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Pasifika Mobility: Pathways, Circuits and Challenges in the 21st Century

**Richard Bedford
Population Studies Centre
University of Waikato**

A challenge

In her commentary on the rather lengthy paper that underpins this presentation, Brenda Heather-Latu observed in February this year that the evidence of

“heightened mobility by the Pasifika group of peoples more than any time previously, [lends] support to the notion that when New Zealand formulates its policies for its people, those policies must also acknowledge the interests and welfare of a group of citizens

.....who are neither here nor there but are in both places simultaneously ... *tihei tagata pasifika* ... ”

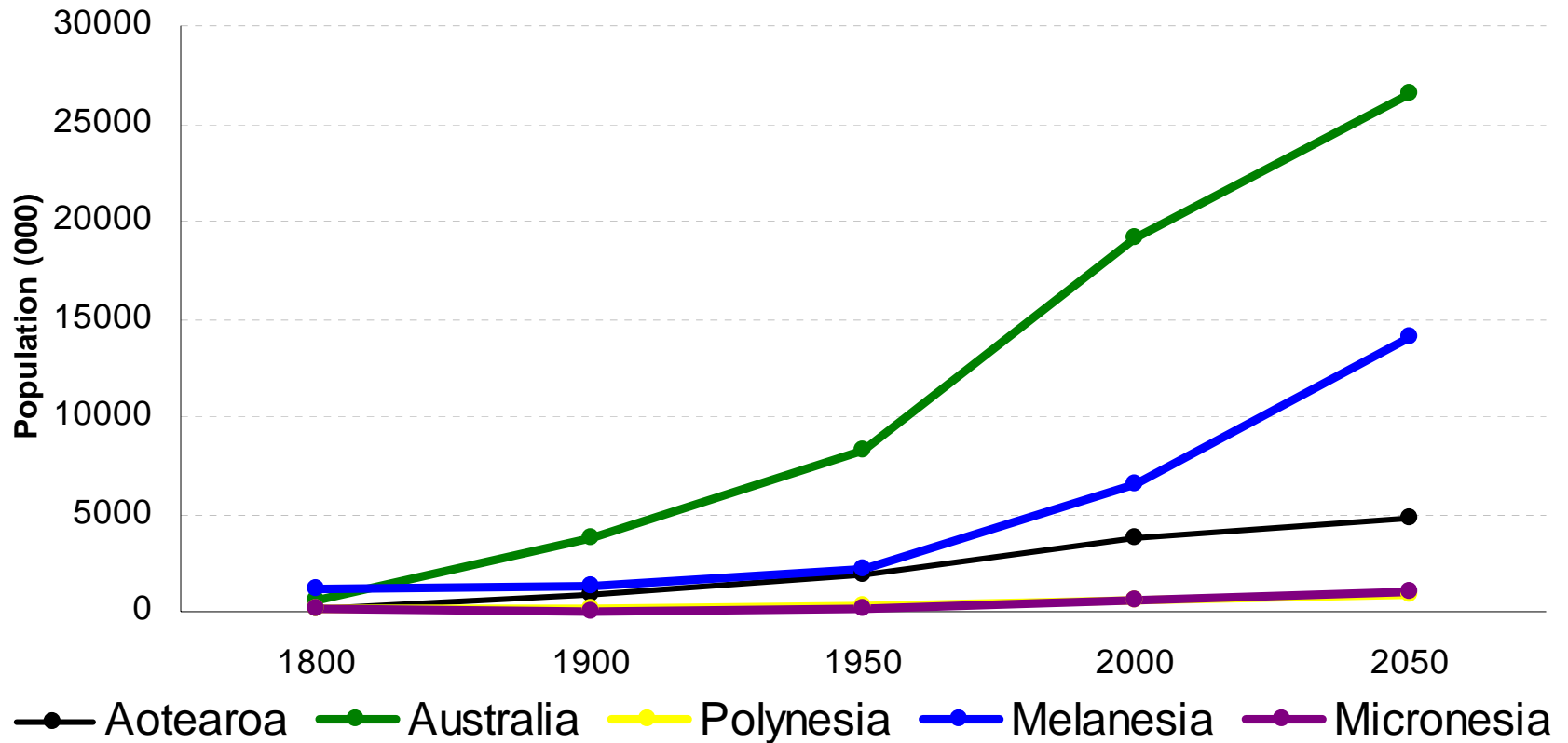
Themes

- **A vibrant research landscape**
- **A complex context for contemporary population movement**
- **Recent flows and the trans-Tasman connection**
- **Approvals for temporary and long-term residence**
- **Changing conceptions of Pacific places and populations**
- **Looking ahead -- the illusive regional collaboration?**

Recent Pacific scholarship

- Rachel 'Esau (2004): Tongan immigrants in NZ (PhD Japan)
- Karen Mangnall (2005): Retiring to Niue (MA Auckland)
- Avelina Rokoduru (2006): Skilled migration within the region (MA USP)
- Teena Brown-Pulu (2006): Transnational lives of Tongans (PhD Waikato)
- Viliami Tupou Futuna Liava'a (2007): Reintegration of returning migrants (MSocSc Waikato)

Population change 1800-2050



A regional perspective

In 2004 the Eminent Persons' Group Review of the Pacific Islands Forum recommended in that Forum Leaders:

“Listen to the needs and aspirations of the burgeoning population of young people in the region, and recognise the impact of bigger and more youthful populations on the resources required for education and vocational training, healthcare and job opportunities”

A Pacific rim perspective

A decade earlier, eminent Tongan sociologist, Epeli Hau'ofa had reminded us that:

“Islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because ... it is in their blood to be mobile.

