

Analysis of the  
Skilled Designated  
Area Sponsored  
Subclass

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This report was prepared by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs on behalf of the Joint Commonwealth, State and Territory Research Advisory Committee.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Objective of the Survey**

The survey was undertaken in response to the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration (JSCM) report “New Faces, New Places”, September 2001. The JSCM identified a number of concerns with the implementation of the SDAS visa:

“The fundamental issue was that it permitted migration outcomes which were contrary to the intention of SDAS, which was to focus settlement on designated areas of Australia. SDAS, unlike other State-specific Migration Mechanisms, did not make the concessions offered to migrants conditional on them settling in a specified area.”

The Committee concluded that:

“...the lack of connection between concessions and location of settlement under SDAS had the potential to reduce its effectiveness”

“...the family sponsorship basis of SDAS meant that it was linked directly to one of the important determinants of migrants’ settlement location decisions. However, SDAS lacked any formal mechanism to ensure that settlement in fact occurred in designated areas”.

The Committee recommended that:

“... a study of SDAS be undertaken in 2003 to determine how well it is meeting its objectives”.

### **Objectives of the SDAS visa**

The objectives of the Skilled Designated Area sponsored (SDAS) visa are to:

- address skill shortages in designated areas; and
- encourage a more balanced dispersal of Australia’s migrant intake.

### **Criteria**

Applicants for SDAS visas must have a sponsor who lives in a designated area. All of Australia except Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Perth and Brisbane are designated areas.

Applicants must meet threshold criteria for:

- skill;
- age;
- English language; and
- work experience.

However, they do not have to meet the general skilled migration points test, and the English and work experience thresholds are flexible.

### **Reasons for SDAS criteria concessions**

SDAS applicants do not have to meet the stricter points-test criteria for general skilled migration because it is considered that the visa provides additional benefits ie it is intended to;

- Assist family reunion in regional Australia;
- Increase skilled migration to designated areas; and
- Capitalise on the benefits of settlement assistance available to SDAS migrants from their family sponsors, thereby increasing the chances of successful settlement in designated areas.

### **Size and distribution of the SDAS program**

The SDAS program has grown rapidly. In 2000-01 just over 1,000 visas were granted. By 2003-04, this had grown to 7,547.

Of those SDAS migrants who entered Australia in 2003-04, some 61% went to Victoria. This was followed by Queensland (11%), NSW (10%), WA (8%), SA (7%), ACT (2%), TAS (0.5%) and NT (0.4%).

### **Location**

The survey found that:

- 10% of all SDAS migrants had never lived in a designated area (the equivalent of nearly 800 SDAS migrants in 2003-04);
- 16% of SDAS migrants who had been in Australia for three years or more were living in non-designated areas, predominantly Sydney, Brisbane and Perth;
- SDAS migrants living in Melbourne who had a sponsor outside Melbourne comprised 9% of all SDAS migrants. This indicates a drift from other designated areas to Melbourne;
- While 87% of sponsors living in a designated area were sponsoring a principal applicant who was living in a designated area at the time of the survey, Melbourne's dominance skews these findings. Excluding Melbourne, only 62% of sponsors living in a "designated area" were sponsoring a principal applicant living in a designated area;
- 64% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional Victoria were not living in regional Victoria at the time of the survey;

- 59% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional NSW were not living in regional NSW at the time of the survey;
- 53% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional Queensland were not living in regional Queensland at the time of the survey;
- 53% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in the ACT were not living in the ACT at the time of the survey.

These findings suggest that the SDAS visa is falling short of its aims to:

- assist family reunion in regional Australia;
- encourage a more balanced dispersal of Australia's migrant intake; and
- address skill shortages in regional areas, although it may be addressing skills shortages in Melbourne, a designated area.

### **Skilled Employment**

The survey indicated that the SDAS visa is succeeding in attracting skilled migrants who integrate well into the Australian labour market.

The unemployment rate for SDAS principal applicants was 5% and their participation rate was 89%. Some 71% of principal applicants used their qualification often or very often.

### **Migrant Satisfaction**

Overall, 86% of principal applicants said the scheme met their expectations. Just under 6% stated they were dissatisfied because of lack of recognition of overseas qualifications.

Despite being from a wide variety of non-English speaking countries, 98% of respondents said they were made to feel welcome.

### **Language**

While applicants normally need vocational level English, several States and Territories have a concession that allows people with a lower level of English to be granted an SDAS visa, provided they take up English courses in Australia. The survey was unable to ascertain what proportion of this group fulfilled this obligation. Only 27% of principal applicants for whom English was not a first language had attended or planned to attend English language classes. Over 95% of those who had attended English language classes said their English had improved, compared with only 73% of those who did not attend classes.

*Sources of Information*

Information in this report is based on a survey conducted around May-August 2004 of 700 SDAS Principal Applicants. At the time of interview these Principal Applicants had been in the country between 12 months and 4 years. The survey sample represented about 40% of the applicable population.

Supplementary information giving contact details for the sponsor and basic demographic information on the Principal Applicant was obtained from internal DIMIA systems.

**Survey Description**

The survey contained 88 questions and used Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) techniques to collect the information.

The main topics covered by the survey, and of this report, were as follows:

- Migrant Demographics
- Relationship with sponsor
- Mobility
- Migrant satisfaction
- Labour Market Outcomes
- Income
- Community Participation
- English Language Skills

Before the survey data was analysed in depth it was weighted to help account for biases caused by non-response. For example, people who had been in Australia for longer were more difficult to track down than recent arrivals.

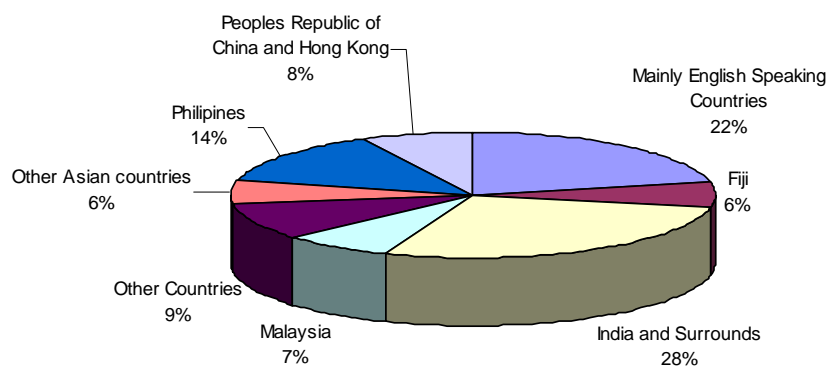
## 1. MIGRANT DEMOGRAPHICS

*Where migrants came from*

Figure 1.1 shows that the Indian subcontinent<sup>1</sup> accounted for more than a quarter of SDAS migrants. There were also relatively large numbers of migrants from the Philippines (14%) and Fiji (6%). Only about 1 in 5 were born in a country where English was the main language.

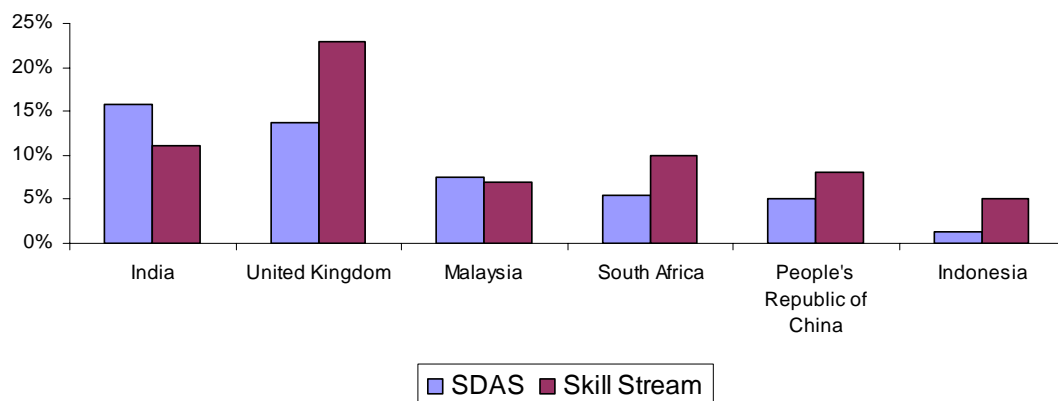
The English skills of these migrants will be discussed later in the report.

**Fig 1.1 : Birthplace regions for Primary Applicants**



As figure 1.2 shows migrants from the People's Republic of China, South Africa and the United Kingdom were under-represented among SDAS migrants when compared with skill stream migrants in general<sup>2</sup>.

