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Emigration of Greek citizens to Australia during  
the Greek economic crisis (2009-2016)*

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**New temporariness, old permanency. Emigration of Greek citizens to  
Australia during the Greek economic crisis (2009-2016)**

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# **New temporariness, old permanency: Emigration of Greek citizens to Australia during the Greek economic crisis (2009-2016)**

## **Abstract**

Australia as an intercontinental traditional post-World War II Greek emigrant destination has attracted several thousands of new Greek emigrants fleeing the Greek economic crisis (2009-2016). These new Greek emigrants have included both Greek-Australian citizens and permanent residents who returned back to Australia, as well as Greek citizens. The differential Australian legal status of these two groups has meant that they have vastly different emigration and settlement experiences in Australia. Research on this phenomenon however is limited and of localised character, focusing at the peak of the Greek economic crisis (2010-2014), and its estimates on the number of Greek migrants in Australia are either limited or inaccurate. This paper aims to partly fill in the knowledge gap on the number and pattern of emigration of Greek citizens to Australia over the period 2010-2017. It does this primarily through an analysis of the types of Australian visas granted to them, and by discussing some of the key settlement challenges these emigrants had to face/are facing in Australia. This approach provides an updated and accurate nationwide picture of the emigration of Greek citizens in Australia, and a better sociological understanding of their experiences.

**Keywords:** Australia; migration; Greeks; Greek crisis

## **Introduction**

One of the most profound effects of the Greek economic crisis has been the massive and, at times, rapid emigration of thousands, mostly highly educated, Greek persons around the world (Pratsinakis et al 2017; Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2016, 2017; Labrianidis, 2011). Crisis driven emigration to Australia from Greece was initially dominated by returning Greece-born Australian citizens or permanent residents and Australia-born people of Greek descent. Once in Australia this group of persons could exercise immediately all their civil, political and social rights, their *permanency* – *permanency meaning here their permanent belonging to the nation-state, not their physical presence in the country* - accorded to them by their citizenship and permanent resident status. In contrast, nearly all Greek citizens – mostly young and educated – have travelled to Australia under temporary visas (95.5%), either for short-term (up to 3 months) or long-term (over 12 months) periods of time, and the remainder on permanent visas. On arrival these temporary emigrants experienced (and are experiencing) an uncertain, often long and arduous *temporariness* by having constantly to satisfy various

and changeable immigration bureaucratic criteria to remain in the country, with no social and political rights and few civil rights.

The defining experience of the post-2010 new Greek emigrants in Australia is this clear dichotomy of their migration experiences and outcomes, between the legal, economic, social and psychological permanence of the Greek persons with Australian citizenship and permanent residence, and the legal, economic, social and psychological temporariness of the Greek citizens on temporary visas.

The above dichotomy has to be understood in the context of the Australian economic and immigration policies. Until the mid-1990s Australia only had a permanent migration program, emphasising *permanence* - belonging and inclusion of the new arrivals to society, the economy and the nation-state. However, as a result of changing international economic conditions and increased competition for skilled labour due to globalisation, Australia introduced also a temporary migration program, with emphasis on *temporariness* – on contingency and insecurity. So the temporal eligibility of these emigrants, their temporal constraints and differential inclusion, contrasts with the dominant discursive constructions of migration linked to permanent settlement and full citizenship that have been central in Australia for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This immigration dichotomy is having a profound impact at the individual and group level of the temporary arrivals, as well as on the economy and the multicultural fabric of the Australian society.

Australia's temporary migration programme is composed of eight visa categories and numerous subclasses of visas that can be granted either outside of the country (offshore) or inside the country (onshore). There is no limit on the number of annual grants of temporary visas. Certain temporary visa categories are for guest-workers; however, most categories provide staggered pathways – application from one visa type to another - primarily to long-term employment, studies, some for family reunion and to permanent residence and ultimately to citizenship. The size and scope of Australia's temporary migration program is very substantial, at the end of 2016 there were approximately 2.1 million people in Australia on various temporary visas.

The sociological understanding of Australia's temporary migration program can be understood by the sociological concept of *temporariness*. One particular feature of temporary migration to Australia is the phenomenon of 'staggered pathways'. This phenomenon is contrary to the notion of 'guest worker' and seasonal worker programs that are geared towards a rotation of temporary residents (Boese & Robertson, 2017, p.3). Several temporary visa programs in Australia have come to be recognised as implicated into long-term and multi-stage forms of migrant mobility, with temporary visas often operating as 'stepping stones' to other temporary statuses or to permanent residency or citizenship. The pathways from *temporariness* to permanence are seldom explicit or guaranteed, leading to 'long term temporariness' and ongoing insecurity which are manifold, ranging from increased vulnerability to exploitation by employers.

The permanent migration program of Australia (Migration Programme) has three streams, and like the temporary migration program it has the same design of staggered

pathways of numerous subclasses of visas that can be granted either outside or in of Australia. There is also a Humanitarian Programme that allocates defined places each year to refugees but it is managed outside the Migration Programme. The Migration Programme allocates a defined number of places every year. The program target for the last two financial years (2017-18 and 2018-19) was 186,515 permanent positions (Australian Government, 2018a). In July 2018 the government announced that for the first time in ten years there was a significant drop in the allocation of places under the permanent migration program, to 162,417. This reduction is a reaction to growing public concern about the size, appropriateness and speed of immigration in Australia over the last decade (Birrell, 2018, p.2).

### *Greek migrants in Australia prior to the Greek economic crisis (1952-2010)*

Emigration from Greece to Australia started in earnest after 1952 and it peaked in 1971 at 160,200 persons (1971 Australian Census), with 48% of them living in Melbourne, 31.8% in Sydney and 7.5% in Adelaide (Tsounis, 1975, p. 27). However, since then the Greece-born population in Australia has been steadily declining and ageing. By 2011 the median age of the Greece-born population in Australia was 67 years old and in 2016 it was over 70 years old. The ageing of this population is due to two major factors. Firstly, from the 1980s onwards Australia started to source more migrants from the Asia Pacific region instead of Europe, as the latter became less available due to increased economic prosperity in European countries. Secondly, increased return to Greece of thousands of Greece-born and Greek descent persons from the 1980s onwards, as a result of Greek government policies and improved economic conditions in Greece<sup>1</sup>. Among the returnees to Greece is a large number of Australian social security age pensioners (persons over 65 years old), estimated at approximately 11,000 in 2014 (News247, 2014, June 08).

### *Literature review on the new Greeks emigrants presence in Australia*

Research on the new Greek emigration to Australia during the period of the Greek economic crisis is very limited. To the best of my knowledge at the time when this paper was written there were only two publications on this topic. Unlike the nationwide coverage of the data presented here, both of these publications have a strong and/or exclusive focus on the city of Melbourne. The first publication by A. Tamis focuses on the arrival patterns and certain settlement experiences of new Greek emigrants in Australia, mostly in Melbourne, and on various initiatives by Greek-Australian institutions in Melbourne to better facilitate the arrival and settlement of these emigrants (Tamis, 2014). Tamis has made the first, and only estimate

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<sup>1</sup> Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). 2011 Population Census, Section 'Migration'. (2018, August 24). Table A04 'Persons settled in Greece from abroad, arrived in the last 5 years before the Census and country of previous residence'. Of the 3,564 persons who stated as their previous place of residence five years earlier 'Oceania', overwhelmingly represented by Australia, 40% of them were of age pension age. Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SAM07/2011>

thus far, of the total arrivals from Greece to Australia from 2009 to 2013. He estimated that 80,000 Greece-born Australian citizens and Australian born persons of Greek descent, and 10,000 Greek citizens - a total of 90,000 persons – have moved to Australia. This estimate, particularly the 80,000 figure, is inaccurate as it grossly overestimated the number of these arrivals. In the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing, under the Census ‘year of arrival’ range of 2006 to 2016, 5,595 Greece-born persons settled in Australia. Under the variable of descent (ethnicity) for the same period of time 8,286 persons of Greek descent settled in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018)<sup>2</sup>.