The world of Oceania ... certainly encompasses the great cities of Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. And it is within this expanded world that the extent of the people's resources must be measured”

A major policy challenge

Responding to the challenges of population growth and mobility in the Pacific has been hampered by differences in the immigration policies of Australia and New Zealand.

The biggest single difference between the immigration policies in the two countries relates to special provisions for their Pacific neighbours.

An evolving debate

In this context there is an evolving debate about how to address a potential crisis:

“We must be ready for an island exodus. PNG, West Papua, Timor, Tonga and now Fiji - [Australia’s] Pacific rim is rushing towards disaster. ... Canberra has no idea of the huge disaster that lies ahead.

Against this backdrop there are silly people who want Australia to bring in guest workers from the Pacific rim” *The Australian*, 5 December 2006.

A plea for dialogue

In the UN General Assembly in 2006. Kofi Annan stressed the importance of constructive dialogue:

“Migration stirs passionate debate. It can deprive countries of its best and brightest, and it can divide families. For all the good it can bring, it can also generate significant social tensions. ...

Nevertheless, the answers to many of the problems raised by migration may be found through constructive engagement and debate. This will lead to a broader recognition of the enormous benefits and opportunities that migration can bring.”

Recent Pacific migration to NZ

- **Largest permanent and long-term net migration gain for a single year during year ended March 2006 (4,220).**
- **Over 5 years to March 2006 NZ gained 15,900 citizens of Pacific countries through PLT migration -- highest for any five year period since late 1970s.**
- **Between censuses in 2001 and 2006 NZ's Pacific-born population increased by 17,860. The net gain of Pacific-born people through migration was 18,000.**
- **Migration from the Pacific is currently at record levels.**