**Fig 1.2 : Birthplace Comparisons  
SDAS versus Skill Stream**



<sup>1</sup> Comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka

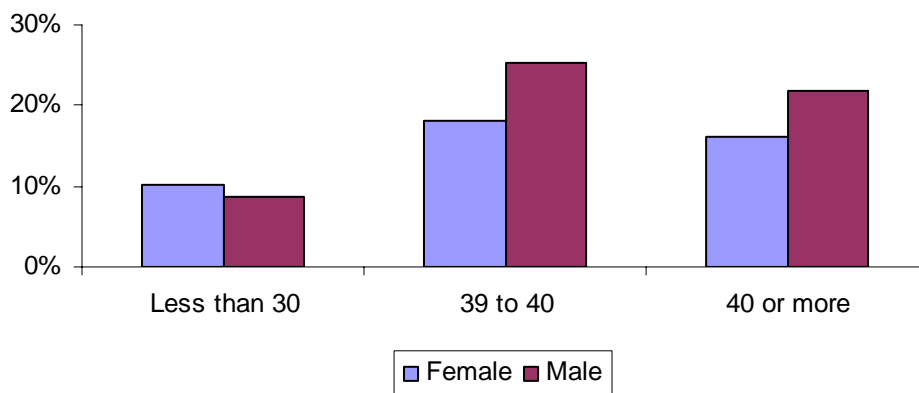
<sup>2</sup> Source : Population Flows – Immigration Aspects 2002-03 edition

*Age : Gender*

Around 56% of SDAS Principal Applicants were male and 44% were female. The average age of the females was 36. Males were slightly older with an average age of 37.

Figure 1.3 shows that less than 1 in 5 Principal Applicants were aged less than 30. This is about half the number that were aged 40 or over.

**Fig 1.3 : Age and Gender Distribution of SDAS migrants**

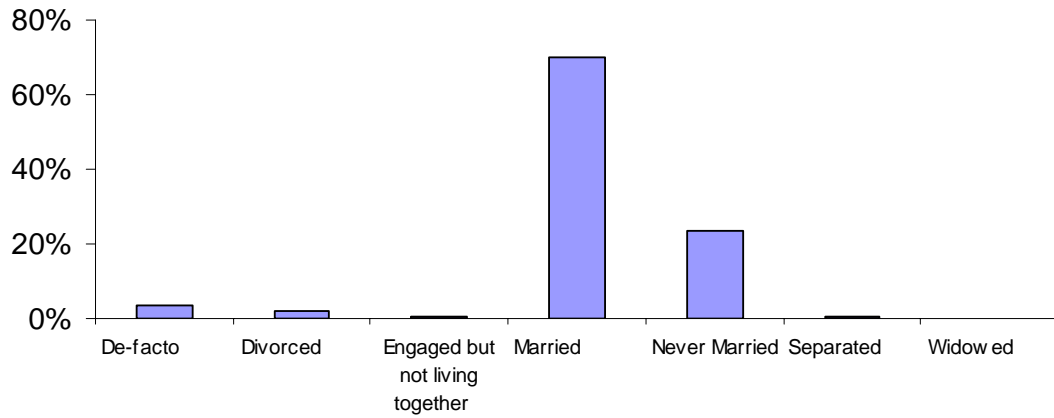


*Marital Status*

Around 70% of SDAS Principal Applicants were married and about a quarter were never married.

Of those that were married, around 95% were living with their spouse and about 75% had children living with them.

**Fig 1.4 : Marital status of SDAS Primary Applicants**



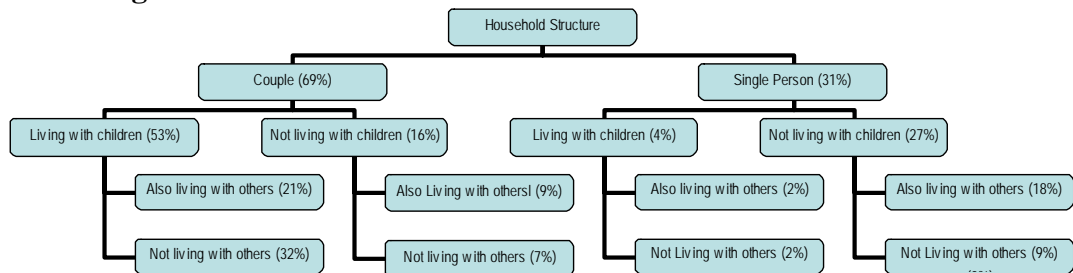
*Household Characteristics*

The average household size was 3.3 persons and the average size of migrating unit was 2.6 persons.

Around 40% of households contained people who were not a part of the migrating unit.

Figure 1.5 below shows that just over half of the households comprised a Principal Applicant, their spouse and their children. Less than 1 in 10 Principal Applicants lived alone.

**Fig 1.5 : Breakdown of Household Structure**



*Reasons for migration*

Almost half of SDAS Principal Applicants migrated to Australia to ensure a better future for their family in Australia. Other common reasons for migration were Australia’s climate and lifestyle (32%), family reasons (26%) and employment reasons (24%).

Fig 1.6 : Main Reasons for migration

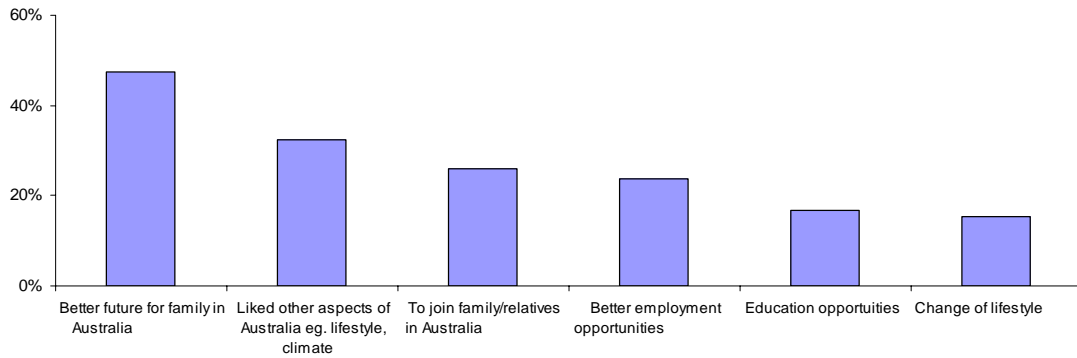


Table 1.1 shows that reasons varied depending on region of origin:

Principal Applicants from the Philippines or Fiji were more likely to say that they migrated to Australia to ensure a better future for their family (69% and 63% respectively). Those from Malaysia and China/Hong Kong were less likely (28% and 33%).

Those from Mainly English speaking countries were less likely to nominate educational or employment opportunities – the proportion of these Principal applicants giving these reasons was only 6% and 13% respectively. In contrast the corresponding figures for Principal Applicants from the Philippines were 22% and 31%.

Table 1.1 Reasons for Migration By Region

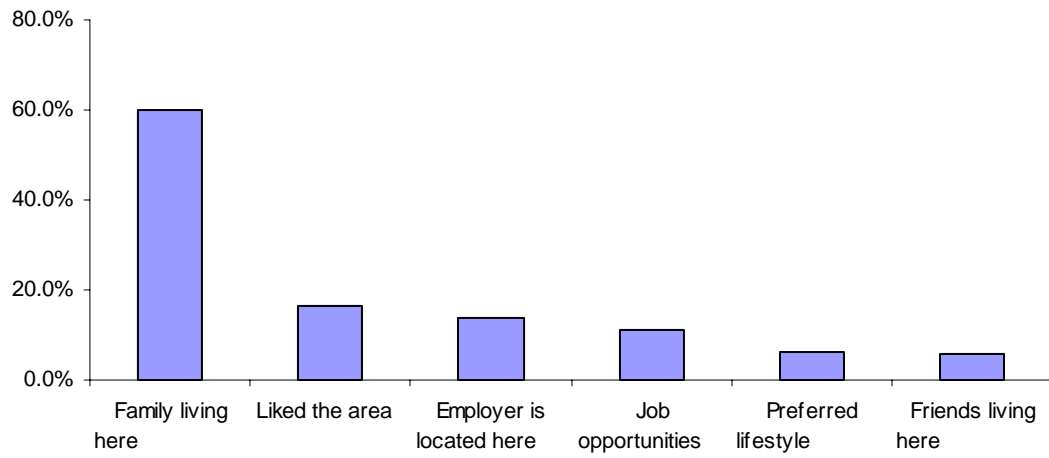
	Mainly English Speaking Country	Fiji	India and Surrounds	Malaysia	Philippines	PRC and Hong Kong	Other Asian countries	Other Countries
Better employment opportunities	13%	27%	28%	22%	31%	23%	29%	23%
Better future for family in Australia	35%	63%	57%	28%	69%	33%	42%	37%
Change of lifestyle	26%	7%	12%	18%	7%	19%	12%	15%
Dislike of social conditions in former country	18%	5%	3%	0%	3%	2%	2%	20%
Education opportunities	6%	15%	20%	27%	22%	13%	30%	11%
Liked other aspects of Australia eg. lifestyle, climate	50%	31%	24%	43%	22%	25%	29%	30%
To join family/relatives in Australia	28%	17%	30%	19%	19%	23%	30%	29%

*Reasons for living in current area*

Almost 60% of respondents lived in their current city or town because their family was living there. Relatively small numbers indicated that employment reasons were important – 14% lived in the region because their employer was located there and 11% lived in the region because of job opportunities<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents could select more than one reason, so proportions when summed will exceed 100%

Fig 1.7 : Reasons for living in current city/town



## 2. LOCATION

Fig 2.1 encapsulates the initial location choices of SDAS migrants in terms of designated and non-designated areas, and subsequent movements between these areas.

