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The Australian National University Migration Hub

ANU College of Law, Governance and Policy

New thinking on migration: an urgent necessity for our time

Migration is one of the most urgent and controversial challenges of our time.

Our vision at the ANU Migration Hub is a world where migration works better for us all. Our mission is to generate and share the insights needed to create smarter, fairer migration systems, and unlock the transformative potential of human mobility for the public good.

Our investigation of migration issues is independent, interdisciplinary and takes a long-term, global perspective – this is essential to cut through the myths, misinformation and political weaponisation that so often shape public opinion about migration.

Our starting premise is that human mobility inevitably shapes our world. It is fundamental to the human experience – building and dividing communities, enriching cultures, spreading knowledge, and changing our natural environment, for better and for worse.

Our mission is to deepen our understanding of the growing impact and potential of global population movement, uniting our world-class research, data collection, education and training, public engagement, and policy analysis, into a powerful tool for change.

Together with our partners on the front lines, we are working not only towards an integrated, systemic and evidence-based transformation of Australia's migration system, but a better understanding of migration globally, for the benefit of our nation, our region and our world.

Investing in a new era of migration

Throughout history, migration has been a driver of human progress and conflict. Migrants cross borders for countless reasons: some by choice, many more due to events beyond their control. Today, more people than ever before live in a country outside their birthplace. The movement of people is a defining feature of our time.

In Australia, we celebrate our multiculturalism and our immigrant roots as central to our national identity, prosperity and place in the world. More than half of Australia's population presently consists of first- or second-generation migrants.

Well-planned migration can deliver profound benefits for economic growth, social cohesion and cultural diversity; this is demonstrated by the existing research. Yet unplanned migration brings genuine risks, including social tensions in the communities of destination countries, economic decline for countries of origin, and vulnerability for migrants themselves.

Such risks are significantly increased when migration policy and planning are driven by myths and misinformation, rather than independently verified facts.

Global migration research is scarce, fragmented, and has suffered from sustained underinvestment. There are too few migration experts available to counter myths with evidence, and focus debate on the real challenges of migration.

Today, myths and misinformation are driving migration policy decisions that directly affect hundreds of millions of migrants, billions of non-migrants, and trillions of dollars. Because of this, community and business leaders, journalists, civil servants, legal professionals, and scientists around the world are urgently calling for improved research and technical capacity to understand and manage human migration, mobility and displacement.



It is technically demanding to manage migration well. It requires integrated expertise from multiple disciplines and sectors. Since 9/11, heightened political sensitivities about migration have led to sustained under-investment in these essential areas of expertise. The resulting capability gap has become central to the growth in migration-related crises on a scale not seen since World War Two.

Now, as then, we must overcome a lack of political will and generate the large-scale investment in independent and integrated research, education and training needed to solve the unprecedented migration crises of our era. If governments are too paralysed by the toxic politics of migration to respond, then community leaders and civil society must step forward to fill the breach.

Many countries would benefit from sustained efforts to strengthen technical capability in public service and infrastructure delivery, and to increase the engagement of frontline agencies with academic experts to improve the evidence base for policy and practice.

Here in Australia and in our region, there are widespread calls for a major research-and-training-focused institution that is both independent of government and adequately funded to provide government, industry, and communities with high-quality information about human migration, mobility and displacement.

Building national capability

The ANU Migration Hub is uniquely positioned to help meet this national, regional and global need for a non-partisan, long-term-focused research, training and public engagement capability.

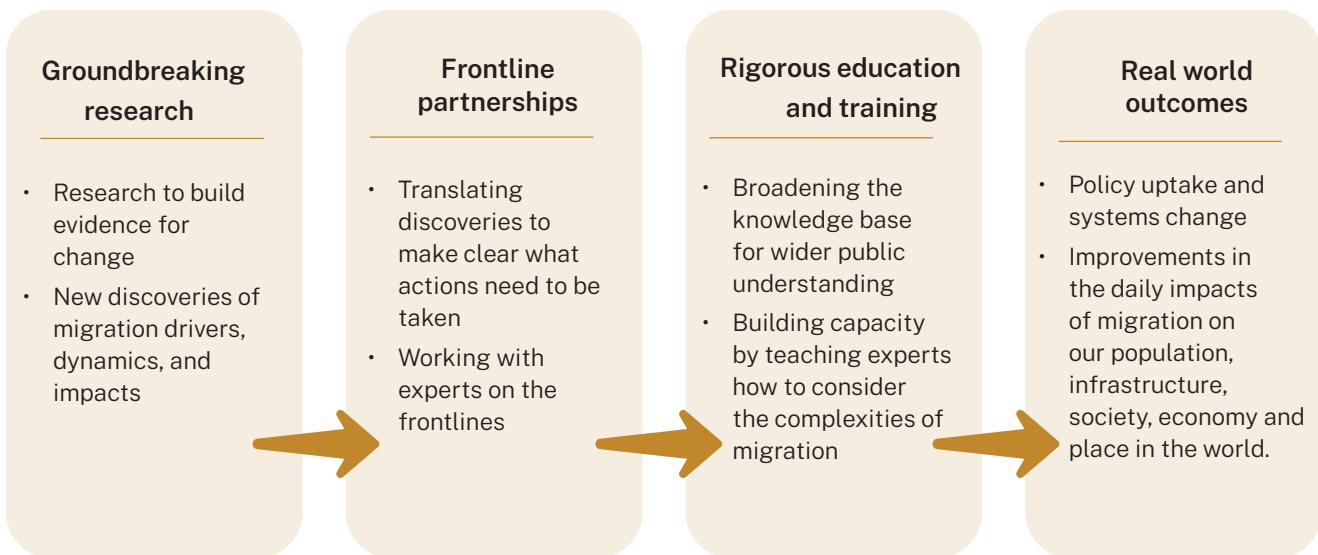
We deliver the expertise essential to respond to complex and growing human migration and mobility challenges. We aim to deliver impact in collaboration with a range of public and private partners and funders who share our focus on evidence-based decision-making for the public good.