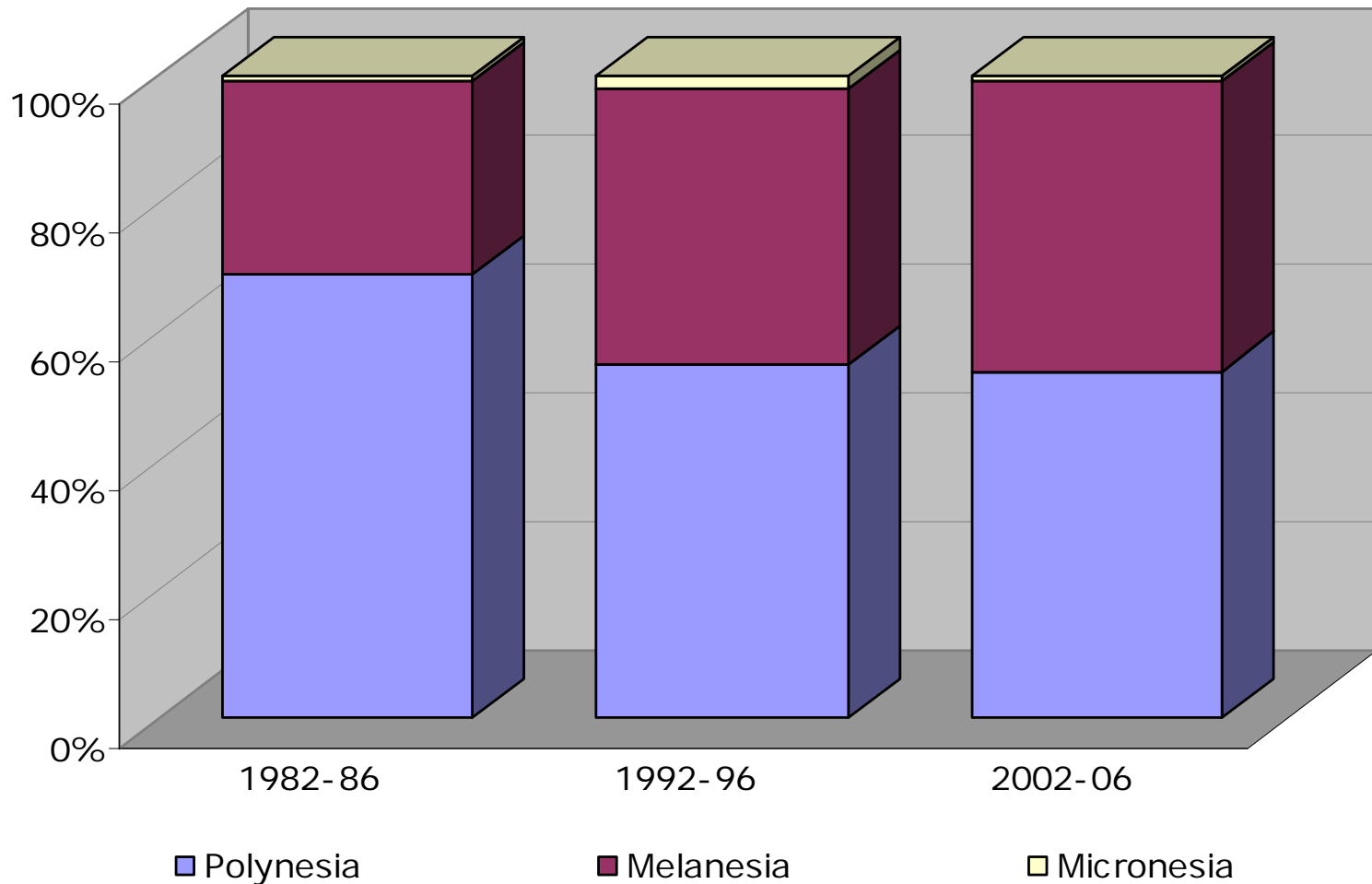
Policy changes, 2000-2007

- **2000 Transition Policy for overstayers**
- **2002 Pacific Access Category introduced**
- **2005 Seasonal Work Permit pilot**
- **2006 Approval in Principle and Variation of Condition processes**
- **2007 Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy**

Total arrivals, Pacific citizens (March Years)

	1982-86	1992-96	2002-06
Polynesia	79,400	112,200	196,000
Melanesia	34,600	88,500	163,100
Micronesia	1,100	3,700	4,200
Pacific	115,000	204,400	363,300
% increase		77.7	77.7

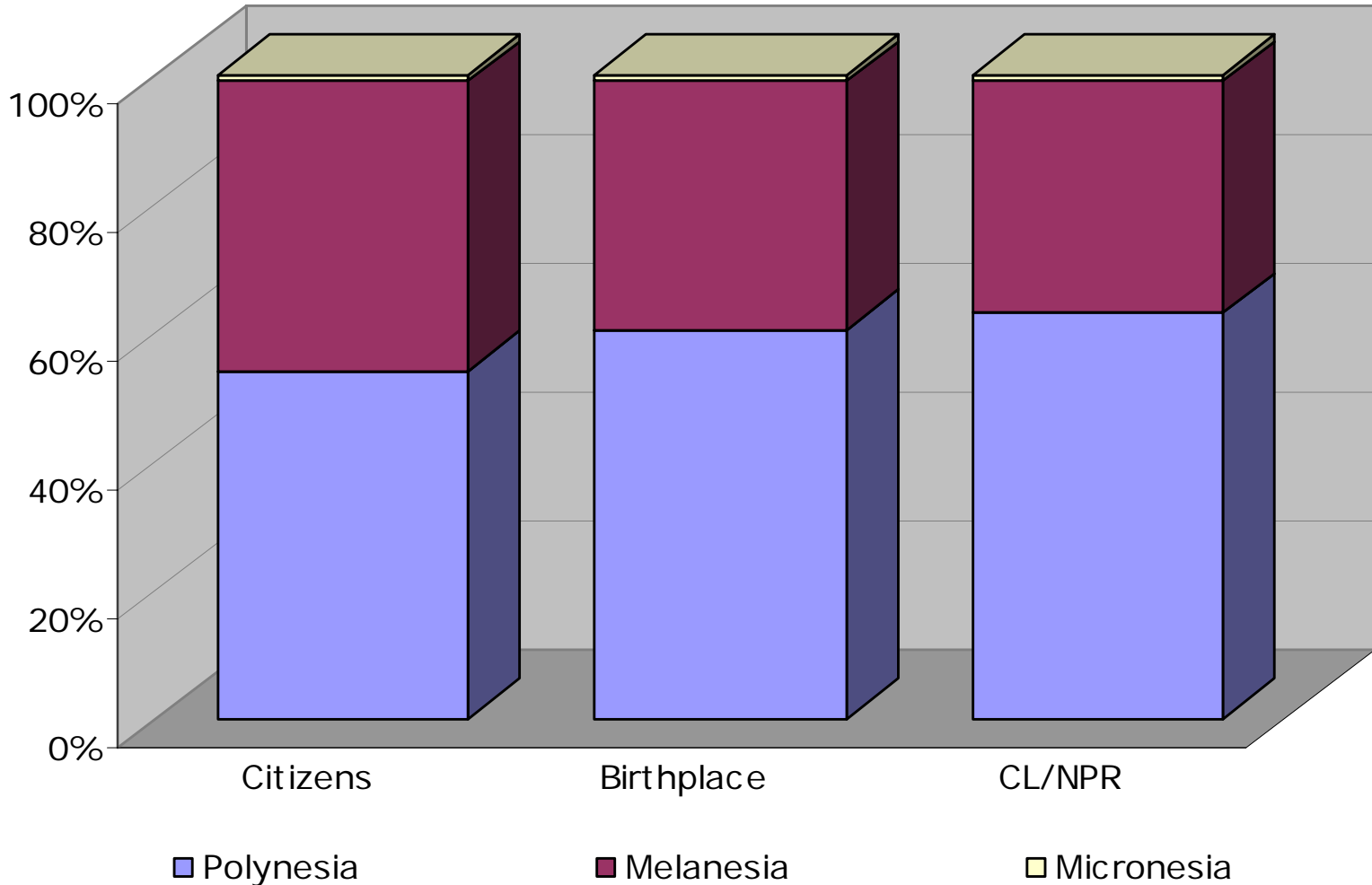
Shares of Pacific citizen arrivals



Total arrivals: 2002-06 (June Years)