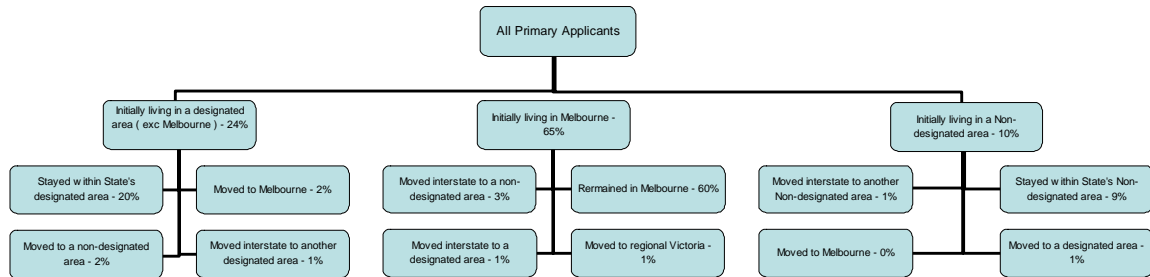


Fig 2.1 shows that 10% of all SDAS migrants moved directly to a non-designated area on arrival in Australia (the equivalent of nearly 800 SDAS migrants in 2003-04).

Table 2.1 : Proportion in Non Designated Areas

	Time since arrival				Overall
	Less than 2 years	Two to less than 3 years	3 Years or more		
Proportion at time of survey	14%	15%	16%	15%	
Proportion at arrival	12%	8%	10%	10%	

Table 2.1 shows the survey findings that 16% of SDAS migrants who had been in Australia for three years or more were living in non-designated areas, predominantly Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. This 16% includes most of the 10% who never lived in a designated area.

### Fig 2.2 Proximity of migrants to sponsors

Sponsor Location	Respondent Location at time of Survey											
	ACT	Designated NSW	Non-Designated NSW	NT	Designated Qld	Non-designated Qld	SA	Tasmania	Regional-Vic	Melbourne	Designated WA	Non-designated WA
ACT		47% *		30% *	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Designated NSW	*		41%	40% *	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NT	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Designated Qld	*	*		15% *		47% *	*	*	*	*	*	*
SA	*	*	*	*	*	*		75% *	*	*	9% *	*
Tasmania	*	*	*	*	*	*			83% *	*	*	*
Regional-Vic	*	*	*	*	*	*				37%	35% *	*
Melbourne	*		1%	4% *	1%	1% *	*	*	2%	86% *		2%
Designated WA	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		60% *	

Fig 2.2 gives some illustration of the difference in location between sponsors and migrants at the time of the survey. The table is incomplete because in some cases numbers are too low to be statistically significant.

As already mentioned, an underlying assumption of the SDAS visa is that the principal applicant will live near their sponsor. Figure 2.2 shows that this is broadly the case for places like Melbourne, where, for 86% of sponsors, the Principal Applicant also lived in Melbourne.

However it is not the case for regional (ie designated) areas of NSW and Queensland. At the time of the survey, less than half of the sponsors in these two areas lived in the same geographic area as the person they were sponsoring. In fact where the sponsor lived in regional NSW, there were almost as many people being sponsored living in *urban* NSW as in *regional* NSW.

A Principal Applicant may not live near their Sponsor but may still live in a Designated Area. In fact 87% of Sponsors were sponsoring a Principal Applicant that was living in a designated area at the time of the survey. Melbourne's dominance skews these findings however. Excluding Melbourne, only 62% of Sponsors living in a "designated area" were sponsoring a Principal Applicant living in a designated area.

It is of some concern that most SDAS migrants who initially settled in a regional ie non-metropolitan area had moved by the time of the survey, the great majority to metropolitan centres.

For example:

- 64% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional Victoria were not living in regional Victoria at the time of the survey;
- 59% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional NSW were not living in regional NSW at the time of the survey;
- 53% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in regional Queensland were not living in regional Queensland at the time of the survey.

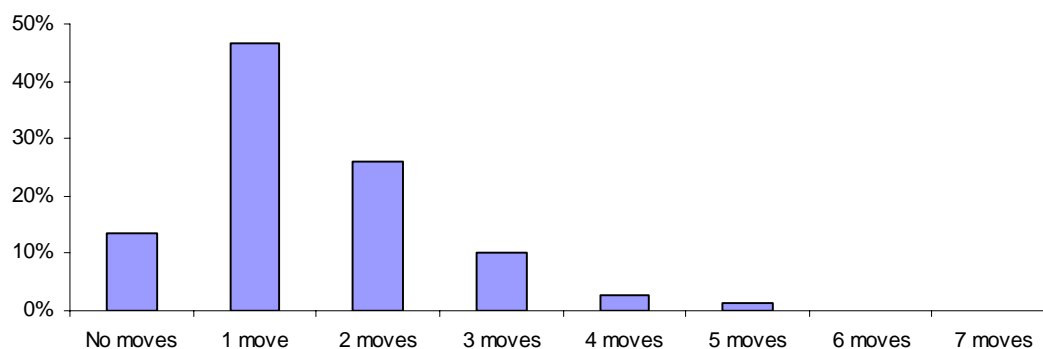
In addition, 53% of SDAS migrants with sponsors in the ACT were not living in the ACT at the time of the survey.

Some of the secondary movements described above were to Melbourne, indicated by the fact that 9% of all SDAS migrants were living in Melbourne but had a sponsor who lived outside Melbourne (in addition to the 58% of PAs living in Melbourne who had a sponsor in Melbourne). On the other hand, only 4 % of PAs living outside Melbourne had a sponsor based in Melbourne. This indicates a drift from other designated areas to Melbourne.

*Number of Moves*

As figure 2.3 shows, around three-quarters of Principal Applicants had moved either once or twice since arrival. This may reflect movements within as well as between designated and non-designated area, and the fact that most Principal Applicants lived with their sponsor at some time but quickly moved to another location.

**Figure 2.3 : Number of moves since arrival**



*Movement Intentions*

Around 6% of Principal Applicants indicated that they intend to move to another region in 12 months time and around 24% said they would like to live in another part of Australia. Principal Applicants living in designated areas did not differ significantly from those in non-designated areas in this regard.

There was a wide range of locations that migrants intended to move to, and no single location was dominant. When it came to preferred locations, Brisbane/Queensland was the most popular – with around half of those preferring to live in another region of Australia choosing this location.

Around half of the migrants who intended to change region within twelve months cited job opportunities as being one of their main motivations. Other less prevalent reasons for moving were family reasons, lifestyle and living costs.

Of the migrants who wanted to move to another region – more than half indicated they wanted to move because they preferred the weather elsewhere and around 40% wanted to move for lifestyle reasons. Similar numbers, around 1 in 6, wanted to move because of job opportunities or because they had family and friends in other areas<sup>4</sup>.

### 3. SPONSORSHIP

#### *Living with the sponsor*

One intention of the SDAS scheme is for migrants to live in Designated Areas close to their sponsor so they can benefit from their help in settling. The survey shows that almost 90% of Principal Applicants had at some point either lived with their sponsor or lived in the same city/town as their sponsor.

Although almost three quarters of Principal Applicants said that they *had lived* with their sponsor, at the time of the survey only 11% were *currently living* with their sponsor and only 4% indicated that they would *still be living* with their sponsor in 12 months time. Those from the Indian subcontinent were the most likely to have lived or be living with their sponsor – 88% of Principal Applicants in this group. Those from English speaking countries were the least likely – 49% of Principal Applicants in this group.

The time spent living with the sponsor was usually not very long. Some 56% of those who had lived with their sponsor had stayed with them for 3 months or less, a further 20% had lived with their sponsor for 4-6 months. Only 7% had stayed with their sponsor for more than a year.

