in China, especially young people want to move to a developed country. As more and more people find their ways to get to USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand, Australia appears as a desired destination because it is regarded as the most beautiful country with the best social security system, the cleanest air and the least fees for settlement. All these make it attractive to most Chinese citizens who are looking for opportunities outside their home country.

This chapter has also drawn the attention that an overseas student from China is a potential migrant. A large number of new Chinese migrants are young and highly educated. They will most probably be mobile between China and Australia during

their active business age. However, younger and older Chinese migrants from China are likely to stay in Australia when they age.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The Chinese community in Australia is not only significant in size but also very distinctive in its socio-economic characteristics. This chapter investigates the life and activities that Chinese migrants have experienced socially and economically in Australia. The period of analysis is focused on the past 30 years, although some comparisons are also made between new and old Chinese migrants. One of the aims of this chapter is to investigate how the types of economic activities carried out by the migrants have changed. Another aspect is on whether the new Chinese immigrants in Australia have achieved their social-economic adaptation in their new country, such as obtaining jobs within the established Australian Chinese community and in the mainstream of the Australian society. The analysis covers both regional and international activities. The migration model developed in the previous chapter stresses the interactivity between push and pull factors for a decision to migrate and consequently remain in a foreign country. Therefore, the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Chinese immigrants also covers issues such as when, why and how the Chinese came to Australia. This reflects the interactivity assumed in the developed model.



First, Section 5.2 examines the cultural characteristics of the Chinese migrants in Australia. Section 5.3 then discusses Chinese economic activities within Australia. Finally, some summary remarks are presented in the conclusion.

## **5.2 Cultural Characteristics**

Their ethnic origin is the primary factor distinguishing the Chinese community from the rest of the multicultural society in Australia. However, what makes the new Chinese migrants different is their specific culture and sense of belonging to a special group with distinctive customs, values, habits, achievements and overall way of life. Cultural activities, such as the performing arts, literature, film and video, libraries, language and religious practice are essential to a shared sense of quality of life. Australia is a multicultural society and immigrants have brought their customs and traditions with them to their new homeland. As a result, Australia is rich in a diverse range of cultures including Chinese costumes and traditions, which play an important part in Australians' everyday lives (ABS, 1994). Chinese immigrants in Australia not only enjoy Australia's multicultural life style, but also are keeping their own culture and religions. This is strongly manifested through the establishment and operation of Chinese societies and associations as well as overall preferences for education, employment and social interactions.

### *5.2.1 Chinese Organizations and Their Activities*

With the increasing number of Chinese immigrants, many culturally based organisations have been established. Most Chinese cultural activities are normally organised by those organisations. The scholars of Chinese studies divide the organisations into formal or informal associations. There are Chinese headquarters, executive councils, and memberships in formal Chinese organisations directed and managed by Chinese community leaders. Their actions are targeted towards the Chinese community (Yu-sion, 1998, p.114). Furthermore, according to Christiansen (1998, p.55), formal organisations include typically native place organisations, Chinatown neighbourhood committees, chambers of commerce, and various types of Chinese associations. Below the level of these formal organisations are informal organisations, such as groups of friends from the same province of China, Chinese student associations and some Chinese social groups or clubs. Informal associations can be developed into formal when they become more mature and get bigger in size.

Formal organisations have their goals or objectives and can be subdivided into two groups: community-based and government organizations. The community-based associations, societies and other formally established organizations facilitate activities in order to assist the Chinese settlers in Australia. The government organisations pursue the links between Australia and China at a formal level. They both play a very important role in maintaining the multicultural character of the Australian society and

keeping a good relationship with the world's most populous country and its expanding economy. As Li points out (Li, 1999):

Nowadays, the Chinese voluntary associations can be found wherever a Chinese immigrant society exists. A vast but loosely knit web of Chinese voluntary associations extends around the world, providing numerous possibilities for communication, mutual help, and organized activities for Chinese immigrants (p.10).

The Australia-China Council (ACC) is a typical formal government organization. It was established by the Australian government in 1978 for the purpose of promoting understanding and fostering "people-to-people" relations between Australia and China. Members of the ACC are appointed by the Governor-General-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Council's funding is in the form of an annual grant-in-trust administered by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia-China Council-Australian, 2004). The Council cooperates well with the Chinese government and members of Chinese organizations and communities to promote cultural exchange and understanding in both Australia and China.

Organizations associated with the Chinese community in Australia include Chinese associations located in different states, such as the Chung Wah Association in Western Australia, North Eastern Melbourne Chinese Association Inc. (NEMCA), and the Chinese Association in Victoria. They all have their own internet websites and also have similar aims as follows (Chung Wah Association, 2005; QCASE, 2004; Australia China Friendship Society, 2005):

- To organise activities which meet the social, cultural, educational, recreational and other needs of the Chinese community in Australia;
- To facilitate the involvement of the Chinese community in local and regional activities;
- To promote better community relations in Australia and understanding of Chinese culture;
- To promote cultural exchange and understanding in both Australia and China and to establish stronger trade linkages between both countries.

With the increasing number of Chinese professionals in Australia, some professional associations have also been established, such as the Queensland Chinese Association of Scientists and Engineers Inc (QCASE, 2004). This is a non-profit organisation of Chinese professionals for the advancement of science and technology. Its members are a group of scientists, academics and engineering professionals from universities, research organizations, high-tech companies, and governmental institutions in Queensland. An association with a similar profile was also established in Western Australia in 2003. In addition, Chinese students and scholars in Australian universities also established the Chinese Students and Scholars Associations (CSSA), which bring new students and new immigrants together to share the experiences of study, migration and social life. For example, they regularly have parties to celebrate Chinese New Year, Christmas and other special days. Exhibit 5.1 was taken during one of these celebrations in Western Australia and shows students and scholars (some of them became Australian permanent residents or citizens) making Chinese dumplings. Other societies related to Australia and China, in which Chinese

immigrants are actively involved, such as the Australia-China friendship societies (ACFS), are dedicated to the promotion of friendship and understanding between the peoples of Australia and the People's Republic of China, and the bridging role for trade and culture exchanges between the two countries. The ACFS has a branch in each State and Territory and is a very active organisation (Australia China Friendship Society, 2005).

### **Exhibit 5.1 Celebrating Chinese New Year, 2003**



Photo by Xiumei Guo

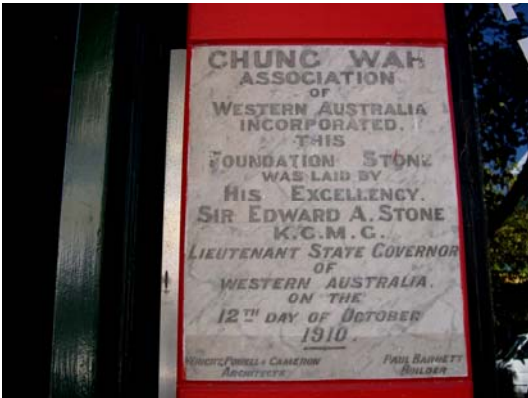
### **5.2.2 Case Study - the Chung Wah Association (CWA) in Western Australia**

In this Section, the Chung Wah Association (CWA) in Western Australia is chosen as a case study to demonstrate the social activities in which Chinese migrants are involved in Australia. The CWA was the first ethnic association established in 1910

in Perth, Western Australia, to meet the social, cultural and political needs of Chinese in this State. For close to 10 years, I have been personally involved in numerous activities and events organised by the Association. In part this was the motivation for my study interest to Chinese immigration to Australia.

When the Chung Wah Association was formed, it had 600 members. The Executive Committee included elected representatives from each of the main garden areas. The first function of the Association was to build a community hall and club room in James St.- the first building constructed by and for an ethnic group in Perth. The CWA provided a number of welfare services to its members including financial assistance to elderly Chinese wishing to return to China (Atkinson, 1988). During the earlier period of its establishment, the CWA consisted almost entirely of single men who were forced to leave their families in China and it not only provided a substitute family for the community but was also a means through which individual Chinese could find communal protection and voice their protest against laws aimed at restricting the lives of Chinese in Western Australia (Chung Wah Association, 2004). The Chung Wah Association is now still located in the same venue and it witnessed the development of James Street and the Northbridge area of Perth, where many Chinese businesses are active (see Exhibit 5.2).

**Exhibit 5.2 The Chung Wah Chinese Association in Western Australia**



Photos by Xiumei Guo

The Chung Wah Association has developed very rapidly in terms of fast growing number of members and the expansion of its services during the almost 100 years since its foundation. It is recognized as the largest ethnic Chinese Association in Western Australia and probably one of the largest and most active in Australia. As many other large associations in other States and Territories do, the CWA organises a wide range of activities, run entirely by volunteers. They include Chinese Schools, women's group, Lion and Dragon Dance Troupe, Newsletter, Welfare and Chung Wah Youth. Other activities include ballroom and social dances, Tai Chi, Tai Chi Sword, Posture Exercise and Canteen Day or Karaoke. In addition, through fund raising, a Chinese cultural centre called Chung Wah Cultural Centre has been built recently to host these activities (see Exhibit 5.3). Furthermore, the bi-monthly Chung Wah News magazines provide a communication link between its members and the Association, reporting and announcing activities organised by the volunteers. A web site of the Association can be accessed freely and a series of articles about the history of the Association and Chinese immigrants are presented on the web. In particular, it also reports about contemporary Australian Chinese issues such as education and culture (Chung Wah Association, 1995).



### Exhibit 5.3 Chung Wah Cultural Centre of Western Australia



Photo by Xiumei Guo

Overall, the Chung Wah Association is a window for Chinese history and culture. Many student groups from primary schools and universities visit the Association, where they can learn and understand the past and present of Chinese in Australia. They are being introduced to the history of Chinese in Western Australia by volunteers. Telling stories about the migration experience of old and current immigrants is another important aspect of keeping history alive. Other activities include Northbridge area and Chinese herbalists visits. I personally participated in a visit to the Association with a group of university students from different backgrounds who were exposed to the richness of information and the facts about the Association (see Exhibit 5.2).

Some of the interviews for this thesis were carried out with the help of the Chung Wah Association and its members which I am mostly obliged. An aged Australia-born Chinese experienced life in both Australia and China, shared with me her amazing story (see Box 5.1) about how she stayed in China for more than 30 years and how she struggled to come back to Australia. It also is an explicit example of preference most Chinese have to spend their retirement age in Australia.

**Box 5.1 Returning to Australia from China**

*I was born in Sydney. I am 79 years old now. In 1946, I went to Shanghai, China, as a United Nations' relief worker. In China, I met my husband, a doctor from the World Health Organization from USA. We used to work in a medical college in Shanghai. We got married and lived in Shanghai and our children grew up in China. After my husband died during the Cultural Revolution, I decided to come back to Australia. After the diplomatic relationship between Australia and China was established in 1972, I wanted to take my children back to Australia. It took us five years to get a permit.*

*I came back to Australia for my children. One of my children is a famous violinist now. I am living in a nursing home and doing volunteer work in the retirement village. I am sometimes invited by the Chung Wah Association and tell my story to young people who want to know more about Chinese culture. Before I moved to the nursing village, I lived with my son's family and helped him to raise his daughter. My retirement village is very close to my son's family home and we visit each other very often. I want to live alone even though my son doesn't mind me living with him.*

*I have experienced both cultures. I am happy with my retirement life now.*

A community leader from the Chung Wah Association also shared his migration experience with me (see Box 5.2). He emphasised the growing share of mainland Chinese in Perth which is witnessed through the Association's membership and the activities they engage in.

***Box 5.2 Volunteers Are Welcome***

*I was born in Malaysia and lived in Singapore. I came to Australia in 1973, and I was much welcomed as a student. I like Australia's natural and social environment. This is an equal society to everybody. Nowadays, Australia is more Asianised. Our Association develops with the composition change of the Chinese population. There are a lot more members from mainland China now. I believe that Chinese from China will one day dominate the Association because of the fast growing number of Chinese from China in Western Australia (traditionally, there were more members from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong). Further more, volunteers are very important for the Association's development. We encourage more volunteers to assist our association and Chinese from mainland China are most welcomed.*

The role of volunteers is crucial for the functioning of the Chung Wah Association. The interview with a lady who is proud of being one of the first Chinese babies born in Perth (see Box 5.3) is an example of the time members contribute to assist the Association.

### ***Box 5.3 A Life of Volunteering***

*I was one of the first Chinese babies born in Perth and I basically grew up in the Association. I witnessed the development of the Association. We organised a lot of activities to assist saving the Chinese migration history and to remember the contribution of our Chinese ancestors. We organise local Chinese to visit the Chinese Cemetery to pay our respect to our ancestors. A lot of old people were too poor or fragile to go back to China and died in Australia without seeing their families. This year's activity is very large and it is a good cultural education to our next generation to acknowledge how our ancestors contribute to Australia's society.*

There are three Chinese schools (Leeming, Parkwood and Morley Chinese schools) with government support in Western Australia under the management of the Chung Wah Association, with more than one thousand students attending. They are said to be the largest Saturday schools in terms of student numbers in Australia (Chung Wah Association, 2003a; 2003b). While teaching Chinese language and culture in the Chinese schools in Perth as well as previously in Adelaide, I have noticed that children not only learn the Chinese language, but are also encouraged to learn more about their Chinese ancestry and understand Chinese culture and tradition through various activities. For example, the schools organise concerts and children's activities to celebrate Chinese New Year and Moon Festival every year. In addition, through Chinese schools, parents can gather together to maintain and enjoy cultural activities

and share ideas about their children's education. This also facilitates the establishment of a wider social network between parents and teachers.

Box 5.4 presents an interview with a member of the Chung Wah Association, who explains what his personal reasons and benefits from supporting the organization, The interviewee stresses not only the day-to-day importance of the Association through provision of information about current events but its even more significant the role in keeping the Chinese connection alive through the education of the next generation

***Box 5.4 Benefits from the Chung Wah Association***

*I became a member of the Chung Wah Association because I could benefit from that, especially as we could pay discounted fees for my children to attend the Chinese school. I also receive the bi-monthly Chung Wah magazine, which keeps me informed of the activities in the Chinese community. In summary, the association has enriched the social life of my family.*

The Chung Wah Association is always ready to assist people from the Chinese Community. On the 1st of February 2004, three Chinese restaurants in Perth, Western Australia were fire bombed (Hewitt, 2004; Eliot, 2004). The Chung Wah Association was the first to comfort and support the victims. A media conference (see Exhibit 5.4) was organized by the CWA immediately after the incident (Oriental Post, 2004; Australian Chinese Times, 2004a). Prime Minister John Howard has praised the

Chinese community's contribution to Western Australia in the wake of the firebombings:

“The Chinese people of this city are a very welcome part of the Perth and the West Australian community. They have made a wonderful contribution to the modern Western Australia and to the modern Perth and any suggestion that this is in some way racially based adds a further dimension to what is obviously a crime” (The West Australian, 2004, p.13)

**Exhibit 5.4 A Media Conference Organized by the CWA after Three Chinese Restaurants were Firebombed**



Source: Oriental Post (2004); Australian Chinese Times (2004a)

With community and government support, the owners of the three restaurants were comforted and could face the problems more easily. I visited and interviewed the owners of one of the restaurants on the day following the accident. One of the family

members (the restaurant is family owned) told me that they have received a lot of support from the Chinese and local communities. They have felt much better and better enough, so that they could keep the business going, but through take-aways only. “They (the offenders) wouldn’t let us down” said bravely the member of the family. A few days later, my family and friends organised my birthday party in the same restaurant which had been reopened with a ceremony with community leaders. Their business seemed as usual, full of diners, both Chinese and non-Chinese.

Without the community support through the Chinese associations such as the CWA, many Chinese migrants in Australia would find it very hard to cope with the difficulties that they might experience, in particular for those who do not speak English well or not at all. The Chung Wah Association is now preparing to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010, The newly elected committee of the Association is very positive about the Association’s development and they are ready to continue to serve the community on a totally voluntary basis. Although the CWA does not engage in any business activities itself, its support to the many Chinese in Western Australia is invaluable.

### ***5.2.3 Informal Organizations and China-towns in Australia***

Even though there are no committees and mission statements in informal organizations, they are very important networks for Chinese immigrants, especially



for the new settlers. They are formed through personal networks, such as friends' gathering through work or place of study, or even from friends of friends. Chinese gather together for parties or barbecues to share similar values and life styles, and to provide support when facing the challenges in their migrant life. Other community groups, such as those of people from the same province of China, also tend to unite together. They have similar backgrounds linked to their original birthplaces, such as dialects and dietary habits. These similarities bring them together to share social life as well as information about the development of their hometowns. The informal organizations help reduce homesickness and create a favourable environment where migrants can feel comfortable about being Chinese.

Since the late 1970s, the new Chinese immigrants who were mainly Chinese students and scholars (CSS) have become an important social group in almost every developed Western country. Australia is one of the popular Western countries. The total number of Chinese students and scholars in Australia, including both current students and former students who have become immigrants, is growing quickly. As those in many other Western countries, the former Chinese students and scholars are highly educated and have professional occupations. According to Li (2002, pp.186-187):

“Its social visibility and impact are significant to both their receiving and sending societies. After becoming residents of their adopted countries, the former students form part of existing Chinese communities. Some established CSS cherish a new dream of becoming the leading group representing the whole local Chinese community”.

This group of new Chinese migrants is very distinctive in Australia as well. There are not many formal organisations which have emerged from this group yet due to the relatively short time of migration, but the informal communities are very closely associated with each other in their vision to fulfil most of their expectations in the new soil of their destination. The performance of such informal associations will gradually mature and is likely to grow into more visible organisations.

By exploring China-towns in Europe, Christiansen (2003, p.67) notes: “China-towns are symbolic centres of overseas Chinese communities. Even small places with few Chinese restaurants and shops are referred as China-towns’’. China-towns can be formal or informal organizations, depending on how mature they develop. They can bring Chinese people together to share social and economic life. China-towns, which exist in most large Australian cities are important social and economic centres and are of special focus in this study. In most states of Australia, it is easy to find a place where Chinese immigrants are active socially and economically. I refer to these places as China-towns but they could be part of a larger area. In some cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney these places are indeed officially named China-towns (they are formal Chinese organizations). For example, the popular website China-town Sydney introduces the Chinese community in this city, including coverage issues about the Chinese community and their relationships with the broader Australian community (China-town Sydney, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. However, in other cities such as Perth and

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<sup>1</sup> China-town Sydney (2004), <http://www.chinatownsdney.com> (accessed: 8/8/2004)

Adelaide, they are part of wider areas, namely Northbridge and Central Market, respectively (these are informal Chinese organizations).

The important features are that Chinese businesses are concentrated in such locations, such as Chinese restaurants, groceries, Chinese shops, Chinese medical clinics and offices of Chinese Associations. In large Chinatowns, there are also Chinese accounting agencies, migration and travel agencies, real estates and even Chinese lawyers. China-towns grow with the increase of the size of the Chinese community. As a place providing an economic, employment and business environment for the Chinese community, China-towns are important not only to Chinese migrants but also to other local residents and ethnic communities.

China-towns are the places where Chinese businesses are concentrated but they often cannot be separated from the other ethnic communities. Other ethnic businesses find China-towns very convenient for local residents. For example, in Perth, Kakulas Bros., a specialized ethnic grocery shop originally established by Greek tradesmen, operates in close proximity to a wide range of Chinese businesses in Northbridge, including restaurants, shops and medical clinics. As typical economic and cultural centres, China-towns are also very attractive to tourists, thus contributing to the attractiveness of Australia's tourism industry.

It was the discovery of gold in 1851 which attracted Chinese immigration to Victoria on a large scale. Ships sailed to Australia from Hong Kong with their cargo of men

who had come in search of the “New Gold Mountain”. In the 1860s, many Chinese district associations began to purchase land in Little Bourke Street in Melbourne to build clubrooms which would serve as meeting places for the Chinese community. From the early 1870s until the early twentieth century, China-towns experienced a period of growth.

The China-town in Melbourne, as a social and economic centre, is very attractive to national and international visitors. In particular, the Chinese Museum, which has been opened since 1985, provides not only visitors, but also groups of students and local residents with information about the history of Australians of Chinese descent since the mid-19th century. For example, “Finding Gold” - an exhibition of Chinese on the Australian goldfields records the very hard life of early Chinese in Australia (China-town in Melbourne, 2004)<sup>2</sup>.

#### ***5.2.4 Media and Newspapers***

With the increase of the size of the Chinese community in Australia, the needs for media are growing as well. Besides the official public media, the media development within the Chinese community is very fast, with most businesses run by private agencies. The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) provides a means by which Australia’s multicultural society can gain access to a wide variety of linguistic and ethnic cultures. The SBS television and radio broadcast in more than 60 languages,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.melbourne-chinatown.vic.gov.au> (accessed: 25/1/04)

with more than half of their programs being broadcast in languages other than English. The SBS television programs are made accessible to all Australians through the use of English subtitles. SBS Radio, the world's most linguistically diverse radio network with programs based on languages not nationalities, broadcasts a total of 650 hours each week in 68 languages. The amount of program time devoted to each language group is guided by the size of the community, its needs (for example language proficiency, age, employment etc), and its geographic distribution within Australia. Programming content comprises homeland, international, local and community news as well as current affairs, arts, culture, sport and music (The SBS, 2003)<sup>3</sup>.

The SBS is a very important broadcasting channel for the Chinese community, especially for those Chinese immigrants who cannot speak or understand English well. Its Chinese programs are mainly broadcast in Cantonese and Mandarin. Traditionally, Cantonese was very popular in the SBS Chinese programs. However, with the increase of new Chinese immigrants from Mainland China, SBS has started to broadcast in Mandarin. Through the SBS broadcasts, immigrants can listen to world and national news and Chinese music and they can also watch Chinese movies.

Despite its outstanding performance, the services provided by the SBS to the Chinese community are far short of the real need. In recent years, it has become more common for Chinese families to install satellite systems with access to Chinese

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sbs.com.au> (accessed: 8/08/03)

television programs directly from China, Singapore, Hong Kong and other countries with large Chinese populations. New technology developments have shortened the distance to one's birthplace and allowed for keeping up to date with news as well as media and arts productions. This helps maintain the specific features of Chinese culture for those who have settled and live in Australia.

There is however also a need to provide for the specific needs of Australian Chinese. As a result, some private businesses have responded to the demand by publishing local Chinese newspapers, installing satellite dishes and opening Chinese bookshops and video shops. Besides the SBS and other official medias, media groups within the Chinese community are developing quickly and providing good services. For example, the number of newspapers, community and commercial radio and local television programmes continues to increase. Many video shops and satellite TV installations are available. Chinese newspapers are platforms of the Chinese culture and a source of links within the Chinese community. For example, in Western Australia, there are two Chinese newspapers: The Australian Chinese Times is published weekly, and The Chinese Express is a fortnightly publication. It is interesting to mention that The Australian Chinese Times has changed to simplified Chinese characters instead of the traditional style, which shows the population of Chinese from Mainland China has increased dramatically and is probably predominant in the community.

The impact of globalisation on culture and society is very significant. Rapid technological development together with economic globalisation is producing accelerated change around the world. For example, the Internet has also become a major source of information and news with numerous Chinese sites providing and broadcasting Chinese content. In Australia, it is convenient to access on-line newspapers in Chinese, such as Chinatown on line, The Australian Chinese Times and The Oriental Post<sup>4</sup>. In addition, numerous world-wide websites created by the Chinese government or private agencies have shortened the distance between overseas Chinese and their origins. Improvement in communication technologies is creating business and social practices that previously did not exist. They are providing links between businesses and communities facilitating the maintenance of cultural interests and identities.

### ***5.2.5 Education***

Traditional Chinese culture encourages education as a way to gain better employment prospects. This is particularly evident among the Australian Chinese community which has higher educational levels than the rest of the Australian society. In 2001, among the China-born people aged 15 years and over, 47.1 per cent held some form of educational or occupational qualification compared with the average 46.2 per cent for all Australians. Among the China-born, 33.7 per cent had tertiary qualifications which is almost double the 18.3 per cent for the Australia-born (See Table 5.1), and

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.chinatown.com.au>; <http://www.actimes.com.au> and <http://www.orientalpost.com.au>

only 5.3 per cent had Certificate level qualifications (compared to 16.9 for Australian-born). Of the China-born with no qualifications, 25.1 per cent were still attending an educational institution. In particular, the Hong Kong Chinese in Australia are generally better educated and highly qualified.



**Table 5.1 Education for Selected Countries of origin (%), 2001 Census, Australia**

|                | Educational/Occupational Qualifications | Higher Qualifications | Certificate Qualifications | Attending an Educational Institutions |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| China-born     | 47.1                                    | 33.7                  | 5.3                        | 25.1                                  |
| Hong Kong-born | 48.1                                    | 35.7                  | 6.6                        | 48.6                                  |
| Cambodia-born  | 22.2                                    | 9.6                   | 5.3                        | 13.9                                  |
| Burma-born     | 50.8                                    | 29.2                  | 10.8                       | 15.9                                  |
| India-born     | 67.1                                    | 48.1                  | 9.4                        | 21.3                                  |
| Indonesia-born | 52.5                                    | 35.0                  | 8.3                        | 48.7                                  |
| Malaysia-born  | 60.2                                    | 46.5                  | 7.2                        | 41.6                                  |
| Singapore-born | 58.3                                    | 42.1                  | 9.0                        | 41.9                                  |
| Thailand-born  | 43.5                                    | 29.0                  | 7.0                        | 41.5                                  |
| Australia-born | 43.3                                    | 18.3                  | 16.9                       | 18.6                                  |

Source: DIMIA, (2004c)

Although it is difficult to find detailed statistical information about the level of Chinese component in the educational degrees held by Chinese migrants, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of them would have obtained their qualifications in their home country. In Australia, the China-born population has the highest level of schooling completed. According to the Office of Multicultural Interests (2003, p.16), some 57 percent of China-born persons aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent) at the time of the 2001 Census compared with 38 percent among the total Western Australian population. At the same time, 61 percent of persons aged 15 years and over of Chinese ancestry had completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent). Schooling contributes to preserving the typical qualities of Chinese culture. It also helps migrants themselves in making a living in Australia. Box 5.5 presents a good example.