	Citizens	Birthplace	CL/NPR
Polynesia	200,500	494,500	289,300
Melanesia	165,400	315,600	168,800
Micronesia	4,100	5,700	4,800
Pacific	370,00	815,800	462,900

Shares of total arrivals, 2002-06



PLT net migration: 2002-06 (June Years)

	Citizens	Birthplace	CL/NPR
Polynesia	5,570	4,460	6,460
Melanesia	10,650	9,860	10,870
Micronesia	30	40	130
Pacific	16,250	14,350	17,460

PLT net migration, three countries 2002-06 (June years)

	Citizens	Birthplace	CL/NPR
Tonga	2,010	1,880	2,200
Samoa	3,590	2,370	4,140
Fiji	10,500	9,550	10,330
3 countries	16,100	13,800	16,670
% Pacific	99.1	96.1	95.5

Trans-Tasman Pacific migration

People born in the Pacific are also crossing the Tasman in unprecedented numbers.

In the year ended June 2006 19,840 people born in the Pacific arrived in New Zealand stating Australia was their country of last permanent residence. 38% were NZ citizens; 62% other country citizens.

20,780 Pacific-born people left New Zealand stating Australia was their country of next residence. 42% NZ citizens; 58% other country citizens.

Trans-Tasman Pacific migration

The overall net loss to NZ was not great -- -960 (-1,310 NZ citizens and + 370 other country citizens). But there is a lot of movement.

The Pacific TT flow accounted for 11 percent of all Pacific-born arrivals in and departures from New Zealand in the period 2002-2006.

Over 40 percent of PLT departures of Pacific born people from NZ had Australia as their country of next permanent residence.

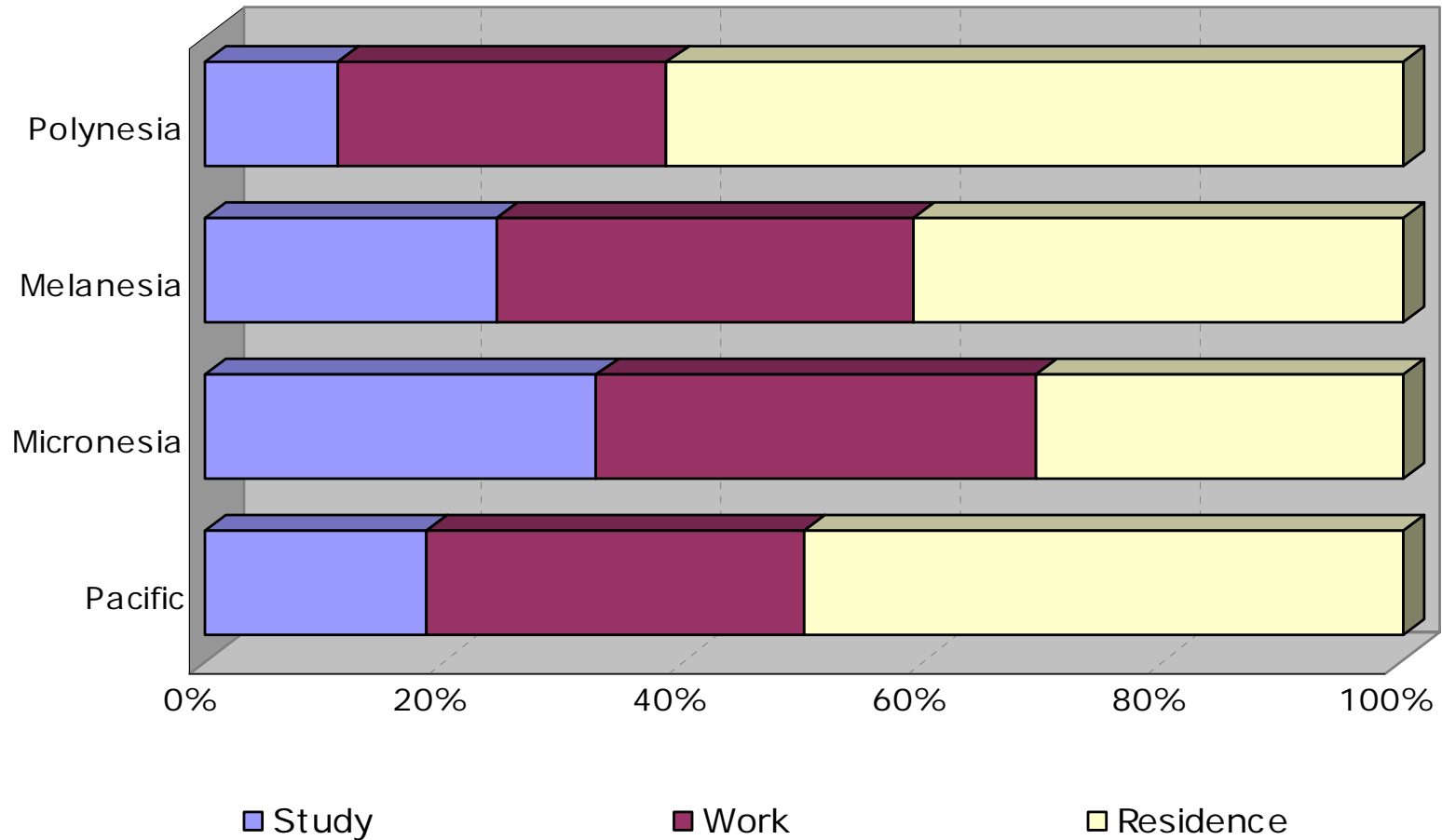
Pacific approvals for temporary and long-term residence