The second publication is a research study of the settlement experiences of newly arrived Greek migrants to Australia from 2010 to 2014 as recorded and researched by the Australian Greek Welfare Society (now called ‘Pronia’) in Melbourne (2014). The report is very significant and very valuable for a number of reasons: it contains first hand responses of the experiences of a number of these arrivals from casework, surveys, interviews and workshops at the peak of new Greek emigrant arrivals in Australia; it describes the stresses placed on Greek community welfare/civic institutions in dealing with the sudden influx and needs of these people and their responses; and it makes numerous policy suggestions to government policy makers to address the needs of these arrivals.

## **Methodology and data presentation**

This paper presents and discusses the number, processes and pattern of emigration and settlement experiences of post-2010 Greek citizens to Australia mostly through a detailed and comparative exploration of available secondary data. This approach is based primarily on immigration data, and specific Australian Population Census data. The principal set of data contains the number and categories of temporary and permanent visas granted to Greek citizens in the financial years 2010-11 to 2016-17, and as such it is very accurate<sup>3</sup>. These statistics were specifically requested for this paper from the Statistical Coordination Section of the Department (Ministry) of Home Affairs and were provided on 12/04/2018. Other immigration data used here is from the Department of Home Affairs (which incorporated the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) in December 2017), and is published in different government publications.

In addition, the paper utilises quantitative information on the new Greek emigrants in Australia from the publications mentioned in the above literature review, to comment and interpret aspects of the statistical data presented. Additionally, current (April 2018) primary information, kindly provided by the welfare section of the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales in Sydney, is used to further update the quantitative data.

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<sup>2</sup> In the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census ancestry classification, ancestry is defined as far back as two generations.

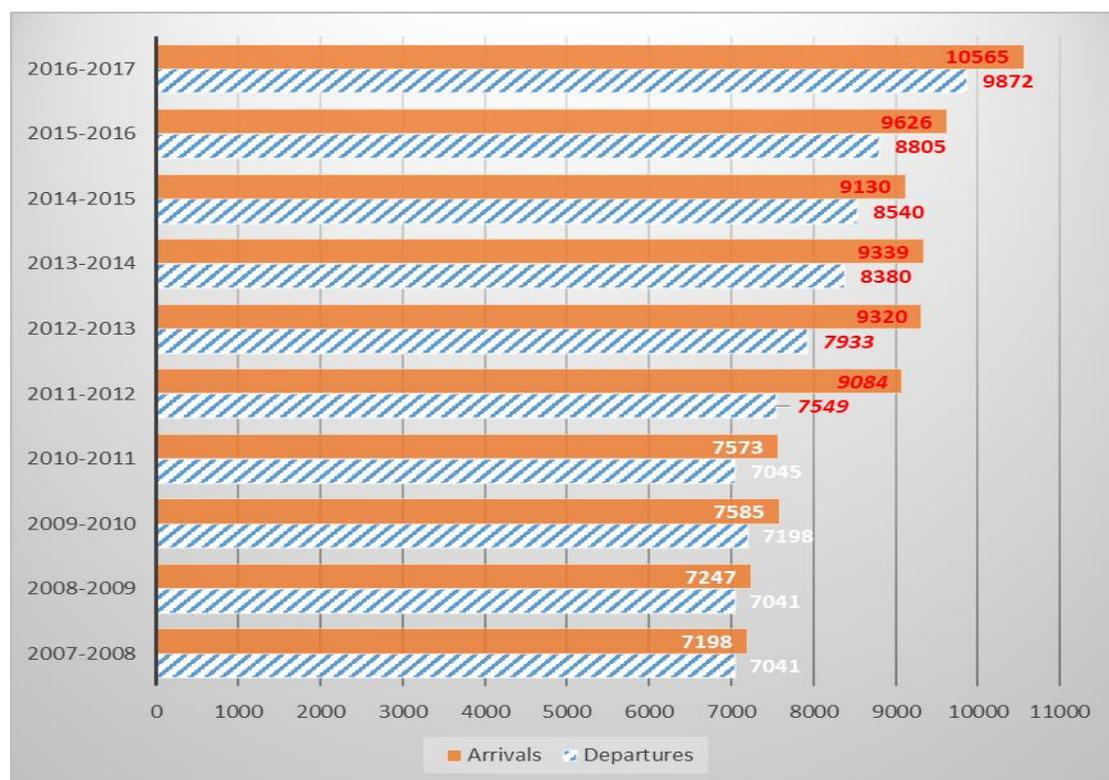
<sup>3</sup> In Australia the financial year is counted from 1 July to 30 June next year.

## Number of Greek citizen arrivals and departures in Australia from 2007-08 to 2016-17

The arrivals and departures information is extracted from the 'Incoming Passenger Card' completed by passengers arriving in Australian airports and seaports (Australian Government, 2018b). This is passenger/traveller movements data, where one person can be recorded more than once. Therefore, this data is best used as a good indicator to understand the size, composition (age and sex), and the trends of travel movements of Greek citizens in and out of Australia.

In the period 2007-08 to 2016-17 (Figure 1), a total of 86,667 Greek citizens arrived in Australia and 79,404 persons departed, a difference of 7,263 less departures. The arrivals after the commencement of Greek economic crisis (2011-12) was 57,064 persons and the departures 51,079 persons, a difference of 5,985 less departures.

**Figure 1: Total number of Greek citizen arrivals and departures in Australia (2007-08 to 2016-17)**



The most important observations in Figure 1 are:

- A very clear division is evident in the timing of arrivals (dark coloured bars) and departures (lined bars) from the pre/early start of the Greek economic crisis period (2007-08 to 2010-11), to the period that corresponds to the height and continuation of the Greek economic crisis (2011-12 to 2016-17) (darker numbers). The highest number of arrival movements was recorded in the last recorded financial year (2016-17), 10,565

arrivals, - increased emigration of Greek citizens was recorded in the same period in countries of the European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries<sup>4</sup> - and the lowest number of departure movements was recorded at the height of the crisis period (2011-12), 7,549 departures.