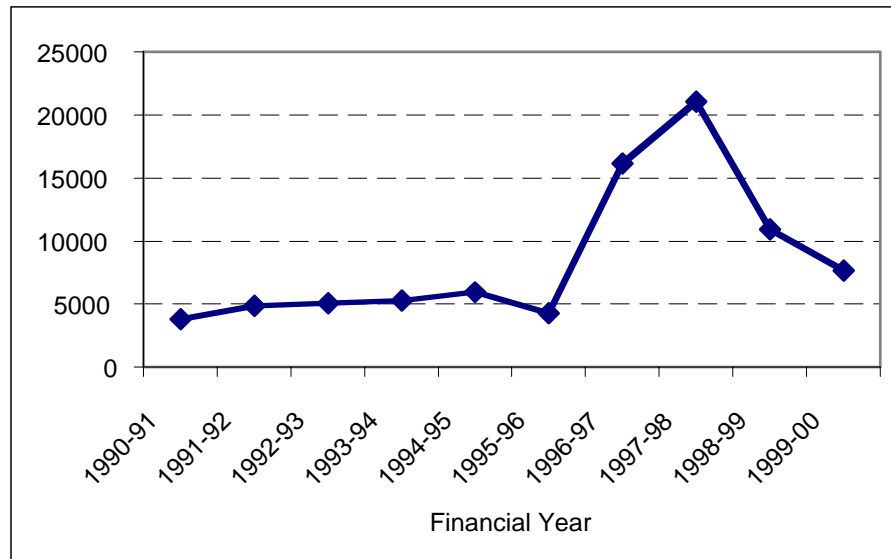
***Box 5.5 University Career***

*Dr A has received a PhD degree in one of the famous universities of China. He was appointed to a Senior Lecturer position in an Australian university. He has been a beloved lecturer and was also successful in attracting large research grants for his university. Recently he has been offered a position of Professor in another university. He considers himself luckier than those who have to gain Australian degrees for better job opportunities. His education from China has benefited him and Australia.*

### 5.2.6 Citizenship

In Australia, as a multicultural society, it is common for its citizens to hold the citizenship from another country (dual citizenship) or more than two countries (plural citizenship). However, the constitution of the People's Republic of China does not recognise dual citizenship. If a Chinese citizen is granted another citizenship, he or she would have to give up automatically his or her Chinese status (GQB, 2005). This has prohibited Chinese migrants from China from taking the citizenship of their adopted country, mainly because they do not want to lose their Chinese status. Otherwise, Chinese migrants who have or have held Chinese passports, would be forced to give up their Chinese citizenship.

**Figure 5.1 Persons Granted Australian Citizenship, Former Chinese Citizens, 1990-91 to 1999-00**



Source: Compiled from DIMIA (2002a; 2003d)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Includes Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China) from 1997-98

Figure 5.1 shows the trend for persons born in China who have been granted Australian citizenship from the 1990-91 to 1999-00. Between 1995-96 and 1998-99, the number of China-born persons who were granted Australian citizenship increased sharply, but they dropped to around 7,500 in 1999-00 (see Figure 5.1). In 2001-02, the number of people from China who took up Australian citizenship is 6,416 (DIMIA, 2003d, p.6). A large group of them are the students who came to Australia before 1989 and became Australian citizens. Most of these students were asylum seekers and they preferred to get Australian citizenship by giving up their Chinese one. This means that in their native country they are treated as foreigners (see Box 5.6).

**Box 5.6 Australian Passport**

*I travel abroad a lot. I have experienced a lot of problems with my Chinese passport. For example, I had a problem getting a temporary visa to go to USA with my Chinese passport. It also took me much longer time to get visas for other European countries. Since I became an Australian citizen, it's been easier for me to travel. However it is inconvenient to hold only an Australian passport. With my Australian passport, I go overseas easily. However, when I went back to China to visit my parents and relatives, I had to apply for a Chinese visa. When my father was dying in China, I had to wait for several days to get my Chinese visa. I was so worried that I would not see my father in his last minutes.*

According to the 2001 Census, the rate of taking Australian citizenship for the China-born in Australia was 82.6 per cent, which was higher than that for all overseas-born (75.1 per cent). The rate of Australian citizenship for Hong Kong-born in Australia was 88.7 per cent, which is even higher than the China-born and overseas-born (DIMIA, 2003a; 2003b). This is mainly due to Hong Kong's transfer of sovereignty in 1997 and the uncertainties associated with this change in political leadership (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1997).

It is quite often the case for Chinese people to obtain Australian citizenship before they head off back to China or Hong Kong to work or do business. It is well known that Hong Kong-born and China-born Chinese emigrate, obtain Australian citizenship and then return to Hong Kong or China "in safety" with an Australian passport to continue their work there (Hon and Coughlan, 1997). For some of them, these countries provide the opportunity to make more money than in Australia (see Box 5.7). However, in order to be eligible to apply for citizenship, they are required to stay in Australia for two years. They humorously refer to this experience as "immigration prison".

***Box 5.7 Business in Hong Kong***

*I have a good business in Hong Kong. Once I get Australian citizenship, I will go back to Hong Kong to continue my business there. With the Australian passport, I feel secure especially as Hong Kong is the Special Administrative Region of China now. With my Australian passport, I don't have to come back to extend my visa and I can come back any time.*

Overall, the change in citizenship does not diminish the cultural identity of the Chinese migrants. It is perceived as a political or business act that facilitates their everyday activities which are deeply rooted in the Chinese culture. However, in most Western countries, there are growing numbers of migrants who often retain close ties with their country of origin (Kymlicka, 2003). Some migrants may not apply for Australian citizenship due to the possible regret of losing their Chinese citizenship even if they are willing to become an Australian citizen. If the People's Republic of China changes its policy toward citizenship, the number of China-born persons applying for Australian citizenship will grow even higher.

### ***5.2.7 Religion***

An important aspect of the cultural wellbeing of all overseas-born Australians is their affiliation with their chosen religion. Most new migrants from mainland China did not have a particular religion due to the dominance of the socialist educational system in China. However, many have adopted Christianity in Australia. The 2001 Census shows the major religions amongst China-born to be Buddhism (27,740 persons), Western Catholic (6,620 persons) and Baptist (3,880). The major religions of Hong Kong-born are Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Some members of this community are Christians, and a small number are Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Jews. Most of them speak Cantonese and Mandarin is widely understood (DIMIA, 2003a). In addition, according to the Australian 2001 Census, there were 4396 people who adhere to Chinese religions (including Australians and Australian Chinese), including 3,426 people who believe in Taoism, 574 people who believe in Ancestor Veneration, 382 people believe in Confucianism and 14 people with other Chinese religions (Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs, 2003). As China is opening more to the world, its religions are becoming more acknowledged. For example, Confucianism is more accepted globally wide not only as a religion but also as a culture. The first Confucius College in Australia has just been established in the University of Western Australia, for the purpose of promoting Chinese languages and culture (University of Western Australia, 2005).

Many Chinese from mainland China became Christians formally or informally after migrating to Australia. They also go to church. Normally a Chinese goes to church for socializing or belief. One Chinese migrant told me that she started going to church and became a Christian mainly as an opportunity to socialise and openly express her beliefs (see Box 5.8). Chinese churches in Australia are divided by languages, such as Cantonese, Mandarin or English speaking churches or a church could have sessions for different language groups. I have visited several Chinese churches in Western Australia. Most Chinese churches provide English classes for new migrants, they also have youth groups, Chinese classes, and a range of activities to celebrate Chinese New Year.

***Box 5.8 Christianity***

*I believed in god in China a little bit, but I could not let other people know, because a Christian wasn't accepted easily in China then. Since I came to Australia, I went to church with my friends and now I feel very comfortable to let people know I am Christian.*

Overall, religion does not appear to play a major role in shaping the Chinese cultural identity of Australian Chinese migrants. It seems that the common business, educational and life style values play a much more significant role in identifying this Australian ethnic community.



### **5.3 Economic Characteristics**

The approach taken in presenting the economic characteristics of Australian Chinese migrants is via examining specific cases that give a lot of insight into their presence within the Australian society.

According to the research by East Asia Analytical Unit (1995, p.117), Australian Chinese are active in all sectors of the Australian economy and many of them are professionals. It is well known that most Chinese have traditionally operated small businesses such as restaurants and shops. Nowadays many of them are running export and import businesses. On the other hand, recent arrivals have some degree of occupational specialisation and relatively high educational level. Many new immigrants from China run small consultancy companies, such as migration agencies, Asia-Pacific inquiry groups, etc. All these economic migrants are dedicated to encourage and facilitate trade and investment between Australia and China. It is believed that: “The diverse and growing Chinese community in Australia can contribute significantly to Australia’s economic wellbeing domestically, regionally and internationally” (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.118).

### *5.3.1 Employment*

Employment statistics from the latest 2001 Australian Census give some insight into the employment situation of the various overseas-born ethnic communities (see Table 5.2). Among China-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was 53.0 per cent in 2001 and the unemployment rate was 10.2 per cent. The participation rate is lower than that of the total Australian population (63.0%), and the unemployment rate was higher than for the Australian population (7.4%). Among Hong Kong-born people aged 15 years and over, the participation rate in the labour force was higher at 56.6 per cent and the unemployment rate was 7.7 per cent. Again, the participation rate is lower than the total Australian population and the unemployment rate was a little bit higher than that for the total Australian population (DIMIA, 2004c).

It is surprising to find that the China-born population has the lowest labour force participation rate among the various overseas-born ethnic communities because China-born immigrants seem to be very active in the labour force. This is most likely due to the large amount of family operated businesses where family members are not officially registered as part of the labour market but are still contributing to the economy and wellbeing of their families. Another reason might be that some Chinese migrants, especially new migrants do not speak fluent English, so that they have fewer job opportunities than India-born, Singapore-born migrants or those who have lived in Australia for many years. Kleinman (2003, p.59-74) suggests in his studies of

economic impact of labour migration in UK that education has a positive effect on employment and participation and UK qualifications are more valued in the market than overseas ones. He also concludes that English language fluency enhances probability of employment by about 20 per cent and increases wages. There is a similar trend in Australia, as most new Chinese immigrants have to go to university to gain Australian degrees in addition to their Chinese degrees (see Box 5.9) in order to improve their employment opportunities. It takes them longer to start to actively participate in the labour force market.

***Box 5.9 Degree in Marketing***

I migrated to Australia as a skilled migrant about three years ago with the expertise of Chinese English translation. I experienced some difficulties to get a job in my area because a lot of businesses in Chinese English translation have already been set up. So I decided to obtain another degree in marketing. Now I have to be very patient in applying and waiting for a job, while my wife has some part-time jobs to support my study and the family.

**Table 5.2 Employment, Selected Countries of Origin, 2001 Census, Australia**

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|                 | Labour Force Participation Rate | Unemployment Rate |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| China-born      | 53.0                            | 10.2              |
| Hong Kong Born  | 56.6                            | 7.7               |
| Cambodia-born   | 56.6                            | 17.2              |
| Burma-born      | 59.0                            | 8.5               |
| India-born      | 67.5                            | 7.7               |
| Indonesia-born  | 51.6                            | 14.4              |
| Korea-born      | 47.3                            | 10.8              |
| Malaysia-born   | 64.3                            | 7.0               |
| Singapore-born  | 55.0                            | 8.4               |
| Thailand-born   | 54.3                            | 15.5              |
| Viet Nam-born   | 60.6                            | 17.7              |
| Australia-born  | 65.5                            | 7.0               |
| Total Australia | 63.0                            | 7.4               |

---

Source: DIMIA (2003a, 2003b and 2003f), compiled from Community Information Summaries, 2001 Census

### *Employment of Chinese in Western Australia*

The employment situation of Chinese in Australia can be further detailed with the case of Western Australia (see Table 5.3). According to the 2001 Census, the labour force participation rate among China-born persons was 46 percent (the same as the rate in 1996), compared with 62 percent among the total Western Australian population. In 2001, 40 percent of China-born persons aged 15 years and over were in employment, 5 percent were unemployed and 54 percent were not in the labour force. The unemployment rate among the China-born persons had decreased from 13.3 percent in 1996 to 11.1 percent in 2001. However, it was higher than the rate

among the total Western Australian population in both time periods. In 2001, the labour force participation rate among persons of Chinese ancestry was 54 percent, which is also lower than the rate of total Western Australian population (62 percent). Among persons of Chinese ancestry, approximately half (49%) were employed, 5 percent were unemployment and 45 percent were not in the labour force. Persons of Chinese ancestry had a higher unemployment rate (9.7%) than the total Western Australian population (7.5%). The respective figures for females are even worse with the trend of underutilising the labour force of China-born and women with Chinese Ancestry, continuing (see Table 5.3). It appears that the majority of the Chinese women are invisible as far as the formal economy is concerned.

**Table 5.3 Participation in the Labour Force: China-born, Chinese Ancestry and total Western Australian Population, Western Australia, 2001**

|                            | China-born |         |       | Chinese Ancestry |         |       |
|----------------------------|------------|---------|-------|------------------|---------|-------|
|                            | Males      | Females | Total | Males            | Females | Total |
| 2001 Labour Force Status   | %          | %       | %     | %                | %       | %     |
| In the Labour Force        | 53.2       | 38.8    | 45.5  | 60.3             |         | 49.1  |
| Employed                   |            |         |       |                  |         |       |
| Full-time                  | 32.8       | 18.4    | 25.1  | 37.4             |         | 22.8  |
| Part-time                  | 12.6       | 14.5    | 13.6  | 14.9             |         | 20.1  |
| Not stated                 | 2.1        | 1.4     | 1.7   | 1.9              |         | 1.5   |
| Total employed             | 47.5       | 34.2    | 40.4  | 54.2             |         | 44.5  |
| Unemployed                 |            |         |       |                  |         |       |
| Looking for full-time work | 4          | 1.9     | 2.9   | 3.7              |         | 2     |
| Looking for part-time work | 1.7        | 2.6     | 2.2   | 2.4              |         | 2.6   |
| Total unemployed           | 5.7        | 4.6     | 5.1   | 6.1              |         | 4.6   |
| Not in the labour force    | 46.3       | 60.3    | 53.8  | 39.3             |         | 50.4  |
| Not stated                 | 0.5        | 0.9     | 0.7   | 0.4              |         | 0.5   |
| Total                      | 100        | 100     | 100   | 100              |         | 100   |
| 2001 Unemployed rate       | 10.6       | 11.8    | 11.1  | 10.1             |         | 9.3   |
| 1996 Unemployed rate       | 11.8       | 15.3    | 13.3  |                  |         |       |
| 2001 participation rate    | 53.2       | 38.8    | 45.5  | 60.3             |         | 49.1  |
| 1996 Participation rate    | 54         | 38.5    | 46.1  |                  |         |       |

Source: Compiled from OMI, 2004

Even though, many new immigrants from China are highly educated, it is difficult for them to achieve skilled employment in their area of expertise. This is mainly due to their lack of English fluency, problems with the acceptance of their Chinese qualifications and lack of local work experience.

### ***5.3.2 Occupation and Industry***

The case in Western Australia is also used to present the types of occupation and industry that Australian Chinese are involved. The 2001 Census shows that China-born persons aged 15 years and over in Western Australia were strongly represented in the occupation groups of professional (23%), associate professional (20%), and labourers and related workers (15%). Among persons of Chinese ancestry, 28 percent were employed as professionals compared with 17 percent among the total Western Australian population. Most other occupation groups had lower proportions of persons of Chinese ancestry compared with the total Western Australian population. One-quarter (24%) of China-born persons aged 15 years and over were employed in the accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry, around five times the proportion of employment in this industry among the total Western Australian population (5%). A further 15 percent were employed in the retail trade industry and 12 percent worked in the manufacturing industry. Among persons of Chinese ancestry, the most common industries of employment were retail trade (15%), accommodation, cafes and restaurants (14%), property and business services (13%) and health and community services (12%) (OMI, 2004, pp.18-23).

Hence, there seems to be a division between the Chinese community with higher presentation of the extremes – highly qualified professionals on the one end, and the catering and hospitality services, on the other. The remainder of this chapter deals with the lower end of the spectrum as these occupations are often seen as culturally representative.

### ***Business Development in Australia's China-towns***

Most businesses run by Chinese can be found easily in the China-towns of the States and Territories in Australia. China-towns in Melbourne and Sydney are the liveliest in Australia.

China-town in Melbourne started in the 1850s with a small Chinese community in Little Bourke Street providing all the needs of the gold diggers such as food, equipment and medicine.

As gold dried up on the diggings, those who did not return to China went back to Melbourne's China-town which, for those who stayed, represented the only community they had. They found work and established businesses to cater for the local Chinese and non Chinese markets. The 1880s were the days of "Marvellous Melbourne", the time when industry was booming. However, the Boom-times of the 1880s did not last. The demise of the Gold Rush signalled a depressed labour market. European settlers who previously resented the Chinese, now openly accused them of providing cheap labour - particularly in the furniture trade. Soon the introduction of labour laws meant furniture fashioned by Chinese hands was stamped "Asian Labour Only". The new labour laws combined with the effects of the "White Australia Policy" introduced in 1901 plunged China-town into darkness. It was no longer the



residential haven for the Chinese, as the population declined alongside business (Victorian Government of Australia, 2004).

When the government eased immigration laws in 1947, China-town revived itself once again, spreading its population over suburban Melbourne. China-town predominantly extends along Little Bourke Street between Swanston Street and Spring Street. Its cabinet makers and lodging houses may now be gone but eating houses and top class restaurants take their place with the streetscape and its low-rise brick buildings retaining its historic character. It remains a busy and important social and economic centre for the Chinese community and proudly stands as one of Melbourne city's most popular venues. Throughout the year, there are many traditional festivals and activities, making China-town a popular destination in the city centre for local, interstate and international visitors.

In Melbourne's China-town, the total amount of business activities, namely 139 (see Table 5.4) is amazing. About 50 per cent of the businesses are catering (see table 5.4), followed by the service industries (about 40 per cent). There are only 4 general trading shops. The large number of catering establishments (72) attract tourists and visitors to the area generating stable income and making China-town a visible and lively place. Their economic activities are also exciting. Chinatown, as an important social and economic centre, reflects a new kind of life style for Chinese migrants in Australia.

**Table 5.4 Type of Businesses in Chinatown, Melbourne, 2000**

| Type                                | Number    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Catering</b>                     |           |
| Cafes and Bars                      | 3         |
| Takeaway                            | 3         |
| Restaurants                         | 65        |
| Food court                          | 1         |
| Subtotal                            | <b>72</b> |
| <b>Foodstuffs trading</b>           |           |
| Groceries                           | 3         |
| Cakes/Pastries                      | 1         |
| Delicatessen                        | 1         |
| Subtotal                            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>General Trading</b>              |           |
| Books                               | 3         |
| Newspapers                          | 1         |
| Fashion                             | 1         |
| Sub-total                           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Services</b>                     |           |
| Banks                               | 5         |
| Amusements                          | 5         |
| Theatres and Cinemas                | 7         |
| Hairdressing and Beauty Salon       | 6         |
| Medical Clinic and Chinese Medicine | 2         |
| Pharmaceutical and Pharmacy         | 2         |
| Travel Agents                       | 2         |
| Solicitors                          | 2         |
| Marketing Service                   | 1         |
| Radio Station and Retail            | 1         |
| Photographic                        | 1         |
| Copy centre                         | 1         |
| Architects                          | 2         |
| Graphic Design                      | 1         |
| Hotels                              | 6         |
| Societies                           | 6         |
| Worship                             | 2         |
| Communication                       | 1         |
| Parking                             | 1         |
| Shopping Centre                     | 1         |
| Museum                              | 2         |
| Cultural Centre and Art gallery     | 2         |

**Table 5.4 Type of Businesses in Chinatown, Melbourne, 2000 (continued)**

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Retails      | 3          |
| Martial Arts | 1          |
| Subtotal     | <b>59</b>  |
| Total        | <b>135</b> |

Source: Compiled from China-town Directory, Business List Victorian Government of Australia, (2004)<sup>6</sup>

### *Chinese Restaurants and Take-aways*

Chinese restaurants and take-aways are the most traditional and visible businesses in the economic activities of the Chinese community in Australia and worldwide.

Wherever there are Chinese people in Australia, you can find a Chinese restaurant.

Chinese restaurants and food also attract customers from a wider range within the Australian community. For example, Yellow Pages counts of Perth for 2003 suggest that there are 184 restaurants with Chinese names or indicating Chinese cuisine. This number is 20 per cent of the total 917 restaurants listed. In the Australian Capital Territory, there are also 50 Chinese restaurants, which is 12.5% per cent of the total (399). Most Chinese restaurants are run by Chinese. The percentage of Chinese restaurants in Australia is much higher than the population percentage of people of Chinese origin (i.e. around 3 percent).

Why are there so many restaurants run by Chinese people? One of the reasons is that the catering trade is well suited to immigrant entrepreneurs because a limited

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.melbourne-chinatown.vic.gov.au/pages/business\\_list.html](http://www.melbourne-chinatown.vic.gov.au/pages/business_list.html) (accessed: 6/6/2004)

knowledge of English is sufficient for running such a business. Immigrants are willing to work long hours for low wages or profits and the employees are normally family members investing a greater amount of family labour. It is also the case that some other restaurants are run by Chinese, such as Japanese take-aways or restaurants, McDonald's, and even cafes. The significance is that Chinese businesses in Australia have transformed from providing services mostly to the Chinese community in the early days to the wider Australian society now. With the development of Chinese immigration, such as education, social economic improvement, the services provided by Chinese migrants will be broadened into the main society.

The Chinese involvement in the catering business exposes these migrants to a range of challenges, because of the high demand on time and commitment put on the family. Such businesses are very much resource draining and tend to either exist for a limited (often short) period of time or change ownership frequently. For example, when you have gone back to dine in your favourite Chinese restaurant you may have experienced that it was closed or its ownership has been changed. What is the reason behind this happening quite often? Some people run a Chinese restaurant mainly for investment purposes required by their migration status, including business investment conditions. Once they obtain their permanent resident visas and save enough money, they change to another business that suits them better. Being employed at a restaurant is also not very secure because the ownership is often likely to change frequently.

Irrespective of all such impediments, with the increasing number of new Chinese business migrants, the catering service keeps growing and spreading very quickly.

In order to deepen my understanding of Chinese restaurants' business, I spent more time in Chinese restaurants in Perth, eating and informally observing their business activities and sometimes having a chat with the owners. I learnt a lot behind the scenes of Chinese take-aways and restaurants. The fieldwork carried out for this study shows that most lunch customers of Chinese restaurants are Chinese, however most dinner customers are of non-Chinese backgrounds or Australians. The attraction of Chinese food has drawn more Australians to enjoy the Chinese eating culture. This is a window of opportunity into the Chinese culture and traditions, which, in the long run, benefits the globalisation of the Australian society as well as the blending of Chinese migrants into their new country. It is amazing and overwhelming to find Australians can also accept some very traditional Chinese food, such as Yum Cha, and some of them do not even mind having the popular chicken feet. Multicultural Australians have gradually changed their tastes and appetites for different foods. Most Australian people believe that the Chinese catering industry enriches Australia's food variety and are also of the opinion that Chinese food is healthier and cheaper than western food. They also learn to enjoy it. More and more Australians are choosing Chinese restaurants to gather together with relatives and friends. As a result, there is a demand and opportunities for services, such as Chinese cooking classes, retail trade of food components and imports of ingredients, and this has been witnessed.

### *General Trading and Services*

The gold rush of Chinese labourers about 160 years ago in Australia resulted in the establishment of business operations in gardening, furniture manufacturing, laundry work and retailing within the Chinese community. The gold rush also created employment in the hospitality industry and many Chinese found work as cooks, kitchen hands or domestic servants in hotels and boarding houses (Atkinson, 2003). Things have changed since but the Chinese community tends to exhibit characteristics which distinguish it from the average Australian figure.

An analysis of the buying guide for the Chinese community (Australian Chinese Times, 2002) and the Chinese-English Business Directory (Australian Chinese Times, 2005) in Western Australia shows the diversity of their economic activities. They can be classified into business (general trading and services), Chinese herbal, finance, migration, health and medicine and law. Expanding businesses include garment manufacturing, estate agencies, jeweller's shops, bakeries, butcher's shops, driving schools, and even entertainment and education, alongside more traditional activities such as catering, foodstuffs, manufacture, and furniture making. In foodstuffs trading, large enterprises such as Chan Brothers, which import and distribute Asian products, have grown alongside the numerous small local groceries. Another common field of employment for Chinese is taxi driving. Chinese taxi drivers may hold university degrees (including Masters or doctoral degrees) from Australia or China (see Box 5.10).