- In year ended June 2006 14,400 Pacific citizens approved for study, temporary work and residence in NZ -- again a record for a single year.
- Over the five years to June, 63,140 approved for study (18%), temporary work (32%) and residence (50%).
- The Pacific residence approvals accounted for 13% of all people approved in period.

Approvals: 2002-06 (June Years)

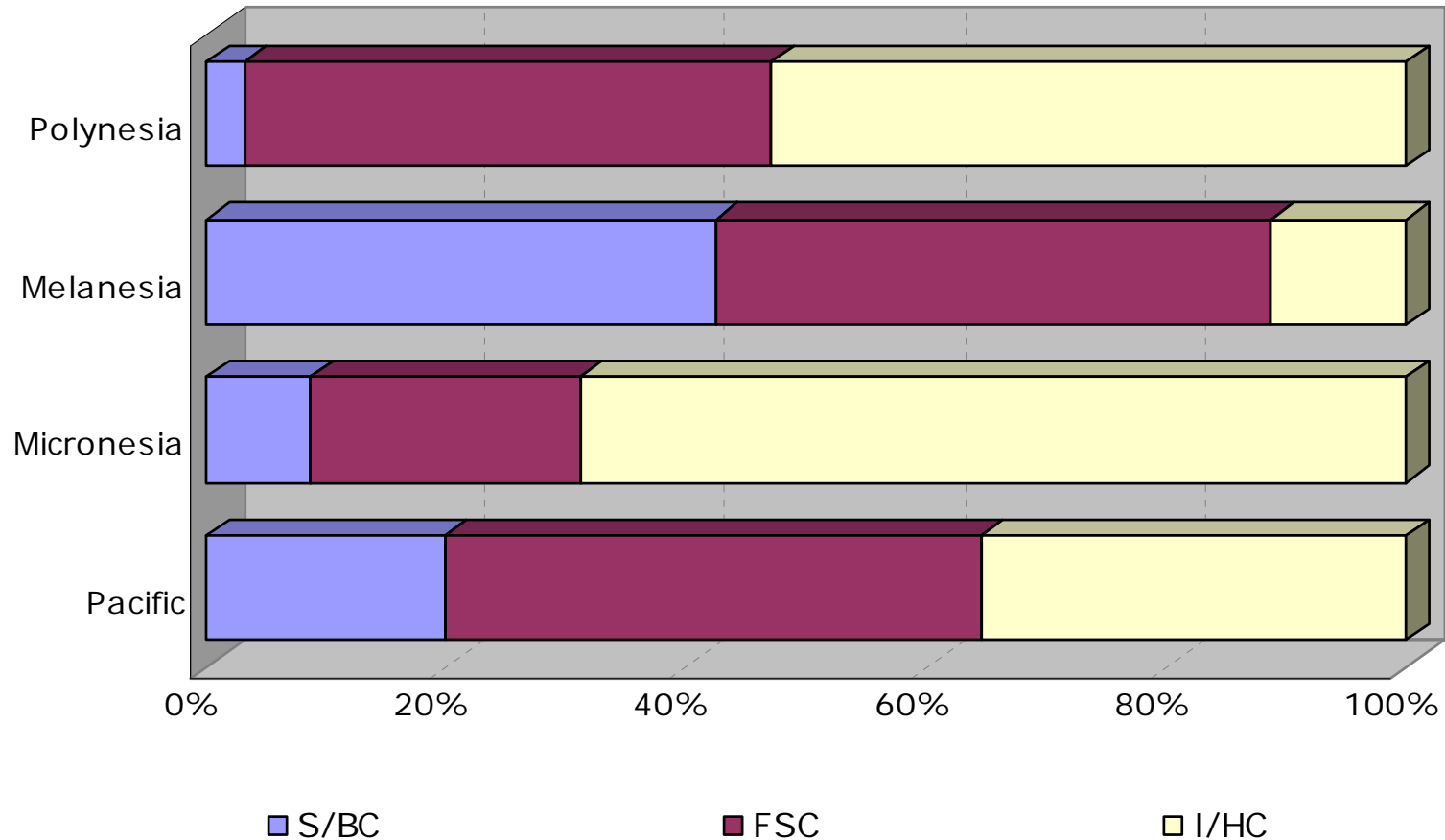
	Study	Work	Residence
Polynesia	3,190	7,920	17,720
Melanesia	7,950	11,380	13,400
Micronesia	520	580	480
Pacific	11,660	19,880	31,600
% NZ total	2.9	5.1	13.1