- The reduction in arrivals in 2014-15 is explained by the first signs of economic recovery in Greece towards the end of 2014. The surge in arrivals after 2016-17, is linked to the economic uncertainty in Greece generated by the handling of the economic crisis by the first SYRIZA government in 2015, the continuous high unemployment levels in Greece (even at present approximately 20%), and a greater familiarity by prospective Greek citizen emigrants with Australia.
- In the pre-crisis period (2007-08 to 2010-11), the number of Greek citizen arrivals and departures to Australia show a consistent trend. This trend indicates that there has always been a critical mass of Greek citizen visitors to Australia to visit family and friends, for short-term business trips and for purposes other than prospective emigration, which became more prominent after 2011-12.
- The gender distribution of all arrivals was 58.9% male and 41.1% female. However, the gender distribution of the short-term arrivals (3 month stay), which included nearly all the persons interested in investigating their emigration options in Australia, was more balanced, males at 54.4% and females at 45.6%. This gender ratio of 54 to 46% between males and females respectively, is a fairly constant figure throughout all other Australian government data on the post-2010 arrivals from Greece.
- After 2011-12 the number of the Greek citizen arrivals more than doubled in each of the age groups (Table 1), with the exception of the over 55 years old persons age group, compared to the pre/early Greek economic crisis period. The age group with the highest numerical and proportional representation among the arrivals after 2011-12 was that of 35 to 44 years old (14,216 persons or 24.9%), an increase of 5.8% compared to the pre-crisis period. The age group with the second highest numerical and proportional representation was that of 25 to 34 years old (13,320 persons or 24.5%), even though in the percentage terms this age group declined marginally by 0.4% compared to the pre-crisis period. These two age groups accounted for 48.2% of the total post-2011-12 Greek citizen arrivals in Australia.
- Among the youngest three age groups, 0 to 24 years old, there was more than doubling of their numbers (from 3,338 or 0.3% to 7,182 or 1%). This large numerical increase is

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<sup>4</sup> Eurostat. (2018, February 27) - *EU and EFTA citizens who are usual residents in another EU/EFTA country as of 1 January [migr\_pop9ctz]*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=migr\\_pop9ctz](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=migr_pop9ctz)

explained mostly by the fact that these were children of families where at least one spouse was a Greek citizen and the other either an Australian citizen or permanent resident. The majority of Greek citizens travelled to Australia as single persons, not families. Finally, there was a proportional decline of 6.6% for the age groups 55-64 and 65+, from 29.6% before 2011-12 to 22.2% afterwards, even though in numerical terms there was an increase of approximately 40% (from 8,712 to 12,684) for this group too.

**Table 1: Total Greek citizen arrivals in Australia by age group (2007-08 to 2016-17)**

Age group	Pre/early Greek economic crisis	Height/ongoing Greek economic crisis
	2007/08 - 2010/11	2011/12 - 2016/17
00-04	1.3% (395 persons)	1.9% (1,101 persons)
05-14	3.2% (943)	3.5% (2,011)
15-24	6.8% (2,000)	7.1% (4,070)
25-34	23.7% (6,989)	23.3% (13,320)
35-44	19.1% (5,632)	24.9% (14,216)
45-54	16.3% (4,800)	16.9% (9,662)
55-64	16.1% (4,746)	12.1% (6,932)
65+	13.5% (3,966)	10.1% (5,752)

### Total grants of Australian visas to Greek citizens (2010-11 to 2016-17)

In the period 2010-11 to 2016-17 Greek citizens overwhelmingly utilised Australia's temporary migration program to explore their emigration options. Of the total 85,956 visas granted to Greek citizens during this period, 83,090 were temporary visas, and only 2,866 were granted under the permanent migration program (Table 2). The Table below shows clearly the sudden increase of visa grants to Greek citizens from the financial year 2011-12 onwards, the peak of the Greek economic crisis, and follows the same pattern of increases and decreases as described in Figure 1.

**Table 2: Total Australian temporary and permanent visas granted to Greek citizens from 2010-11 to 2016-17**

Program visas granted	Financial Year							Total
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Temporary visas	10,656	12,483	11,876	11,598	11,528	12,305	12,644	83,090
Permanent visas	134	325	525	575	486	393	428	2,866
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>10,790</b>	<b>12,808</b>	<b>12,401</b>	<b>12,173</b>	<b>12,014</b>	<b>12,698</b>	<b>13,072</b>	<b>85,956</b>

## Temporary visas

The temporary visa categories granted to Greek citizens by Australia show clearly their numbers, their pattern of migration pathways, and their potential and actual migration outcomes. The focus of analysis is on four temporary visa categories most relevant to the Greek citizens: Visitor, Temporary Resident Skilled (457 visa), Student and Temporary Other.

A total of 83,090 temporary visas were granted to Greek citizens in the financial years 2010-11 to 2016-17 (Table 3). This number of temporary visas includes 22,313 visas, or 27% of the total, granted under the Maritime Crew Visa category. This visa is granted only outside of Australia, it is valid for 3 years, it can be granted to a commercial ship's crew and their dependants and can be used only while a ship is in an Australian port. It does not allow its holders stay or work in Australia. In view of the very restrictive nature of this visa, its holders cannot be considered as potential emigrants, and consequently this visa is not taken into consideration in the current analysis.

**Table 3: Temporary visas granted to Greek citizens in and outside of Australia from 2010-11 to 2016-17**

Visa Category	Financial Year							Total
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Maritime Crew Visa</b>								
Granted outside Australia	3,327	3,019	2,727	3,146	3,225	3,517	3,360	22,321
<b>Visitor</b>								
Granted outside Australia	6,655	7,937	7,216	6,671	6,728	7,146	7,732	50,085
Granted in Australia	321	547	544	532	431	504	431	3,310
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,976</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>7,760</b>	<b>7,203</b>	<b>7,159</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>8,163</b>	<b>53,395</b>
<b>Other Temporary Student</b>								
Granted outside Australia	30	139	198	214	135	147	82	945
Granted in Australia	65	442	655	571	504	506	381	3,124
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>4,069</b>
<b>Temporary Work Skilled - (457 visa)</b>								
Granted outside Australia	34	92	180	106	60	66	85	623
Granted in Australia	23	64	108	113	139	125	158	730
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,353</b>
<b>Temporary Resident (Other)</b>								
Granted outside Australia	155	170	165	182	222	209	320	1,423
Granted in Australia	30	43	46	30	55	58	67	329
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>1,752</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>								
Granted outside Australia	10,207	11,371	10,510	10,336	10,380	11,093	11,587	75,484
Granted in Australia	449	1,112	1,366	1,262	1,148	1,212	1,057	7,606
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>10,656</b>	<b>12,483</b>	<b>11,876</b>	<b>11,598</b>	<b>11,528</b>	<b>12,305</b>	<b>12,644</b>	<b>83,090</b>
<b>Total temporary visas granted excluding the Maritime Crew Visa</b>	<b>7,329</b>	<b>9,464</b>	<b>9,149</b>	<b>8,452</b>	<b>8,303</b>	<b>8,788</b>	<b>9,284</b>	<b>60,769</b>
<i>Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2018 (RFI 20864.01)</i>								
<i>Note: Includes primary and secondary applicants.</i>								

The total number of temporary visas granted to Greek citizens, therefore, was 60,769, of which 53,163 or 87.5% were granted outside of Australia and 7,606 or 12.5% in Australia [see bottom of Table 3]. These figures are the operating figures for the remainder of this statistical analysis.

At the peak of the Greek economic crisis (2011-12 and 2012-13) there was an average of 21.0% increase in the number of temporary visas granted to Greek citizens (9,464 and 9,149 respectively) as compared to 2010-11 (7,329). It is worth noting here, that although the vast majority of Greek citizens who were granted Australian temporary visas did travel to Australia, not all of them did so (Agonas tis Kritis, 2011).

