International labour mobility in Australia and New Zealand: The Pacific case

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Main papers that this presentation draws upon

- Callister and Didham (2008) Some emerging demographic and socio-economic features of the Pacific population in New Zealand
Population change, 1800-2050
(Source: Dick Bedford)
‘the most contentious demographic issue confronting Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific during the next half century will be how to cope with pressure for an emigration outlet from Melanesia.’

(Bedford 2007)
Some background to migration policy in New Zealand and Australia

Similarities and differences
Historically New Zealand differs from Australia in relation to Pacific migration

- A Treaty of Friendship was signed with the Samoan government in 1962, and the Western Samoan Quota scheme was established to facilitate migration from Samoa.
- From 1974 people from the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue were allowed free entry into New Zealand.
- Fijian temporary rural workers scheme (terminated in 1987)
- The Pacific Access Category allows small numbers of citizens of Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji to be granted residence in New Zealand each year.
- The new Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme

These relationships have been primarily with Polynesia not Melanesia – but the RSE scheme begins an exploration of flows from other countries
The Pacific in New Zealand

- Large number of migrants from the Pacific Islands during the late 1950s to 1970s
- In 1945 the Pacific population was just over 2,000 people.
- In 2006, the Pacific population was 265,974, or 7% of the New Zealand population
- There is much movement to and from New Zealand by Pacific people who are NZ citizens (where is “home”?)
- Pacific people who migrate to New Zealand and become citizens can potentially migrate to Australia
- So can Pacific people born in New Zealand
- But little evidence of Pacific back-door migration.
- The largest “Polynesian’ flow to Australia is probably by Maori
- Ethnicity is complex in New Zealand due to high rates of ethnic intermarriage.
## Trans-Tasman PLT migration, NZ citizens only, YE 2008 (source Bedford)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>TT PLT arrivals</th>
<th>TT PLT departure</th>
<th>TT PLT net (loss to NZ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>6,982</td>
<td>31,331</td>
<td>-24,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islands</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>-839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe (incl UK)</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>-1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2,436</td>
<td>-2,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,419</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,738</strong></td>
<td><strong>-30,319</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Pacific people resident in New Zealand, 1996 and 2006

- Samoan
- Cook Islands
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Fijian
- Tokelauan

1996
2006
% in each group leaving with University Entrance qualifications in 2006
Concerns about low skill migration
Enhancing labour mobility between the Pacific and New Zealand

- There seems to be little reason not to free up access for all types of labour from Samoa and Tonga.
- But labour needs to be free to flow freely both ways and there are other barriers to movements such as restrictions on flows of capital, land ownership etc.
BUT, the really big issue is making the best use of low skill labour in/from Melanesia

New Zealand and Australia need work together to formulate migration policies with regards to Melanesia and the wider Pacific