

Background

Australia is facing a serious economic **crisis*; it is **running out of men*! According to recent figures there were almost 100,000 more females in Australia than males. Just 30 years ago the figures were the complete opposite, with more men than women. So what has caused this 'man **drought**'?

The first suggested reason is the changes in **immigration** policy. In the 1970s it was easier for non Australian males to come into the country to find work than it was for non Australian females. Recently the immigration **policy** has become much fairer.

The second reason is **emigration**. All Australians seem to like travelling, but men are more likely to stay abroad long term, whereas women tend to travel for a short time and then return home. Strong economies in places like Dubai, Hong Kong, and the UK have attracted Australian men. It is now thought that about one million Australian passport holders live outside the country. It used to be a **source of pride** for Australian parents if they could tell friends and neighbours about the successful careers of their sons who were **abroad**, but people are now realizing that this man **shortage** will cause economic problems both now and in the future.

Glossary

**crisis* = a time or situation that is extremely dangerous or difficult

**face (v)* = if you face a problem you have to deal with it

**launch* = begin something

**put pressure on* = to force somebody to do something

**run out of* = to finish something so that there is no more left

The man shortage means that there are fewer people to do important jobs in Australia. Most of the Australians who are in Dubai or the UK are the educated ones who have specific skills that are difficult to replace. So Australia is **facing a real **brain drain***.

The Australian government is also suffering because of the man drought. The typical age for a man to leave Australia is 24, after school and university, but before starting full-time work. This means the state has paid for the education of its population, but cannot get the money back through taxes because these men are earning their money in other countries. It is also feared that these men will return to Australia when they are older – when they need more support from the government. This will **put more pressure on the tax payers who stayed in the country*. As a result of this, the Australian government is looking at ways to **restrict** emigration, including tax rewards for people who stay in the country and **launching advertising campaigns in Dubai, London, and Hong Kong encouraging Australian men to return home*.

For the moment the real losers are Australian women over 35, who are finding it more and more difficult to find a partner.

Exercises

1 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 Have you ever visited Australia? If so, what was it like? If not, would you like to visit it?
- 2 Do you know any Australians who are working in your country?

2 Read the text quickly and choose the best title for the article.

- 1 A woman's paradise
- 2 Where have all the men gone?
- 3 Fewer men means a weaker economy

3 Match the words and phrases in bold in the text to definitions 1–10.

- 1 a long period of time when there is little or no rain: _____
- 2 when very skilled and qualified people leave one country to live in and work in another: _____
- 3 a place where something comes from or the cause of something: _____
- 4 when there is not enough of something: _____
- 5 a good feeling you get because you or people connected to you have done something well: _____
- 6 when people leave a country permanently and go and live in another: _____
- 7 when people come to live in another country: _____
- 8 in or to a foreign country: _____
- 9 an official plan from the government of what to do in particular situations: _____
- 10 to limit something: _____

4 Work with a partner. Make a new sentence for each word or phrase in 3.

5 These numbers all appear in the text. Read the text quickly and match each number to what it represents (a–f).

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1 100,000 | a the typical age when a man leaves Australia |
| 2 30 | b the number of Australians who live abroad |
| 3 1970s | c number of years ago when there were more men than woman in Australia |
| 4 one million | d the age from which Australian women find it difficult to meet a partner |
| 5 24 | e how many more woman than men there are in Australia |
| 6 35 | f the time when immigration was easier for men than for women |

6 Read the text again and answer these questions in your own words.

- 1 Why are there now more women than men in Australia? Give two reasons.
- 2 What negative effects is the 'man-drought' having on the Australian economy?
- 3 How is the government trying to stop men leaving?

7 Look back at the text and choose three words that you could use in your day-to-day work.

8 Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Could a 'man-drought' happen in your country? Why? / Why not?
- 2 Why do you think so many Australians want to work abroad?
- 3 Do you think the Australian government's plan will work?