The ranking of the temporary visa categories granted to Greek citizens is as follows:

1. Visitor category (short-term) – 53,395 visas granted or 87.8% of the total. Of these 93.8% (50,085) were granted outside of Australia and 6.2% (3,310) in Australia.
2. Student temporary category (long-term) – 4,069 visas granted or 6.6% of the total. Of these 76.7% (3,124) were granted in Australia and 24.5% (945) outside of Australia. This was the most popular temporary long-term visa granted to Greek citizens.
3. Temporary Work Skilled (457 visa) (long-term) – 1,353 visas granted or 2.2% of the total. Of these 53.9% (730) were granted in Australia and 46.1% (623) outside of Australia. This was the second most popular temporary long-term working visa designed for skilled workers to work in Australia in their nominated occupation for their approved sponsor for up to four years.
4. Temporary Resident (other) category (short and long-term) – 1,752 visas granted or 2.8% of the total. Of these 81.2% (1,426) were granted outside of Australia and 18.8% (329) in Australia. This category includes a mixture of mostly short-term temporary working visas such as for entertainers, diplomatic personnel, training, research and other.

### *Visitor Visa Category*

This visa category was, and remains, the primary choice of Greek citizens for potential emigration to Australia. The category allows visa holders to stay in Australia for a maximum of three months at the time within a period of twelve months, for holidays, to visit friends and relatives, to explore educational, employment and business options. Visitor visas do not permit their holders to work in Australia and cannot be extended. The focus of analysis in Table 4 is on the most commonly granted current visitor visas. The sequential '0' values in the tables indicate termination of specific subclass visas.

**Table 4: Australian visitor visas granted from 2010-11 to 2016-17 to Greek citizens by location of applicants.**

Place of grant of visa	Visitor visa subclass	Financial Year							Total
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Outside	601 Electronic Travel Authority	0	0	933	4,895	4,648	4,737	4,873	<b>20,086</b>
Australia	976 Electronic Travel Authority (Visitor)	4,897	5,709	4,235	0	0	0	0	<b>14,841</b>
	651 eVisitor	1,124	1,470	1,445	1,665	1,998	2,285	2,749	<b>12,736</b>
	600 Visitor	0	0	<5	111	82	124	110	<b>427</b>
	Visas - 977, 676, 456	634	758	603	0	0	0	0	<b>1,995</b>
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6,655</b>	<b>7,937</b>	<b>7,216</b>	<b>6,671</b>	<b>6,728</b>	<b>7,146</b>	<b>7,732</b>	<b>50,085</b>
Inside	600 Visitor	0	0	55	532	431	504	431	<b>1,953</b>
Australia	676 Tourist	321	547	489	<5	0	0	0	<b>1,357</b>
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>3,310</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,976</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>7,760</b>	<b>7,203</b>	<b>7,159</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>8,163</b>	<b>53,395</b>
<i>Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2018 (RFI 20864.01)</i>									
<i>Note: Includes primary and secondary applicants.</i>									

The main points of discussion in relation to Greek citizens on the visitor visa category are:

- At the peak of the Greek economic crisis (2011-12) there was a significant increase in the number of visitor visas granted to Greek citizens: 8,484 compared to 6,976 the previous financial year (2010-11), an increase of 18%. After a drop in the grant of visitor visas between 2013-14 and 2014-15, there was an increase afterwards reaching 8,163 grants in 2016-17, close to the peak number of 2011-12.
- The most popular visitor visa granted to Greek citizens was the Electronic Travel Authority 601 visa – 20,086 grants or 40% of all visitor visas. This visa has an online administrative cost of only AUD20. The visa allows its holders to enter Australia for up to three months at a time as a tourist or for business visitor purposes, such as for making general business or employment enquiries. The 601 visa also permits the holder to study in Australia for up to three months in some circumstances. This visa can be issued within 1-2 days.
- The second most popular visitor visa granted to Greek citizens was the eVisitor 651 visa (which replaced the 976 electronic visa) – 12,736 grants or 25.4% Australian Government, 2018c). This visa is free of charge, it can be issued within 1-2 days, it allows the holder to enter Australia for up to three months during each visit during the 12 months from the date of grant and it covers a broader range of activities than the 601 visa.
- The third most popular visitor visa granted was the Visitor 600 – 2,380 grants (Australian Government, 2018d), which combined with its predecessor 676 visa, make up a total of 3,310 visa grants to Greek citizens or 6.2%. These two visas are very significant as they are

granted once an initial 601 and 651 visa expires, while a traveller is in Australia and they want to extend their stay. It is safe to assume that most of the Greek citizens who applied for these two visas were interested in extending their stay in Australia to further examine their emigration options. The base application charge for a 600 Visitor visa is priced from AUD140 to AUD1,045, depending on the circumstances of the applicant. Persons applying for this visa for its maximum validity have to prove availability of funds to support themselves, such as personal bank statements, pay slips, or taxation records.

### Student Visa Category

Enrolment in an Australian educational institution – Vocational Education Training (VET) and tertiary education institution - is seen by many international students as an opportunity to access high quality education, as well as a potential pathway to long-term employment and acquisition of Australian permanent residence. The student visas include various subclass visas linked to specific types and levels of studying in Australia. The student visas allow students to work in Australia (40 hours per fortnight), gain valuable work experience, bring over their dependants, and provide them with time to decide about their long-term life plans. At the end of the validity of the student visas, visa holders can apply for other visas that can lead to further studies, employment and permanent residence. This process can take at least two years.

In the period 2010-11 to 2016-17 a total of 4,069 student visas were granted to Greek citizens (Table 5). The majority of the student visa applications were made while the applicant was in Australia (76.7%) and mostly for VET education (92%). This pattern clearly shows that this pathway to long-term emigration was chosen by Greek citizens who had investigated their emigration options *after* arriving in Australia under a visitor visa. This pathway is effectively a long-term emigration strategy via technical education.

**Table 5: Student visas granted from 2010-11 to 2016-17 to Greek citizens by location of applicants.**

Place of grant of visa	Student visa subclass	Financial Year							Total
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Outside	572 Vocational Education and Training Sector	7	67	89	108	69	83	8	431
Australia	570 Independent ELICOS Sector	9	39	73	60	39	28	0	248
	573 Higher Education Sector	6	23	19	31	18	15	0	112
	500 Student	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	74
	575 Non-Award Sector	8	10	12	5	9	9	0	53
	574 Postgraduate Research Sector	<5	<5	5	10	<5	12	0	27
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>945</b>
Inside	572 Vocational Education and Training Sector	39	212	416	441	423	424	58	2,013
Australia	570 Independent ELICOS Sector	18	218	217	91	60	56	5	665
	500 Student	0	0	0	0	0	0	313	313
	573 Higher Education Sector	8	12	16	34	16	26	5	117
	574 Postgraduate Research Sector	<5	<5	6	5	5	<5	0	16
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>3,124</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>4,069</b>
<i>Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2018 (RFI 20864.01)</i>									
<i>Note: Includes primary and secondary applicants.</i>									

There were a variety of reasons why VET education was chosen by the majority of Greek citizen student visa applicants: Greek citizens were assessed under Assessment Level 1 (out of 3 levels), in which Greece was classified as a lowest immigration risk country, as well as student visa applicants assessed under Level 1 could lodge their application while in Australia; the lower cost of and higher accessibility to VET education compared to that of higher education; student visas provide opportunity for part-time employment and hence to earn income and acquire work experience; the VET diplomas are often more labour market responsive than tertiary degrees; in the current decade the Australian education policy focus has been to encourage enrolments of overseas students in the VET sector, as it has now many private providers; and VET institutions in Australia can also offer post-graduate university courses.