Almost everyone (98%) who lived or was living with their sponsor indicated that this was a satisfactory arrangement. Of the very small number of people that had not been happy with the arrangement the main reasons were a lack of independence and a household that was too crowded.

#### *Sponsor Assistance*

Another intention of the SDAS is for sponsors to assist in the settlement of migrants.

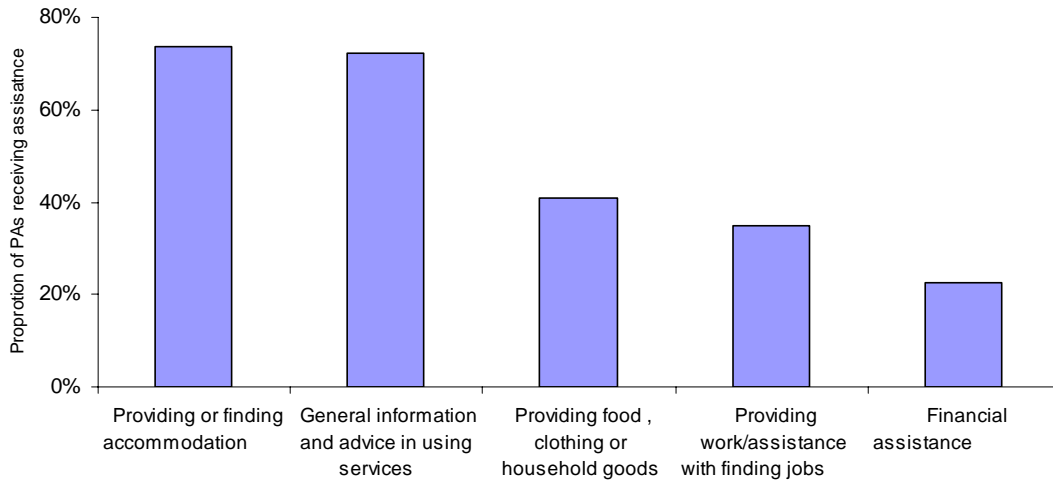
The survey indicates that 91% of migrants received assistance from their sponsors. The majority of those receiving assistance (81%) found it very helpful. A further 17% found the assistance helpful.

Those living or who had lived with their sponsor were more likely to be more satisfied with the sponsorship assistance they received than those who did not live with their sponsor. For instance, 86% of those who had lived or were living with their sponsor indicated that the assistance they received was very helpful. For those who had not lived with their sponsor the equivalent figure was only 59%.

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<sup>4</sup> Respondents could select more than one reason, so proportions when summed will exceed 100%

**Fig 3.1 : Types of assistance provided**



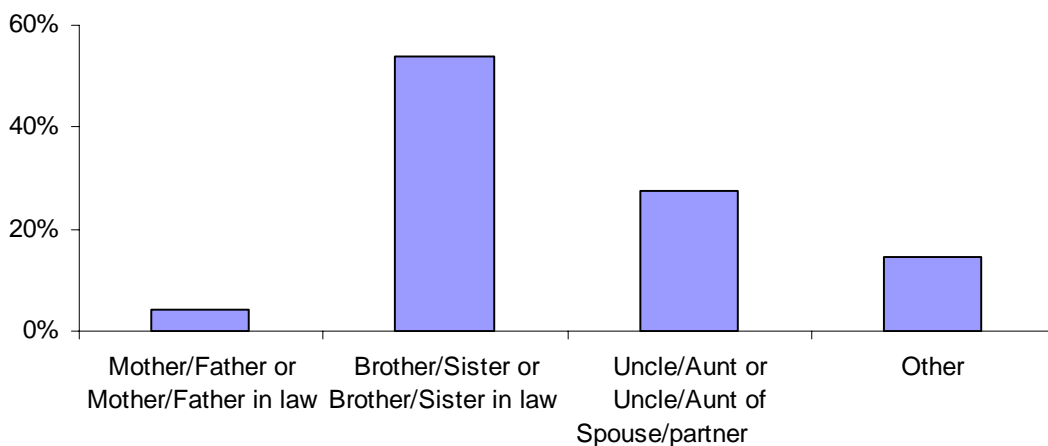
The types of assistance provided by sponsors are given in figure 3.1. As can be seen, around three-quarters of Principal Applicants received accommodation assistance and general information/advice from their sponsors. Less than a quarter received financial assistance.

*Relationship with sponsor*

Over half of the sponsors were a sibling of the Principal Applicant or the Principal Applicant’s spouse. A further 28% were either an uncle or aunt of the Principal Applicant or their spouse.

A small number of respondents (3%) said that they were not related to their sponsor!

**Fig 3.2 : Relationship of Sponsor to Primary Applicant**



#### 4. MIGRANT SATISFACTION

The SDAS survey contained a number of measures to evaluate a migrant’s satisfaction.

These measures were :

- Whether the SDAS scheme met their expectations
- Whether they were made to feel welcome
- What they like and dislike about their region

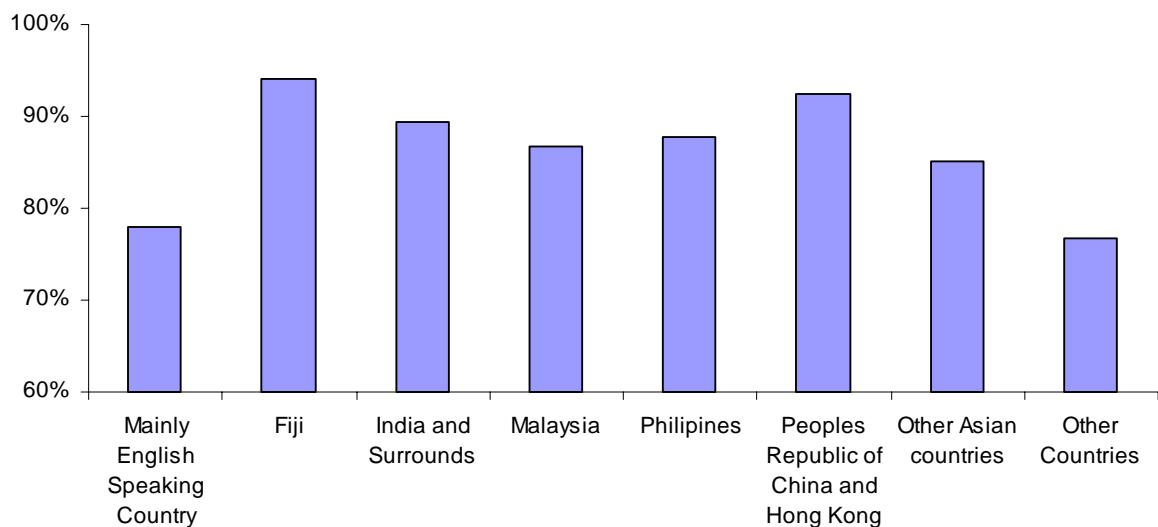
Respondents were asked whether or not they felt the SDAS scheme met their expectations. Across all Principal Applicants, around 14% said the scheme did not meet their expectations. For those that moved into a non-designated area from a designated area the equivalent figure was 21%. Although this estimate is based on a small number of responses, it is consistent with expectations – ie people less satisfied with their outcomes choosing to move to areas where they think opportunities are greater.

##### *Satisfaction with the SDAS scheme*

Overall, 86% of Principal Applicants said the scheme met their expectations. Migrants from Fiji and China/Hong Kong were most likely to be satisfied, those from Mainly English speaking countries were the least satisfied.

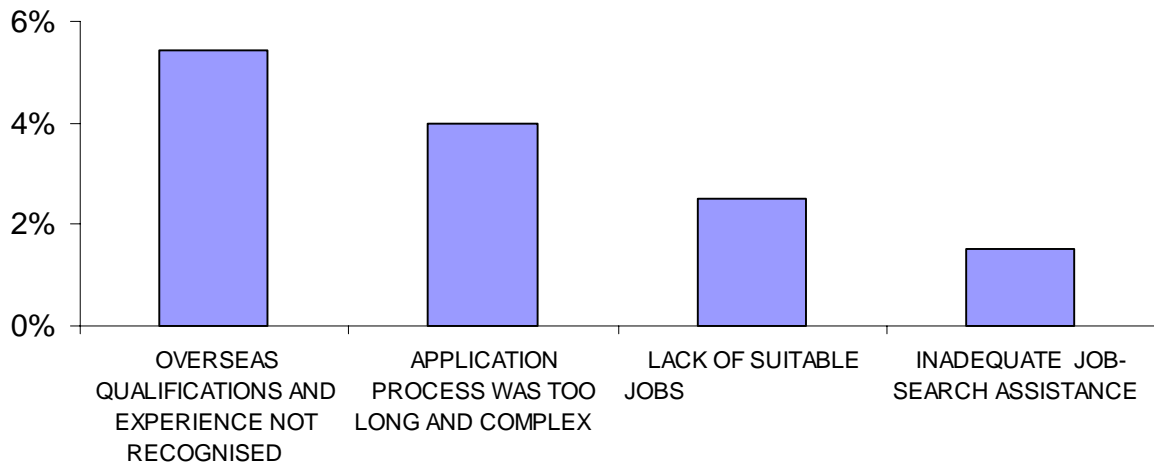
Looking at Victoria in isolation, 88% of Principal Applicants who migrated to this State were satisfied with the scheme. Across the other States and Territories, 79% were satisfied with the SDAS scheme.

