

5. Details of Sponsor and Sponsorship

5.1 Introduction

With Australian immigration policy clearly shifting towards taking larger proportions of skilled migrants, sponsorship has become even more important to those less skilled migrants wishing to settle in Australia.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) describes the role of a sponsor as providing support for the person being sponsored in their first two years in Australia. This assistance is to make the settlement process an easier one. DIMIA defines support as providing accommodation, financial assistance, and information and advice – including employment information.

Only Cohort 2 will be analysed in this section. The information required – to answer the areas of interest described below – was not included in the questionnaire administered to the respondents in Cohort 1. Consequently, no comparisons between the two cohorts can be made in this section. This section will assess the answers given by the Primary Applicants of Cohort 2 in regards to: the composition of their family members overseas, their relationship with their sponsor, and the level of assistance they received from their sponsor.

Fifty-eight per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2 were sponsored--45 per cent of males and 73 per cent of females. If we look at the visa categories individually it is not surprising to find that no migrants in the Business skills/ENS visa group and less than one per cent of the migrants making up the Independent visa class were sponsored. As for the remaining visa categories, 57 per cent of Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked migrants, 97 per cent of Preferential family/family stream migrants, and 20 per cent of Humanitarian migrants were sponsored.

5.2 Composition of Family Members Overseas

The respondents were asked a number of questions about their family living outside Australia. The first of these questions concerned the composition of their overseas family members. They were asked to tell the interviewer whether or not they had a spouse, children, brothers or sisters, or parents living outside Australia.

The results in this part were based on a multiple response question. That is, the possible answers to the said question were not mutually exclusive and the respondents could have given an affirmative reply to all answers.

Referring to Table 5.1, as a cohort in total and on average, 92 per cent of the migrants in Cohort 2 had at least one sibling living overseas. The percentage of migrants who had any parents overseas was also high, 87 per cent of respondents said that they had at least one parent outside of Australia. The percentage of migrants who had children or a spouse overseas was a lot lower. Only two per cent of migrants reported having a spouse living overseas while the figure for children was slightly higher at nine per cent.

As Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show, the story was much the same when the dichotomy between sex and division across visa categories was made. Generally speaking, we saw the same pattern of the highest proportion of migrants having brothers or sisters overseas and the lowest proportion of migrants who had a spouse(s) living outside Australia. There was virtually no difference between the figures for male and females and only modest differences between the figures across the different visa classes.

Table 5.1: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 with Relatives Overseas, by Sex of Primary Applicant

Type of Relative	Male	Female	Total
Spouse(s)	2	2	2
Child/Children	9	9	9
Brothers/Sisters	92	91	92
Parents	87	87	87

Note: (1) This was a multiple response question, ie the respondent could have answered 'yes' to all types of relative

Table 5.2: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 with Relatives Overseas, by Visa Category

Type Of Relative	Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked	Independent	Preferential family/family stream	Business skills/ employer nomination scheme	Humanitarian	Total
Spouse(s)	2	3	<1	6	4	2
Child/Children	7	2	11	17	16	9
Brothers/Sisters	90	95	90	98	91	92
Parents	91	97	84	89	74	87

Note: This was a multiple response question, ie the respondent could have answered 'yes' to all types of relative

5.3 Relationship with Sponsor

The analysis in the next two sub-sections involves only those migrants who were actually sponsored. There were 26 possible ‘relationship with sponsor’ choices in the questionnaire. Of these, there were 14 where either no one or a very small number responded as having that particular relationship with their sponsor.⁴ These were subsequently left out of the tables.

Husband or wife was by far the most common relationship between the migrant and their sponsor. Fifty-five per cent of respondents said that their relationship with their sponsor was either husband or wife. The next most common relationship was fiancé, with 15 per cent of the migrants choosing this option. The remaining relationship options listed in the tables recorded low figures, with the lowest being one per cent for mother and brother-in-law.

The division between gender told much the same tale with only modest differences, as shown in Table 5.3. When we controlled for visa category however, we found a much different pattern. Note that we have left out the Independent and Business skills/ENS visa groups, in any analysis across the visa categories from here on, since no migrants in the Business skills/ENS and virtually none in the Independent visa categories were sponsored.

Table 5.4 indicates that the Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked group had their ‘relationship with sponsor’ figures spread quite evenly across the brother (38%), sister (30%), and uncle/aunt (26%) options, with the other figures being too small to report. The Humanitarian migrants had as sponsors mainly husband/wife (14%), brother (23%), sister (16%), and uncle/aunt (14%) options. The Preferential family/family stream migrants were mainly sponsored by husband/wife (63%) and fiancé (17%). Because the majority of sponsored migrants have come from the Preferential family/family stream, the pattern we see in this visa category dictates the pattern we see in the overall results obtained for the entire cohort.

Table 5.3: Primary Applicants’ Relationship with their Sponsor, by Sex (per cent)

Relationship	Male	Female	Total
Husband/Wife	49	59	55

⁴ These included: same sex partner (interdependent), stepson/stepdaughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, grandfather, grand-father-in-law, grandmother, grandmother-in-law, grandson, granddaughter, your spouse’s/partner’s uncle/aunt, your nephew/niece, and your spouse’s/partner’s nephew/niece.