Overall, small businesses are expanding with the increase of the number of Chinese in Australia in terms of business activities.

***Box 5.10 Taxi Driving***

*I came to Australia as a skilled migrant in 1997. I obtained my Bachelor of Arts degree in a university in China, majoring in economics. I have sent countless job applications since I arrived in Australia and in the same time I had to work in different Chinese restaurants to support my family. When I lost hope to find a proper job, I decided to obtain another bachelor degree in information technology. Unfortunately by the time I got my IT degree about two years ago, I still couldn't find a job related to my area of expertise. Thus, in order to support my family and pay the mortgage, more than a year ago, I started working as a taxi driver.*

***Economic Role of Chinese Women***

Most Chinese women from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore are staying and working at home as housewives. However, the women from mainland China are more economically active outside the family unit. It is very rare to see a woman from mainland China who stays at home as a housewife. Two groups of my interviews (with 10 women each) show that 7 out of 10 women from China are working, however 7 out of 10 women from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong are staying at home as housewives. This is probably because most Chinese female migrants from

mainland China are relatively new. Another important reason is that most Chinese female were “workers” in China and they cannot stop working.

Most new Chinese migrants from China did not have any savings with them when they first arrived in Australia. It can be said that they had to start a new life from zero. Hence, women migrants from China have to work hard together with their husbands to build their new homes in the new country. They are keen to work in order to pay the mortgages for their houses and provide the best education for their children. Children’s education is extremely important in their lives. For example, they prefer to buy houses in suburbs with good public and private schools. Some Chinese migrants are also willing to provide financial help for their relatives in China. All these put much more pressure on women from mainland China, so that they have to be part of formal economy to have a better quality of life.

This group of women also looks for support from their elderly parents who can look after their children, while they enter the labour force. Box 5.11 is an example of a mother of three children who is very grateful to her parents for looking after her baby, so that she can go back to work. Relying on extended family support is also a significant factor which drives migration through family reunion. Consequently, the move of grandparents to Australia will contribute towards the ageing of the Chinese community.



### **Box 5.11 Working Mother**

*My parents came to Australia from China three times to look after my children whenever I had a new baby, so that I never stopped working. They enjoy helping me and staying with my children. Many of my friends are the same as me. Our parents are always willing to help us.*

Similar to the total Australian female population, a growing number of Chinese women are entering the workforce in Australia. However, Chinese women are more likely not to be in the labour force compared with males. The 2001 Census data confirms this. For example, in 2001 in Western Australia, China-born females (60%) were more likely not to be in labour force compared with males. In terms of their occupation, China-born females (19%) were more than four times more likely to be intermediate clerical, sales and service workers than males (4%). There was also a higher proportion of China-born females (10%) employed as elementary clerical, sales and service workers than males (4%) (OMI, 2004, p.18-20).

Some Chinese women have to stay at home as housewives. However, the economic contribution of women in this group should not be ignored, especially for those grandparents who look after their grandchildren at home and those housewives who are looking after home businesses as well. Women play a very significant role in home businesses that are very popular amongst Australian Chinese families. Examples include selling goods at home such as cosmetic, herbal and health products.

It is noticeable that this kind of home businesses is normally run within the Chinese communities through their own networks and advertisements in the local Chinese newspapers (see Exhibit 5.5). It is also interesting to note that some Australian special products and other Australian made goods are taken to China and other countries as presents. This type of small home businesses has made a contribution to Australian exports too (Exhibit 5.5 confirms this). For many years many cosmetic and other products are made in Australia, people buy them and take to China as gifts.

Exhibit 5.5 Australia's Famous Careline Products

**澳洲名產柯藍 Careline 及其它品牌保健品**

廠家直銷西澳唯一總代理  
西澳價格最平

**歡迎 各商店代銷**

**產品降價10%-20%**

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| 袋鼠皮 \$25/張                   | 蜂皇乳 \$19/365粒 袋鼠精 \$6.50/瓶 |
| 羊毛被 \$49/張                   | 羊胎盤素膠囊 \$8.50/瓶            |
| (Qsize 500g/m <sup>2</sup> ) | 蜂膠 \$2.90/瓶                |
| 鯊魚軟骨 \$21/500粒               | 精品禮盒 \$9.-/套               |
| 袋鼠錢包 \$2/個                   | 深海魚油 \$5.00/180(1000mg)精裝  |

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(西澳唯一的三大集團公司總代理)

新鮮肉店: ..... Shop 11, 375 William St. Northbridge

勝者音像店: ..... 273 William St. Northbridge

Golden Swan River 旅游品店: ..... 579A Hay St. Perth

Harvest 健康品店: ..... 20 Napoleon Street, Cottesloe

IE Gift 禮品店: ..... Shop 8, 60 Roe St. Northbridge

HYW 店: ..... 5 Point St. Fremantle

蜂蜜店: ..... Fremantle Market

Aussin 旅游品店: ..... E-Shed Market, Fremantle

榮盛亞洲超市: ..... Shop 27A, Kardinya Park Shpg Centre

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Careline 集團公司  
Homart 集團公司  
Green King 集團公司

Source: Australian Chinese Times (2005)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Chinese Times (2005), 13/7/2005

An example is a woman who has set up her business at home more than 3 years ago. She sells Australian made health goods at home, her business is very popular and at the same time she is raising four children (see Box 5.12).

***Box 5.12 Business and Housework***

*This business is very suitable to me. I can stay at home and do my housework. There are quite a lot of people who come here to buy the Australian goods and take them back to China as presents.*

With the increasing number of high school students from China, hosting one or more students at home is a booming business for many Chinese families to earn extra income. Women are doing most of these jobs. A positive outcome is that the Australian born children of the hosting families can also have a chance to practise Chinese with the students.

It is very often to see Chinese women running small businesses in Australia, including with products imported from China. For example, a woman from Shanghai told me her story about selling at Sunday markets or at university open day markets (see Box 5.13):

***Box 5.13 Selling at Market***

*I sell my goods imported from China three days a week at a market. There are more and more people running this sort of businesses, which are very competitive. I also have a small sewing business at home. I have to do this because I can't find another job.*

The increased economic role of women in fuelling the economic processes should not be ignored, especially in maintaining social sustainability. It is noticeable that most Chinese women from mainland China, especially those who are highly educated, are very active in contributing economically to their families and the Australian society. This has highlighted the roles they play in their family's social and economic adaptation.

***Housing and Real Estate***

The increasing number of Chinese real estate agents has been associated with the fact that there are more and more Chinese customers. Most Chinese migrants prefer to buy houses to secure their future for living or investment. Like a modern day gold rush, most Chinese professionals own more than one property for renting and enjoy tax benefits. For example, in the Rossmoyne Senior High School zone of Perth, there are large numbers of Chinese families. The good reputation of the local government

school as the best public school in Australia is attracting Chinese residents. Chinese parents always choose the best education for their children and they are willing to do so through investing in their properties. The demand for houses in the Rossmoyne High School Zone has driven house prices extremely high, probably more than several tens of thousands dollars higher than the neighbouring suburbs. This example shows that preferences by Chinese and for that matter of any other group of ethnic immigrants, can have a noticeable impact on local business and the economy.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the socio-economic characteristics of Chinese immigrants in Australia. Although preserving their native cultural characteristics, such as language and traditions, Chinese immigrants have experienced a transition in their socio-economic characteristics since they have become Australian permanent residents or citizens. Most of them have engaged in further education or qualifications to pursue better job opportunities. Some have also adopted new religious beliefs. When making a decision to migrate to Australia, many of the new Chinese migrants are excited with the prospects of the new life that awaits them.

However, these expectations cannot always be met. An option is to seek unskilled employment. Many Chinese remain in Australia with the prospects for better education for their children or for the beautiful natural and safe social environment. Their personal stories vary. Some migrants feel a bit disappointed about their

employment opportunities, while others are very successful in finding job opportunities. Overall, there seems to be a feeling of satisfaction as well as new possibilities to be exploited further.

Nowadays, Australian Chinese participate more in the Australian mainstream and they are more visible. This chapter also examined how the new Chinese immigrants have used their ethnic and personal resources in order to achieve economic adaptation in their new country, including ways in which they have responded to economic challenges, such as obtaining jobs within the established Chinese community and Australian society and pursuing a global strategy, by seeking employment or starting a business abroad.

The participation and contribution of Chinese migrants in Australia have transformed from the basic food industry to the wider industries. New technology has shortened the distance between the origin and destination. Many Chinese are trying to establish their dignity within the local Chinese community, and integrate themselves into mainstream society as well. In particular, the integration and transition of the new Chinese immigrants into either the local community or mainstream society will be persistent and challenging.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE ROLE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chinese economic involvement in Australia dates back to when Chinese immigrants started to arrive on the shores of this country in the 1850s. Their economic contribution to the Australian society continues to grow along with the dramatic increase in recent times of Chinese immigration to Australia. Since December 22, 1972, when the Governments of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Australia announced the establishment of diplomatic relations, the prospective cooperation in trade, culture, science, technology and other spheres between these two countries have brought great interests to both Australia and China (Doren and Lee, 2002, pp.831-833). Seven years later, China's open-door policy and its economic reform in 1979 made China even more important to Australia's economy. With China's entry to the World Trade Organisation in December 2001, the trade and investment relationships between these two countries have expanded further. Over the last ten years China has moved from being the tenth to the third largest merchandise trade partner of Australia (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1997). In addition, the Australia-China Trade and Economic Framework was signed in Australia in 2003. This economic framework agreement raised the prospect of even stronger economic ties between

Australia and China (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003a). The agreement allowed Australia and China to undertake a joint feasibility study into a possible free trade agreement (FTA) (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004). Recently in April 2005, during the Australian Prime Minister Howard's visit to China, Australia and China have agreed to formally launch talks on a free trade agreement, the historic bilateral trade pact, with Australia's recognition of China as a "market economy" (Lewis and Armitage, 2005; Xinhuanet, 2005; People's Daily Overseas Edition, 2005). Lewis and Armitage (2005) point out that "a free trade deal will make it easier for Australian firms to gain a foothold in the booming Chinese market while opening Australia to more Chinese trade and investment". The Australia-China Free Trade Agreement could boost their economies and is expected to substantially benefit both countries. The objective of this chapter is to examine the economic relationships between Australia and China and to introduce the themes of building bridges between these two countries. In particular, it investigates the role of Chinese immigrants in building up the trade relationships between their countries of origin and destination.

## **6.2 Overview of Current Trade between Australia and China**

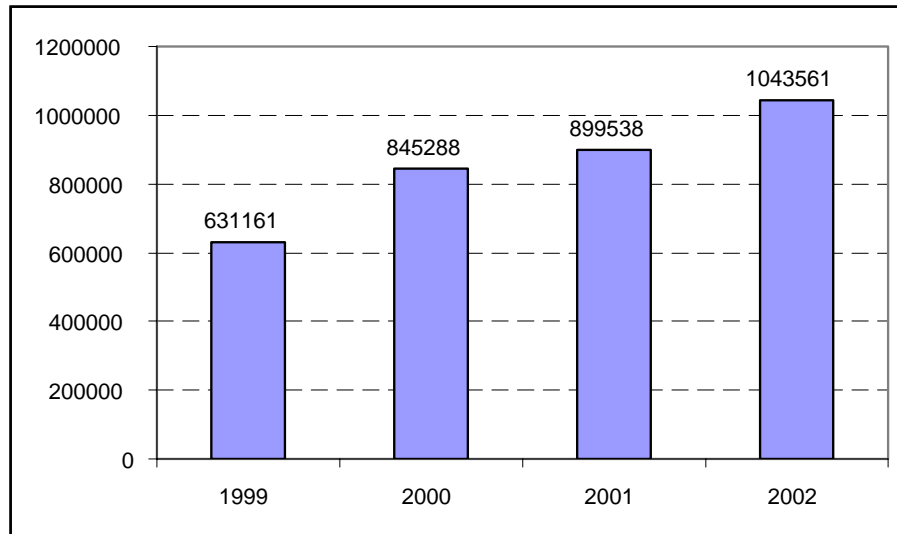
China is a major player in the global economy now and the third largest trading partner of Australia. With China's economic development, Australia also becomes more important as China's trading partner and a provider of resources, services and expertise. The recent economic and trade co-operations between these two countries are increasing "explosively" (Xinhuanet, 2005b). For example, during



the period from April 2002 to March 2003, Australia's export to China has increased by 12 per cent, up \$964 million to \$8709 million. However, exports to other countries increased by 7% for Japan, 9% for the USA, 6% for Singapore respectively (ABS, 2003d). Australia has been contributing to China's economy through providing resources such as iron ore, metals and LNG in the near future. Trade and investment is an important key to the relationship between Australia and China. China is currently Australia's largest overseas education market and one of its fastest-growing tourism markets. Australia became one of the first countries granted China's approved tourism destinations (Downer, 2002).

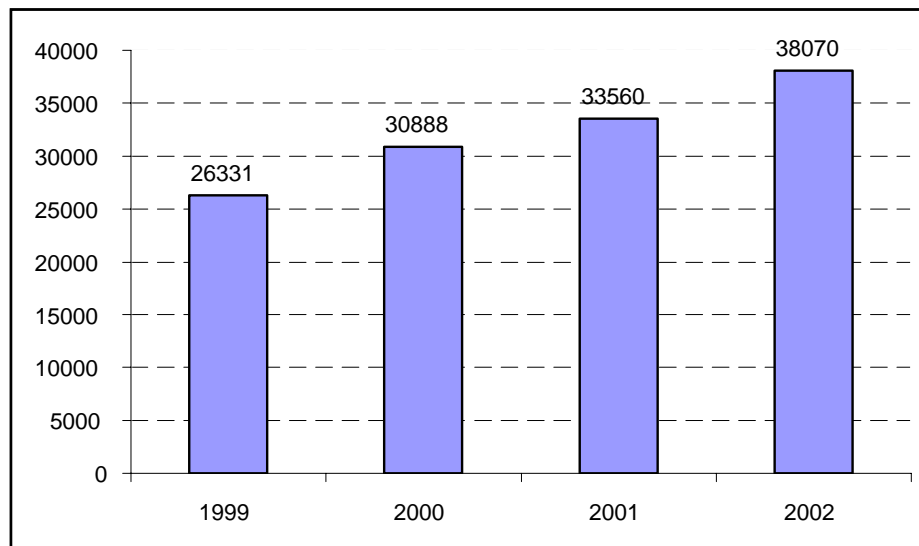
On the other hand, China's manufacturing sector has also been responsible for a large amount of imports to Australia. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate China's foreign trade with Australia and actual foreign direct investment in Australia from 1999 to 2002. Both figures give evidence of the steady increase in China's foreign trade and foreign direct investment in Australia. China's total imports and exports with Australia grew from US\$6.31161 billion in 1999 to US\$10.43561 billion in 2002, which is a 60 per cent increase. Direct investment in Australia also increased from US\$263.31 million in 1999 to US\$380.70 million in 2002, reaching a 25 per cent growth. More recently, China's turnover of economic cooperation (TEC) with Australia also jumped from US\$23.62 million in 2001 to US\$38.00 million in 2002 which almost tripled its TEC with Canada (US\$14.67 million, 2002) (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2003).

**Figure 6.1 China's Foreign Trade with Australia, US\$ 10 000, 1999-2002**



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2001b, 2003)

**Figure 6.2 China's Actual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Australia, US\$10 000, 1999-2002**



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2001b, 2003)

### ***6.2.1 Impacts of China's Accession to the World Trade Organization***

China's long struggle for openness and economic integration led its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which has impacts on the Chinese and world economies. Since 1978, China has been an important player in the global economy. By the end of 2000, China's exports were worth \$249.2 billion and its imports reached \$225.1 billion. By joining the WTO China is committed to complying with the WTO entry requirements, including liberalising trade further, so that China gradually opens most service sectors including financial, education, tourism, telecommunications, environment and professional services. Australia's service suppliers will benefit a lot from many opportunities created from China's entry in the WTO. The membership of the WTO has brought in valuable resources to China.

China has already benefited greatly from foreign investment since it opened its door to the world economy in the late 1970s. China has been successful in attracting FDI. For example, China has become the largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) among developing countries since 1993 (Wei, Wen and Zhou, 2002 pp. 1-9; East Asia Analytical Unit, 1997). Understanding foreign direct investment and economic growth in China is very important for Australian investors in China (see Wu, 1999). China's WTO entry has a profound impact on world labour-intensive exports and the primary agricultural import market (Wang, 2002, p.187).

Australia is an important player in the world economy and China is an active service trader with Australia. According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2004), China is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest economy, Australia's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest merchandise export market and Australia's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest import source. Australia exports large quantities of primary commodities to China, particularly iron ores (\$1.38 billion in 2001-02) and wool (\$1.32 billion in 2001-02) and increasingly overseas higher education and international tourism services. China mainly exports labour intensive manufacture to Australia, which Australia imports back in the form of high quality garments (Vaile, 2002).

As regional and bilateral trading partners, Australia and China share a strong interest in continued regional economic prosperity and are committed to the success of regional economic integration. In October, 2003, China signed a deal potentially worth A\$30 billion for gas exports from the Gorgon project off the Western Australian coast. It is one of the world's biggest resource deals (ABC, 2003). The Australian liquefied natural gas (LNG) consortium won the contract to supply liquid natural gas to Guangdong Province in Southern China. That contract is the largest single export deal in Australia's history, worth up to \$25 billion over 25 years, and will lead to enduring economic benefits for regional communities in Western Australia. It would also provide some business opportunities for the local Chinese community in particular and Australian society in general.

### ***6.2.2 Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement***

China's accession to the WTO has created a lot more trade opportunities for both Australia and China. The potential impact of the agreement of the trade and economic framework and the further negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) signed recently have become the subject of newspaper headlines and a topic in academic and policy discussions both in China and Australia.

According to the agreement of the economic framework:

“The Trade and Economic Framework sets the direction for the future development of the strong and rapidly expanding trade and economic relationships between Australia and China. The practical measures and co-operative activities contained in the Framework will make it easier to do business with China and provides for closer government-government, business-business and people-people linkages.” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003a).

The agreement leads to the formal negotiations on an Australia-China free trade agreement (FTA). Chinese figures show that two-way trade reached 20.39 billion US dollars in 2004, up 50.3 percent from the previous year. Lewis and Armitage (2005) reported that: “A free trade deal will make it easier for Australian firms to gain a foothold in the booming Chinese market while opening Australia to more Chinese trade and investment”. Australia-China free trade agreement could boost both economies and would substantially benefit both countries. Research

conducted by Monash University's Centre of Policy Studies concluded that an FTA would yield increased output and enhance welfare.<sup>1</sup>

The record-breaking US\$19 billion (A\$25 billion) deal clinched by China with Australia will ship the super-cool, condensed fuel to a CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corp) terminal in South China's Guangdong Province for 25 years. A possible free trade agreement could make many more trade miracles between Australia and China. For example, Chinese companies are in talks with Australian partners to import more LNG to China's affluent east coast, which would make the business the largest area of trade between the two countries. If the talks are fruitful, Chinese oil companies may also buy equity in some of Australia's largest gas projects, such as Gorgon, Browse and Sunrise. The deal would make Australia China's largest supplier of LNG (Ye, 2005).

Further more, according to Minerals Council of Australia (2005), the Chinese market is also very important for Australia's mineral exports. China is already one of the Australian mineral sector's most important markets, and was worth nearly \$4.5 billion in 2004. Mineral exports currently account for 60 per cent of Australia's total exports to China. Since 1995, minerals exports to China have grown by a massive 470 per cent. This expansion continued in 2004. For example, iron ore exports to China grew by 41 per cent to reach \$2.4 billion and overtake Japan as the world's largest iron ore importer. China's demand for imported minerals is very big and continues. China accounts for only 4 per cent of global

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.monash.edu.au/news/newslines/story.php?story\\_id=369](http://www.monash.edu.au/news/newslines/story.php?story_id=369)

GDP, but 16 per cent of the world's metal consumption. China's iron ore imports increased 10 fold between 1990 and 2003 from 14 million tonnes to more than 200 million tonnes.

Australia and China are a natural strategic fit. There is a big complementarity between China's resources needs and Australia's minerals reserves. Australia is the world's third largest minerals sector by value of production. The prospects for increased two-way investment in the resources sector are big. China has considerable potential for investment from Australian producers. An Australia-China free trade agreement is expected to expand the bilateral mineral trade. A key goal of the FTA should be to reduce the barriers to providers of mining related services and the FTA should remove or reduce restrictions on foreign investors and will also promote technical co-operation between the Australian and Chinese minerals industries (Minerals Council of Australia, 2005).

Australia's trade negotiations could place Australia in a unique position and be the envy of Australia's trading partners as the only country with bold and comprehensive free trade agreements with China. On the trade and economic front, an FTA with China would provide Australian manufacturers, services exporters, farmers and investors, with access to one of the largest and most dynamic markets in the world economy. While China's trade barriers are trending down under its WTO obligations, it still has some way to go and this distance is an indication of the commercial and trade gains available to Australia from a

bilateral FTA. Removing these trade barriers would give Australian exporters of services and manufactures very real competitive advantages.

Cooperation and collaboration between the governments and peoples of Australia and China is remarkably diverse and growing. China has a big market for Australia's resource inputs and raw materials. Wool and iron ore are currently Australia's biggest exports to China, but elaborately transformed manufactures (ETMs) and service exports such as education and tourism have begun to take off. Education and tourism dominate Australia's service exports to China, accounting for over two-thirds of services exports in recent years. Onshore Chinese students' enrolments have reached over 57,000, making China Australia's number one source of overseas enrolments (Downer, 2004). Education is booming with major Australian universities gaining a foothold in China and a liberalisation in travel restrictions will enable Chinese citizens to benefit more from international education and tourism. Tourism is a new area for China, so it has more potential. The potential for China to continue to grow as a market for many Australian commodities is undoubted and the challenge for Australia is to position itself effectively to make the best of a range of opportunities that will arise from a growing China (Australia China Business Council, 2005, p.4). In this overall picture, it is interesting to consider in particular the impact of the Chinese migrants have had or can potentially have on the trade relationship between Australia and China.



### **6.3 The Role of Chinese Immigrants in the Trade Relationship between Australia and China**

A promising trade relationship between Australia and China can produce great opportunities for Australians and Australian Chinese. The business opportunities for Chinese migrants are influenced by the relationship between Australia and China. The better the relationships, the easier their businesses are going, especially for Australia-China export and import companies. They are in the position of providing more opportunities to assist the peoples' understanding between Australia and China, and they encourage good relationships between these two countries. For example, most ethnic organisations are promoting Chinese culture and encouraging cultural exchanges. Overseas Chinese in Australia can help widen the trade networks of Australian companies in China and even some South-east Asian countries with large Chinese communities. A great number of mainland Chinese remained in Australia after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 and this migration has provided Australia precious cultural economic and links to different regions of China. A number of Australia's Chinese settlers have small consultancy companies which facilitate trade and investment between Australia and China and they are the trading bridges between these two countries (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, pp.114-117).

The significant contribution made by many Australians of Chinese ancestry to the Australian life has been well recognised. Chinese crossed oceans to settle in Australia where they established friendships with the local people through working and living in Australia. Better use of the networks brought in by the

Chinese immigrants can make Australia more competitive in the global market because closer contact with local ethnic business groups would help Australia to gain more knowledge about the Asian market. In fact, Australia is proud of its public policy of Productive Diversity (DIMIA, 2003c). It is important to pursue the wise utilisation of Australia's multicultural resources and improve its competitive power in the global trade market.

Australian Chinese have not only brought their culture into Australia, but also brought in their languages and skills. Their skills and culture make Australia more powerful in the global market. Chinese associations are a part of international trade organisations and they use their language, culture and skills to do business internationally. For example, the Sydney Youth Trade Association and Western Australian Commercial and Trade Association have been successful in the Asia Pacific region in promoting businesses between Australia and China. Overseas Chinese have set up their business and contribute to Australia's trade prospect on shore (also see Zhang, 1998, pp.236-241).

The Chinese government has adopted special policies to attract overseas Chinese to invest in China since China's open door policy. With their higher education and leadership in the science areas, Chinese immigrants can contribute to the economies of both Australia and China in the areas of science, technology, sustainability and international exchange (also see Zhuang, 2001, pp.282-304).

Chinese migrants can promote Chinese investment in Australia and they can also assist Chinese investment in China. Australia is one of China's main investment destinations, along with Hong Kong. For example, since 1996, Chinese cumulative investment in Australia has surpassed A\$2 billion. The direct investments are mostly in resources (minerals and metals), and food and textiles related ventures (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1997, p.186). Many Chinese business leaders have made a contribution in attracting Chinese investment in Australia.

### *Australia's Productive Diversity*

“Productive Diversity (PD) is a public policy that promotes supports utilising Australia's language and cultural diversity for the economic and social benefits of all Australians. This policy objective is implemented through the Productive Diversity Program of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs” (DIMIA, 2003c, p.1).

Chinese language and culture are very important part in the PD programme and Australia's Chinese immigrants can provide Australia with the following resources:

- Chinese language skills
- Chinese cultural knowledge and understanding
- Business networks and knowledge of business practices and protocols in China and overseas Chinese markets, and

- Low cost intelligence about Chinese markets, including intimate knowledge of consumer tastes and preferences.