The main points of discussion in relation to Greek citizens on the student visa category are:

- There was an approximate six-fold rise in the granting of student visas to Greek citizens at the peak of the Greek economic crisis, from 95 visas in 2010-11 to 581 in 2011-12. In 2011-12 there was nearly a seven-fold increase of grants where the applicant was in Australia (from 65 to 442) - and more than a four-fold increase in the grant of student visas to Greek citizens outside of Australia (from 30 to 139).
- The highest number of student visas granted was in the financial year 2012-13 (853) and remained high until 2015-16. Then there was a reduction of approximately 29.1% (463 visas) in 2016-17 compared to the previous year (653), because of the introduction of the new Student 500 visa.
- The number of visa grants to Greek citizens for university education was small: 272 in seven years (43 for postgraduate research), or 6.7% of the total. In contrast to the location of VET student applicants (93% in Australia), the location of the applicants for tertiary education visas was nearly equally split between those outside of Australia (51%) and those in Australia (49%). This indicates student visa applicants for university studies had greater economic capacity, given that higher education in Australia is substantially more expensive than VET education, and they did not appear to have an urgent need to emigrate.
- The introduction of the Student 500 visa in 1 July 2016, is of particular importance to Greek citizens wishing to emigrate or already in Australia on student visas<sup>5</sup> (Australian Government, 2018e). Under the 500 visa the eligibility criteria have become stricter. Students are assessed on their immigration risk based on their country of citizenship (the names of immigration risk countries are no longer publicly available to eliminate bias from applicants) and the intended education provider. This assessment is used to determine the

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<sup>5</sup> The student visa 500 has streamlined all the other visas shown in Table 5.

amount of evidence, including evidence relating to financial capacity and English language proficiency, students need to provide with their application.

- It is not clear yet what the long-term effect of the student 500 visa stricter conditions on Greek citizen existing students and new applicants. In the first financial year of introduction of this visa (2016-17), the number of visa grants to Greek citizens was reduced to 463 from 653, a reduction of 29.1% compared to the previous financial year (2015-16). This could indicate that fewer Greek citizens are eligible for this new student visa, and/or it is a transitional stage until the applicants become more familiar with new bureaucratic demands for this visa and respond accordingly, and/or it is discouraging new applicants.
- All previous and current student visas allow their holders to work part-time, up to 40 hours per fortnight. However, this allowable working time is not sufficient to cover the living expenses of an international student in Australia, given the very high cost of living – especially of housing in Sydney and Melbourne. International students who need to work to support themselves are often vulnerable to severe workplace exploitation. This is a well-documented and investigated issue in Australia (Parliament of Australia, 2016, p. 204). International students share also the same levels of workplace vulnerability as 457 visa holders, discussed in the next section. A recent survey of more than 200 international students found: A quarter of those responding received AUD10 or less an hour; 60% earned less than the national minimum wage (AUD 16.37 an hour); 79% said they knew little or nothing about their rights at work; and 76% said they did not receive penalties (additional pay rates) for weekend or night work.

### *The Temporary Skilled (457) and Temporary Resident (other) category visas*

The Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) program, or simply 457 visa, was a temporary long-term visa introduced in 1996 designed for international skilled workers to work in Australia in their nominated occupation for their approved sponsor for up to four years. The 457 visa was replaced in March 2018 by the Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) 482 visa. The main prerequisite for the grant of the 457 visa was that a business could sponsor a person for this visa if they could not find an Australian citizen or permanent resident to do the skilled work. The list of skilled jobs was very extensive, which finally contributed to its abuse and its replacement<sup>6</sup>.

One of the great appeals of the 457 visa was that visa holders who worked full-time for two years with a sponsoring employer, could then apply for permanent residence, requiring again the employer's sponsorship, and acquire permanent residence within two

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<sup>6</sup> The 457 visa was replaced by the TSS 482 visa because it was abused by certain employers who were accused of bringing in workers (often on lower wages) on this visa, without exploring the local labour market. The TSS 482 visa has more stringent eligibility criteria, e.g. a shorter skilled jobs list, and its application fee starts from AUD1,175. Retrieved from <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/482->

years. The sponsorship fee for the applicant was AUD420 in 2014 and the nomination charge for the employer AUD350, modest amounts of money. Under the new TSS visa rules the visa holders have to wait for three years, if they were sponsored after 18 April 2017, to apply for permanent resident visa. These new visa rules could potentially discourage new visa applicants, and extend the temporariness of existing 457 visa holders. In the period 2010-11 to 2016-17 a total of 1,353 skilled worker 457 visas were granted by Australia to Greek citizens (Table 6).

**Table 6: Temporary Resident Skilled (457 subclass) visas granted from 2010-11 to 2016-17 to Greek citizens by location of applicants.**

Place of grant of visa	Visa subclass	Financial Year							Total
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Outside Australia	457 Temporary Work (Skilled)	34	92	180	106	60	66	85	<b>623</b>
Inside Australia	457 Temporary Work (Skilled)	23	64	108	113	139	125	158	<b>730</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,353</b>
	<i>Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2018 (RFI 20864.01)</i>								
	<i>Note: Includes primary and secondary applicants.</i>								

The main points of discussion in relation to Greek citizens 457 visa holders are:

- There was a three-fold increase of grant of this visa at the peak of the Greek economic crisis from 57 in the financial year (2010-11) to 156 grants (2011-12), and almost a doubling of grants from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (288 grants, the highest number). There was a reduction of grants from 2013-14 to 2015-16 and an increase again in 2016-17 (243 grants).
- Since 2013-14, the dominant trend of Greek citizen visa 457 applicants was to be in Australia (53%), as was the case for the student visa applicants. In certain instances, prospective 457 visa applicants had to return back to Greece to get additional supporting documentation (e.g. references), or even gain further work experience for the sponsored position.
- Compared to the number of student visas granted to Greek citizens (4,069), the number of 457 visas granted was significantly lower, by a third (1,353), and at a slower rate, an increase of 50% in 5 years (2012-13 to 2016-17). The Department of Home Affairs could not provide statistics on the number of Greek citizen application rejections for the 457 visa, and therefore it is not possible to know the exact number of applicants for this visa. At least three reliable assumptions can be made for the low number of 457 Greek citizens visa holders: it has been difficult for Greek citizen emigrants to find an employer sponsor for the visa; the emigrants did not apply for this visa over concerns of employer exploitation and over-dependence; student visas offered better and more quality settlement options.