**Fig 4.1: Proportion satisfied with SDAS scheme**



The main reasons for dissatisfaction with the scheme were a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and experience and an application process that was too long and complex. However as Figure 4.2 shows relatively few respondents that came forward with these complaints.

**Fig 4.2: Reasons why SDAS failed expectations**



*Were SDAS migrants made welcome?*

Virtually all respondents (98%) said that they were made to feel welcome. Although the numbers involved were small there was a correlation between being made to feel welcome and the Principal Applicant’s assessment of the scheme. Only 1% of people who said the SDAS scheme met their expectations said they weren’t made welcome when they came to Australia. In comparison, 7% of those who said the SDAS scheme did not meet their expectations also reported that they were not made to feel welcome when they came to Australia.

*What People liked about their City/Town*

The following table shows that quality of life and general lifestyle were the things most appreciated by respondents about their current town or city. Economic factors were ranked much lower.

It should be noted however that this is a list of things people liked about their local area. The question “What do you like about *Australia* “ would produce a different set of responses.

**Table 4.1: Top 10 Things liked about City/town**

<b>Thing Liked</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Environment/peaceful environment	53%
Quality & availability of goods/services	34%
Relaxed atmosphere	33%
The people/caring friendly people/hospitable	32%
Weather/climate	30%
Quality of life/better life for family	30%
Clean environment/cleanliness no pollution	28%
Lifestyle/way of life/outdoor lifestyle	25%
Family is there/family & friends/close by	24%
Not crowded or overpopulated	24%

***Frequency of Economic Factors***

Cost of living/standard of living	11%
The economy	5%
More opportunities/better prospects	4%
Economic conditions (nfi)	3%

Note - people could nominate more than 1 thing they liked, hence the sum of percentages will exceed 100%

*What People disliked about their City/Town*

Reassuringly, people had a lot less to say when it came to what they dislike about their city/town. In fact 42% said they disliked nothing about where they were living. The only other common response was the weather which was disliked by about 1 in 5 respondents.

**Table 4.2 : Top 10 Things disliked about City/town**

<b>Thing Disliked</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Nothing	42%
Weather/climate	20%
Transport system e.g public transport	6%
Traffic jams/traffic	3%
Distances involved to get to places	3%
Too quiet/pace of life too slow	3%
Cost of living is higher/inflation	3%
High unemployment/No jobs	3%
High cost of housing/property	3%
Crime/too much/do more about crime	2%
Everything	2%

Note - people could nominate more than 1 thing they liked, hence the sum of percentages will exceed 100%

## 5. LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

In this section the following measure of labour markets success will be described:

- Unemployment and Participation rates
- Use of qualifications in job
- Job satisfaction
- Occupational skill
- Hours worked

### *Unemployment and Participation Rates*

Overall the unemployment rate for SDAS Principal Applicants was 5% and the Participation rate was 89%.

Significant deviations from these overall figures were as follows:

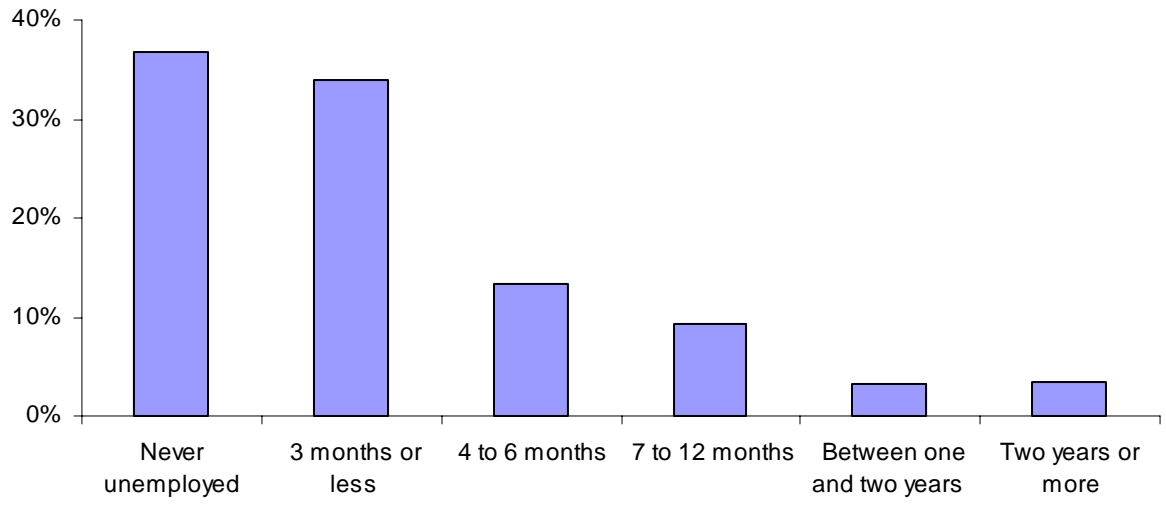
- Lower unemployment rates for respondents in the 30-39 years age range (3%), males (2%) and respondents living outside of Victoria (3%).
- Higher unemployment rates for females (9%) and respondents aged 40 or over (7%).
- Lower participation rates for females (80%) compared to males (96%).
- Better unemployment and participation rates for those who had been in Australia longer.

Table 5.1 shows how unemployment rates and participation rates vary across a range of categories. It should be noted that although there is a wide variation in unemployment rates between different regions of origin, these figures are based on small numbers of observations and should be treated with caution.

Figure 5.1 shows that while almost two-thirds of SDAS migrants had been unemployed at some time since arrival, only a few migrants had been out of work for a total of 4 months or more. Figure 5.2 shows that SDAS migrants tended to find work quickly as well.

Some 12% of Principal Applicants stated that they had never had any paid employment in Australia. However, only a quarter of these people considered themselves as unemployed at the time of the survey. Those who had never had paid employment were mostly female (75%).

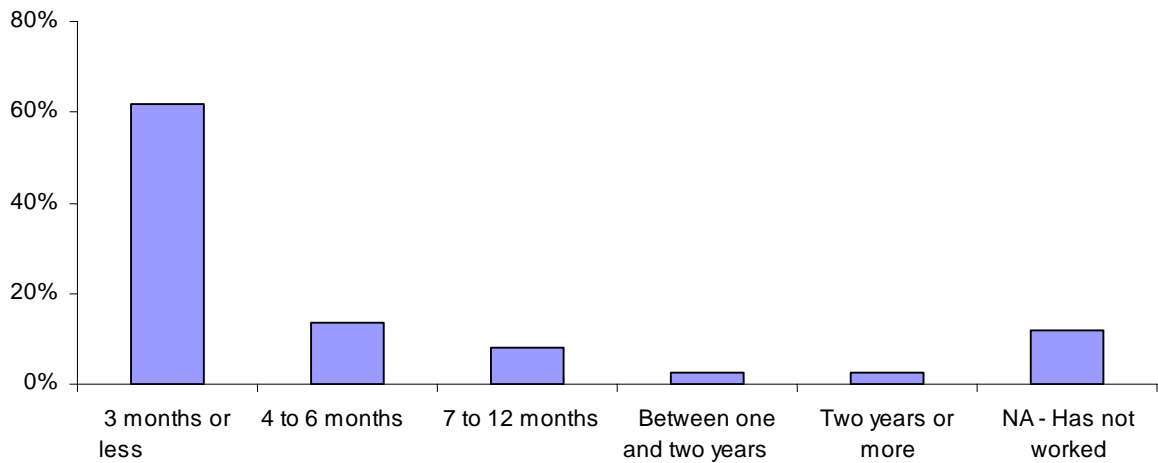
**Fig 5.1: Total time unemployed since arrival**



**Table 5.1: Unemployment and Participation Rates**

	Unemployment Rate	Participation Rate
<i>Region of Origin</i>		
Mainly English Speaking Country	3%	90%
Fiji	7%	93%
India and Surrounds	4%	88%
Malaysia	9%	87%
Philippines	2%	90%
Peoples Republic of China and Hong Kong	8%	80%
Other Asian countries	13%	90%
Other Countries	4%	91%
<i>Age</i>		
Aged less than 30	5%	86%
Age 30 to 39	3%	89%
Aged 40 and over	7%	90%
<i>Current Region</i>		
Victoria	5%	90%
Melbourne	6%	90%
All Designated Areas	5%	89%
All Non Designated Areas	4%	88%
All Areas outside of Victoria	3%	87%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	9%	80%
Male	2%	96%
<i>Time since arrival</i>		
Less than 2 years	5%	88%
Two to less than 3 years	4%	89%
Three years or more	6%	91%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>89%</b>

**Fig 5.2: Time taken to find first Australian job**



Of those who had been unemployed at some time since arrival the main difficulties were a lack of Australian experience (31%), a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and experience (19%) and a lack of jobs (14%). A considerable number (17%) said they had not experienced any problems.