As described in the public policy of Productive Diversity:

Language and cultural resource can benefit the Australian economy and business, in particular SMEs, by providing a competitive edge in both the domestic and global market. Business can use resources to improve performance and reap the benefits through boosting productivity and innovation in the workplace, developing domestic niche markets and widening customer reach and entering new and or increasing market share in overseas markets (DIMIA, 2003c, p.2)

Chinese language and cultural resources can strengthen the export market, with the change of the structure of Australian exports, from predominantly primary products to higher value-added, more highly manufactured products, coupled with the emergence of significant growth trends in exports of service. Chinese language and cultural knowledge can help exporters to get more detailed information about Chinese markets in China and some Asian countries. As a result, Australia can complete successfully in the global market with the better understanding and communication. China is a big market to Australia. Chinese immigrants must be able to contribute to Australia's economy to open a bigger and more successful market in China.

As part of the language and cultural diversity of Australia's population and workforce, Chinese language skills and understanding of Chinese culture in Australia can provide a valuable resource that can be capitalised upon as a

comparative advantage in doing business with the rest of the world (DIMIA, 2003c), because these resources can help Australia enlarge business networks and knowledge of business practices not only in China, but also in the global Chinese communities, located in the countries with Chinese migrants. The framework has been made on the basis of the Productive Diversity programme to demonstrate how Chinese in Australia perform in the trade relationship between Australia and China.

It is recognised that the Chinese and their language with diverse dialects, their professional and business skills, and experiences, allow the Chinese communities to assist other ethnic Australian businesses to trade with and invest in China and other regional economies with ethnic Chinese as suppliers, consumers, financiers or intermediaries (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.118).

According to the public policy of Australia's Productive Diversity, Australian small businesses managed by local Chinese can contribute boosting productivity and innovation in the workforce. With their Chinese language skills and cultural knowledge, they can enlarge their businesses through import and export in the overseas markets, finally win and widen some competitive global markets. Yu-Sion (1998, p.111) points out that: "members of the Chinese community develop a dual identity which gives them a distinct advantage over competitors in exploiting the vast market for ethnic goods and products". Depending on their origin, Chinese business people have the ability to speak different languages and dialects such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien etc., so that they can easily

communicate and deal with other Chinese business persons from China or the countries with Chinese population in any one of the Chinese dialects. They are also familiar with the Chinese business world.

With the growing economic and trade relationship between Australia and China, Australians and the Chinese immigrants within Australia tend to work together to open more trade markets in both countries. Chinese Australians are involved professionally in all sectors. Traditionally, the Chinese have operated small businesses such as restaurants and shops. Recently, many such businesses have grown into export and import concerns. The observation and interviews of this study give evidence that it is very common to see highly educated, both in Australia and China, and highly skilled Chinese professionals. They know both the Chinese and Australian markets well and hence, they make great trade bridges between Australia and China (Harcourt, 2003). In addition, the research conducted by the East Asia Analytical Unit (1995, p.117) tells a similar story that many traditional Chinese small businesses have grown into export and import concerns.

Understanding Australian and Chinese culture and their languages can improve the economic and cross-cultural communications and encourage more business activities between the two countries. The Chinese in Australia are playing a significant role in promoting business between Australia and China, including joint ventures. Australian companies - many of them small and medium sized enterprises (SMES) are already active in China, especially in the global city of

Shanghai. New Chinese immigrants are coming to Australia to seek their fortunes as investors, entrepreneurs, and students. China's emergence into the world markets has rapidly affected worldwide trade and immigration.

Immigrants play a very important part in the economic relationship between Australia and China. Harcourt (2003) notes that immigration means business and links exist between immigration and trade. He suggests that new migrants could link strongly with their business networks back home through contacting their friends and families because they speak the same language and share the same culture. Further more, he points out that "the influx of migrants also changes consumer tastes in the new country and ultimately increases demand for exports and imports." Many Australian Chinese businesspeople who are from Hong Kong or China are doing import and export businesses with China or Hong Kong and they benefit a lot from their language and business networks they have established before they migrated to Australia. There is economic evidence about the links between cultural diversity and exports. Harcourt (2003) strongly agrees that "much of Australia's success as an exporting nation in the late twentieth century was due to the efforts of the post-war immigration business leaders." The Australian Prime Minister John Howard praised Chinese immigrants in Australia and noted that "Australian-Chinese community has been instrumental in the economic development of our region and has made vital contributions in all areas of life in Australia" (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2002a, p.1). In terms of the role of Chinese immigrants in the economic relationship between Australia and China, Downer (2002) observes that the economic cooperation

increasingly reflects the depth and vitality of the people-to-people links, drawing in large part on the skills and commitment of Australia's Chinese community (p.2).

It was reported that, since 1979, during 25 years of open door policy and economic reform, China has sent 580,000 students and scholars overseas and only 150,000 people returned to China, which is about 25 percent of the total. Most of them started to work in the areas of education, science research, high technology, and the field of management. With the rapidly growing economy of China, the increased return rate is 13 per cent; so far they have built up 5000 companies (People's Daily, 2003). The returning Chinese nationals can build up network bridges between Australia and China. They can do a lot to help Australian companies operating in the Chinese market. In China, Australian investors need assistance to understand better the local market. Networks are the key factors to the success of businesses. Hence close connections to the local Chinese communities are very important to Australia's exporters.

People who have returned to China to do business or work after spending some time in Australia have brought back their networks from overseas and helped to establish joint venture companies, which are beneficial to both Australia and China. They bring and maintain these network links. They play the role of building up economic relationships between Australia and China. For example, returned Chinese migrants from Australia to China have a migrant experience in Australia, which is still benefiting Australia. In China, the major companies



established by the returned migrants from Australia can be grouped into: studying abroad, migration and international travel companies. A Chinese migration agent who is working in China shared his pride for contributing towards sending students to study in Australia (see Box 6.1).

***Box 6.1 A Chinese Australian Working in China***

*After more than ten years of studying, working and living in Australia, I went back to China to build up a school to teach English and help students to get visas for Australia to study in high schools, TAFE and universities. My school has been very successful for students to pass their English tests and obtain Australian visas. So my school has contributed a lot to improving Australia's education export.*

Further more, the return of skilled and business migrants has an impact on both their home and host economies. According to Iredale et al. (2003, pp.183-184), the returned Chinese migrants can better link Australia and China and exploit their knowledge of opportunities and institutions in China. For example, the return of Chinese academics can provide a bridge to universities and research institutions in China. “These aspects have received little coverage in Australia and the ‘networks’ value of returnees has not been capitalised upon. Similar attempts at quantifying the “benefits to Australia of skilled emigrants/astronauts and networks have not been undertaken and there is much less acknowledgement of the possible benefits” (Iredale et al., 2003, p.184). Iredale et al. identified this as a sphere for future research and this thesis is attempting to fill in some of the gaps.

China is the largest source of overseas students. In 2000-01, Australian immigration offices in China (not including Hong Kong) granted 106,512 visitor visas, an increase of more than 35 percent over the previous record level attained in the year before. Australia is also one of the few Western countries to be designated by the Chinese government as an approved destination for tourists from China. This approved destination status was developed as a result of cooperation between government and industry in both Australia and China.

Australia has been very successful in attracting international students, including the largest amount of students from China. As a result, Australia has benefited a lot from its international education through students' spending in Australia on fees and living costs, generating income to academics and consultants and creating jobs and additional household consumption spending. International education can also generate tourism from visits by families of students and stronger trade flows (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). New Chinese immigrants play a very important role in Australia's education import. There are countless migration agencies and English schools in both Australia and China. They cooperate very well to provide migration channels to local Chinese. Chinese migrants already established in Australia also encourage other Chinese people to undertake their studies in Australian universities. Chinese fee paying students have made a large economic contribution to Australia's education system. Chinese immigrants and migration agents can assist Australia to extend the Australian Government's Chinese network, building partnerships to expand

access to Chinese education and innovation system, and encouraging trade liberalisation.

Chinese migrants who remain in Australia, especially the China-born and Hong Kong-born Chinese business people in Australia are also maintaining important business and trade networks with China, Hong Kong and other parts of world with Chinese communities. Once people have crossed the two countries, their connection remains an important resource with the potential to offer mutual benefits in the globalised world. Although Chinese immigrants in Australia are very active in doing businesses across both Australia and China, it is necessary to mention that they may still age in Australia in the future (this is further detailed in Chapter 7).

The linkage between immigration and trade has not been the subject of considerable research. There is no direct statistics on the linkage between the Chinese immigration and the trade between Australia and China. However, the boom of economic relationship has followed the dramatic growth in immigration from China to Australia. In terms of foreign investment in China, research from East Asia Analytical Unit (1997, p.197) found some significant features of unsuccessful joint ventures, such as foreign investment being initiated without careful planning, poor market understanding and lack of market research and transfer of outdated technology etc. Most Chinese community or organisation leaders are also business leaders. Chinese involvement in the investment in China can help Australian companies to avoid careless planning and can assist them

research and understand the market better and they can also assist Australians to avoid transfer of outdated technology.

## **6.4 Tourism between Australia and China**

Travelling to Australia from China is a relatively new phenomenon for Chinese people. Only recently, Chinese residents started to travel to overseas for holiday when government policy allowed and they could afford it, in particular, after Australia was approved as a tourist destination by the Chinese government.

### ***6.4.1 Australia – Approved Destination Status for Chinese Tourists***

Australia was granted Approved Destination Status (ADS) by the Chinese government in July 1999. According to DIMIA (2004b), the Approved Destination Status (ADS) was developed as a result of cooperation between government and industry in both Australia and China, in recognition of the increasing interest in visiting Australia shown by Chinese people. Since then, the country has become one of the few western parts of the world to be designated as approved destinations for tourists from China. As a result, Chinese tourists are able to travel to Australia more easily as part of pre-organised tour groups. The number of Chinese tourists visiting Australia is increasing significantly, providing a substantial boost to Australia's tourism industry. Since August 1999, when the first ADS visitors arrived in Australia, over 62,000 Chinese ADS visa holders have visited Australia. Overall visitor visas issued to PRC citizens to travel to

Australia rose from 55 897 in 1997-98 to 129 446 in 2002-03. In 2001-02, Australian immigration offices in China granted 120,656 visitor visas, an increase of more than 10 percent over the previous record in 2001-02. The figure comprised 80,089 visas for tourism or visiting friends or relatives and 49,331 visas for business trips. 29,603 of the tourist visas were granted to members of tourist groups under the ADS scheme in 2001-02 (DIMIA, 2004b). Over 176,000 visitors from China came to Australia in 2003 and more Chinese visitors are expected to come. Australia was the first, and is now one of only a handful of western countries to be granted Approved Destination Status by China for tourism (Downer, 2004).

A number of travel agents in China have been authorized to establish links with Australia nominated travel agents to arrange group travel from China. The Australian nominated travel agents were selected by the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC). Among the tourist designated destinations, Australia is preferred by the Chinese. Countries, such as Canada, Finland and Switzerland are looking at ways to make it easier for Chinese people to get tourists visas. Short-term visitor arrivals from China to Australia have increased from 2,180 persons in 1982 to 190,000 persons in 2002. Since 1982 this represented an average increase of 24 % per year in short-term visitor arrivals from China. In 2002 the main reason for short-term visitor arrivals from China was taking a holiday (41%), followed by work (23%), education (12%) and visiting friends and relatives (11%). The World Tourism Organisation estimates the number of Chinese travellers will increase to 100 million by 2020. It is anticipated that the Chinese

will replace the Americans, Japanese and Germans as the world's top travellers (ABS, 2003c, p.1). When Chinese people travel to Australia, Australians also travel to China. In particular, most Australians with Chinese ancestry show a lot of interest to travel to China, especially those Australians who were born in China. They often go back to China regularly to visit their families or have holidays. Thus, the travel industry is booming from both sides and migrants' contribution is significant.

#### ***6.4.2 Role of Chinese Immigrants in the Tourism Industry***

As part of the competition in the global travelling market, Chinese immigrants in Australia are playing a very important role in attracting Chinese citizens to travel to Australia. For example, local Chinese newspapers, Chinese web pages are abundant with travel migration agents' advertisements. The migration and travel agents in Australia are dealing with and helping people to obtain visas for Chinese visitors. They sent messages to their networks in China to open and win the market in China. The current Chinese immigrants in Australia can maintain and enlarge travelling business networks with Chinese travel agencies. They know more than non-Chinese people in Australia about how and where to attract people in China to choose Australia as their destination. Thus, there are opportunities for local business people to keep in touch with Chinese community, in terms of supplying travelling products and opening Australian markets.

Attracting tourists from China is very important to Australia's travelling industry. This is because China has one fifth of the world population. With China's economic development, more and more people can afford to have holidays overseas, as a result, China's foreign travelling industry is growing rapidly. China has been recognized as a key emerging inbound tourism market for Australia, which provides many opportunities for travelling agencies owned by Chinese immigrants who are familiar with both China and Australia's socio-economic and natural environment. They can speak both English and Chinese and thus are able to provide the best services to Chinese tourists. The Australian travel industry will benefit greatly from the Chinese community and is expected to boom. It is important for Australian product suppliers and marketers to establish and maintain business network relationships with Chinese travel agencies if they intend to build and retain a sustainable competitive advantage to attract more business from the Chinese tourism market.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the economic relationship between Australia and China and examined the role of Chinese migrants in the trade relationships between these two countries. Chinese Australians have contributed greatly to the trade relationship between Australia and China and, in the same time, they have also benefited from this relationship. China has become increasingly more important to Australia since its economic reform and open-door policy started in 1978. Strong trade links have expanded the commercial relationship between these two

countries. With China's entry to the World Trade Organization and other economic reforms, China's demand for higher quality Australian goods, services, technology and investment will increase. Chinese language and cultural resources can benefit the Australian economy and business in many ways. For example, with their language skills and cultural knowledge, Australian Chinese are keen to trade more with China to meet the rising consumer demand, are willing to import more goods from China to Australia and export goods from Australia to China. Thus, Australia can compete successfully in the big global market.

Chinese migrants can play a direct or indirect role in building up business connections between Australia and China. Even though Chinese migrants do not seem to play a direct role in the economic relationships between China and Australia, the indirect role of the Chinese immigrants is significant. Chinese migrants can drive and boost Australia's aggregate demand through their everyday life and economic activities. Without good people to people's relationship, it would be impossible for governments to build up good political and economic relationships. On the other hand, good relationship between governments can also help to establish better relationship between the Australian Chinese community and the whole Australian society.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### AGEING OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY

#### 7.1 Introduction

Australia is undergoing a significant demographic transition associated with low fertility rates and reduced mortality rates. It is well known that Australia's population is ageing and it is ageing quite fast. The ageing of Australian population is inevitable due to Australia's historical patterns of growth (Bishop, 1999; McDonald and Kippen, 1999). With regard to ageing in Australia, back in 1991, Appleyard argued that "fertility rates were at near record levels, older Australians are living longer, the number and proportion of older persons were increasing at unprecedented rates, and there had been significant shifts in ethnic composition (1991, p.77)." Over the last decade, the Chinese community has become one of the largest ethnic communities in Australia. A large number of middle-aged Chinese migrants now live in Australia and they are likely to age here. The population within the Australian Chinese community is also ageing. The objective of this chapter is to look at this phenomenon through examining the demographic profile of Chinese elderly and their lifestyle in Australia, where close to 15 percent of the China-born population in 1996 were 65 years and over. With population ageing, care for the elderly has also become an issue of considerable concern to the Australian Chinese community. The majority of the Chinese elderly settled in Australia before World War II but many also came through

family reunion (see Box 7.1). Although they all have Chinese ethnic background, they have arrived in Australia mainly from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

***Box 7.1 An Elderly Couple from China***

*We visited our daughter's family five years ago. We had a great time here. After we went back to China, we missed them very much, especially our grandchildren.*

*Australia is a beautiful place to live. Two years ago, we migrated to Australia and now are living happily with my daughter's family. My son-in-law treats us as his own parents. In Australia, we are happy and have a lot of fun with our grandchildren.*

What is life like for the Chinese elderly in Australia? Some of them live on a government pension and some speak very little English, which is a big concern. What is Australian society doing for elderly migrants? Are the service and care currently provided adequate? Are there any trend setting examples? Is Australia really the dreamland which these migrants wanted to find (see Box 7.2)? What are the problems and implications? These are some of the questions to be explored in this chapter.

***Box 7.2 Owning a House in Australia***

*I am very glad that I am an Australian citizen now. In Brunei we could not be granted citizenship and could not buy our own houses at all even we had money. I feel that Australia is where I belong. We can buy a house wherever we want.*

This research draws on material collected from interviews conducted mainly in Western Australia, Melbourne and Canberra. In particular, Western Australia is chosen as a particular case study in this chapter. The choice is due to several reasons. Firstly I have been living in Western Australia for more than a decade now and most of my research was carried out in Perth. I am closely involved in and familiar with the Chinese community in Perth. This has been mutually beneficial and I am able to serve the community in Western Australia, for example, through teaching Chinese language and culture in local Chinese schools and universities. In comparison with the other States, there are fewer studies focusing on the Chinese community of Western Australia. In addition, Western Australia is the most culturally diverse State in Australia. People born in more than 200 different countries live, work and study in Western Australia, and many have brought their cultural, linguistic and religious traditions with them. About 27 per cent of the State's population was born overseas – a higher proportion than in any other Australian State or Territory. The diversity has

created an unusually cosmopolitan society (OMI, 2003)<sup>1</sup> and Chinese are an important part of it.

This chapter firstly traces the roots of Chinese migrants in Australia back to China. It provides a brief comparison of ageing in China, Australia and the Australian Chinese community. Then it outlines the demographic changes occurring within the Chinese community in Western Australia based on the 2001 Census and current ABS estimates. Subsequently, it investigates the lifestyle challenges faced by the Chinese elderly in this country. These include financial conditions, English proficiency, community life, and home care. Finally the chapter discusses the services and assistance designed to provide continuing care for Chinese elderly. Some of the findings also shed light on similar problems faced in Australia by other overseas born elderly with poor English skills and different cultural traditions.

## **7.2 Ageing in China, Australia and the Australian Chinese Community**

This section compares the ageing profiles of China and Australia by examining demographic indicators, such as median age, proportion of population aged 65 years and over and dependency ratios. China's median age was 32.3 in 2001, an increase of 12 years from 20.2 in 1964 (see Table 7.1). In China, there are about 130 million elderly residents aged 60 years and over, who account for more than 10 % of the total

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<sup>1</sup> [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au)

population or are equivalent to about 65 percent of the total Australian population. The number of people aged 80 years and over in China is above 12 million or around half of the size of Australia (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2002). It is projected that, by 2015, the total number of China's elderly residents will be over 200 million, by 2027, over 300 million and by 2050, it will be over 400 million (People's Daily, 2005, p.4; Daniels, 2005, p.2). Due to its explicit population policies, China's fertility rate is very low. There is one child only in each family in most cities and towns of China's coastal zone and the parents of the first one-child generation are now approaching old age. The number of elderly residents who are living alone is increasing very quickly.

By comparison, Australia's median age was 36.7 in 2005 (compared with 32.4 for China in the same year). The proportion of elderly aged 65 and over in 2005 was 13.1% in Australia (compared with 7.5 % for China in the same year) (ABS, 2005). Without any explicit fertility policies, Australia's birth rates have already been very low at 1.8 children per woman in 2005 and this rate was even lower in China at the formerly unbelievable 1.7 children per woman in the same year (United Nations, 2005). Overall, Australia's population is older than China's, but China is ageing faster than Australia.

### ***7.2.1 Comparison of Population Ageing between China and Australia***

An important indicator of ageing is the dependency ratio which is defined as the number of persons in a population who are not economically active (i.e. in the 0 –14 and 65+ age brackets) for every 100 perceived economically active persons (i.e. between 15 and 64) in that population. Empirical evidence has shown that the dependency ratios are much higher in developing countries than in developed countries and the higher incidence of fertility and mortality in the developing countries results in a higher proportion of the population in the 0-14 age group and a lower proportion in the 65 and over age group (Pollard, Yusuf and Pollard, 1974, pp.20-21). Although China is a developing country, its population growth does not actually follow this traditional trend because of active government intervention. How does China's dependency ratio compare with that of Australia, one of the developed countries in the world?

**Table 7.1 Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China, 1964-2004**

| Year | Young<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Aged<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Dependency<br>Ratio | % of<br>65+ | Median<br>Age |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1964 | 73.02                        | 6.93                        | 79.95               | 3.6(d)      | 20.2          |
| 1982 | 54.63                        | 7.97                        | 62.60               | 4.9         | 22.9          |
| 1990 | 41.53                        | 8.40                        | 49.93               | 5.6         | 25.3          |
| 1995 | 39.58                        | 9.23                        | 48.81               | 6.2         | 28.5          |
| 1997 | 36.74                        | 10.40                       | 47.10               | 6.9(e)      | 29.8          |
| 2000 | 32.67                        | 9.99                        | 42.66               | 7.0         | 30.0(a)       |
| 2001 | 31.96                        | 10.09                       | 42.05               | 7.1         | 32.3          |
| 2002 | 31.86                        | 10.38                       | 42.24               | 7.3         | 31.5(b)       |
| 2003 | 31.39                        | 10.65                       | 42.04               | 7.5         | 31.6          |
| 2004 | 30.32                        | 10.72                       | 41.04               | 7.6         | 31.8(c)       |

Source: Compiled from 1997 and 2003 data from National Bureau of Statistics of China (1997; 1998; 2003)

1953, 1964, 2001 data from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2002); 1982, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2003 and 2004 data from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2005); 2002 data from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2004a)

a: United Nations medium variant projected cited in ABS (2005)

b: The World Factbook <http://www.capitals.com/fields/2177.html> (accessed:20/08/05)

c: The World Factbook <http://www.geoplance.com/hottopics/CIAwfb/factbook/fields/2177.html> (accessed: 20/08/05)

d: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2001), *China Population Statistics Yearbook*, China Statistics Press

e: Calculated from figures of China's annual population change survey in 1997, in *China Population Statistics Yearbook 1998* compiled by National Bureau of Statistics of China (1998)

Rising longevity and falling fertility have created a rapidly ageing population for China. China's total fertility rates are well below the rates needed to maintain the

country's population (somewhere from 1.3 to 1.8 births on average per woman) and this is much lower than the replacement rate, or the birth rate needed to keep the population steady ( on average 2.1 births per woman (Kahn, 2004).

In 1982, the median age in China was only 22.9 years. However in 2004 China's median age has dramatically increased to 31.8 years. Although Australia's median age in 2005 is already close to 37 years, which is only 2 years younger than China's projected 2025 median age (around 39 years), China is ageing faster than Australia, as its median age will soar from about 32 in 2005 to at least 44 in 2040. It is widely concerned that China will get old before it gets rich and will have the social burden of a rich country and the income of a poor country (ABS, 2005; Kahn, 2004). After a decade from now on, the parents of the first generation of the one-child policy of China will become and join the retired ageing population and the economically active labourers will have to support their young and old dependents. With high unemployment and underemployment, China will have a heavy social burden similar to Australia, but the GDP per capita of a developing country.



**Table 7.2 Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China 1997, 2001 and Australia 2001**

|              |      | Young<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Aged<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Total<br>Dependency<br>Ratio |
|--------------|------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| China        | 1997 | 36.74                        | 10.40                       | 47.10                        |
| Coastal Zone | 1997 | 35.3                         | 11.64                       | 46.94                        |
| Shanghai     | 1997 | 21.57                        | 16.93                       | 38.52                        |
| China        | 2001 | 31.96                        | 10.09                       | 42.05                        |
| Australia    | 2001 | 31.34                        | 18.99                       | 50.33                        |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (1998a); ABS (2001)

China's total dependency ratio dropped dramatically from 79.95 in 1964 to 49.93 in 1990 (see Table 7.1). By 2001 there was a further drop of around 8 persons per 100 actively working people. This change is mainly caused by the decreasing number of young dependents. The young dependency ratio decreased from 73.02 in 1964 to 31.39 in 2003, but the aged dependency ratio increased from 6.93 in 1964 to 10.65 in 2003, with some regional variations. For example, in 1997 (see Table 7.2) China's coastal zone had an overall dependency ratio very close to the national level; however, it had a higher aged dependency ratio and a lower young dependency ratio. In large urban areas, such as Shanghai, the distortion of the dependency ratio is even more pronounced (see Table 7.2). Shanghai has the lowest share of young people in China (21.6 per 100 economically active in 1997) and the highest share of elderly (16.9). Shanghai's dependency ratios have been deteriorating between 1990 and 1997 with the share of young people dropping from 25.2 to 21.6 and the share of elderly

increasing from 13.0 to 16.9. The population in most large urbanised areas such as Shanghai is ageing at a faster rate.

Even after the dramatic changes in China's population age structure witnessed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, China's overall dependency situation in 2001 was better than that of Australia (see Table 7.2) where there was approximately 1 dependent per 2 economically active (or dependency ratio of 50.33 compared to 42.05 for China). The share of young dependents was similar but the figure for aged dependents was 9 persons higher in Australia. Hence, Australia's population is more likely to experience the burden of low fertility and mortality.

With people living longer and declining fertility rates, the trend towards a continuing increase of the aged dependency ratio is obvious. China does not have a well-developed social security system to care for the elderly who are mainly looked after by their relatives and extended families. China's economy is also developing fast with little concern being paid to the environmental consequences from the growth in industrialisation. There is ample evidence about recent deterioration of the physical environment (Tian, 1997; Cannon, 2000; Day, 2005). This means that the decreasing share of young people will have the responsibility for both, an increasing population of elderly and increasing environmental problems.