- Various Australian studies and government reports have found 457 visa holders highly vulnerable for reasons such as dependence on a third party for the right of residence, limited access to public goods (no access to financial assistance from the welfare state and free health care), limited authority to work, limited access to workers compensation and to justice (Parliament of Australia, 2016, p. 143-162). There were also significantly higher levels of non-compliance relating to employers of 457 visa workers in particular industries, such as construction, hospitality and retail, and amongst small businesses with nine or less employees. In the 2016 Australian Census new Greek-born migrants had the highest level of participation (18.3%) in the hospitality industry. Greek citizen emigrants (mentioned also in the ‘Pronia’ report) had reported exploitation by Greek-Australian employers. In 2011, Greek-Australian businessmen denied publically that they were exploiting new arrivals and claimed they were ‘doing everything within their power to aid the visitors from Greece and help them get permanent residency’ (Tsolakidou, 2011, December 11).
- In the Temporary Resident (Other) category most of the visas granted were short-term for employment purposes. For instance, 811 visas were granted to entertainers (420 visa), 275 visas to diplomatic staff (995 visa), and 215 visas for short stay activity (400 visa), totalling 1,301 visas or 77.6% of this visa category. The highest number of temporary long-term visas granted were 115 graduate/training/research visas (402 and 485).

### *Snapshot of Greek citizens on temporary visas in Australia*

A complete view and understanding of the presence of Greek citizens on temporary visas in Australia is shown in the following snapshot of the four quarters of the calendar year 2016, the latest available data (Table 7) (Australian Government, 2018f).

**Table 7: Greek citizen temporary entrants present in Australia by visa holder component in 2016**

Quarter	Visitor	Student	Working holiday maker	Temp. skilled	Temp. Graduate	Other temp.	Bridging	TOTAL
31/03/2016	880	910	0	510	20	230	530	<b>3,100</b>
30/06/2016	530	930	0	460	30	240	480	<b>2,680</b>
30/09/2016	560	900	0	470	30	220	510	<b>2,680</b>
31/12/2016	1,840	850	0	470	30	300	520	<b>4,010</b>

In 2016 the number of Greek citizens on temporary visas present in Australia at any given time ranged from 2,680 to 4,010 persons. The two highest figures, 4,010 and 3,100 were recorded around the Christmas/summer/school holiday periods (December to February),

when historically more Greek citizens come to Australia for holidays, to visit relatives and friends.

The largest long-term visa holder group was that of the students, on average 900 persons for the whole of 2016. This group was followed by bridging visa holders, averaging 510 persons<sup>7</sup>. The third largest group was that on temporary skilled visas (mostly 457 holders), averaging 477 persons. And the fourth largest visa group was that on 'Other temporary' visas, averaging 247 persons. There were only 30 persons on temporary graduates' visas.

If we average the total number of Greek citizens on temporary visas for the whole year, then at any time in 2016 there were on average 3,110 such persons in Australia. If we exempt the short-term visitor arrivals, then at any time in 2016 there were approximately 2,100 Greek citizens on temporary long-term visas in Australia.

The estimated national figure of unlawful non-citizens in Australia in 2015 was 62,000 persons and the visa categories with the highest figures of breach were the visitor and student ones. Temporary visa holders in breach of their visa conditions could face visa cancellation and a re-entry ban or exclusion period up to three years. The estimated number of unlawful Greek citizens in Australia in 2014-15 was 510 persons, 310 males and 200 females (Australian Government, 2018g), who were ranked 10<sup>th</sup> among the unlawful non-citizens of the 34 OECD countries monitored, a relatively high position. For the same period of time the visa cancellations for Greek citizens in Australia was 152 persons, 105 males and 46 females, who were ranked 20<sup>th</sup> among the non-citizens of the 34 OECD countries monitored, a relatively low position.

### *The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program (Subclass visas 417 and 462)*

On May 14 May 2014 a bilateral Greek and Australia Working and Holiday Visa Agreement was signed by the respective governments and it was expected to come into effect in the next few months (Clancy, 2013). Under this agreement 500 young people from Greece, aged between 18 and 30, would be eligible to apply to stay in Australia for one year and undertake short-term work and study. The same reciprocal conditions would also allow young Australians to work and holiday in Greece. Although the agreement was ratified by the Greek Parliament in 2017, Greece is still not one of the countries eligible for the visa and the Greek authorities have not set an official timeline of the program's commencement as yet.

### *Settlement issues faced by Greek citizens on temporary visas in Australia*

Both Greek citizens, Greek-Australian citizens and permanent residents who arrived in Australia post-2010 have faced common settlement challenges, such as entry into a new

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<sup>7</sup> The Bridging visas, as the name itself indicates, are temporary visas that allow people to stay in Australia lawfully after their current substantive visa ceases for a number of reasons, such as to make a substantive visa application (including for permanent resident visa), make arrangements to leave Australia or to be granted a bridging visa.

labour market, housing and psychological issues of adjustment in a new society. However, the social and practical issues associated with the temporariness of the Greek citizen arrivals, has meant that they have faced (and are facing) a range of different settlement issues than the Greek arrivals with a permanent legal link to Australia, some of which are<sup>8</sup>:

**Pre-migration planning and preparation** - Pre-migration planning and preparation are critical in achieving positive outcomes as a prospective emigrant. In the early years of travelling to Australia (2010 to 2013) Greek citizen emigrants relied on a variety of sources for information about the country. These sources were the internet, migration agents (with reports of exploitation by some by charging exorbitant fees or of questionable repute), friends and relatives, the Australian Embassy in Athens, the Australian Department of Immigration website and social media. Some of these sources were more reliable than others. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the level of preparation of Greek citizen arrivals was inconsistent, and at times they were driven by pure desperation.

For instance, reports from the Greek-Australian media at the peak of the Greek economic crisis mentioned that many Greek citizens who had arrived in Australia on tourist visas did not have enough money to support themselves, or did not have a specific address to stay, or stated they wanted to look for work. As a result in many instances, such cases were either deported or placed in detention centres (Katsakos, 2012). Even the Australian Minister of Immigration met with Greece's Ambassador to Australia in 2013 '...to discuss concerns that many young people from Greece take off for a new life in Australia without knowing enough about the country and armed with inefficient and sometimes wrong information' (Clancy, 2013).

Educated Greek citizens with a good command of the English language tend to be better prepared on arrival, and are more capable of negotiating successfully the maze of staggered pathways for temporary employment and educational visa options, than those who are less educated and have poor English language skills and less good networks in Australia. Nonetheless, for both groups luck can be a deciding factor.

**Sharing accommodation with family, relatives and friends and housing issues** – One of the main reasons many Greek citizens were attracted to Australia was because of family, relatives and friendship connections. These networks could provide temporary accommodation while they were investigating their emigration options. Greek citizens were generally welcomed by these groups but the sharing of accommodation was not always unproblematic. Often family and relatives in Australia turned out to be of limited help to the new and younger arrivals because of their elderly age, lack of understanding of Australia's current migration program and often limited English language skills. Another frequent and significant problem of staying with elderly relatives was lack of psychological support to the new young arrivals, because of

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<sup>8</sup> Most of the following information is drawn from the 2014 Pronia (pp. 1-65) and Tamis' article. Feedback from the welfare services of the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales in Sydney in April 2018 contained similar examples and experiences of these arrivals at the time and at present.

generational and cultural differences between the two groups, and limited capacity of the elderly relatives to provide such support due to their age.