*Use of qualifications in job*

Figure 5.3 shows that over half (54%) of those respondents who had worked in Australia used their qualifications very often in their job. When those who used their qualifications ‘often’ in their job are included, the figure increases to 71%.

**Fig 5.3 : Use of qualifications in job**

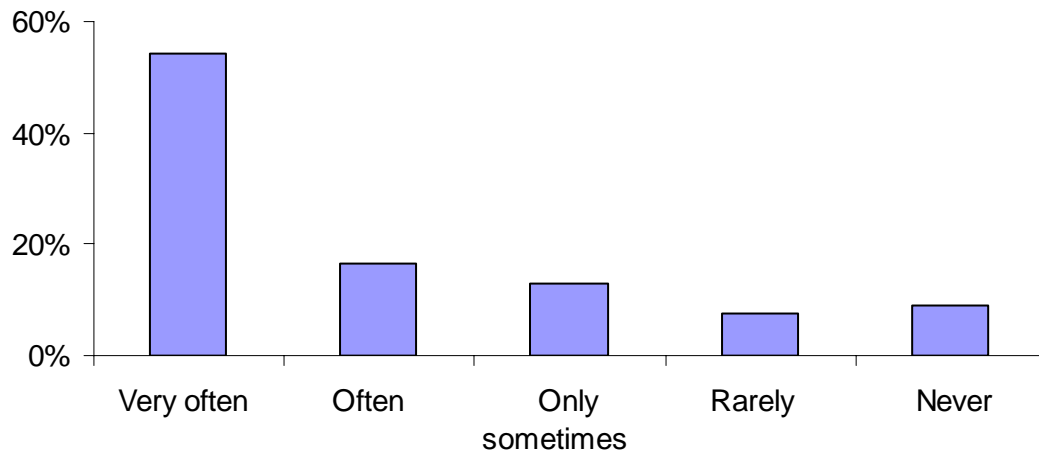
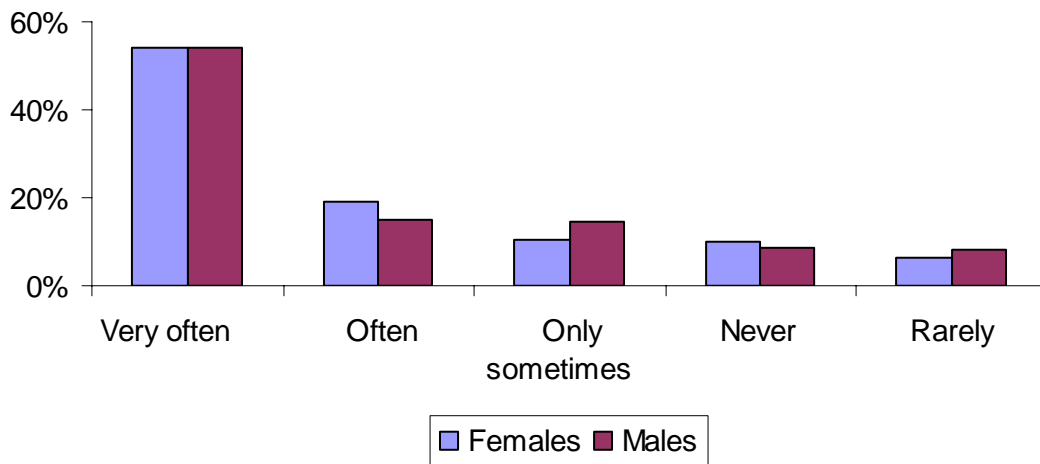
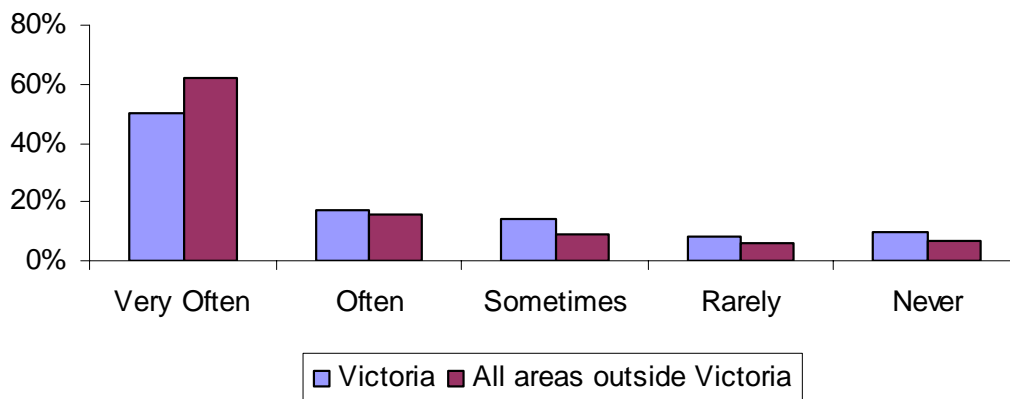


Figure 5.4 and 5.5 shows that the use of qualifications is very similar for males and females, but varies between Victoria and the rest of Australia.

**Fig 5.4 : Use of qualifications by gender**



**Fig 5.5: Use of qualifications - Victoria versus rest of Australia**

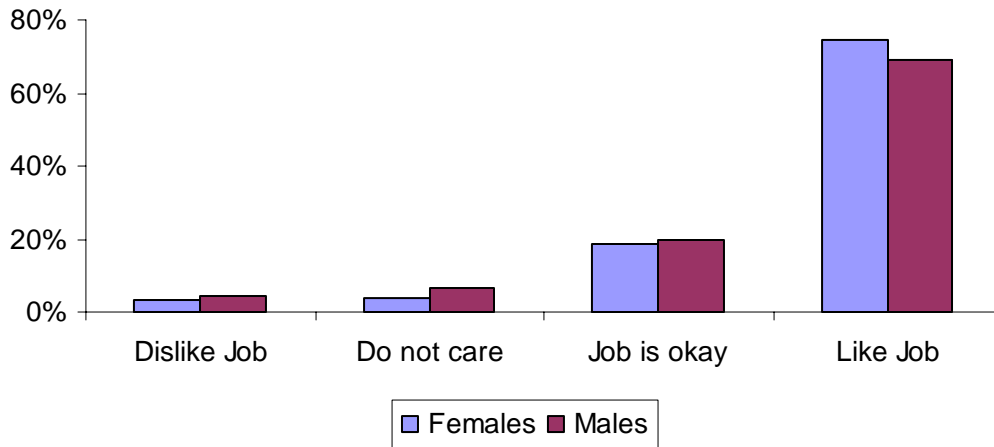


*Job satisfaction*

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about their job. Overall, 71% of respondents either liked or loved their job and a further 19% described their job as ‘okay’. Only 4% of respondents did not like their job.

Figure 5.7 shows that there is very little difference between genders in attitudes to their job. Figure 5.6 shows a slightly more positive attitude for areas outside of Victoria.