Approvals: 2002-06 (%) (June Years)



Residence approvals (%)

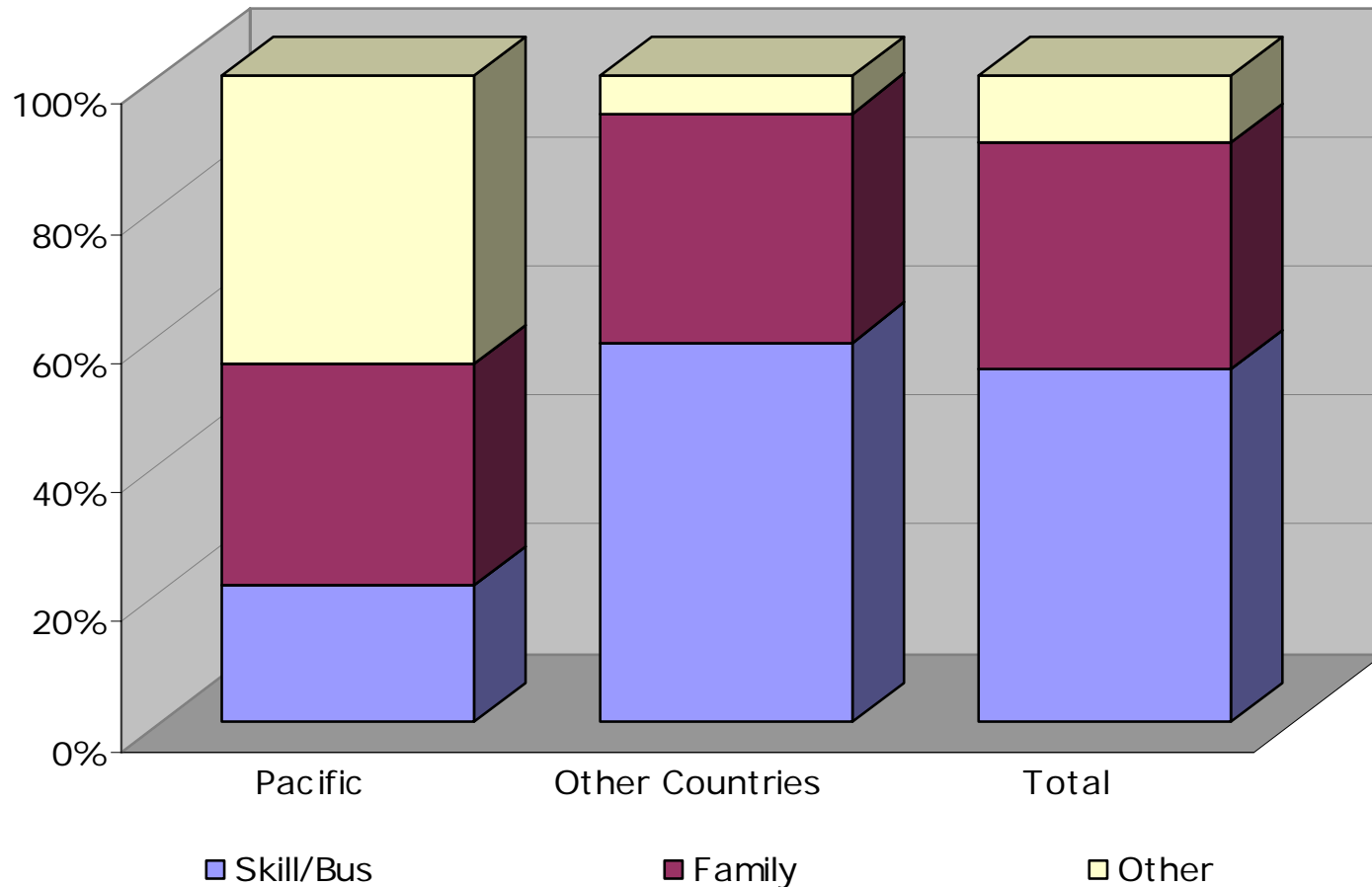
2002-06 (June Years)



Transition work to residence 1997-2005

	Approved	Transit	% transit
Polynesia	7,577	4,805	63.4
Melanesia	7,925	3,890	49.1
Micronesia	388	104	26.8
Pacific	15,890	8,799	55.4
NZ total	346,539	73,984	21.3

Categories of transition from work 1997-2005 (%)