Other arrivals on visitor visas stayed with friends, with whom they often kept in touch with through social media. The usual understanding in such cases was that the friends in Australia would provide the arrivals accommodation for few weeks until they decide on their emigration options. Independent living has been difficult for Greek citizens on temporary visas because of limited financial resources, limited understanding of the cost of living in Australia, inaccurate assumptions relating to salaries and wages, the very high cost of accommodation in Sydney and Melbourne, and lack of support network to guide them.

**Assessment and recognition of qualifications, work experience and employment** – Greek citizens on long-term temporary visas reported various structural barriers that hindered their employment and study prospects. These barriers included complex, often confusing, expensive and time-consuming processes of skills and qualifications recognition. Other arrivals identified entrance to the labour market as a more significant barrier, the open and veiled forms of discrimination, such as the reluctance of Australian employers to value overseas qualifications and work experience as equivalent to Australian ones, as they often placed more emphasis on local work experience (Birrell, 2018, p. 14).

**Financial hardship** – Greek citizens arriving on visitor visas were/are self-funded, and so they are likely to face financial hardship until they obtain a temporary long-term visa and find employment that remunerates them sufficiently to obtain economic independence. At the commencement of the arrival of the new Greek emigrants in 2010, Greek-Australian welfare institutions were unprepared for such an influx of diverse groups with such diverse needs, as their services were geared towards the substantial elderly Greek speaking population. Nevertheless, these organisations, and other Greek-Australian civil society institutions, raised funds to support new arrivals with medical or cost of living expenses, as well as help pay for airfares to repatriate individuals or families back from Greece. Since 2014 Pronia in Melbourne has received State government funding (until 2021) to deliver the 'Newly Arrived Greek Migrant Project' (Pronia, 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2016-2017, p.23). The Greek Orthodox Community's welfare services in Sydney provide mostly casework assistance to newly arrived Greek migrants, however they do not have the volume of clients to justify government funding at this stage.

### **Greek citizens granted permanent residence visas in Australia, 2010-11 to 2016-17**

The Australian Migration Programme has three streams of permanent migration: Skilled, Family and Special Eligibility (Australian Government, 2018h and 2018i) A permanent residence visa confers the following rights to its holders: indefinite residence in Australia; work and study in Australia; enrolment in Australia's national health scheme (Medicare); certain social rights, such as access to welfare support services, but limited access for certain

social security payments (e.g. unemployment benefit) with waiting periods up to two years (an element of temporariness/solidarity exclusion); sponsorship for eligible relatives for permanent residence; travel to and from Australia for five years; certain limited political rights (the right to vote at local government elections); and eligibility to apply for Australian citizenship after four years of legal residence in Australia.

As shown in Appendix A, a total of 2,866 permanent residence places were allocated to Greek citizens in the period 2010-11 to 2016-17 – an average of 409 per financial year. There was a 250% increase in the number of permanent residence place allocations at the peak of the Greek economic crisis, from 135 places in 2010-11 to 325 places 2011-12. The allocations of places continued to rise after 2011-12 and peaked at 575 places in 2013-14. After a small decline in place allocations from 2014-15 to 2015-16, there was an increase again in 2016-17 to 428 places. A total of 1,811 places or 63.2% were allocated while the applicants were in Australia, 1,055 places or 36.8% granted outside of Australia.

The main points of discussion regarding the allocation of permanent residence places to Greek citizens as shown in Appendix A are: Family stream (effectively, partner visas) (Australian Government, 2018j) have dominated the allocation of permanent residence places to Greek citizens with 2,162 visa grants or 75.4% of the total. The granting of partner visas rose by 2.5 times (281) in 2011-12 compared to the previous financial year (111), and continued to increase until 2013-14 (461). After that period there was a decline for two financial years and an increase again in 2016-17 to 280 allocations. More partner visas were allocated to applicants who were outside of Australia than in Australia in the period 2010-11 to 2012-13 because of the high influx of Greek citizen spouses of Australian citizens or permanent residents. From 2013-14 onwards this trend was reversed as it seems more marriages and family reunions were taking place with both partners being in Australia.

Under the Skilled stream, 549 places or 19.1% of the total were allocated to Greek citizens. There was an almost threefold increase in the allocation of places between 2010-11 (10) and 2011-12 (28) and then a 2.5% increase in the following financial year 2012-13 (80); however, the overall numbers have remained very low. The allocation of places under the Skilled stream while the applicants were out of Australia averaged 23 places per financial year, clearly indicating an extremely low interest of Greek citizens for this form of permanent emigration. The major reasons for this low interest is that the relevant application process can take up to 12 months, it is complex and costly, and therefore it could not meet the urgent emigration needs of most Greek citizens at the time.

The child stream is estimated between 16 to 64 allocated places. The majority of allocations were under the 802 visa, ranging from 7 to 28. The visa 802 allows a child who is in Australia to stay in Australia and the child must be single (Australian Government, 2018k). The remainder allocations, ranging from 6 to 24, were made under the 101 visa, which allows a child who is outside Australia to come to Australia to live with their parents. Under the special eligibility stream there were more than 17 allocations, Former Resident 151 visa. This visa is granted to persons who have spent nine years in Australia as a permanent resident before they turned 18 years old and are under 45 years of age.

Obtaining a visa under the Family stream is a lengthy and expensive process. The application process is a two-stage process, irrespective of the application being lodged outside or in Australia. The eligibility criteria for a Partner visa are: the applicant needs to be married, be in a de facto relationship (including same sex partners) or prospective marriage (fiancé) relationship with an Australian citizen, or an Australian/eligible New Zealand permanent resident. A partner visa covers also any children of the family. Family members are not restricted to apply only under the Family stream but they can also be included under the Skill stream and the Humanitarian Programme. For a non-Australian spouse applying from outside Australia to be eligible for a Partner permanent (Migrant) 100 visa, they first need to be granted a temporary Partner (Provisional) 309. For a non-Australian spouse applying in Australia to be eligible for a Partner permanent 801 visa they first need to be granted a temporary Partner (Provisional) 820 visa (Australian Government, 2018l). The application for both the permanent and temporary visas is done simultaneously and only one fee is paid, currently starting from AUD7,000 (approximately 4,400 Euro). The whole process of obtaining either a 100 or 801 visa can take up to three to three and a half years. However, there is discretion to grant them immediately once the provisional visas (309 and 820) are approved.

The high proportion of Greek citizens allocated permanent places under the Partner visas (75.4%), does not mean that all these partners were not eligible for a skilled permanent visa. Rather, this pattern shows that the choice of obtaining permanent residence under the Partner visa was either necessary, and/or more convenient for these persons. This underlines the ongoing high level of dependence of Greek citizens on Greek-Australian citizens or permanent residents for obtaining Australian permanent residence.

The process of application for an Australian permanent skilled visa is also bureaucratically complex, time consuming and costly. As shown in Appendix A, the number of place allocations under the Skilled Independent category (visas 189 and 175) was the lowest of all, 104 places or 19%; the national trend is the reverse. All other allocations were either the Skilled nominated or sponsor categories. The Skilled nominated 190 visa was the most granted visa applied from outside of Australia (41 places or 25.3%). This visa allows skilled workers who are nominated by an Australian State or Territory government to live and work in Australia as permanent residents (Australian Government, 2018m). Candidates who are invited to apply for a State/Territory nomination need to demonstrate that they meet both theirs and the Commonwealth's visa eligibility requirements; that is, meet the points test pass mark of 60 points<sup>9</sup>, be under 45 years of age at time of invitation, have competent English language skills and other. The application process can take up to 11 months for 90% of the applications. The cost starts from AUD3,750 (approximately 2,420 Euro).