De facto Partner	5	5	5
Fiancé	11	17	15
Son/Daughter	6	3	4
Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law	1	1	1
Mother	2	1	1
Father	2	2	2
Brother	8	4	6
Brother-in-law	2	1	1
Sister	6	3	4
Your Uncle/Aunt	4	2	3
Other relative	3	1	2

Table 5.4: Primary Applicants' Relationship with their Sponsor, by Visa Category (per cent)

Relationship	Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked	Preferential family/family stream	Humanitarian	Total
Husband/Wife	+	63	14	55
De facto Partner	+	6	+	5
Fiancé	+	17	+	15
Son/Daughter	+	5	+	4
Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law	+	1	+	1
Mother	+	1	+	1
Father	+	2	+	2
Brother	38	1	23	6
Brother-in-law	+	1	+	1
Sister	30	1	16	4
Your Uncle/Aunt	26	+	14	3
Other relative	+	2	+	2

Notes: (1) + = number of observations very small (n<5)

5.4 Assistance Received from Sponsor

This sub-section examines the proportions of migrants who received assistance from their sponsor as well as the type of assistance received. The questionnaire listed five different areas in which the migrant may have received assistance from their sponsor. These were: general information and advice and help using services, providing food, clothing or household goods, providing or finding accommodation, financial assistance, and providing work or assistance with finding job(s). Once again this was a multiple response question, therefore, the respondents could have replied 'yes' to more than one type of assistance listed (unless they replied that they received no assistance, in which case this was their only possible response).

As shown by the final column of either Table 5.5 or 5.6 we found that 96 per cent of the population received help from their sponsor. Eighty-three per cent of migrants received assistance with general information and advice and help using services, 70 per cent received help with food, clothing or household goods, 75 per cent received help concerning accommodation, 56 per cent received financial assistance, and 30 per cent received help with employment matters. The high percentages in all areas of help suggest that most of the migrants who received help, received help in more than one area.

When controlling for sex, Table 5.5, we found six per cent of males and three per cent of females received no assistance from their sponsor. A substantially larger proportion of females received help in all forms of assistance with the exception of assistance with employment matters. The largest difference between the sexes concerned financial assistance, 35 per cent of males received financial assistance from their sponsor while the figure for females was more than double with 71 per cent receiving financial assistance.

The division between visa categories, Table 5.6, showed that seven per cent of migrants in the Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked, four per cent of migrants in the Preferential family/family stream, and virtually none in the Humanitarian visa categories received no assistance from their sponsor. The Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked visa category showed the lowest proportions of migrants who received help from their sponsor in almost all types of assistance listed. This is with the exception of assistance concerning employment matters where they had the highest percentage (40%) of all the visa categories.

Table 5.5: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 who Received Assistance from their Sponsor, by Sex

Type of Assistance	Male	Female	Total
General information and advice and help using services	74	86	83
Providing food, clothing or household goods	53	82	70
Providing or finding accommodation	64	83	75
Financial assistance	35	71	56
Providing work or assistance with finding job(s)	32	29	30
Other	4	2	3
Received no assistance	6	3	4

Note: This was a multiple response question, ie the respondent could have answered 'yes' to all types of assistance

Table 5.6: Percentage of Primary Applicants in Cohort 2 who Received Assistance from their Sponsor, by Visa Category

Type of Assistance	Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked	Preferential family/family stream	Humanitarian	Total
General information and advice and help using services	84	83	89	83
Providing food, clothing or household goods	50	73	67	70
Providing or finding accommodation	67	76	80	75
Financial assistance	26	60	47	56
Providing work or assistance with finding job(s)	40	30	11	30
Other	+	3	+	3
Received no assistance	7	4	+	4

Notes: (1) + = number of observations very small (n<5)

(2) This was a multiple response question, ie the respondent could have answered 'yes' to all types of assistance

5.5 Conclusion

Settling in a foreign country is not easy. The main avenue through which new migrants find the necessary assistance to help ease the burden of moving to a new country is from their sponsor - in most cases are members of their family who are already resident in Australia.

We found that 58 per cent of migrants in Cohort 2 were sponsored. The majority came from the Preferential family/family stream visa category and were female. No migrants in the Business skills/ENS and virtually none in the Independent visa categories were sponsored.

When looking at the composition of relatives living overseas, we found that most migrants had siblings and parents living overseas while very few had children or a spouse(s) living outside Australia. This was true for both sexes and across the visa categories.

As a cohort in total, we found that either their husband or wife sponsored the majority of migrants while only small proportions of migrants were sponsored by other members of their family. This was true for both sexes. The story was much different across the visa categories. We found that the Concessional family/skilled Australian-linked visa class had their 'relationship with sponsor' figures spread quite evenly across the brother, sister, and the uncle/aunt options, with the other figures being too small to report. The Humanitarian visa group had its figures divided between the husband/wife, brother, sister, and the uncle/aunt options. The Preferential family/family stream visa class displayed a more familiar pattern with sponsors being mostly a husband/wife or, less frequently, a fiancé.

Only four per cent of migrants who were sponsored did not receive any assistance from their sponsor in their first six months in Australia. The highest fraction of migrants received help with general information and advice and help using services and the least frequent form of support was for assistance with employment matters. We also found that, with the exception of help with employment matters, a substantially higher proportion of females received assistance from their sponsor in all the other types of assistance listed. The high percentage across all types of assistance listed suggests that those migrants who received help would have received help in more than one area.