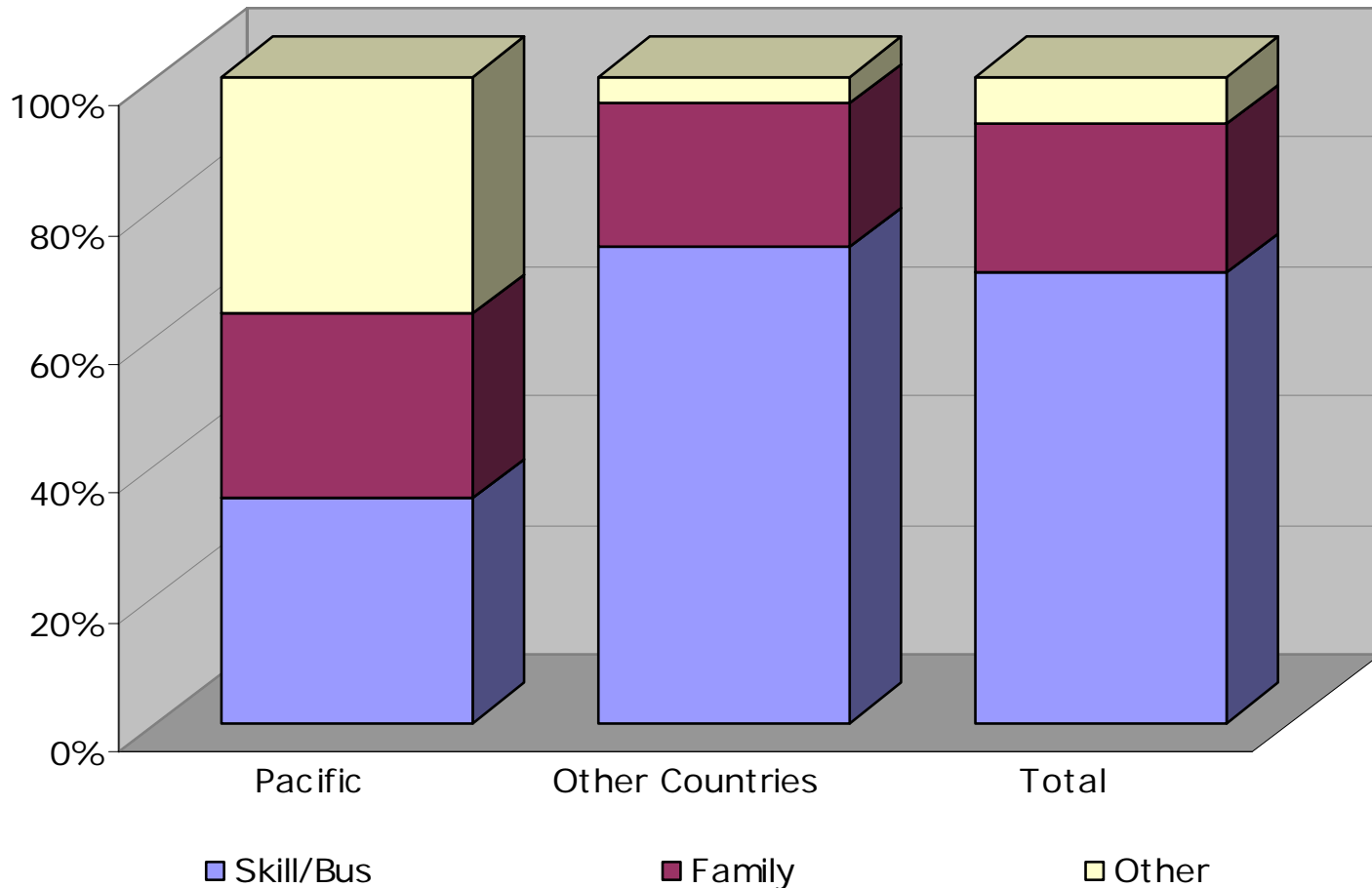
The 2000 Transition Policy

- The largest category by far (40%) under which Pacific citizens transitioned from work to residence was the Transition Policy introduced in 2000 for overstayers.
- This policy was not restricted to Pacific people, but it has been used most extensively by Samoans (63%), Tongans (68%) and Tuvaluans (74%) to regularise their residence in New Zealand.

Transition study to residence 1997-2005

	Approved	Transit	% transit
Polynesia	2,986	1,151	38.5
Melanesia	5,547	1,685	29.9
Micronesia	478	86	18.0
Pacific	9,011	2,985	32.1
NZ total	221,718	28,853	13.0

Categories of transition from study 1997-2005 (%)



The 2000 Transition Policy

- Once again, the 2000 Transition Policy accounted for a large number of Pacific students transitioning to residence.
- Students from Samoa (34%), Tonga (52%) and Tuvalu (61%) used this policy more than others to transition to residence in New Zealand.
- Melanesians (43%) used the “Skilled Migrant” category most frequently.