China's ageing crisis has a lot to do with the country's family planning program, initiated in the late 1970s. The one-child policy, in particular, introduced in 1979 in an attempt to control China's booming population, has speeded up China's ageing process. As a result, the economically active population has to struggle to provide for those who have retired. With China's current health and welfare system, many people are finding it difficult to provide quality health and home care for their elderly parents and grandparents (see Box 7.3). Their traditional responsibilities of care for relatives at home have been eroded with expensive private nursing homes becoming a potential option.

***Box 7.3 Coming Back to Australia for Health Care***

*We have lived in Australia for more than five years. Last year we went back to China, but after a couple of months we had to come back because my wife had to go to hospitals very often. We were not very happy with China's medical system. For example, we had to pay by ourselves and we couldn't deal with this very well. Plus the doctors in the hospitals were not as nice as the Australian ones. We decided to come back. We also missed the beautiful weather here. We feel better and secure with social security and the good Medicare system.*

Ageing is the result of socio-economic development on the one hand. On the other hand, ageing can also have great influences on the socio-economic development and

the future population change. As the Chinese economy develops, young dependency will continue to decline and aged dependency will keep increasing, and at a faster speed.

According to Tian (1997, pp.118-143), population ageing in China has five main features. They include a very high speed of ageing; very large quantity of the elderly; very rapid increase of “oldest old”; consequent changes in family household structure; and coexistence of rapid population growth and low per capita gross national product (also see United Nations, 1998). According to the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China, a large amount of China’s national income will be consumed to care for the projected 400 million elders who will be 65 years by the year 2050. Hu Angang, a leading economist in China, suggested that “the biggest challenge China faces this century is how to handle the problem between its still low productivity level and the population ageing” (Zheng, 2004, p.2).

Both countries, Australia and China, are facing population ageing crises, but Australia’s social and health system is better prepared to cater for the ageing population. Even if Australia is concerned about coping with the crisis, China’s problems are much more serious. The burden from ageing cannot be resolved through China’s traditional family support. It will automatically be transferred to China’s society and China’s economy has not made provision for the scale of impact which

will occur when the rapidly increasing number of aged citizens will require major economic support. This burden will eventually be shifted to the private sector. Nursing homes run by private providers are expensive. This has implications for Australia and other countries with large migrant Chinese populations. Due to China's poor social and health care conditions, more and more Chinese migrants will consider bringing their elderly to their new countries of residence where much better health care service is provided; despite the fact that they may face language and cultural problems. Another consequence is that Chinese migrants face double challenges of accessing job opportunities and looking after their elderly in the new country. It will be beneficial if Australia provides possibilities for both.

In the last 56 years since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, China has provided care for its elderly through publicly managed pension funds. Since 1995, ten China's economically active workers aged 15-64 have been supporting one pensioner aged 65 years and over. A similar ageing process took Australia and the other developed countries more than a century, while it took China only less than half of a century. Even among the developing countries, the ageing of China's population is much more accelerated. Who is ensuring the financial security of the elderly in China, as China's labour force growth is slowing? According to the World Bank (1997a, pp.51-54), by 2020 there will be six working age people for every pensioner, and by 2030 the total workforce is projected to start declining in absolute numbers. As a result, only three working age people will support one pensioner by 2050. China

is already facing a pension crisis in its state enterprises. Although employment in those enterprises is growing slowly, the number of their pensioners is rising rapidly. Some enterprises have more pensioners than workers. With these firms in a weak financial position, managers occasionally have been forced to stop pension payments. Achieving high returns on pension funds will require a new approach in China, since the experiences of other countries show that privately managed funds earn better returns than publicly managed ones (World Bank, 1997a, pp.51-54). China's health policy is also at a critical juncture. If China continues the present course, the problems will deepen and become more difficult to cope with. Major health care issues in China, such as inequitable access to health care, inefficiency and waste, have led to many problems, including a decline in clinical effectiveness and in the quality of service and rising health care costs (World Bank, 1997b, pp.63-64).

All these problems will have a flow-on effect on the world because of the magnitude of China's population, and they will affect Australia in particular as it is already home to a large migrant Chinese community and is geographically closer to China than the other large migrant-taking countries.

### ***7.2.2 Ageing of the Australian Chinese Community***

This section looks at the situation of current and future Chinese elderly in Australia.

With more Chinese migrating to Australia, more Chinese elderly will be living in Australia. Is Australia ready for this?

Most elderly in Australia who have migrated to Australia from China recently receive pensions from their former working places. However, their pension payments transferred into Australian dollars have very little purchasing power in Australia.

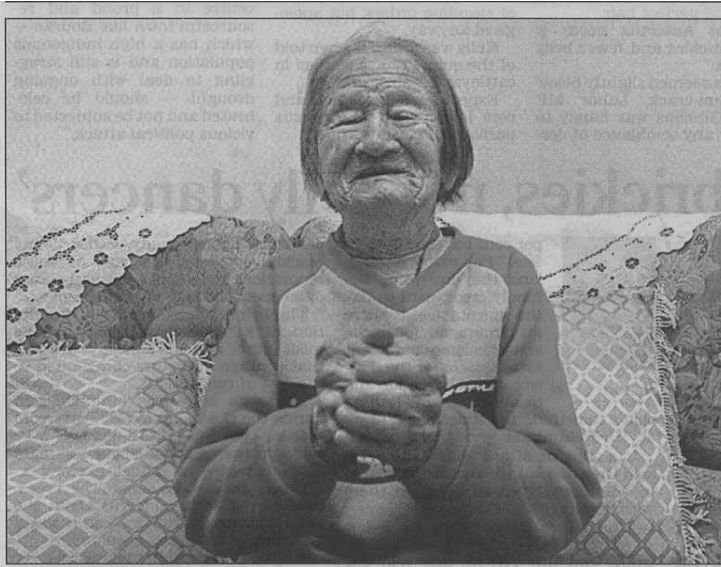
Most China-born seniors have migrated to Australia on family reunion visas supported by their children who had previously migrated. For example, a large number of the Chinese who migrated to Australia after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 have supported their elderly parents to also migrate to Australia. The increasing number of Chinese elderly in Australia has raised a number of issues or concerns. For example, recently Australians were shocked by the story about a 104 year old Chinese woman who was going to be deported back to China because she did not have the required migration status. However, she was living in Australia with her adopted daughter, had no other relatives in China and required medical attention, which her family in Australia could provide. The news not only deeply moved the Chinese community, but also the wider Australian community. This case hit the headlines (see Exhibit 7.1) because of the woman's age but is not uncommon when it comes to the desire of migrant children to help their parents.

One of the people I interviewed also revealed that his mother-in-law had difficulties to go back to China because she had health problems which would have been better

cared for in Australia. This also raises issues of the ability of the Australian health system to cope with an influx of aged migrants who will require significant health care. In order to understand how significant the problems of Chinese elderly in Australia are, it is also useful to examine the age structure of current Chinese community (Strickland, 2005; The West Australian, 2005; Xinhuanet, 2005a).



**Exhibit 7.1 Newspaper clippings tell the story of a 104 year old women from  
China**



'Jubilant': Cui Yu Hu at her home in Narre Warren, southeast of Melbourne

Picture: Brett Har

## Visa reprieve for woman, 104

Katrina Strickland

A 104-YEAR-OLD Chinese woman was late last night granted a visa to stay in Australia, less than 24 hours after a federal tribunal rejected her desperate pleas.

Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone used her discretionary powers to grant an aged dependent relative visa to Cui Yu Hu, which will allow her to stay in the country and receive Medicare.

It is not the aged parent visa for which she applied, but a spokesman for Senator Vanstone said it had the same benefits.

Mrs Hu, who does not speak English, clasped her hands in delight when told of the decision last night.

A spokesman for the family, Chap Chow, said Mrs Hu was jubilant. "This case has been dragging on for 10 years and no one has been able to help until now. They are very grateful."

Mrs Hu came to Australia

from China in 1995 to live with

her daughter and son-in-law. When her year-long visitor visa ran out, she prepared to leave. However, given her frailty, no airline would carry her. She remained here illegally until 2001, when her family applied for an aged parent visa. She has since been on temporary bridging visas.

The application was spurred by falls Mrs Hu suffered in 2003 and last year. She required hospital treatment. The family wanted her to be covered by Medicare for any future hospital visits.

The original application was rejected by the Immigration Department, a decision upheld yesterday by the Migration Review Tribunal, which found it had no power to alter the department's decision as the application had been made too late.

Last night, Senator Vanstone said she had used her discretionary powers to grant Mrs Hu a visa, allowing her to stay in Australia "as my

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## Woman, 104, to stay in Australia: Vanstone

CANBERRA

Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone has given a 104-year-old Chinese woman permission to stay in Australia and denied that the Government ever intended to deport her.

After weeks of controversy over the fate of Cui Yu Hu, the Migration Review Tribunal yesterday upheld a Federal Government decision to deny a visa but Senator Vanstone exercised her discretionary powers last night to grant Mrs Hu a visa "as my department had always intended".

Mrs Hu has lived in Australia with her adopted daughter Mosoko Chui and son-in-law Bing Sen Yang, who have supported her, since 1995 when she arrived on a 12-month visitor visa. When she went to leave no airline would take her because she was too old and frail.

Chinese authorities had warned that Mrs Hu could die if she was deported from Australia. A widow since 1973, she no longer had a home in China and had outlived friends and family from Xinjiang province.

Senator Vanstone denied there was ever any intention to remove Mrs Hu from Australia. The department told her in a letter last month it was doing all it could to help her.

"Correspondence to Mrs Hu from my department, released by me on February 23, makes it clear that the department was making every effort to assist Mrs Hu by allowing her to remain lawfully in Australia on bridging visas despite her having remained unlawfully in Australia for five years," Senator Vanstone said.

The department had to deny Mrs Hu an aged parent visa because she had been unlawfully in Australia between 1996 and 2001, she said.

"(But) at no time has Mrs Hu faced deportation," she said.

Wednesday 9 March 2005 p 15  
West Australian.

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中国百岁老人的经历折戟或在澳永久居住权 09:00 21:36 保险堂 书籍名家齐 次至金业池 香港写字楼 选择新干楼

祝您今年有一趟更快乐的“心”

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## 中国百岁老人历经波折终获在澳永久居住权

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总理息表“同情之心” 部长暗示收留百岁华妇  
104岁老妇被澳驱逐



太太胡翠玉



Last-minute reprieve: Mrs Hu with her adopted daughter Mosoko Chui.

China's Deputy Vice-Consul Yuming Yang said China was concerned about Mrs Hu's case. "We do lay a great importance on this matter and we are concerned about it very much," she told ABC radio.

Since she was refused passage home about 10 years ago, Mrs Hu has been in Australia on a bridging visa without medical coverage but was refused an aged parent visa.

Family friend Chap Chow had predicted that Senator Vanstone would let the elderly woman stay. "The whole world is watching this case now," he said.

Mrs Hu, who married young to a man who travelled for work, led a lonely life. But at 53, in northern Manchuria, she adopted an abandoned Japanese baby, Mosoko. After Mrs Hu's husband died in 1973, she went to live with Mosoko and her husband, who migrated to Australia.

When Mrs Hu turned 104 on February 18, she got letters of congratulations from Prime Minister John Howard, Victorian Premier Steve Bracks and Governor John Landy.

79/content\_2675015.htm

Source: Strickland (2005) in *The Australian*, *The West Australian* (2005) and *Xinhuanet* (2005)

## Demographic Profile of Australian Chinese Aged 65 Years and over

Table 7.3 shows that there are more aged China-born persons than young dependents in every State or Territory of Australia. In 2001, the young dependency ratio of China-born of 7.10 is much smaller than the 31.34 for the total Australian population, while the aged dependency ratio is similar to the total Australian one (18.99 compared to 18.77). The proportion of China-born aged 65 years and older is 2% higher than that of all Australians (which shows that the China-born population is older than the total Australian population). Many new Chinese migrants, who are the first generation workforce produced by China's one-child policy, are highly likely to bring their elderly parents to Australia due to the ageing crisis in their home country. The median age of the China-born also tells a similar story. For example, in Western Australia, the median age of China-born was 39 years in 2001 compared with 34.5 years for total Western Australia (OMI, 2004).

Due to the fact<sup>2</sup> that Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule in 1997 and 98% of Hong Kong's population is ethnic Chinese, 59% of whom were born in Hong Kong and 37% in China (DIMIA, 2003b), when speaking about China-born migrants, this thesis combines the China-born and Hong Kong-born populations. Compared with other ethnic communities, Chinese migrants aged 65 years and over dominate the overseas-born elderly migrants. Even though the China-born people are on average younger than many of the European communities in Australia, the number of older Chinese is increasing very quickly. For example, between 1996 and 2001, the total number of

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<sup>2</sup> Hong Kong was named the Hong Kong special Administrative Region of China (HKSAR)

China and Hong Kong-born people aged 65 years and over in Australia jumped from 12,450 to 24,070, i.e. an increase of 93% (DIMA, 2000a; DIMA, 2000b; DIMIA, 2003a; DIMIA, 2003b) and (ABS, 2001)<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 7.3 Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China-born, Australian States and Territories, 2001**

| States and Territories       | Young Dependency Ratio | Aged Dependency Ratio | Dependency Ratio | Proportion of People Aged 65+ % |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| New South Wales              | 7.16                   | 18.32                 | 25.48            | 14.60                           |
| Victoria                     | 7.12                   | 18.11                 | 25.23            | 14.46                           |
| Queensland                   | 6.10                   | 23.57                 | 29.66            | 18.70                           |
| Western Australia            | 8.69                   | 21.84                 | 30.53            | 16.73                           |
| Australia                    |                        |                       |                  |                                 |
| South Australia              | 5.77                   | 20.14                 | 25.91            | 15.77                           |
| Tasmania                     | 5.37                   | 25.42                 | 30.79            | 19.44                           |
| Northern Territory           | 2.88                   | 18.52                 | 21.4             | 18.52                           |
| Australian Capital Territory | 8.05                   | 17.62                 | 25.67            | 14.03                           |
| Total Australian             | 7.10                   | 18.77                 | 25.87            | 14.92                           |
| China-born                   |                        |                       |                  |                                 |
| Total Australia              | 31.34                  | 18.99                 | 50.33            | 12.63                           |

Source: Compiled from ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing<sup>4</sup>

The main concentration of China-born older persons is in New South Wales, with 57.3% of the total old China-born compared with 36.7% of the old Australian-born. A substantial proportion (24.6%) live in Victoria, with smaller proportions living in

<sup>3</sup> Table X03 2001 Census

<sup>4</sup> Table X03 Birthplace (countries) By Age and Sex and Table B03

Queensland (8.6%) and Western Australia (4.4), and the remainder (5.1%) living in South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (Gibson et al., 2001, p.83). The distribution of the elderly population in Australia, especially of the ethnic elderly migrants who may face more challenges due to their poor English skills and cultural diversity is important when it comes to the regional planning of aged care.

### ***Future Chinese Elderly in Australia***

Gibson et al. (2001, pp.xvii-iii) concluded that ‘in 1996, the older population from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds numbered 392,800 people, or 17.8% of the total older Australian population. By 2011 it is projected to number 653,800 people, or 22.5 % of the total older Australian population. This is a 66% growth rate over the 15-year period, compared with only 23% for the Australian-born population.’ The above estimate is made without considering the potential influx of elderly with more pressure coming from the Chinese economy. If this is also taken into account, the ageing of the Australian Chinese community is becoming an even harder issue to deal with. For example, if these people engage in business in China, how should their retirement be covered financially? Another issue is the provision of health care. Some Chinese migrants continue to engage in business in China, but they still treat Australia as their home and they come to Australia for health care because

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China's health system does not cover them. For example, an interviewee in his forties – a businessman with operations mainly in China - expressed his future plans in terms of ageing as settling permanently in Australia in old age (see Box 7.4).

#### **Box 7.4 Settling in Australia for Old Age**

*I plan to go to China during my earlier retirement stage. When I get very old, probably 75 years and over, I will come back to Australia because Australia can provide better health care service.*

In 2000, there were 768,900 older Australians<sup>5</sup> who were born overseas. This population is expected to grow to just one million by 2011 and almost 1.5 million by 2026 (ABS, 2003b). Gibson et al. (2001, p.xvii-iii) conclude that, by 2026, persons born in Italy are projected to be the largest group of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Australia (98,000), followed by persons born in Greece (66, 3000), persons born in Vietnam (57,700) and persons born in China (50,600) which will be the fourth largest group among older immigrants and the second among the Asian older immigrants. However, in 1996 China ranked sixth among the countries of birth for older immigrants. One in twenty older immigrants was born in China. Although this ratio is projected to change to one in thirty by 2026, the sheer size of the old Chinese community will be much larger. This will pose

challenges to the remainder of the Australian Chinese population as well as to Australia as a total.

English was reported to be spoken not well or not at all by 75% of persons aged 65 and over who were born in China and living in Australia. The proportion of persons aged 45-64 who reported that they spoke English not well or not at all was substantially lower (51.4%), indicating that subsequent cohorts of older persons who were born in China may have higher levels of English proficiency than the current cohort. In 1996 there were 18,000 persons who were born in China aged 65 and over in Australia, and this is projected to reach 28,300 by 2011 and 50,600 by 2026. The sex ratio in 1996 for those aged 65 and over was 80 males per 100 females (72 for the Australian-born). The older population born in China constituted 4.6% of those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in 1996, increasing to 5.4 % by 2026. During the 30-year period to 2026, the population born-in China is projected to grow from 0.8% to 1.1% of the total older Australian population.

The problems related to the ageing Chinese community are hence here to stay if not augment in significance. If Australia continues to maintain cultural diversity and a good record in human rights, it will also need to embrace policies and make provisions for a meaningful and healthy lifestyle for its Chinese community. These issues are addressed later in the thesis. However before that the next section provides

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<sup>5</sup> Older Australians are residents of Australia (i.e. have lived or intend to live in Australia for one year

a more specific examination of the situation in Western Australia, as a special case of demographic and social interest.

### **7.3 Ageing of the Western Australian Chinese Community**

Western Australia is the most diverse State in one of the most culturally diverse nations. The 1996 Census figures show that 27.1 % of Western Australia's population was born overseas with 11.8 % being born in non-English speaking countries (OMI, 2003). In 2001, the proportion of overseas-born population increased to 32.3%. In Western Australia, there were 5,246 China-born persons in 2001 compared to 4,554 in 1996, an increase of 15 per cent compared to only 4% increase among all overseas-born during the same period (OMI, 2004). In addition, there were 3,558 Hong Kong-born persons living in Western Australia in 2001. The combined proportion of China-born and Hong Kong-born population in Western Australia was 0.5 per cent. This is lower than the national level of 1.2 per cent (0.8 % of Australian population in 2001 was China-born and 0.4 % was Hong Kong-born), however, the rate of increase is very significant.

#### ***7.3.1 Demographic Profile of Chinese Population in Western Australia***

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or more) who are aged 65 years and over.



Western Australia is not only attractive to young people, but also a dreamland for elderly migrants. Apart from family reunion, the beautiful weather and good social security system are the main attracting factors. Migrants from China and Hong Kong have recorded the highest proportion of new arrivals relative to their established populations in Western Australia. For example, in 1998, they were 75.9% and 51.4%, respectively (OMI, 1998). Even though Western Australia among the Australian states has the second lowest proportion of people aged 60 years and over (14%), 40.3% of them are overseas-born which is the second highest proportion in Australia (Office of Seniors Interests, 2000a and 2000b). The contribution of the Chinese community to the latter is also growing fast.

In 2001, 4 percent of all China-born persons in Australia were counted in Western Australia. There was a much lower proportion of China-born persons aged 0-14 years (7%) compared with the Western Australian population (21%). There were higher proportions of China-born persons aged 35-44 years (25%) compared with the WA population (16%), and of China-born persons 65 years and over (17%) compared with the WA population (11%). The median age of China-born females was 39 years compared with 35 years for the total Western Australia population. Among the Chinese males, the median age was also 39 years compared with 34 years for the total Western Australian population (OMI, 2004). Hence, although small the Western Australian Chinese community is relatively older and this can have multiple implications for the State's economy and planning for the future.

**Table 7.4 Dependency Ratios (per 100 Economically Active) for China-born and total Western Australian Population, 2001**

|                            | Young<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Aged<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Total<br>Dependency<br>Ratio | Proportion of 65+<br>% |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| China-born                 | 8.69                         | 21.84                       | 30.53                        | 16.73                  |
| Hong Kong-born             | 10.62                        | 4.77                        | 15.39                        | 4.14                   |
| Viet Nam-born              | 2.93                         | 7.18                        | 10.11                        | 6.52                   |
| Germany-born               | 3.49                         | 38.51                       | 42.00                        | 27.12                  |
| Italy-born                 | 0.77                         | 73.00                       | 73.77                        | 42.01                  |
| Total Western<br>Australia | 31.81                        | 16.58                       | 48.39                        | 11.17                  |

Source: Compiled from ABS (2001)

Table 7.4 compares the dependency ratios between China-born and other ethnic communities in Western Australia. The China-born population is younger than the Germany-born and Italy-born population with higher young and lower old dependency ratios and smaller proportion of people over 65 years; nevertheless, it is ageing very fast, which is similar to what is happening in China. The young dependency ratio of the China-born population (8.69%) in 2001 in Western Australia was much lower than the Western Australian level (31.84%), because of the much lower proportion of China-born persons aged 0-14 years (7%) compared with the Western Australian population (21%). However, the aged dependency ratio of China-born (21.84%) was higher than the total Western Australian level (16.58%) and this is similar to the trend of much higher proportion of China-born persons aged

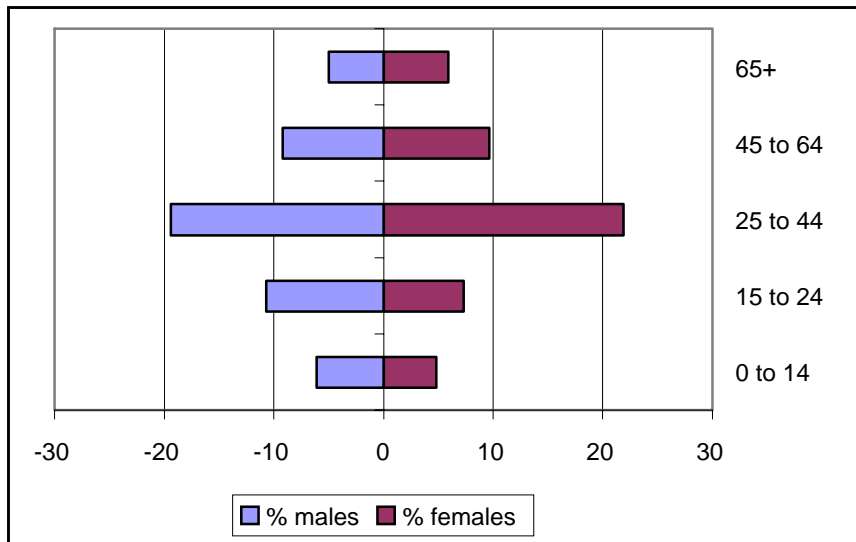
65 years and over (16.73%) compared with the Western Australian population (11.17%) (ABS, 2001; OMI, 2004).

Overall, the population of Western Australia is ageing and this can also be proven by examining its median age. In 1996, the medium age of the total Western Australian population was 33 years compared with 31 years in 1991 (Office of Seniors Interests, 1999). The China-born population is on average older with an estimated median age of 38 and is also ageing<sup>6</sup>. The population pyramids of China-born people living in Western Australia (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2) clearly indicate this trend of ageing. There were also higher proportions of China-born persons aged 35-44 years (25%) compared with the Western Australian population. Among the China-born population in Western Australia, there are very few people in the age groups from 0 to 24 and the number of China-born people aged 65 years and over will increase greatly in the next 15 years (OMI, 2004).

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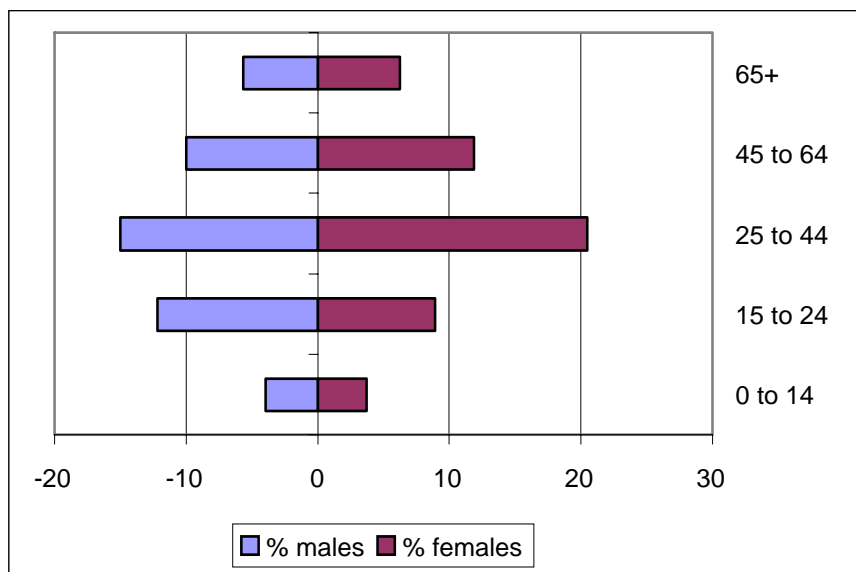
<sup>6</sup> The median age of China born WA population is estimated on the basis of the 10 year age group distribution provided in *CLib96*.