**Fig 5.6 : Attitudes to job by gender**

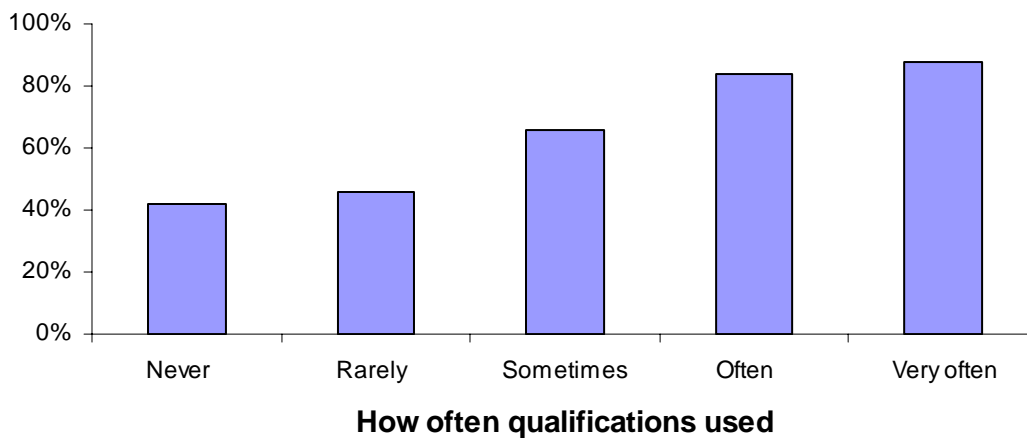


**Fig 5.7: Attitude to job - Victoria versus rest of Australia**



Figure 5.8 shows that there is a strong association between job satisfaction and use of qualifications for SDAS respondents. That is the more often they use their qualifications in a job, the more likely they are to be satisfied with that job. For example, 88% of those who used their qualifications “very often” at work liked their job, compared with only 44% of those who did not use their qualifications at all.

**Figure 5.8 : Proportion who liked job by use of qualifications in job**

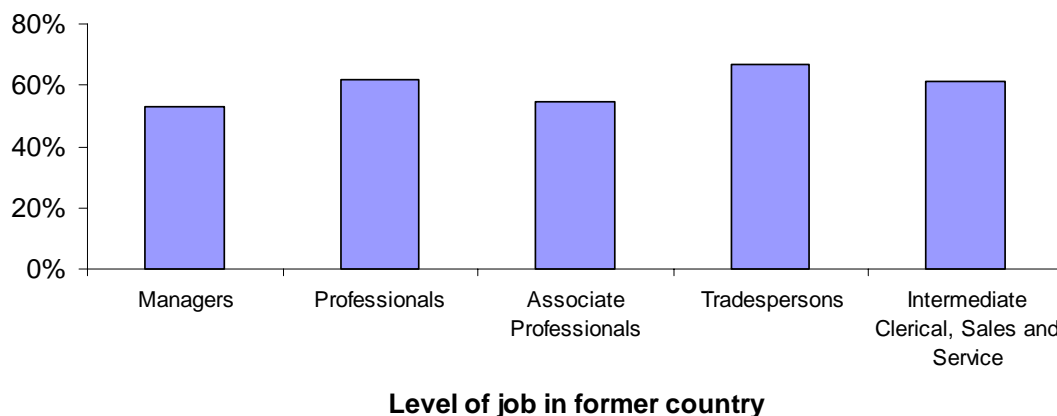


*Occupation*

Respondents were asked to state the job title and duties describe of their current Australian job and the job they last held in their former home country. From figure 5.9 it is apparent that most SDAS migrants that have worked in Australia were in a job that is at a similar skill level to the job they held overseas.

Tradespersons appeared to have the most success in adapting to the Australian labour market - around two-thirds of those that worked as tradespersons in their former home country and had worked in Australia, were working as tradespersons in Australia. In comparison just over half (53%) of managers/administrators were working in a similar field in Australia.

**Fig 5.9 : Percent Australian jobs at same occupational level as job in former country**



Of those that had worked, 70% were in their preferred occupation. Of those that were not working in their preferred occupation, the main reasons a lack of recognition of qualifications and experience (22%), a lack of jobs/a highly competitive job

environment (30%) and a lack of Australian experience (13%). Relatively few migrants cited a lack of English skills as a problem (6%).

There is a strong association between career intentions and job preferences. Some 71% of those who were not in their preferred job said they had changed career since migrating. Only 14% of those who were in their preferred job had changed career. Thus it appears some people may be being “pushed” into changing their career and ending up in a job which they don’t particularly like.

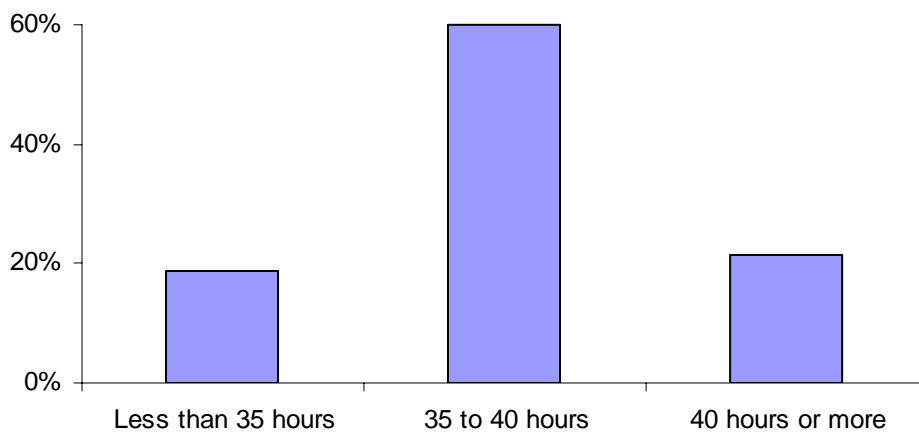
The main reasons people gave for changing career were a lack of jobs in their field (27%), accepting a job outside their field (15%), qualifications and experience not recognised (12%), better money/prospects in another field (11%).

*Hours worked*

Just over 80% of those SDAS migrants that had worked or were working in Australia had been in full-time employment, ie worked 35 hours or more per week.

Figure 5.10 shows that most SDAS migrants worked between 35 and 40 hours per week.

**Fig 5.10 : Hours worked per week**



## 6. INCOME

The median income of SDAS Principal Applicants who were working was \$697 per week. Compared with the second cohort of wave 2 of the LSIA, these earnings lie between those of working PA's from the Concessional Family/Skilled-Australia Linked stream (\$681 per week) and the Independent stream (\$760 per week).<sup>5</sup>

Table 6.1 shows how median incomes vary across different categories of SDAS migrants.

**Table 6.1 - Median Incomes across selected categories**

		Weighted count	Raw count
<i>Region of Origin</i>			
Mainly English Speaking Country	\$ 851	279.8	118
Fiji	\$ 655	94.1	38
India and Surrounds	\$ 670	383.5	164
Malaysia	\$ 714	86.4	35
Philipines	\$ 651	182.7	78
Peoples Republic of China and Hong Kong	\$ 570	95.3	39
Other Asian countries	\$ 639	82.3	34
Other Countries	\$ 672	125.8	53
<i>Age</i>			
Aged less than 30	\$ 698	255.1	95
Age 30 to 39	\$ 697	582.5	250
Aged 40 and over	\$ 687	492.3	214
<i>Time since arrival</i>			
Less than 2 years	\$ 683	702.9	302
Two to less than 3 years	\$ 688	396.5	172
Three years or more	\$ 724	235.5	85
<i>Gender</i>			
Female	\$ 640	530.2	222
Male	\$ 720	799.8	337
<i>Use of qualifications</i>			
Often, Very Often	\$ 746	943.3	396
Only sometimes	\$ 610	177.4	75
Rarely or Never	\$ 537	207.0	87
<i>Preferred Job</i>			
Not in preferred job	\$ 580	392.0	168
In preferred job	\$ 736	937.9	391

<sup>5</sup> Earnings from LSIA have not been adjusted fro CPI

**Table 6.1 continued**

<i>English Language</i>				
	English not first language	\$ 666	717.6	300
	English first language	\$ 739	612.3	259
<i>Occupation level</i>				
	Managers	\$ 895	115.2	45
	Professionals	\$ 800	338.0	143
	Associate Professionals	\$ 744	202.7	84
	Tradespersons	\$ 696	184.9	78
	Advanced Clerical	\$ 639	22.1	9
	Intermediate Clerical Workers	\$ 603	264.9	114
	Intermediate Service Workers	\$ 689	30.4	13
	Elementary Service workers	\$ 484	56.8	23
	Other unskilled workers	\$ 549	115.0	50
<i>Location</i>				
	Non designated area	\$ 747	195.3	92
	Designated Area	\$ 686	1134.6	467
	<b>All Persons</b>	<b>\$ 697</b>	<b>1329.9</b>	<b>559</b>

As would be expected the highest incomes are associated with being male, being in Australia longer, coming from an English speaking country, and working in a preferred job in a skilled occupation. Interestingly, people living in non-designated areas were earning more on average than those in designated areas.

The age of a Principal applicant did not appear to be associated with earnings.

Table 6.2 summarises Centrelink payments received by SDAS migrants. As can be seen virtually all payments were Family Benefit Payments that were received in the first two years. Only 4% required Newstart Assistance – with most of these people saying they required it inside the first 2 years.