A complex picture

- **Transitions to residence have transformed immigration and blurred boundaries between temporary and permanent movement.**
- **A very significant policy development in recent years -
- it has certainly made an important contribution to Pasifika mobility.**
- **Adding to the complexity is the on-going circulation of migrants to NZ, back to the islands and to other countries.**

Dimensions of circulation 1998-2004 (%)

	No moves	Absent 50%+	LT abs. Dec. 04
Polynesia	52.2	17.8	6.0
Melanesia	23.3	11.2	3.5
Micronesia	68.5	19.2	3.4
Pacific	39.9	14.2	4.9
NZ total	35.1	22.8	10.8

Changing conceptions in NZ of Pacific places

- **Polynesia: heritage (tangata whenua); reserve army of labour (1950s-1970s); tropical foods; temporary workers**
- **Micronesia: resource frontier (phosphate, fish); an “American” sphere of influence; drowning islands**
- **Melanesia: a settlement frontier; mineral resources; abundant land; diverse peoples and languages; political instability**

Changing conceptions of Pacific populations

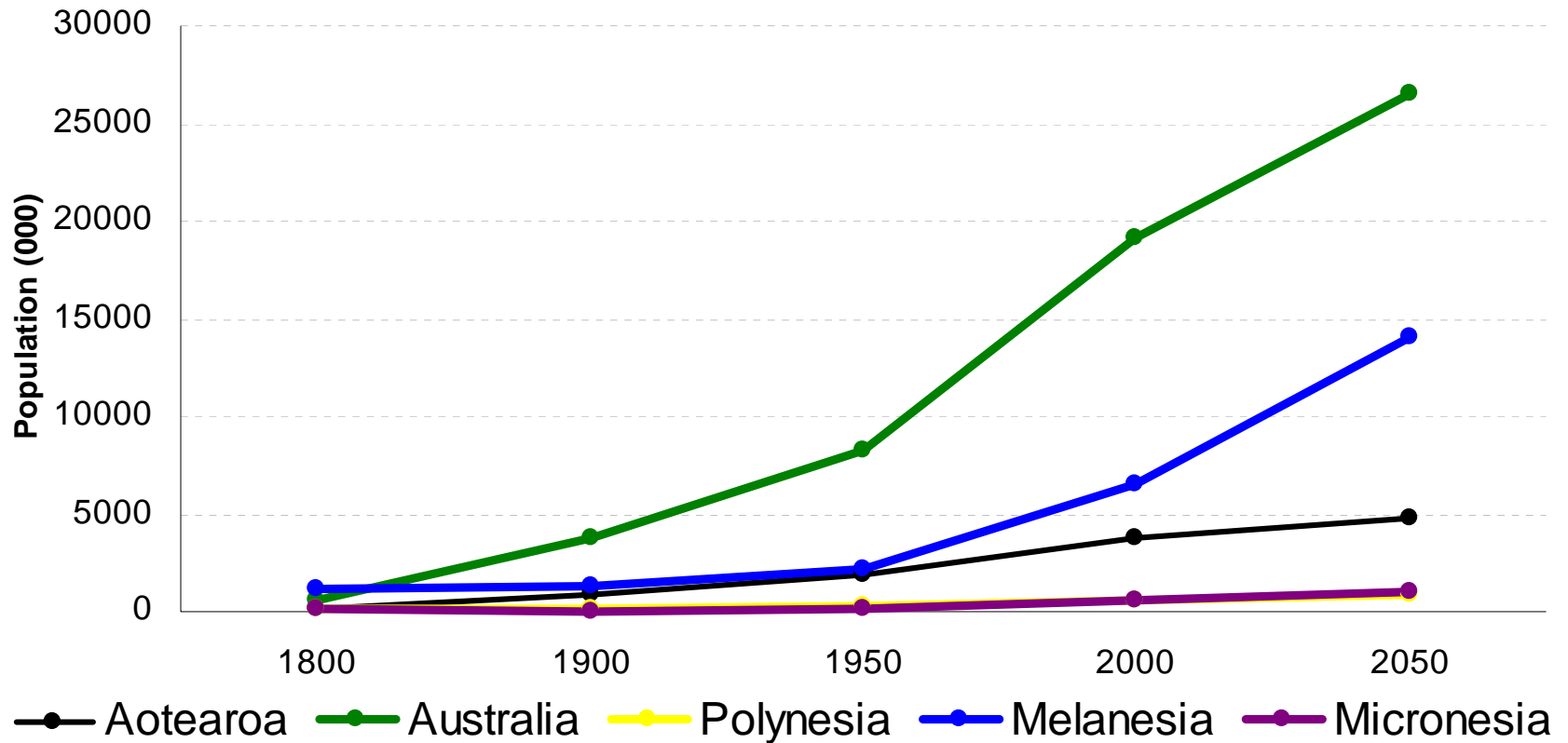
- Resident population shares -- 98% PNG; 5% Niue
- Pasifika diaspora: NZ, USA, Australia, Europe, Asia
- Second and subsequent generations
- Return to the islands -- temporary sojourns, lengthy stays, involuntary return, sustaining options
- The “effective” population for consuming resources and using services

Looking ahead ...

Arguably 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.

Sustainable development in this part of the Pacific will depend heavily on opportunities for young people to travel overseas for training and employment, just as it does in New Zealand and Australia.

Population change 1800-2050



Greater regional collaboration?

The Global Commission on International Migration (2005) concluded that migration policies at all levels should be guided by several principles including greater consultation and co-operation between states at the regional level.

Efforts to promote this regional co-operation must be based on an appreciation of the close linkages between international migration and other key policy issues including trade, aid, state security, human security and human rights.