The Employer Nomination Scheme 186 visa was the most granted visa when the applicant was in Australia (223 places or 57.6%). This visa allows skilled workers who are nominated by an employer to continue to live and work in Australia as permanent residents (Australian Government, 2018n). A person must be nominated by an employer, and then the

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<sup>9</sup> As of 1 July 2018 the points threshold for the 189, 190 and 485 visas was increased to 65.

person has to lodge their application within six months of the nomination being approved for the visa in the stream and occupation in which the employer nominated the person. This visa can be applied for by persons over 45 years old but under 50. The process time can be up to 12 months and the cost starts at AUD3,670 (approximately 2,350 Euro).

## **Conclusion**

The rate and number of Greek citizens emigrating to Australia post-2010 has been shaped by the fluctuating socio-economic and political circumstances in Greece, by the formal and informal links of these persons to Australia, and by Australia's migration system and policies. The majority of these emigrants chose Australia's temporary migration program to test their emigration options because it could respond immediately to their urgent need to leave the economic crisis of Greece, it offered/offers immediate access to the country and at a very low cost.

From 2011-12 to 2016-17 a total of 60,769 Greek citizens were granted Australian temporary visas, of which 53,395 on short-term visitor visas. These visitor visa holders included several thousand Greek citizens who travelled to Australia to explore their emigration options. Greek citizens primarily used two types of temporary long-term visas to stay in Australia. Most were granted visas as international students (4,069) – an emigration strategy with part-time access to the labour market– and then as skilled labourers under the 457 visa (1,353), a total of 5,422 persons. Of the above two types of temporary long-term visas, 65.3% were granted while the applicants were in Australia, indicating that the opportunity for long-term emigration was realised after arrival in Australia under visitor visas, and 34.7% were granted while the applicants were out of Australia. The number of Greek citizens on long-term temporary visas is constantly changing; in 2016 it averaged around 2,100 persons throughout the year.

The Greek citizens on long-term temporary visas in Australia had/have to undergo a process of staggered pathways of application(s) for various categories and subclasses of temporary visas. At some point in time these visas could potentially lead to permanent residence –a goal of the majority of these arrivals - and eventually citizenship. This migratory insecurity under temporariness of the post-2010 Greek citizen emigrants in Australia contains many characteristics of an odyssean story. It is a more complex, contingent and insecure personal and group experience of emigration and settlement, requiring from temporary emigrants a very strong sense of hope, courage, imagination, initiative, determination, resilience, learning and adapting quickly to the demands of a new labour market, society and of changing bureaucratic regulations, and a fair deal of luck.

Post-2010 Greek citizen emigrants have under-utilised Australia's permanent migration program, as its long waiting periods (up to 12 months) for visa approval, complexity and cost, did not meet their urgent need for emigration during the Greek economic crisis. From 2010-11 to 2016-17 only 2,866 Greek citizens have been granted permanent Australian resident visas. The majority of these permanent visas have been granted under the family

reunion stream, specifically under Partner visas (75.4%), as these Greek citizens were/became spouses of Australian citizens or permanent residents of Greek descent. This underlines the ongoing high level of dependence of Greek citizens on Greek-Australian citizens or permanent residents for obtaining Australian permanent residence. In contrast, only 549 persons were granted skilled worker permanent resident visas, indicating the great challenges faced by the Greek temporary visa holders to reach this stage.

Australia, contrary to previous very high estimates, such as by Tamis, has not attracted a very high number of post-2010 emigrants from Greece. The estimated total number of all new Greek emigrants - Greek-Australian citizens and permanent residents who returned back to Australia, and Greek citizens - present in Australia by 2017 is approximately 10,500 to 11,000 persons.

Recent changes to the student visas (2016) and to temporary skilled worker visas (2018), both with stricter eligibility criteria and longer waiting periods for application of permanent residence, as well as the recent reduction of allocated places under the permanent migration program of Australia, could have adverse consequences for encouraging new Greek citizen arrivals, as well as extending and making more uncertain the temporariness of the current long-term temporary Greek citizen visa holders.

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## APPENDIX A

Table: Permanent residence places allocated to Greek citizens under the Migration Programme from 2010/11 to 2016-17 by location of applicants.

Place of grant of visa	Visa category and subclass	Financial Year							Total
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Outside</b>	<b>Family</b>								
<b>Australia</b>	100 Partner	40	132	179	100	<5	<5	<5	451
	309 Partner (Provisional)	18	25	34	49	66	55	54	301
	300 Prospective Marriage	12	12	12	13	10	<5	<5	59
	103 Parent	0	0	5	<5	0	0	0	5
		<b>70</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>816</b>
<b>In Australia</b>	820 Partner	41	112	195	299	288	185	226	1,346
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>111</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>2,162</b>
<b>Outside</b>	<b>Skilled</b>								
<b>Australia</b>	190 Skilled - Nominated	0	0	14	19	<5	<5	8	41
	189 Skilled - Independent	0	0	<5	<5	9	11	13	33
	175 Skilled - Independent	<5	8	12	0	<5	0	0	20
	186 Employer Nomination Scheme	0	0	<5	<5	8	7	<5	15
	119 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	0	6	8	0	0	0	0	14
	176 Skilled - Sponsored	0	8	5	<5	0	0	0	13
	188 Business Innovation and Investment (Provisio	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
	121 Employer Nomination	5	0	<5	0	0	0	0	5
	163 State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
	187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	5	5
	489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional)	0	0	0	<5	0	0	5	5
		<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>In Australia</b>	186 Employer Nomination Scheme	0	0	7	34	54	59	69	223
	187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	0	0	5	13	21	19	14	72
	189 Skilled - Independent ( <i>points tested system</i> )	0	0	10	7	10	14	9	50
	856 Employer Nomination Scheme	<5	6	7	<5	0	0	0	13
	857 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	5	<5	7	0	0	0	0	12
	858 Distinguished Talent	0	0	0	<5	0	5	6	11
	190 Skilled - Nominated	0	0	0	6	0	<5	<5	6
		<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>387</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>549</b>
<b>Outside</b>	<b>Child</b>								
	101 Child	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
<b>Australia</b>	102 Adoption	0	0	0	<5	0	0	0	0
<b>In Australia</b>	445 Dependent Child	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	0	0
	802 Child	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>In Australia</b>	<b>Special Eligibility</b>								
	151 Former Resident	<5	0	<5	5	0	12	<5	17
<b>Total outside</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1055</b>
<b>Australia</b>									
<b>Total in Australia</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1811</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>134</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>2,866</b>
	<i>Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2018 (RFI 20864.03)</i>								
	<i>Note 1: Includes primary and secondary applicants.</i>								

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The SEESOX Diaspora Working Papers series is a forum for research and debate about emigration and diasporas from Greece, the Southeast Europe and beyond. It involves academic and policy relevant research and provides quick-turnaround publication of research and policy papers as well as theoretical discussions by scholars whose research focuses on diaspora issues. The working papers contain original, unpublished research in progress and undergo an internal peer-review process.

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