**Figure 7.1 Population Pyramid for China-born and Hong Kong-born Population in Western Australia, 1996 Census**



Source: Compiled from Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (2000a) and (2000b)

**Figure 7.2 Population Pyramid for China-born and Hong Kong-born Population, Western Australia, 2001 Census**



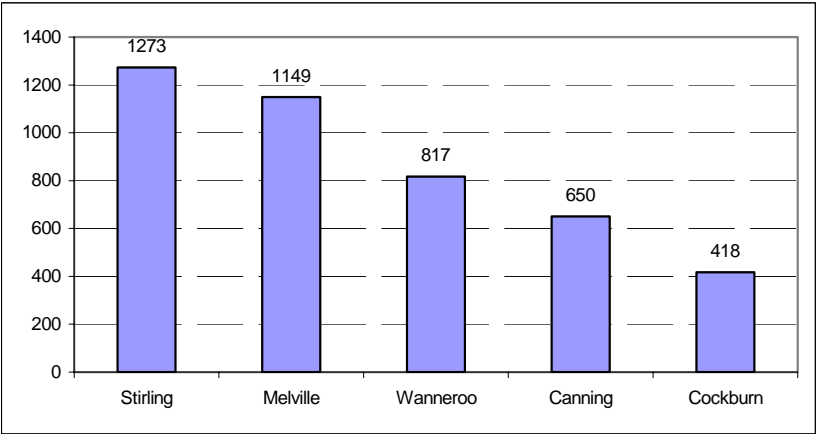
Source: compiled from OMI (2004)

Figure 7.2 indicates that there was a higher proportion of China-born and Hong Kong-born males (12.2%) than females (8.9%) in the 15-24 year age group. In the 25-34 and 35-44 year age groups there was a higher proportion of China-born and Hong Kong-born females than males. The sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) of China-born persons was lower (88.4) than the sex ratio of the total Western Australian population (99.4) (OMI, 2004). The higher presence of women is due to the fact that women generally live longer than men, which is particularly apparent in ageing populations. Another possible contributing factor for the distorted sex ratio is intermarriage between Chinese women and men from other ethnic backgrounds (as already discussed in Chapter 4).

In Western Australia, the local government areas with the largest number of people with Chinese ancestry in 2001 are Melville, Canning, Stirling, Joodalup and Gosnells (see Figure 7.5). This has only slightly changed from the top locations of China and Hong Kong-born people in 1996 which were Stirling, Melville, Wanneroo, Canning and Cockburn (see Figure 7.3). It is interesting to note that in the three overlapping suburbs, namely, Melville, Canning and Stirling, the concentration of Chinese has increased dramatically – around 8, 12, and 5 times respectively. This indicates that Chinese prefer to settle close to people from the same ethnic community in order to maintain close ties.

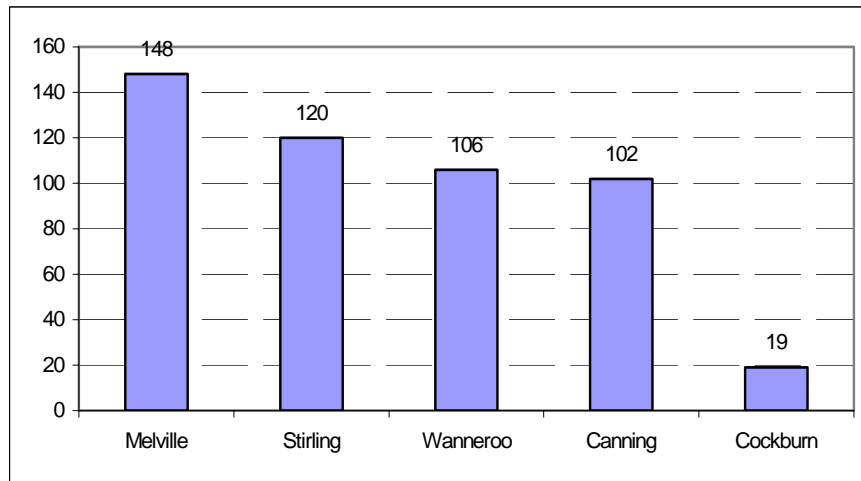
In Western Australia, the city of Melville had the highest share of Chinese elderly born in China and Hong Kong (see Figure 7.4) in 1996 and this was still the case 5 years later (OMI, 2003). The concentration of elderly people from a particular ethnic group is also a confirmation for the importance of community links and support to enhance the quality of life of these people.

**Figure 7.3 Top Local Government Areas of China and Hong Kong-born Population in Western Australia, 1996 Census**



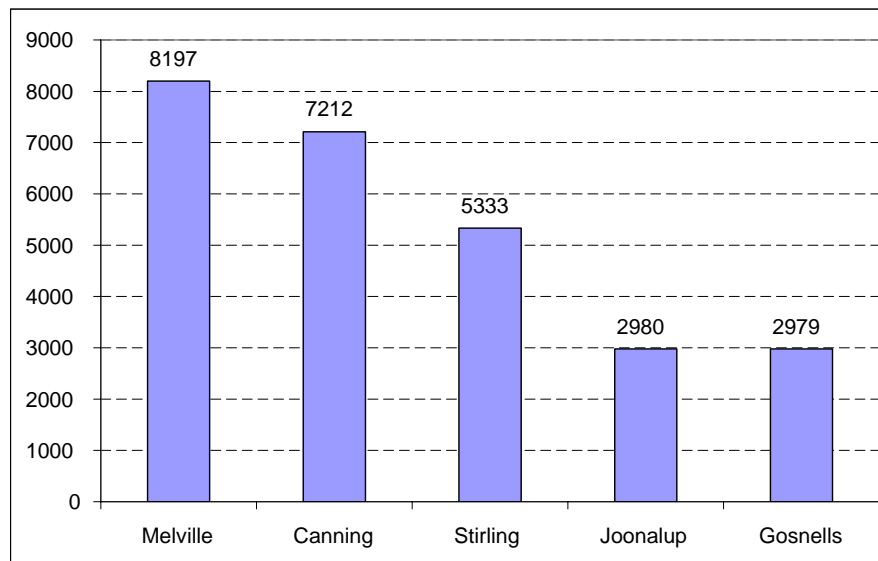
Source: Compiled from ABS (1997a), *CLib96*

**Figure 7.4 Top Local Government Areas of China-born and Hong Kong-born Aged 65+ in Western Australia, 1996**



Source: Compiled from ABS (1997a), *CLib96*

**Figure 7.5 Top 5 Local Government Areas of Chinese Ancestry, 2001 Census, Western Australia**



Source: Compiled from OMI (2003)

### *7.3.2 Economic Profile of Chinese Population in Western Australia*

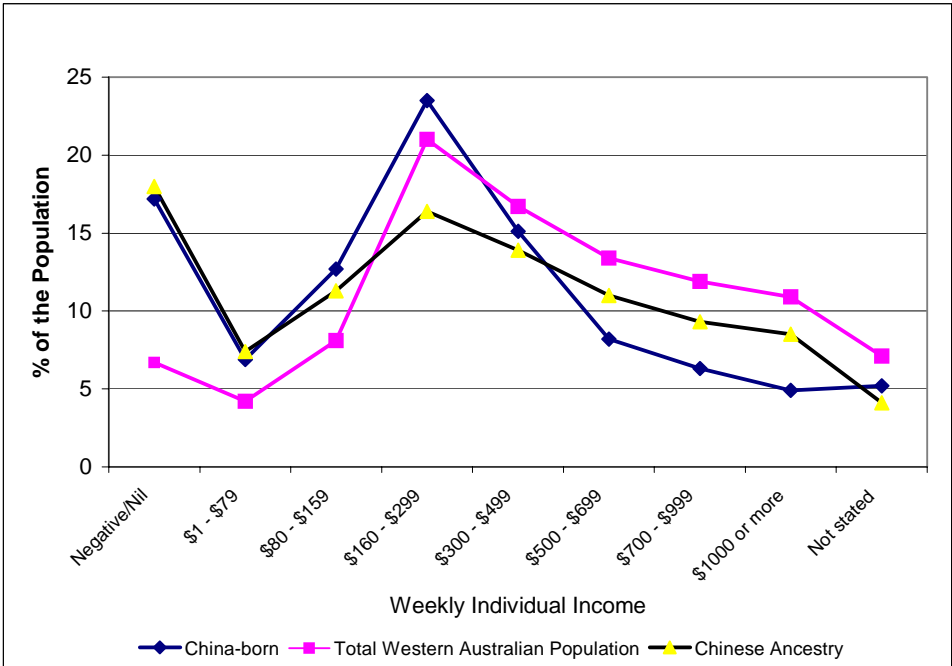
The estimated average weekly income<sup>7</sup> in 1996 for China-born population was \$275 for Western Australia and \$302 for Australia. Those are lower than the estimated average weekly income in Australia, which was \$377. The 2001 ABS Census of Population and Housing shows that a greater proportion of China-born persons was represented in the lower weekly individual income groups compared to the total Western Australian population. Some 37 percent of China-born persons earned less than \$160 per week compared with 19 percent of the total Western Australian population which is almost twice higher. In relation to representation in the higher income groups, there were lower proportion of China-born persons in these income groups, with 19 percent of China-born persons earning \$500 or more per week compared with 36 per cent among the total Western Australian population (OMI, 2004). This is an indication that Chinese people are exposed to more economic hardship in Australia and some may earn cash income without reporting. The fact that a large proportion of these people are relatively recent migrants also does not make things easier for them. It is not surprising that in this situation the importance of maintaining links with and rely on relatives and friends increases.

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<sup>7</sup> The average weekly income excludes the category of people at very high income in order to avoid unjustified distribution and it was estimated from DIMA (2000) and ABS (1997b).



**Figure 7.6: Weekly Individual Income, China-born, Chinese Ancestry and Total Western Australian Population, 2001**



Source: OMI (2004)

Only 40% of China-born people in working age are economically active (including full time and part-time work) in Western Australia compared with 58% for the total Western Australian population (OMI, 2004). The official statistics, however, do not account for the unpaid contribution Chinese elderly make to their families and the Australian society (see Boxes 7.5 and 7.6). Most of them are happy and satisfied with the assistance to the quality of life of their families they offer even if it means no holidays or no personal time off.

For most of the Chinese elderly, looking after their grandchildren is one of the important reasons, if not the main reason, for them to stay in Australia, otherwise they feel their lives empty. For example, a senior woman who migrated to Australia recently shared with me her feelings about working at home (see Box 7.5).

Understanding the unrecognised house contribution of the elderly (including Chinese migrants) adds to the debate about women's issues and national account recording system.

***Box 7.5 An Elderly Woman from China***

*Although I work hard at home, I feel happy and energetic because I am pleased that I am needed and useful.*

**Box 7.6: Daily Routine of an Elderly Chinese Couple from China**

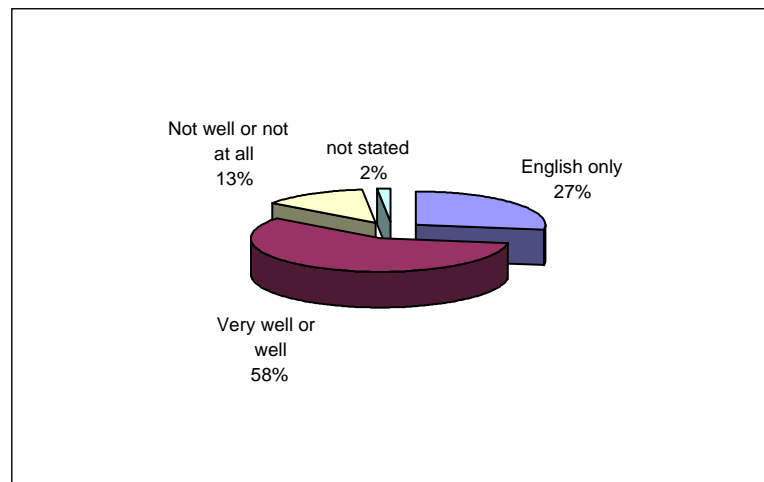
| <i>Time</i>                      | <i>Task</i>   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>5 am</i>                      | <i>Getting up and preparing breakfast for the whole family (6 members)</i>  |
| <i>7 am</i>                      | <i>Exercise at the river side</i>   |
| <i>8:30 am</i>                   | <i>Taking grandchildren to school</i>   |
| <i>9 to 11 am</i>                | <i>House work chores: washing dishes, washing clothes, cleaning up the house, watering, gardening and looking after the Chinese vegetable patch</i> |
| <i>11 am to 1 pm</i>             | <i>Preparing lunch</i>  |
| <i>1 pm to 2 pm</i>              | <i>Afternoon nap</i>  |
| <i>2 pm to 3 pm</i>              | <i>House work and picking up grandchildren from school</i>  |
| <i>4 pm to 6 pm</i>              | <i>Playing with grandchildren, teaching them Chinese, organising them to do their homework and preparing dinner</i>                                 |
| <i>8 pm to 9 pm</i>              | <i>Reading, playing with grandchildren and getting them ready to go to bed</i>  |
| <i>9 pm</i>                      | <i>Going to bed</i>   |
| <b><i>Special activities</i></b> |   |
| <i>Saturday</i>                  | <i>Meeting friends or going out fishing</i>   |
| <i>Sunday</i>                    | <i>Going to Church</i>  |

## 7.4 Cultural and Social Profile of Chinese Elderly in Australia

The main issues which emerged during the interviews with Chinese elderly were their language problems, lack of social life and health care difficulties. Understanding the problems that elderly immigrants face has implications for aged care planning in Australia for the purpose of helping the elderly to keep a positive attitude.

### 7.4.1 English Proficiency

**Figure 7.7 Proficiency in Spoken English, Chinese Ancestry, Australia, 2001**



Source: OMI (2004)

According to (Coughlan, 1997, p.34), “(p)roficiency in the dominant language of the host country is one of the essential keys to effective integration”. It is also a factor that can impact significantly on the quality of life of migrants and the contribution

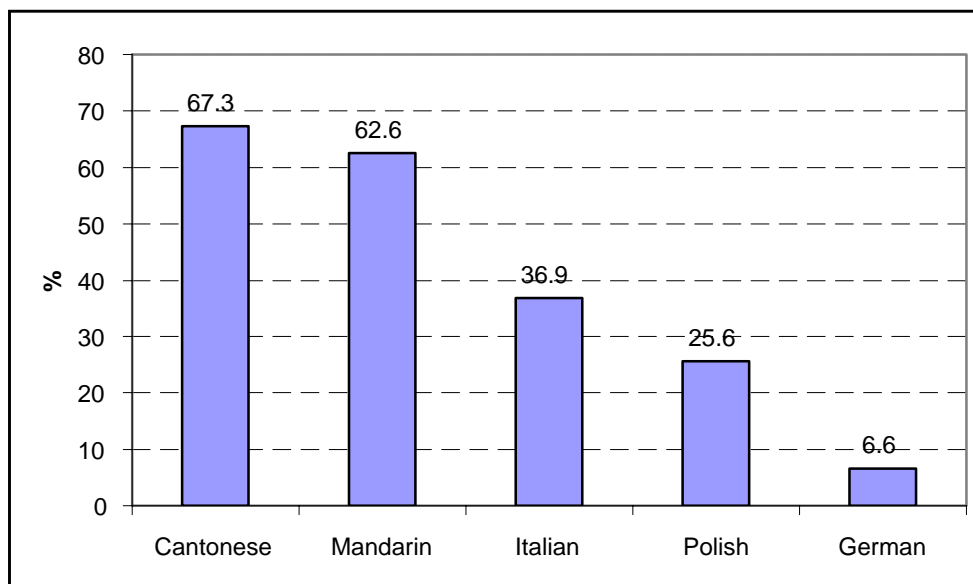
they make to the Australian society. Figure 7.7 presents proficiency in spoken English for the population of Chinese ancestry in 2001. It is not surprising then that more than half of the people with Chinese ancestry speak English very well or well (58%) in addition to the 27 % who speak English only. However, the share of people with Chinese ancestry who do not speak English well or not at all (see Figure 7.7 ) is very high at 13% (or 1 in 8 people). Moreover, this share increases with age. According to the 2001 Census, among the seniors group aged 55-64 years and over who speak language other than English, 14.6% speak English not well or not at all and 27.1% of the group aged 65 years and over, 27.1 % speak English not well or not at all. The situation among the Chinese speaking seniors is the worst. For example, 30.5 % of the Chinese speaking senior group aged 55-64 speak English not well or not at all and 57.2 % of the senior group aged 65 years and over speak English not well or not at all (see Table 7.5). The main reason is that most of the senior migrants have arrived in Australia later in life and at an older age than the predominantly European-born senior population. This could mean that Chinese seniors depend more on their families and friends. Some could even think that it is not necessary to learn English in Australia. Obviously, if their English skills are very limited, it could be hard for them to participate in the labour force as well as other activities in multicultural Australia.

**Table 7.5 Language Spoken at Home by Persons who Speak English Not well or Not at all, 65+, Australia**

| Language   | 55-64 |            | 65+    |            | Total  |
|--|-------|------------|--------|------------|--------|
|  |       | Percentage |        | Percentage |        |
| Cantonese  | 7222  | 11.6       | 14101  | 22.6       | 62280  |
| Mandarin   | 3669  | 10.2       | 5433   | 15.1       | 35997  |
| Chinese, n.f.d.  | 406   | 8.7        | 859    | 18.5       | 4644   |
| Total Chinese  |       | 30.5       |        | 57.2       | 100    |
| Total LOTE speakers who speak English not well or not at all |       |            |        |            |        |
|  | 75792 | 14.6       | 140497 | 27.1       | 519185 |

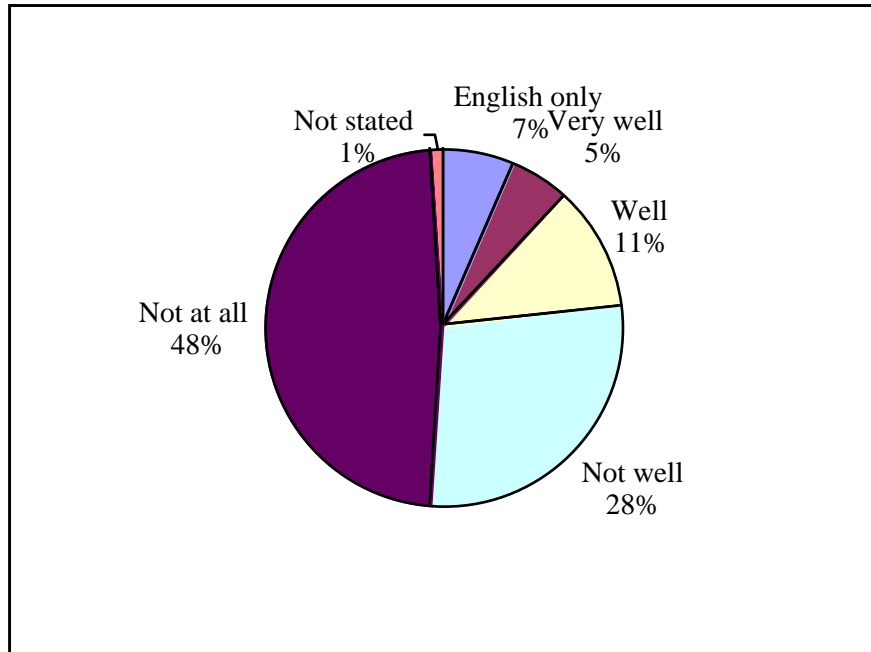
Source: Office of Multicultural Interests, (2003), pp.19-20

**Figure 7.8 Speak English Not Well/Not at All, Aged 65+, Selected Language Groups, Western Australia, 2001 Census**



Source: Office of Multicultural Interests (2004)

**Figure 7.9 English Proficiency of China-born Aged 65+, Australia, 1996**



Source: DIMA (2000a)

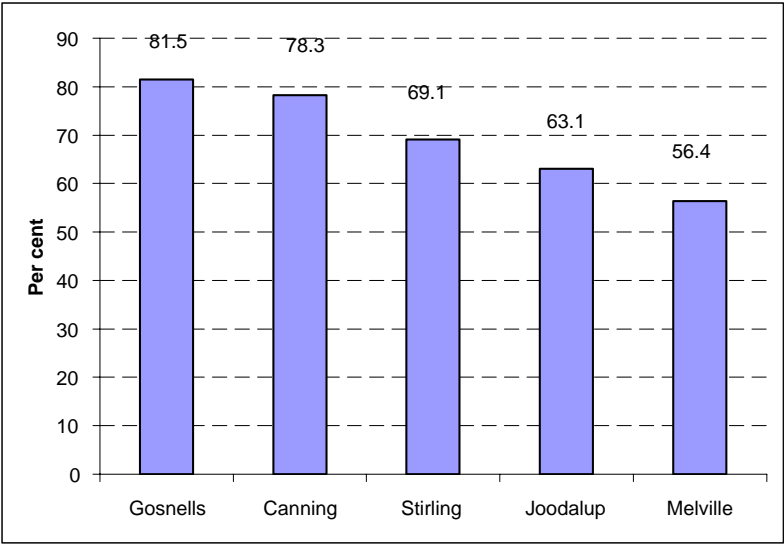
This situation in Western Australia is worse. In 1996, 22 per cent of people born in non-English speaking countries in Western Australia were seniors and about 4% of them speak English “Not well” or “Not at all” (Office of Seniors Interests, 2000a).

The situation with the China-born seniors is, however, very different (see Figure 7.9).

In 1996, 76% of them did not speak English well or not at all. According to the 2001 Census (see Figure 7.8), in Western Australia, among the population aged 65 years and over who speak English not well or not at all, Chinese speakers have the worst English proficiency. It is on par only with Vietnamese elderly. For example, 67.3 per

cent of the Cantonese speakers and 62.6 per cent of the Mandarin speakers speak English not well or not at all. These figures are almost doubled the Italian speakers (36.9%), tripled the Polish speakers (25.6%) and 10 times of German speakers (6.6%). The large number of Chinese elderly who speak English not well or not at all is probably due to their later arrival from Hong Kong, China and other countries, but it may also reflect their level of willingness to learn English and the lack of opportunities to study English. Many of them have come to Australia under family reunion or other schemes under which English proficiency was not an important requirement. In comparison with the other European aged groups, Chinese elderly face more language related social problems and challenges in Australia.

**Figure 7.10 Speak English Not Well/Not at All, Cantonese Speaking Groups, 65+, Top LGAs of Chinese Ancestry Groups, WA, 2001 Census**



Source: Compiled from OMI (2003)



According to the 2001 Census in Western Australia, Gosnells has the highest proportion (81%) of elderly people with Chinese ancestry who speak English not well or not at all (see Figure 7.10). This is followed by Canning (78.3%), Stirling (69.1%), Joodalup (63.1%) and Melville (56.4%). Such a high proportion of people aged 65 years and over who speak English not well or not at all is indicative of the difficulties they may face in their communications in Australia (see Box 7.7).

***Box 7.7: An Elderly Woman from Brunei***

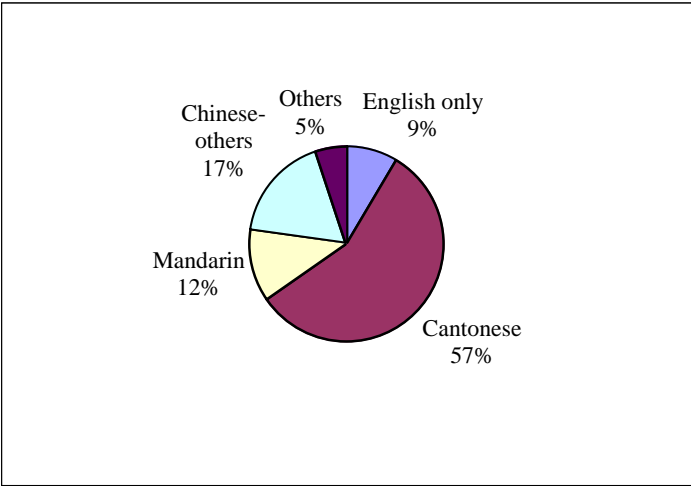
*I came from Brunei, but was born in China. I speak Hokkien dialect. I migrated to Australia 8 years ago under the support of my only son. Now that I am an Australian citizen, I found that it was hard to communicate with people. I could not even talk with some Chinese people because they don't understand my dialect either. I have two grandchildren who speak English a lot.*

Among the China-born population of 45 years and over, it is interesting to note that a higher proportion of females reported speaking English 'Not well' or 'Not at all' than their male counterparts, 58% compared to 45% (DIMA, 2000a). The main explanation is that women are even more closely linked to their housework and family commitments than men. Some Chinese elderly feel that it is very hard to learn English. They also put more effort in teaching their grandchildren Chinese and maintaining the cultural and ethnic traditions, including Chinese food.

According to the 1996 Census, 57 percent of China-born population over 65 speak Cantonese in Western Australia (see Figure 7.11). However this percentage in Australia is lower and was recorded at 42 percent. This means that in Western Australia there are relatively more China-born people who came from the Guangdong province of China. Only 9.5 percent of the China-born population speak English at home in Western Australia. The low share of Chinese households using English is the result of the fact that they have not been in Australia for very long but also reflects their desire to keep their cultural identity and traditions, including translating them to younger generations.

