Editorial

We open this issue of International Migration with the next in our occasional series of interviews with Ministers responsible for migration, this month with the Honourable Peter Dutton, Australia’s Minister of Home Affairs and former Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. As one of the world’s traditional settler societies, Australia has an extensive experience with managing migration dating back to its days as a colony of Great Britain. Similarly to Canada and New Zealand, the core of its immigration program lies in attracting immigrants who will contribute to Australia’s economy, principally skilled workers and international students, some of whom will decide to stay as permanent residents. Australia has long employed a points system for managing skilled worker selection and has used its substantial outcomes data to hone their system to take into account changing conditions and to correct problems that arise. Its settlement and integration programming is extensive and is able to rely upon civil society organizations to deliver many services, an involvement that tends to lead to strong public support. As a highly attractive destination for the world’s migrants, Australia also has received varying and sometimes large numbers of asylum seekers. The government’s measures to manage asylum seeking has caused no small amount of controversy. In this interview, Minister Dutton explains his government’s approach to migration management and, importantly, from the point of view of maintaining public support for the core immigration program.

Next in this issue, we turn to some of the health aspects of migration, beginning with Perna’s probe into the various actors involved in setting migrant health policy and determining that for Europe, only a multi-level governance framework will do justice to the institutional underpinnings of this area of policy development. We then travel to Macedonia for a careful examination by Petreski et al of the relationship among remittances, poverty, and health outcomes. They find that remittances significantly increase the consumption of health care and in turn improve the health conditions of those who receive remittances. In a ground-breaking study, Rahaman et al look at the health effects on climate migrants forced to move from rural areas of Bangladesh to the slums and squats of Khulna City where they face poor water quality, poor sanitation, crowded living conditions and other problems characteristic of many slums, all of these leading to poor health from disease and under-nutrition. They urge better training and better planning for what will, perhaps inevitably, be a rise in the number of such climate migrants. Mora, Fernandez, and Torre compare Latina immigrant fertility rates in Spain and the United States and surprisingly find strong differences, with Latina migrant women in Spain showing more rapidly declining fertility than those in the US. They explain the differences from the point of view of the labour markets and education. Our final article in this section on health looks at the worst health outcomes of migration, death. Williams and Mountz looked at the statistical relationship between increased border enforcement in the European Union and migrant death rates, finding a strong correlation between stronger enforcement and higher mortality as a result of “externalization”, the forcing of migrants and their smugglers to use alternate entry points that are more dangerous.

Our next section deals with labour migration, specifically that involving professionals and highly skilled migrants. Ortega et al test the idea that skilled migrants abroad, through their transnational connections with the homeland, stimulate development in their countries of origin. Looking at Asian-born university faculty in Singapore, they find, disappointingly, that these academics were more connected with academics in the West than in their Asian homelands owing to a shared
academic culture with the West that was missing back home. Staying in Asia, Komine looks carefully at the image that the Japanese government presents of immigration to that country being almost entirely of the highly skilled, finding that, in fact, highly skilled and low skilled migrants are admitted in roughly equal numbers. Where the two diverge is with respect to the privileges that their immigration status confers. Jaskulowski looks at the integration of migrant professionals in Wroclaw, Poland and shows the irrelevance of ethnic networks in favour or connections through the workplace for this group of migrants.

The final section of this issue stays with labour migration but focusses on some of the policy challenges that arise. Makosa explores the long history of Polish migration to the United Kingdom that reached a high point following Poland’s membership in the European Union in 2004; over the ten years following membership, roughly a million Poles entered the UK. The authors project, however, that these numbers will fall, possibly to the point that the Polish population in the UK will actually decline with an uncertain impact on the British economy. Tedong et al bring us to Malaysia which has a long history of low-skilled migration, much of it undocumented. They describe the challenges faced by Malaysia’s enforcement agencies and argue for changes to long-term labour migration policies. Notenja and Kollamparambil look at the phenomenon of migrant self-selection in the context of Gauteng, South Africa, revealing that these international migrants outperformed their South African-born counterparts partly through their willingness to participate in the informal economy and through self-employment. Their higher incomes and higher life satisfaction outcomes stand in stark contrast to commonly held expectations. We then move to attitudes towards labour migrants in East Asia where Shim and Lee looked at what shapes attitudes towards these people. In a fascinating point of departure, they see that a common feature of those who are more accepting of the presence of migrant workers in their communities is their willingness to take risks; those who are more likely to take risks in their lives are also more positive about immigration, a finding that warrants further confirmation. In a study of the catch-up rate of labour immigrants to Canada with their native-born counterparts, Esmaeilzadeh, Ahmad, and Naveed confirm what previous studies have discovered, that the salient factors are education, experience, marital status, and age at migration. Finally, also looking at wage gaps between migrants and native-born citizens, Kushnirovich finds that immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel find it difficult to close the gap regardless of their education, a result that the authors attribute to discrimination.