**Table 6.2 - Analysis of Centrelink payments**

Whether Centrelink payments received	38%
Percentage receiving them within 2 years	36%
Types of payment received	
Family Benefits	36%
Rental Assistance	4%
Newstart	2%
Study Assistance	1%

## 7. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As table 7.1 shows those from Fiji had the highest rate of community participation overall – with 91% of these migrants taking part in one or more community activities since arrival.

In terms of specific activities, those from the Philippines were more likely than others to attend a religious activity, while those from Fiji were more likely to attend an activity that was based around their country of origin.

Interestingly, Malaysians were the group least likely to participate in community activities. Their level of non-participation was particularly pronounced for activities involving their country of origin and local community activities.

**Table 7.1 Participation in community activities by region of origin**

	Religious Activity	Local school activity	Country of origin activity	Local community activity	Activity involving sports or hobbies	Any of these
Mainly English Speaking Country	32%	27%	15%	34%	53%	81%
Fiji	54%	38%	49%	38%	60%	91%
India and Surrounds	61%	30%	41%	28%	37%	87%
Malaysia	36%	17%	11%	13%	43%	74%
Philippines	69%	26%	41%	18%	30%	88%
PRC and Hong Kong	35%	19%	24%	13%	62%	84%
Other Asian countries	39%	33%	30%	33%	59%	85%
Other Countries	37%	26%	36%	23%	49%	77%

Another indicator of successful settlement are interactions with neighbours. These are summarised in table 7.2. As can be seen those from Fiji are the most gregarious, interacting with almost 5 neighbours on average, whereas those from PRC and Hong Kong interact with less than 3 neighbours.

What is also of interest is that 1 in 5 migrants from Malaysia and PRC/Hong Kong do not interact with any of their neighbours at all.

**Table 7.2 - Number of persons spoken to living in street or nearby**

Mainly English Speaking Country	Fiji	India and Surrounds	Malaysia	Philipines	PRC and Hong Kong	Other Asian countries	Other Countries	Total	
No people	9%	4%	17%	20%	10%	19%	11%	13%	<b>13%</b>
1 or 2 people	19%	17%	23%	20%	33%	16%	28%	15%	<b>22%</b>
3 to 5 people	28%	30%	26%	29%	18%	36%	33%	36%	<b>28%</b>
6 to 10 people	22%	29%	25%	24%	31%	18%	20%	18%	<b>24%</b>
More than 10	22%	19%	10%	7%	7%	10%	7%	19%	<b>13%</b>
Median	4.3	4.8	3.5	3.6	3.4	2.8	3.5	3.6	<b>3.7</b>

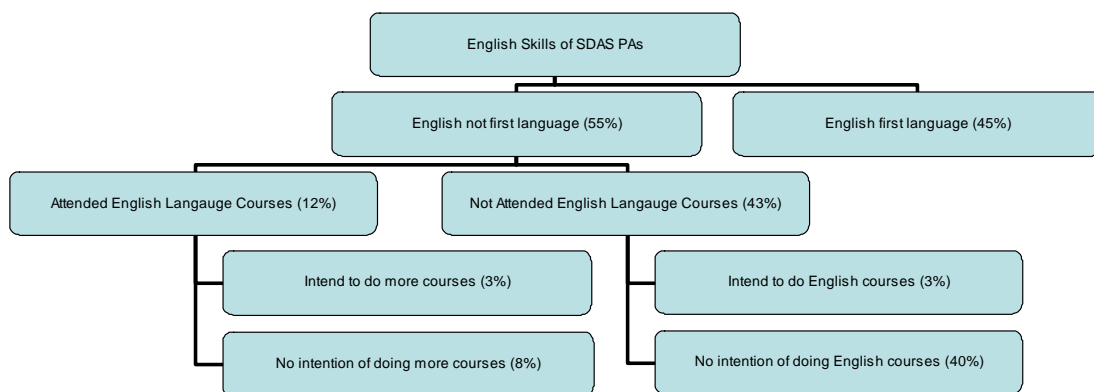
## 8. LANGUAGE

### *Attendance at English Classes*

Figure 8.1 shows that only about 1 in 8 SDAS Principal Applicants had attended English language classes and only about half that number were planning to attend English language classes in the future.

Looking only at those for whom English was not a first language, only 27% had attended or planned to attend English Language classes.

**Fig 8.1 : English language course attendance**

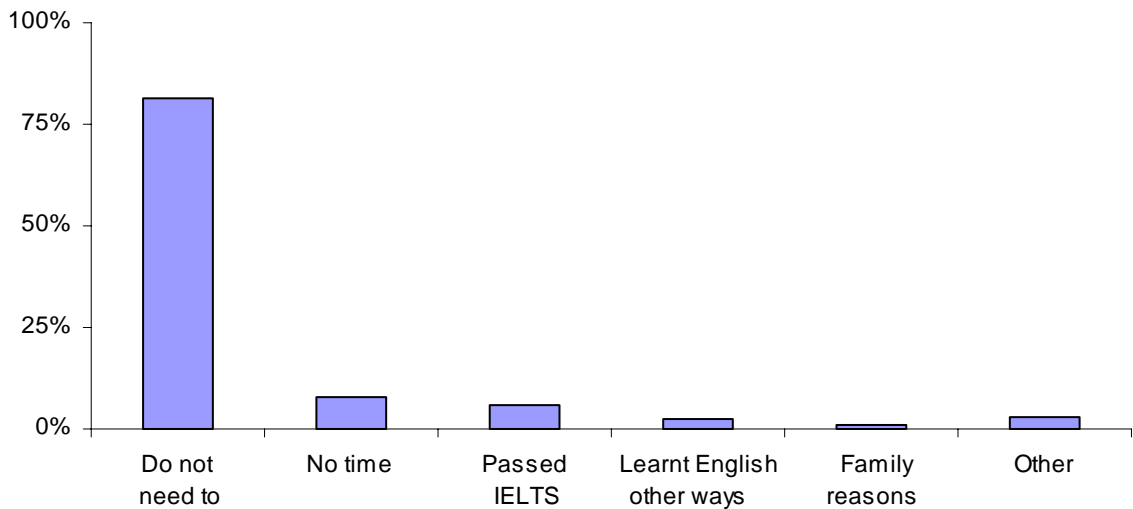


The most commonly stated reason for not attending English Language classes was that their English was good enough already – some 80% of Principal Applicants who did not have English as their first language and were not attending English classes gave this reason.

It would be a valuable exercise (though difficult to implement) to obtain the IELTS scores of those migrants that did not attend English Language classes to get a

quantitative assessment of their English skills. In particular to find out how many of them had only functional level English and were therefore not satisfying the visa condition of taking up English language courses in Australia<sup>6</sup>.

**Fig 8.2: Reasons for not learning English**



*Whether English Improved*

Respondents who did not speak English as a first language were asked whether their English had improved since arrival. Overall, 78% of those interviewed said that their English had improved.

Surprisingly though, time in the country did not influence the response to this question. Among those who had been in Australia less than two years, 80% indicated their English had improved. In comparison, only 75% of those who had been in Australia 2 -3 years or 3 years or more indicated that their English had improved.

What did have an impact though was attendance at English classes. Over 95% of those who had attended English language classes said their English had improved, compared with only 73% of those who did not attend classes.

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 for a fuller explanation

## **APPENDIX 1. SDAS requirements**

The SDAS focuses on sponsorship of skilled migrants by residents of designated areas in Australia.

### *Applicant requirements*

The applicant being sponsored must -

- be related to the sponsor in one of the following ways - a non-dependent child, working age parent, brother, sister, niece, nephew, first cousin or grandchild of the sponsor.
- be aged less than 45.
- have skills that are on the Skilled Occupation list.
- have vocational or functional level English ( or an intention to upgrade by paying for a course).

### *Sponsor requirements*

The sponsor must –

- be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident
- live in a designated area – ie anywhere in Australia except Perth , Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong; and have lived there for 12 months.
- not have received defined social security benefits in the 12 months before sponsorship was made.

### *Assurance of Support*

There must be an assurance of support, which is a legal commitment by the sponsor to repay the Commonwealth any Centrelink benefits paid to the applicant in the first 2 years after their migration or grant of permanent residence.

### *International English Language Test Scores (IELTS)*

To qualify for an SDAS visa, an applicant normally needs vocational level English (ie a band score of at least 5 for each of the speaking, writing, listening and reading components of the IELTS test. However, South Australia, Victoria, Northern Territory and Tasmania have a concession that allows people with only functional level English (ie an overall band score of 4.5 ) to migrate provided they take up of English courses in Australia to improve their level of English.