**Figure 7.11 Language Spoken at Home, China born 65+, Western Australia,**

**1996**



Source: DIMA (2000a)

According to Gibson et al. (2001):

“(C)antonese is projected to move into the fourth place, being used by 3.5% of the older population from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Cantonese is projected to become the second most commonly used language other than English among older people from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Western Australia. In 2026, they are projected to be 4,100 older people who use Cantonese as their main language spoken at home, 1000 of whom will be aged 80 and over. Mandarin is projected to be the main language spoken at home by between 2% and 3% of the older population from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Western Australia in 2026”.

This forecast emphasises the ageing of the Chinese community. The growing importance of the Chinese languages in Western Australia will be a significant factor in planning for aged care and provision of services to the senior.

#### ***7.4.2 Social Life***

It is reported that nearly half of Western Australians aged 70 or more say that most people at their age feel at least lonely (OSI, 2000b). Chinese elderly who do not speak English well or not at all could be the loneliest group in this State (see Box 7.8). Due to the limited knowledge of English, entertaining from television and other media is not accessible to them (see Box 7.9). Going to Church seems to be an alternative to fill in the social gap (see Box 7.10). Most Chinese elderly miss the easiness of communication and social contacts they had in their homeland (see Box 7.11).

***Box 7.8 An Elderly Man from Hong Kong***

*I feel very bored in Australia because I cannot speak English and I am not used to eat western food.*

Elderly people, who have poor English skills, normally face more difficulties in Australia than those who can speak English. In particular, they face more serious problems in emergency situations. If required, it will be hard for them to access some services and support systems. Another problem faced by Chinese elderly in Australia is that most of them cannot drive. Easy public transport access is very important for them. However, when their English skills are very limited, they often have to depend on their family members or friends and normally feel nervous to catch a bus, train or ferry alone. This further limits the social interactions Chinese people have.

***Box 7.9 A senior Man from China***

*I get up at six to watch Chinese News every day. That is the important thing I do every day. I also like to read local Chinese weekly newspapers. Chinese movies on SBS are very limited and most of them are in Cantonese which I do not understand.*

**Box 7.10 A Senior Woman from China**

*I migrated to Australia with the support of my only daughter - my only child. I have attended the English class organised by the Immigration Department, but my progress has been very poor. I could not remember anything. My son-in-law is an Australian who cannot speak Chinese. So we hardly communicate with each other. A place where I can go is a Chinese speaking church. I was not religious at all in China, but people from the church are very kind to me and I can talk with them. Now I have a grandson and feel that I am not as bored as before.*

**Box 7.11 A Chinese Elderly at a Social Club**

*The general impression is that Australia is a great country to live in, but the social life is too boring, not like in China where people know each other and they can watch TV, go to cinema and enjoy Beijing opera and some other traditional activities.*

**7.4.3 Living Arrangements for Chinese Elderly**

Traditionally, adult children in China have the responsibility to support their parents when they get old. Even in Australia, this tradition is still well kept by some Chinese families (see Box 7.12). Consequently, home care for Chinese elderly is very

important. The problem is that, if the parents are very old or sick, their children may be too busy to look after them. I asked the son-in-law of a Chinese couple whether he would send his parents-in-law to a nursing home. He replied that it was really up to them. If they want to stay at home, he will suggest to his wife to quit her job and look after them. The Chinese tradition is that the son or daughter-in-law call the parents-in-law mother and father, show their respect to them and treat them as their real parents.

**Box 7.12: An Elderly Woman from Malaysia**

*I was born in Hong Kong but migrated to Australia from Malaysia. I am 75 years old. My daughter supported me to come here. I got my own property, but my daughter will be worried if I live alone, so I moved into my daughter's house. If I could not look after myself one day, I may need to go to a nursing home.*

A daughter of an aged Chinese couple said that she felt stressed sometimes because she could not avoid having trouble with her parents due to the generation gap. Occasionally her parents are angry with her too. She always tries to please them because she loves them. Often the elderly Chinese do not realise that their children have become “westernised”. Building tolerance and acceptance of the younger generation’s values could be a long and painful process. The shared living

arrangements however are often unavoidable due to economic restrictions (see Box 7.13).

***Box 7.13: Depending on Relatives***

*At the moment I get support totally from my daughter and her husband. I cannot be independent until I stay in Australia for the full 24 months. Then I can apply for a pension.*

Chinese elderly could be the main target for burglars because they may be (wrongly) thought to be relatively wealthier. They are also seen as defenceless and an easy prey. Most of the elderly have fear of handbag snatchers and becoming victims of burglaries (see Box 7.14). Today many elderly Chinese live alone. They prefer to stay at home as long as possible instead of moving to a nursing home because of poor language skills and different dietary habits. However, there are numerous situations when this is not an option and institutionalised care is required.

***Box 7.14: An elderly Woman Born in China***

*I have two sons. One of them died of cancer and the other lives in America. I am living alone. One day I left my keys at the door, later I found they disappeared and in the evening my bag was stolen when I was in my bathroom. I was so scared alone since then and decided to sell my house and move to a nursing home.*

Several nursing homes in Perth cater for indigenous and other European cultural groups. It is reported that only one nursing home, i.e. Asian House of Brightwater Care Group caters for elderly from Chinese background (Australia Chinese Times, 2000). One of the male residents reports that he chose to live there because he didn't want to add burden to his children and there he could be independent. Attitudes like this are expected to become more common with the increase of the share of Chinese elderly in the future, as a number of them would have lived in Australia longer.

#### ***7.4.4 Community Service and Care***

This section looks at some examples of community service and care provided to elderly migrants. The City of Melville in Western Australia is chosen to be investigated in terms of cultural activities and aged care services provided. As already discussed, there is a large proportion of Chinese elderly in the City of Melville, in which the unique services are praised by most local Chinese migrants. Hence, this section presents the City of Melville as a model to demonstrate how important community service is for migrants, especially for the aged migrants.

#### ***A Case Study of the City of Melville***

Statistics from both 1996 and 2001 Censuses show the City of Melville is the leading area in Western Australia with both Chinese ancestry and China and Hong Kong-



born migrants who are 65 years and older (see Figure 7.4 and 7.5, OMI, 2003). This is one of the important reasons to choose the City of Melville as a case study. In particular, the club named Ethnic Melville Active Seniors (E.M.A.S.) has drawn attention to the senior migrants, such as Italian and Chinese speaking elderly. I have visited and been involved in the Chinese group activities. It is a meeting group for senior people from culturally diverse backgrounds and also an opportunity for the socially isolated to come together. There is also a free bus service available (see Exhibit 7.2).

**Exhibit 7.2 Activities of Ethnic Melville Active Club (Chinese Group) in the City of Melville**



Photos by Xiumei Guo

One of the elderly who attends the meetings every week said that “EMAS Club is providing a lot of fun to the seniors.” Its activities include watching Chinese videotapes, dancing, playing Mahjong. Another elderly said that: “Even watching others is better than staying at home alone”, and she expects with anticipation the day of gathering in this club. However, the elderly from the neighbouring city which does not have this service, feel unfairly treated by not being eligible to use the service offered by the City of Melville (see Box 7.15). Strict access boundaries seem to divide the otherwise culturally close community.

***Box 7.15: A Chinese Elderly Who Lacks Social Life***

*I don't speak Mandarin and I like the Club of Ethnic Melville Active Seniors. My friends go there a lot, I am not allowed to use that service because I don't live in that city. I just live across the road. I live with my son's family. I have two grandchildren, we are living together happily and my daughter-in-law is so good to me, just like my own daughter. I go back to Brunei once every or every second year to visit my daughter's family. I am a Buddhist and the temple is now the only place that I feel confident to go because I can meet and talk with my friends.*

In the City of Melville, a range of other events have been held, such as celebrating Chinese New Year, Harmony Day and other traditional festivals (see Exhibit 7.3). For example, the Chinese New Year Concert is widely supported by local Chinese and non-Chinese Australians. The Organising Committee of the Concert consists of the Council and community volunteers from within the City of Melville as well as the neighbouring local government areas. The Committee, together with performers and helpers are all volunteers. I met several elderly Chinese at the 2005 Concert. They were excited and happy to enjoy the concert with their family members and their grandchildren and one of them said (see Box 7.16):

***Box 7.16 Enjoying Celebrating Chinese New Year***

*I like the concert for celebrating Chinese New Year in the City of Melville. Hopefully, such an event can be held every year and I am looking forward to this day.*

**Exhibit 7.3 Chinese New Year Concert Posters from 2004 and 2005**



Source: City of Melville (2004; 2005)

The City perceives that celebrating Chinese New Year and other cultural festivals is celebrating multicultural Australia. Volunteers predominantly from Chinese background are very important to organise and enrich community activities, especially for ethnic communities, where a number of people cannot speak English.

Cultural activities help forge harmonious relations and promote a better understanding amongst culturally diverse communities (City of Melville, 2004).<sup>8</sup> In addition, such activities also promote local businesses through advertisements in the programme booklet (which also helped fundraising to support the event) and allow people to get together to meet and know each other.

### **7.5 Future Needs and Trends**

The ageing Chinese population will require among others more medical help and health related assistance. Chinese elderly tend to seek Chinese traditional medical help. Due to the strict coverage of the current Medicare system, they cannot use Chinese medicine easily. Private health cover does not always include this type of traditional treatment either. Curtin University research has revealed seniors are subject to frequent financial, physical, psychological and physical abuse, often at the hands of their adult children or spouse (Melville Times Community, 2004). People aged 75 years or over were the most likely to experience abuses and the media often ignore the fact that seniors experience abuses and neglect other than crimes. “The report recommends that adequate resources are made available so that appropriate responses and interventions can be pursued in response to elder abuse situations. And it was suggested the State Government should fund protection services and make them available to all older West Australians” (Melville Times Community, 2004).

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<sup>8</sup> Foreword from Katherine Jackson JP, Mayer City of Melville.

Chinese elderly and other seniors who do not speak English well or not at all should face more challenges than those who can speak English. Even though Chinese families keep their traditions of supporting senior family members, young people have to face their own challenges of employment and looking after their own children. The care for their elderly members is not as easy as it can be imagined.

Due to the one-child policy, there are likely to be more Chinese elderly migrating to Australia on the basis of the current migration policy and the Chinese family supporting tradition. The first generation under China's one-child policy is already in their late 20s – early 30s, and some of them have already migrated or are intending to move to Australia. Their parents are likely to follow them sooner or later.

The China-born new migrants who settled in Australia after the Tiananmen Square are entering their 40's. After 30 years, where are they going to be? My observation and interviews for this study indicate that most of them intend to age in Australia (Box 7.17).

***Box 7.17 Coming Back to Australia from Overseas for Retirement***

*I have been living in Australia for more than ten years and I have changed several jobs and work in different countries, such as Singapore. No matter where I work, in Australia or overseas, I still have properties in Australia. At the moment, I work in Hong Kong and I am sure I will come back to enjoy my retirement life in Australia. Australia is a great place with beautiful weather and good health care system. You can't find a better place for retirement.*

Australia is a great place to live. A large number of migrants are temporarily working and living overseas. Is Australia ready for those who plan to retire in Australia in the future? In Australia, Australians have planned in one way or another for their retirement age. For the foreign born Australians this is time for reassessment, revaluation, adjustment and challenge. The wider the cultural gap, the more difficult the problems can be. A fundamental principle in the care of the elderly should be to enable them to lead independent lives in the community for as long as possible (United Nations, 1999 p.110). More assistance will be needed for Chinese elderly to achieve this. It is unrealistic to expect that the issues will resolve themselves without an active policy to care for the needs of the elderly. Policy implications and recommendations from this study are further provided in Chapter 8.



## 7.6 Conclusion

Besides the many new young arrivals, a lot of Chinese seniors have also moved to Australia as new migrants. The share of Chinese elderly migrants, including people who have settled before the World War II, is expected to increase. Australia provides a sense of security, stability and protection and it also offers them citizenship.

Owning property and land is also an attractive possibility. The weather and climate are appreciated by them, so is the Australian social security system. On the other hand, Chinese elderly have left their familiar societies and lifestyles for a totally new society. In the countries where they came from, people knew each other. In Australia, life is totally different and isolated. Due to the cultural diversity, they have a number of challenges to face. In particular, the Chinese community is the most complicated one in Australia, as people from the same ethnic background speak different dialects and languages and some of them cannot communicate even with each other. People from Chinese ethnic background often have even migrated from different countries. They also have additional challenges, such as different dietary habits, traditional lifestyle, religions, security and transportation difficulties. Active policy measures are needed to avoid the social isolation and hardships that this part of the Australian society could face.

Older Chinese Australians, like other overseas-born Australians, are a diverse population within the Chinese community - culturally, linguistically and geographically. They need special consideration in policy development and planning in the field of aged care service. The size of the older Chinese Australians and their characteristics affect the number and type of services. Those characteristics include their location, age and sex structure, living arrangements, health and disability status and proficiency in spoken English (ABS, 2003b p.1). The Chinese community in Australia is younger than some of the Australian European communities. However, its future can be foreseen as more difficult than that of their current European counterparts. The socio-economic and cultural challenges that Chinese elderly face are stronger than the other communities, in particular when a much high proportion of them have very poor English proficiency and an influx of new older migrants is expected because of the ageing pressure within China.

China is considering certain changes to reduce the pressure from its ageing population. If China were to invest more in education, then this might reduce its dependence on the economically active population through facilitating the use of mechanised systems. China is easing its One-child policy and allowing people to have more than one child in some urban areas. Certain changes have already occurred. However, the pace of these reforms will not be quick enough to completely revert the migration pressure that China is likely to impose on Australia. The raising

numbers of new Chinese migrants will have a long-term effect on this country and Australia needs to be prepared.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

Chinese immigration to Australia and its ageing issues have been examined in the preceding chapters. The findings from this study have multiple implications for both Australia and China as well as for other countries with Chinese immigrants. A better understanding of the pattern of global movement of Chinese migrants and their social-economic characteristics can help the Australian government adjust immigration, social, economic and environmental policies.

Through understanding and learning about the experiences of Chinese migrants in Australia, light can also be shed on other ethnic communities, in relation to community services, social life, businesses activities and aged care needs. It is hoped that this study can also contribute to maintaining harmony and ecological sustainability in the Australian multicultural society.

This final chapter summarises and comments on the main conclusions that can be drawn from the whole study. Section 8.2 presents a brief summary of the main findings, while section 8.3 examines the implications of the research findings followed by some recommendations. Suggestions for further research are provided in Section 8.4.

## 8.2 Summary of Findings

This study examined the current state of Chinese immigration to Australia at a time when ethnic affairs and globalisation are key forces affecting the contemporary world. It presented empirical research results obtained by analysing the Chinese immigration to Australia, with demographic and socio-economic characteristics being the main themes. Within the Chinese community in Australia, diversity exists in terms of their languages and culture. Social groups can be divided by dialects, such as Mandarin, Cantonese and Shanghai dialects, which are determined by the places of origin of the migrants. As a result, there are mainland Chinese (such as Hong Kong Chinese, Shanghai Chinese, Beijing Chinese etc.), Malaysian Chinese, Singaporean Chinese, Indonesian Chinese, Vietnamese Chinese etc. They all however share common ethnic background reflected among others, in value systems, business attitudes and activities, hopes and aspirations. The demographic and historical analyses in the study covered both old migrants and their descendants who started to migrate to Australia more than 150 years ago, as well as new migrants who arrived in the last several decades. The main emphasis however was on the latter group as they provided most of the interview material and their importance is expected to continue to grow.

The main findings of this study with significant policy implications for Australia can be summarized as follows:

- The Australian ethnic Chinese community is a distinctive and vibrant part of contemporary Australia, contributing in all walks of life;
- The size of the Chinese ethnic community in Australia will continue to grow.
- Chinese migrants play a bridging role between Australia and China during their economically active life and are likely to move between the two countries for business purposes;
- The number of old Chinese in Australia is likely to increase as the majority of currently economically active Chinese intend to retire in Australia and more older Chinese are expected to migrate to Australia for family reunion; and
- Education (including education obtained in Australia) is highly valued by Chinese. Chinese citizens who are studying as international students in Australia, attracted by the quality of life, economic and natural resources this country offers, are highly likely to become potential migrants.
- Ethnic organisations play a major role during the adaptation period for new migrants as well as in sustaining the Chinese community.

- The Chinese migrants play a significant role in booming economic relationships between Australia and China.

The factors determining population movement between China and Australia cover a range of push and pull forces that change constantly depending on the overall political, economic and environmental developments. The push factors for Chinese emigration to Australia contribute to the motivation and desire of Chinese nationals to leave China and look for a better life in Australia. They may include low income and unemployment, unstable political conditions and deteriorating natural environment. The pull factors in the migration process are those conditions in Australia that are attractive to Chinese. They could be Australia's attractiveness for investment, better education opportunities, relatives and friends of Chinese citizens who have already settled in Australia, existence of Chinese community organizations and good state of the natural environment. They all contribute to Chinese citizens in China being interested and motivated to migrate to Australia. The push and pull factors do not act independently and they are constantly changing within an environment that is also strongly affected by factors enabling migration, such as information technology, social networking and migration policies both in China and Australia. Overall, the pull, push and enabling factors interact with each other to influence Chinese people's decision of migration from China to Australia.

Chinese immigrants have experienced a transition in their socio-economic characteristics since they had migrated to Australia. In particular, most of them

have pursued further education and some have also adopted new religious beliefs. Chinese Australians are now more visible in the Australian mainstream as they achieve economic adaptation in their new country. The participation and contribution of Chinese migrants in Australia span from the basic food industry to the wider industries. Even though, some new migrants have experienced difficulties in employment opportunities and their integration and transition into mainstream Australian society are challenging, the interviews, observations and reviewed literature plus my personal experiences presented in this study demonstrate that most Chinese immigrants in Australia are satisfied and enjoy the living conditions that Australia offers. This confirms the findings by Richardson (2002) whose research focused on all ethnic communities in Australia. Richardson concluded that the most pleasing result from his research is the high level of satisfaction that migrants express about their life in Australia. This also implies that migrants would encourage others to migrate as they themselves have already done. Most Chinese immigrants in Australia have similar experiences and intentions in helping their relatives and friends to come to Australia for study, work or as migrants. As a result, Australia continues to be one of the most desired Western migration destinations for Chinese nationals and the total number of immigrants from China is likely to be growing. These are important considerations when making plans for meeting Australia's migration needs.

The movement of Australian Chinese immigrants between Australia and China has become more frequent. Due to China's economic growth, more opportunities have become available to overseas Chinese including Chinese Australians.



Chinese government is also keen to attract overseas scholars and business people by establishing incentive programmes (Guo and Iredale, 2003). Temporary return to economic activities in China is common among Chinese immigrants in Australia, especially those who cannot find proper jobs for their expertise in Australia. However, these migrants are willing and planning to come back to their Australian home, and in particular to spend their old age years in Australia.

International students from China are potential immigrants in Australia and are likely to apply for migration status after completing their studies. Australia is a country which is attractive to most Chinese students and they may prefer to apply for permanent resident status upon completion of their degrees. With potential access to opportunities in both countries, Chinese immigrants' life could be easier than that of their ancestors and many look forward to a brighter future related to Australia.

### **8.3 Policy Implications**

The findings in this research can be used to draw policy implications for a more sustainable development of Australia. Sustainability is a highly contested term which history has travelled a long way since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. It requires increased understanding of the complexities and interrelationships between social, cultural, environmental, economic, political and technical aspects of reality but also increased respect for the diversity of voices from differences, religious, ethnic groups, geographic

locations, current and future generations (Wheeler and Byrne, 2003). As a practical philosophy, sustainability is framed along principles that engage “multi-levels, places and cultures in a systemic approach towards better environmental and social health whilst simultaneously allowing the economic improvement and technological development that this may require” (Marinova and McGrath, 2005, p.277). An outstanding example of attempts to move towards a more sustainable society is adoption of the Western Australian State Sustainability in 2003. The definition of sustainability endorsed in Strategy is: “Sustainability is meeting the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity” (Government of Western Australia, 2003, p.24; Newman, 2005, pp.273-274).

Migration impacts on all aspects of sustainability. Australia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society which provides extra opportunities to address the global and local sustainability agenda. It is believed in Australia that “the benefits of multiculturalism to sustainability come from the benefits of recognising difference” (Government of Western Australia, 2003, p.259). Different cultures including Chinese culture bring different approaches to solve the multiples of layers underlying sustainability. As one of the oldest and largest ethnic communities, the Chinese community plays an important part in the Australian multicultural society, and can contribute towards building a more sustainable way of living through its unique knowledge, values, experiences and concerns about the future generations.

According to the Government of Western Australia (2003), “sustainability is about building communities and strengthening the bonds between them.

Multiculturalism and sustainability mean that the cultural needs of all citizens must be recognised and that they be empowered to participate effectively, creatively and critically in community life” (p.260). The study of Chinese immigration to Australia can help decision-makers, service providers, business people and policy makers to address a number of challenges posed by the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity in Australia. The following sections discuss the implications from the findings of this research for immigration, social, economic, and environmental policies.

### ***8.3.1 Immigration Policy***

According to Hugo (2002), international migration is an area of population policy squarely within the hands of the Federal Government. This is an essential component of the enabling environment of the migration model developed in Chapter 4 to explain population movement between China and Australia. This study of Chinese immigration gives the following findings and policy recommendations to ensure that migration contributes towards building a sustainable future for Australia:

- The nature of Chinese immigration to Australia has changed over the last 160 years with migrants becoming more informed, more skilful and better educated.

- Although relatively young, the Chinese community in Australia is ageing. It is also expected to have further pressure on Australia from the parents of the “one-child” generation that has or is migrating to this country.
- Immigration policy needs to be integrated more closely with related policies, such as provision of extra and culturally appropriate services, health care and education for Australia’s diverse ethnic communities and the Chinese community in particular.
- In view of the booming of tourist opportunities from China to Australia, extra policies need to be made to facilitate tourist entry. Tourism should not only contribute to Australia’s economy but can also make Australia’s advantages known to the world, including attracting future migrants.
- The booming Chinese market for Australian educational services requires the development of clear guidelines and principles concerning the entry of Chinese students. Policy makers should consider Chinese students and many other overseas students as potential immigrants. Federal Australian policies that encourage the export of educational services should be linked to a thorough understanding of migration and demographic consequences.
- Migration criteria should be carefully adjusted according to demand for skilled workers in the market, such as medical and aged care experts. The “skilled

jobless” phenomenon should be avoided by providing opportunities for lifelong learning and flexible skill development for everybody, including new and older Chinese migrants.

- Within the immigration programme itself, a higher intake of well-educated young people should be encouraged with the clear understanding and a preparedness to cater for their cultural, economic, social and environmental needs, including family responsibilities arising from China’s long standing “one-child” policy.

Although several skilled migrants complained that they had difficulties in finding proper jobs that matched their qualifications, unemployment amongst Chinese immigrants was not a big issue during my fieldwork. New young Chinese immigrants are unusually mobile geographically and occupationally with their skills in seeking new jobs. Such mobility increases the flexibility of the economy and mitigates tight labour markets (Simon, 1995). Many new Chinese immigrants have to move from one State or Territory to another, and concentrate in large cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, where there are supposed to be more employment opportunities. Thus, policies can be put in place for attracting well-educated young immigrants to other less attractive cities and help reduce the unbalanced economic development across Australian States and Territories.

Particular assistance can be provided for Chinese migrants in setting up businesses in Australia or for establishing trade and service connections with

mainland China or other Asian economies. This can be in the form of loans, taxation benefits or technical assistance. The input and contribution of the formal and informal Chinese organizations can also be sought. Garnaut (2002) suggests that migration issues could be addressed by taking a more innovative and synergistic approach to policy formation in different areas. He further points out that policies relating to immigration, education and training, human resource development and microeconomic and labour market reform should be seen as being interrelated, and dealt with as such, rather than in isolation from one another. It is also important to incorporate environmental and resource concerns in building a future picture for the Australian society. More positive outcomes could be achieved for each policy area by developing a more nuanced appreciation of the complex ways in which each area impacts on the others and in searching for holistic solutions, so that the Australian immigration program can be more sustainable. Sustainability is also about relationships which have the potential to give everybody a fair go, and this includes all migrants.

### ***8.3.2 Economic Policy***

The socio-economic characteristics of the new Chinese immigrants who came to Australia since the late 1970s are very different from those of their ancestors. They are more involved in the mainstream Australian society. In particular, the new migrants are well educated and very active in business: “(b)y any measure, the ethnic Chinese outside China have been phenomenally successful in business.” (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.119). Ethnic Chinese businesses in

Australia are contributing to the development of the Australian economy and trade. They play a major role in the economic relationships between Australia and China through imports and exports between these two countries.

The relative business success of ethnic Chinese is due to several factors including:

- A propensity for hard work, good connections and networks, and an ability to keep business expenses low;
- The fact that many have wealth in the first place which affords a relatively high level of education (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.119).

“When it comes to doing business, culture matters” (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, p.121). Ethnic Chinese businesses are successful in part because of their distinctive cultural values such as family values (the family is an input for ethnic Chinese success). The cultural connections between new ethnic Chinese business in Australia and their former businesses in China are very important. Many ethnic Chinese business people have benefited from their links with China. Australian policy planners should encourage Chinese business people with incentives and support to transplant and adapt their framework of social and community organization, while maintaining cultural and business networks between China and Australia. Besides the hardworking characteristics and other inputs, the role of sound government has also made a considerable difference to the opportunities enjoyed by ethnic Chinese (East Asia Analytical Unit, 1995, pp.119-130).