We advance fundamental knowledge about population movement, educate future policymakers and experts on human mobility and displacement, and accelerate the translation of research into better migration policies and outcomes.

Migration has historically been viewed by policymakers as mainly an economic issue, or primarily a matter of national security—especially since 9/11. But migration is not merely an economic tool or a security issue, even if it has often been treated as such; it is a complex, society-wide process that is both disruptive and profoundly transformative.

Migration is an essential element of the human experience, forming the neighbourhoods we live in, the work that sustains us, the food and art that nourishes us, and the politics that unite and divide us.

Migration is a force that powerfully, inevitably shapes our world; and like the movements of the stars, or the rise and fall of empires, its impact and scale demand that we continually seek to advance our understanding of it. As such, it must be studied holistically – not from within disciplinary silos. Our work is informed by multiple disciplines: demography, sociology, economics, political science, data science, history, geography, anthropology, public health and law. Our credibility is strengthened across the sector by close partnerships with peer universities, government agencies, and “on the ground” experts: community groups, service providers and NGOs.



“The Hub’s inclusive and action-oriented approach to research is essential to realising a world in which lives are saved rather than politicised.”

— SANUSHKA MUDALIAR, DIRECTOR, RED CROSS RED CRESCENT GLOBAL MIGRATION LAB

Well-managed migration not only enriches our economy, promotes cultural diversity and supports social cohesion, good international relations, and effective diplomacy – it can also save lives, helping to prevent or mitigate humanitarian crises. A migration system built for the future must enable Australia to:

- Uphold our regional and global obligations, protecting our national interests and security
- Prevent vulnerable people being exposed to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation
- Meet the humanitarian needs of migration forced by war and natural disasters
- Build cyber-ready sovereign capabilities in an increasingly tense, unstable region
- Source workers to care for an ageing population and pick crops for food security
- Compete on the world stage for talent and skills to create a lower carbon economy
- Enhance cohesion, inclusion and liveability in a rapidly growing and diversifying society
- Balance population pressures with needed investment in infrastructure and services.

These are some of the most complex societal issues and challenges of the 21st century. Our work examines the evidence to find new and better solutions, and help translate them into real world outcomes.



Why ANU?

ANU is one of the world's most highly respected research institutions. Its deep expertise on human migration and unparalleled connections to decision-makers and opinion-shapers make it the ideal hub for expertise on migration in Australia, the Asia-Pacific, and beyond.

ANU has a reputation for distinctive research and the University's teaching programs are among the nation's best. As Australia's national university, it is our core mission to understand Australia and its place in the world, and to deliver research with global impact and relevance. We count more Nobel Laureates among our staff and alumni than all other Australian universities and embed a culture of discovery and inquiry in all aspects of research and education.

Our leadership

Professor Alan Gamlen is an international award-winning scholar and Australian Research Council Future Fellow, whose work on migration spans sectors and continents. For two decades he has been an influential voice in the world-leading migration research community at the University of Oxford, where he completed his doctorate. Now leading the Migration Hub, which sits in the prestigious School of Regulation and Global Governance in the new ANU flagship College of Law, Governance and Policy, Professor Gamlen's goal is to foster a more transparent, evidence-based approach to understanding and managing the complex risks and opportunities of migration.

“Time and time again the evidence shows us how human movement sparks innovation the spread of ideas, relieves poverty and is the bedrock of our global economy. The world needs a deeper understanding of this, particularly from the Asia-Pacific. The creation of the Migration Hub at ANU is a welcome and necessary addition to better understanding human movement in our increasingly interconnected world.”

— PROFESSOR IAN GOLDIN, DIRECTOR, OXFORD MARTIN SCHOOL

FORMER ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA



Your opportunity to partner with us

Philanthropy is a vital source of funding to support and sustain transformative programs of research, especially those that may be politically sensitive or undeveloped through decades of public underinvestment.

Our Migration Hub is actively seeking a mix of public and private funds. Philanthropic funding can provide the long-term independence and freedom to innovate which is critical to developing creative solutions to migration challenges. Philanthropic funds can also be rapidly deployed to address urgent or emerging issues.

Our donors are essential to us delivering on our mission—we cannot achieve our goals alone.

Thank you

Thank you for recognising ANU as uniquely placed to find new solutions to the complex challenges of global migration.

We welcome your philanthropic support in building the independent evidence base and interdisciplinary expertise so urgently needed to tackle the risks, and embrace the opportunities, of our increasingly interconnected world.

Contact us

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