The trends in employment and occupation for Chinese immigrants to Australia have varied over time. In the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants usually lacked qualifications and often worked in labouring jobs in the manufacturing industry. Today, many skilled migrants come to Australia to seek professional positions or to build businesses. For example, many new Chinese immigrants are active in the scientific and engineering labour force, especially those with advanced level of education. These scientific professionals have made great contributions to the increased productivity and economic sustainability in Australia. The assistance of Chinese businesses, community and welfare organizations should be engaged to publicise these success stories from Chinese professionals and establish networks where information can be obtained into the future.

A growing number of Australian companies are doing businesses with China. Chinese migrants are the bridge between the two countries. More assistance should be provided to new arrivals. Intensive courses need to be available covering topics such as establishing a company in Australia, Australian company law, Australian policies towards business, business English and so on. Additionally, it is suggested that there should be more training classes for managers, senior executives and professionals of Australian companies to learn more about China, such as business Chinese, Chinese culture and doing business in China.



Successful business people who immigrate to Australia make significant contributions to the economy. However, the potential gains of admitting business immigrants are not always easy to estimate. Despite of the numerous success stories, there has recently been concern about people who bring their families into the country and gain permanent residence under the pretext of engaging in business activities, and subsequently make little or no attempt to work (Mendez, 2004). This raises difficult questions about how to identify immigrants' ability and intention to work and contribute to Australia, what actually constitutes a 'contribution', and how to deal with people who do not conform to the spirit of government regulation relating to business immigration. Policy makers face a difficult task to avoid such rorts in business migration and ensure that immigration benefits Australia.

Small Chinese businesses play a large part in the Australian catering services market. Chinese restaurants are very popular in Australia. However, ethnic businesses, for example, Chinese restaurants need more business, economic, social and physical protection and security. While this success in the food services sector is important, there are obstacles preventing Chinese people from accessing a larger range of business and employment opportunities. For example, improving the standard of English skills of small-business people is an essential step towards achieving better communications with the wider business community. More training classes or seminars should be carried out through the relevant ethnic organizations.

It is evident that Australia is not using fully the resources of many skilled migrants. This is particularly the case with Chinese women whose economic contribution often remains invisible. More progress still needs to be made with accreditation of overseas qualifications and provision of short bridging courses to bring overseas qualifications in line with Australian standards in order to avoid underusing migrants' skills. In the US, for example, policy ensures a more effective use of immigrants' skills to enhance the economy (Garnaut, 2002). The economic incentive and policy measures recommended here can facilitate the building and maintaining of economic prosperity for the Australian Chinese as well as the rest of the Australian society.

Tourism between China and Australia is a recent phenomenon which apart from its recreational and cultural benefits has also more significant economic contribution to Australia's economy. As an industry, tourism however requires government encouragement and regulation in order to make particular destinations popular and attractive. The section to follow addresses some of these policy issues.

### ***Tourism Attraction from China to Australia***

China is currently one of Australia's fastest-growing tourism markets since Australia was granted the status of one of China's approved tourism destinations. Education and tourism dominate Australia's service exports to China. Tourism from China to Australia is booming with a liberalisation in travel restrictions.

According to the Productivity Commission (2005b), “(j)ourney by people travelling abroad to visit friends or relatives seems more likely to entail a significant degree of tourism activity and expenditure” (p.c.10). There is an impact on labour supply and economic growth. The role of Australian Chinese in the tourism industry is significant. Links between the Australian Chinese community and government are very important. Recent tourism boom from China, the world’s most populous and fastest industrialising nation, to Australia has made great contribution in Australia’s international tourism industry. When tourists eat, sleep and travel, they make purchases of commodities and services, with the corresponding effects on resource consumption (McGlynn, 1992). However, tourism infrastructure requires considerable investment to capitalise on the growing tourist trade between Australia and China. China is a big market for Australia and close relationships between Chinese immigrants and the government will help Australia to be more competitive in the Chinese and global markets.

There are a lot of potential business opportunities for Australia and China since Australian was approved as a tourist destination. Services to tourists from China should be set up sooner such as access to public transport, signs in Chinese, legalized travel agencies. Links between the service sector and the travelling industry should be established and regularly maintained. Actions should be taken to avoid accidents as this could potentially damage the industry. Anti-racism should be strengthened, as more harmony is needed to sustain this booming

industry. In the current climate of fear of terrorism, Australia is very well placed to provide alternative tourist destinations.

### ***8.3.3 Social Policy***

There is an important role for government and particularly local government in encouraging more networking between ethnic communities and the wider Australian society. Churches, temples and ethnic communities working with local governments and non-government organisations are a powerful resource. There is a need to implement strategies to help create links with supportive social networks. Example of this are social events open to people from all origins, such as celebrations for Chinese New Year, where people from a range of cultural backgrounds could interact and form new relationships and build cultural understanding. In this way, social barriers that exist due to perceived cultural differences can be broken down and positive networks can be established.

Most new Chinese immigrants are generally concerned with pursuing further education and/or looking for occupational opportunities. As a result, they have limited opportunities to socialize within the wider Australian community. This also applies to new migrants of other ethnicities. More activities to encourage interaction and meet the social, cultural and recreational needs of the new settlers can be promoted by cooperative partnerships between various levels of government and existing ethnic organisations.

The increasing number of Chinese students in Australia has implications for the provision of educational services. Education is Australia's leading services export to China and China has been the leading source country for overseas students in Australia. As a result, about 46,000 jobs for Australians have been created directly and indirectly (DIMIA, 2005). Australia's educational export to China is booming. In this climate of increasing number of overseas students from China in Australian educational institutions, Australia and China should be aware of the consequences resulting from the presence of a larger number of young students, such as issues of potential migration, and their social welfare. Information about Australia's laws, regulations and security issues provided to students before their arrival in Australia is a very important part of their adjustment. Monitored or regulated migration agencies in Australia and China are significant players and migration agents often need extra training and information.

Information collected from international students from China, as feedback on experiences in Australia could be valuable of reforming the policies and regulations of the Australian international educational market. The Australian Federal Government is likely to continue encouraging the export of education to China, but an emphasis on more social networks for Chinese students is needed. Offering of more places for overseas students and student exchange schemes in other Australian cities such as Adelaide and Perth, instead of the popular Sydney and Melbourne could be considered.

In terms of the increasing opportunities for business co-operation between Australia and China, Australia can continue to put more effort into using its wealth of Chinese languages and cultural resources for the purpose of benefiting the Australian economy and businesses. Chinese studies can be encouraged and supported more in Australian universities, schools and TAFEs as China is a big market for Australia. Considerably enlarged cultural programs in Australia are essential, as China is likely to become a powerful country in this century.

The most important effect of the migration policy changes in Australia and China in the late 1970s and the consequent arrival of Chinese migrants from mainland China in greater numbers in the first half of the 1990s reinforced the shift towards establishing closer links with China's economy. In order to enhance better economic and cultural relationship between Australia and China, Australia can encourage and support more Chinese organizations such as Chinese Associations relating to Chinese medicine, Chinese women, languages and engineering exchanges in the business, educational and cultural sectors.

The Chinese government is working to encourage highly educated overseas Chinese to return to China. In particular, China is making serious effort to maintain good relationships with the overseas Chinese in Australia, knowing how to use them and their knowledge to benefit China. In the future, there is likely to be a competition between Australia and China to employ highly educated Chinese people, in terms of salary and working conditions. There is competition in the global world to attract highly educated and skilled Chinese nationals from which

Australia can benefit instead of losing the opportunity to other countries, such as USA and Canada.

In addition, Chinese immigrants from mainland China cannot accept Australian citizenship without losing their Chinese citizenship. A lot of Chinese immigrants select to become Australian citizens but others are concerned about the inconvenience of losing their Chinese passports. The latter is particularly the case when these people are engaged in business activities in mainland China. Until the Chinese government reconsiders and reforms the citizenship regulations, these restrictions will be prohibitive to potential business opportunities as people could opt for Australia's political security as well as its socially more just society.

#### ***8.3.4 Ageing***

An ageing Australian Chinese community has economic and social implications. The pressure comes not only from within Australia but also from China as a consequence from its long lasting one-child policy. This study revealed that solving China's ageing problems cannot depend on traditional support from family members and relatives. China's society and economy are struggling to cope with population ageing and most families cannot afford nursing homes run by private providers. This has implications for both Australia and China. There is a trend that many more new Chinese migrants will have to support their elderly parents to move to Australia due to the lack of adequate health care services in China. As a result, Chinese migrants will have double pressure from looking after

their own family and their elderly in Australia. The distribution of the ethnic elderly migrants who have poor English skills is important for policy makers and planners in the context of regional planning of the aged care. There are many opportunities for the provision of specific services, such as the ones offered by the City of Melville, as there seems to be geographical concentration of people with Chinese ancestry.

Interviews and observations for this study show that many elderly Chinese face constant challenges meeting their social needs in Australia mainly due to their poor English skills. The importance of the diverse Chinese languages in Australia is becoming more significant in planning for aged care and provision of services to the elderly Chinese. The situation with other ethnic communities is similar.

The population projections show that the share of Chinese elderly is expected to be proportionately high in Australia in the future. With the rapidly increasing number of Chinese elderly in Australia, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Socialising the elderly within the broader Australian society is very important. Religious groups, seniors' club activities and ethnic associations are major components of this and should be actively encouraged and assisted.



- Health policies should be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the elderly. Care for ethnic minorities should not be left entirely to local councils. There is a need for cross boundary links and cooperation.
- Sharing of family values from ethnic communities with other elderly groups can be beneficial in both ways. For example, Australians could also learn the traditions of Chinese elderly, including family values, medicine and food.
- It is important for Chinese medicines, Chinese herbal treatment and traditional methods to be recognised in the Australian health system, in particular in health insurance.
- Day care centres and day care arrangements appear to be much needed and valuable options for the elderly Chinese and other ethnic communities. They will combine the best from both worlds, i.e. living at home with extended families and staying at a nursing home.
- According to the Productivity Commission (2005a, p.329), increase in net migration can partly reduce the fiscal pressures associated with ageing, it could help to overcome some skill deficits for Australia's economic performance. This solution however should be treated with care as imposing barriers on the entry of aged parents will negatively affect social sustainability.

Most Chinese family members choose to look after their elderly relatives at home. In order to reduce the elderly's feeling of being a burden at home, more Chinese speaking nurses should be trained (or allowing some nurses from China to migrate to Australia) and be sent to visit them regularly. There should also be some assistance with traditional Chinese food catering.

Many OECD countries have undertaken health reform in recent years, which may reveal useful lessons for China and Australia. While the ageing of Australian population is inevitable, governments should have the capacity to change part of the equation in a range of areas such as introducing policies that encourage people to stay longer in the workforce and thereby add to the tax base (Bishop, 1999).

According to Hugo (1998), the growth of the older population implies an increased demand for a wide range of social services specific to the older population. This changing demand however is not only shaped by the number of older people but also by their changing characteristics. The ageing of Australia's population will result in an increased demand for the home-based care for the disabled, frail and elderly. The characteristics of Chinese elderly in Australia are significant in terms of diversity in languages and culture. For example, the Chinese tradition of looking after their aged parents at home will make the Chinese immigrants face more challenges of attempting to gain or maintain employment and looking after their children and their elderly relatives at home. The number of women in the workforce will continue to rise with some projections showing women's share of employment being almost equal to that of

men in future decades. This will create further challenges for aged care, financial support, social security and pension. The aggregate participation rate will fall with ageing and health care expenditure will escalate. Aged care needs will increase and fiscal pressure on local government for an ageing population and pressures on health care will be built. This scenario is not attractive for Australia's future and adequate counteracting policies as the ones suggested here, need to be put in place.

China's one-child policy has already produced its first generation workforce in China. Future Chinese migrants will have to bring their parents into Australia and the burden that concerns China will also move to Australia. Immigration policy should balance programmes and services, which will be needed in the future. Even though population ageing is a slow process, it raises major policy changes and there is a need for early action before the situation deteriorates and is conceived as a crisis (Productivity Commission, 2005a, p. 339).

### ***8.3.5 Environmental Policy***

Environmental issues are both a cause and effect of migration trends.

Environmental concerns drive migration - many people leave China for Australia in search of better environmental conditions. The intake of migrants also impacts on the environment. It is debatable whether the net effect is positive or negative. Factors such as cultural attitudes, trade relationships, and the transfer of technical

knowledge, determine the environmental outcomes associated with migration between the two countries.

People in China face deteriorating ecosystems and environment. There is concern about whether China can maintain economic growth and preserve its arable land, water and other limited natural resources. China's average population density is very high compared to the world standard, especially in the big coastal cities. In the future, China will have to face not only the problems of increasing pressure on the environment due to the large and growing population, but also environmental deterioration due to industrialization, urbanization and land degradation.

Uncontrolled land degradation, air and water pollution affects the whole of China. The ecological burden on the Chinese population is likely to further stimulate migration to Australia. Australia's comparatively good environmental and climatic conditions are important factors in attracting immigrants. Escaping China's environmental problems, such as carbon emissions, land erosion and degradation, air, soil and water pollution, the migrants from China enjoy Australia's cleaner environment.

Immigration is always the centre of debates in Australia. Some people claim it as the salvation of the Australian economy, but others are concerned about the issues of environmental degradation in Australia, particularly in relation to population growth. Some argue (such as McGlynn, 1992) that as the Australian population increases, both through immigration and natural growth, pressures on the

environment are likely to increase without changes in consumption patterns, and/or the introduction of new technology and direct management techniques.

On the other hand, observers such as Simon (1995) point to the positive environmental effects immigration may have. Referring to the situation in the U.S.A., Simon concludes that immigration inevitably improves environmental conditions and does not negatively impact upon natural resources. Long-term trends show that in the U.S.A, air and water quality is improving. He maintains that immigration increases the technical knowledge that speeds these benign trends.

Chinese migrants and other international migrants choose to live in Australia partly due to the better environment. The new Chinese migrants bring their own perspectives and attitudes towards the Australian environment, which influence their skills, aspirations and practices. According to Leung and Rice (2002), Chinese Australians and Anglo-Australians differ in their environmental concerns. Chinese Australians who identify themselves as Asians or Chinese are less likely to be environmentally conscious than those who do not identify themselves with any ethnic group. Therefore, in order to protect the environment that attracts people in the first place, educational programs may need to be put in place to encourage Chinese Australians to adapt environmental friendly behaviour. These new Australians have a responsibility to help protect the environment, as does the rest of the Australian society.

### *Trade relations between Australia and China*

Chinese immigration to Australia means business and trade opportunities between Australia and China. The booming industry cooperation between these two countries has been acknowledged and witnessed the most in Western Australia. For example, the record-breaking A\$25 billion deal of shipping the super-cool, condensed fuel (LNG) from Australia to China's Guangdong Province for 25 years has implications for environmental protection, especially in China, being one of the largest developing countries. Freeman, Pierce and Dodd (2000, pp.113-114) suggest that global warming and the greenhouse are highly charged labels for the most controversial environmental issues but global warming is a real phenomenon and could have dramatic consequences. Therefore, it is important to understand how firms can be profitable and leave next generation with a living planet. The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy (Government of Western Australia, 2003) emphasises that all of the major environmental issues facing this state must be seen in their global context as opportunities that are now available to the Western Australian economy for innovations in environmental technology, clean production and environmental services. This is important for a number of reasons related to migration, such as the promotion of a healthy environment to continue to support and maintain Australia's immigration program and tourist industry as well as the creation and development of business links which specifically enhance environmental standards in both countries.

When doing business with China, Australia can help raise China's environmental standards and certain rules and international standards should be strengthened.

When China imports Australian fuel, China should also adopt Australian methods of environmental management. If China uses the high efficiency technology cleverly, they can reduce green house gas emission which will in turn help the global environment.

According to Hargroves and Smith (2005, p.68), "the globalization of firms, markets and regulation has meant that the countries of the world are more closely integrated economically and culturally than ever before. The rules of the game of global commerce are being written to create greater globalization that will have profound effects for future generations." Whilst there is much we can do locally, action is also needed at the global level. The CSIRO FutureCorp Forum's findings concluded that "developed countries have a responsibility to ensure that developing nations have immediate access to the latest clean technologies and are not forced to go through earlier, heavily polluting and resource inefficient stages of industrialization" (Heij, 2002, p.69).

Starkey and Welford (2001) believe that business plays a big role in moving society towards a sustainable future. In order to pursue sustainable development when doing business, it is necessary to commit to pursuing resource efficiency. In addition, the commitment to maintaining environmental quality is needed. Starkey and Welford (2001) suggest that "business must commit itself to a system of production that absolutely respects environmental limits. Living within

environmental space means that there are limits to the quantity of raw materials that can be extracted from, and the amount of waste that can be released into, the environment and so the task of business is to use the technology to maximize the value that can be created within these limits” (p.5). Chinese migrants often have a deep understanding of importing and exporting businesses between Australia and China, which has important implications for sustainable development. They also need to adopt the sustainability ethics to ensure the prosperity of current and future generations.

Although environmental degradation has not historically been primary driver of migration, it is becoming increasingly important. According to Hugo (1999, p.595), “the growing appreciation of the global implication of environmental problems is occurring at a time of a rapidly changing context in which international exchanges of population, good, capital and information are accelerating at an unprecedented rate”. More importantly in the long term, work of eradicating poverty, reducing population growth and encouraging the adoption of sustainable ways of using the environment successfully will obviate the need for such migration.

Chinese immigrants in Australia are very active in doing business. However, their level of environmental awareness is not very active. This issue did not emerge during the interviews and is a vast gap that requires attention. It is important for business traders in Australia and China to develop a model of business reality and to help integrate environmental considerations into strategic business decisions



and operation. Seminars and training programs are suggested to be provided to business people through the cooperation between local governments, formal ethnic associations and non-government organizations (NGO).

In terms of the booming tourism industry between Australia and China, McGlynn (1992, p.23) points out that “a large proportion of tourist expenditure is on transport, a sector which produces considerable amounts of carbon dioxide emissions. While tourists may spend a higher proportion of expenditure on high value added purposes, an average tourist in Australia also spends 65% more per day than an average Australian”. McGlynn (1992) suggests that the impacts on the ecology of popular but fragile tourist attractions will be one of the most important effects of growth in tourism. It is necessary to take steps to ensure that new areas of interest to tourists are properly protected. “Demand management must encompass management of tourists themselves, as well as development of tourist accommodation and other facilities, especially in fragile environments” (p.23). Most tourists from China and other countries do not speak English and do not know Australia’s environment well. Proper instructions in Chinese are necessary for tourists from China to ensure their stay is beneficial both to themselves and the Australian environment and society.

China’s economic growth has accelerated its industrialisation and urbanization. It is hard for China to avoid “growth at any cost” characterized by the early history of Australia in choosing between economic growth and environment. Continuing population growth will continue to put more pressure on the strictly limited

capacity of the environment to meet the demand for its various services (Lindner and Fraser, 1991, p.112). Through doing business with Australia, China could benefit from Australia's experiences in the purpose of controlling the environmental pollution and maintaining the quality of the environment to avoid "growth at any cost" and clean it later (Sun et al., 1994, p.389 and Tian, 1997 p.193)

New migrants who come to a new country have responsibility for looking after the beautiful environment that they dreamed to have and will have in Australia. It is important for new migrants to have a sound understanding of the new environment in their new country. For example, recycling and efficient appliance usages are the best and easiest ways to start. Thus, it is important to provide further education and training to the business people who carry out business between Australia and China.

Immigration policies can be designed to build global links, and set a solid vision that extends beyond narrow concerns. Such aims are often interrelated, as described within the discourse on sustainability. Economic strength, for example, is enhanced not only by direct increases in business activity measured according to a financial bottom line, but also by improved socio-cultural networks that promote cross-cultural interaction and understanding. This can provide a basis for improved business transactions, thus improving Australia's position in the global marketplace. Meanwhile, the development of appropriate business activities can support social networks and contribute to environmental protection. Increased

opportunities for network approaches offer the potential to satisfy sustainability criteria – the simultaneous and synergistic enhancement of economic, social and environmental factors. When formulating immigration policies, local and global issues and opportunities must be considered.

### ***Environmental Impact of Ageing in Australia and China***

The social and economic impact of an ageing population is widely discussed globally. However the environmental impact of the rapidly ageing population is easily ignored. In areas with a high concentration of elderly people there may be pressure on local government planning processes to provide sufficient land, general transport and infrastructure for aged care. Education, aged care and disability support pension costs influencing the environmental investment. Land and age adjusted health costs per capita have been projected to increase at a rate 0.6 percentage points above that for GDP per capita (Productivity Commission, 2005a).

Australia and China are both facing a rapidly ageing population which makes it crucial to start resolving ecological problems. In addition, most importantly, the ageing population needs sound environment for health, such as fresh air, green grass and beautiful parks.

According to the Productivity Commission (2005a), nearly one in five Australians is aged 65 or older and a third of all households are predicted to be occupied by at

least one older person by 2021. This develops a comprehensive picture of the social conditions necessary to support a diverse ageing population which includes a large part of Chinese elderly, such as designs for new housing solutions, focuses on demographic and socio-economic changes and their relationship and understanding of the housing needs required for this group. It is crucial to make sure that the needs of the elderly now and in the future are effectively met. Population ageing shares part of the annual economic cost which is used to work the land shift the expenditure from environmental protection to health care and other needs. As a result, the development of population ageing may cause more difficulties in achieving sustainability. Policy planners should balance and prepare for these costs.

#### **8.4 Future Research Recommendations**

A lot of effort has been made in this study to cover and examine most of the issues related to Chinese immigration to Australia. The extensive history of Chinese migration and involvement in Australia is distinguished and Chinese migrants' contributions to Australia's social and economic sustainability is acknowledged. In particular, the distinctive socio-economic characteristics of the large Chinese immigration community to Australia help the development of the social society and economic prosperity. In the long term, the Australian immigration program will go on to provide both Australia and China with more significant economic benefits and make Australia stronger to compete with other nations in the global economy.

Chinese business is one of the most active among the ethnic communities in Australia. As the trade and economic relationships are expanding with a possible free trade agreement, it is necessary to promote cultural exchange and fully utilize the resources provided by Chinese migrants, especially those skilled new immigrants with their skills and their business network brought into to Australia from China. Multiculturalism, in which Chinese immigration plays a part, will contribute to sustainable development in Australia.

This study adds to the understanding of immigration and ageing issues in Australia and will benefit communities, migrants and policy makers behind the model of Chinese immigration into Australia. Due to the long history of Chinese immigration to foreign countries, the research findings from this study have implications not only for Australia and China, but also could extend to the Asia Pacific Area and the global world, as powerful Chinese economic and cultural influences are extremely visible in many Asian countries and the rest of the world. It is important that immigration into Australia is considered within a global context, so that associated opportunities to enhance Australia's competitive position within the global economy, and responsibilities to promote global sustainability are not overlooked.

It is however impossible in this thesis to cover all the issues related to Chinese immigration to Australia. The following areas in particular need more attention in the future:

- Further research is needed to enable Australia and China to better understand the mobility of Chinese migrants in the Asia Pacific area, especially between Australia and China.
- Further analysis should be carried out to debate the relationships between international migration, economy and environment.
- More research should be developed about sustainable migration in Australia and China, such as the issues about the returned migration to China and potential Chinese migration trends in Australia.
- Extensive data related to Chinese immigration have been collected and analysed in this study and this research should be maintained and updated.
- Further data collection and analysis are needed in relation to the activities of the Chinese ethnic organisations and clubs
- In terms of the ageing population in Australia, more research is needed with a focus on ethnic communities where many elderly have poor English skills. More research should be conducted about social and economic needs, as this

would be useful in improving homecare services for the ageing population and also have implications for industry and health production.

- A theoretical and institutional analysis of the Australian social security system and its care in relation to Chinese elderly can be a new research topic of its own in the future.
- Another important research topic is the analysis of contribution of Chinese migrants to the booming economic relationships between Australia and China
- More studies should be done about the role of migrants in Australia and how to fully use the resources of migrants in order to empower Australia to compete in the global economy.
- It would be interesting to examine whether the trends in the Chinese community are similar to other ethnic communities, e.g. Malaysia, Singapore and India.
- Impact of migrant mobility on migrant countries (for example, New Zealand).
- There is little work comparing Australia with other countries such as USA, Canada and UK.

- Encouraging volunteering and political involvement of mainland Chinese migrants in the mainstream of Australian society.

In conclusion, the examination of Chinese immigration and ageing trends in the Australian Chinese community carried out in this thesis shows that Chinese immigration to Australia will play a great part in Australia's sustainability. Most new immigrants from China feel fortunate to live in this country, have been able to accomplish a smooth transition and achieve their expectations in their new home country. Chinese immigrants have made important contributions to the Australian culture and society and their role in building the link between the two economies of Australia and China is widely recognised.

Under the current immigration policies, Chinese immigration to Australia is expected to continue. New Chinese skilled immigrants are not only valuable resources in Australia, but they also played a vital role in globalization. Although not all trends outlined in this thesis are necessarily positive, if proper policies are put in place, the benefits of immigrants to Australian society and economy and their transition to sustainability will be enormous and long lasting.



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