

Survey of Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) visa holders

Wave two

June 2008

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Executive Summary

Origin

The survey was undertaken to determine how well the Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) (provisional) visa was meeting its objectives. In September 2007, the SIR and the Skilled Designated Area Sponsored (SDAS) visa categories were incorporated into the provisional Skilled Regional Sponsored visa category. These changes did not affect the SIR survey as the population surveyed were those who were granted their visa prior to September 2007.

Objectives of the survey

- Monitor the likelihood of SIR visa holders going on to apply for permanent residence in Australia
- Assess their labour market and settlement outcomes
- Assess their contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.

Survey description

The scope of the survey population for wave two was Primary Applicants who were granted their SIR visa between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2006 and residing in Australia for at least 12 of the 18 months of residence to wave two.

Wave one of the survey was conducted for the same population six months after residence in Australia (arrival or grant of visa onshore). The findings from wave one are available in a separate report which was produced in April 2007.

Main findings

Employment Outcomes

The overall labour market outcomes were significantly better over the 12 month period to wave two. There was a dramatic increase in the employment rate, from 84.7 per cent at wave one to 97.8 per cent at wave two. The employment rate for wave two was higher than the national average during the survey period of 95.7 per cent. The participation rate was also high at the 99 per cent level for both the waves. This was also well above the national benchmark of 65 per cent during the time of the survey.

The likelihood of jobs being skilled varied with different characteristics. For instance those born in a Main English Speaking (MES) country were much more likely to be working in a skilled occupation than the non-MES country-born, 95.5 per cent compared to 67.1 per cent respectively. Having a skilled occupation also increased with age, the 20-24 age group had a lower rate of holding a skilled job (60.7 per cent) compared to the 40 and over age group (92.4 per cent).

The top five occupations of the SIR Primary Applicants were among the skilled or semi-skilled occupations - computing professionals (9.2 per cent), marketing and advertising professionals (2.7 per cent), special care workers (2.1 per cent), accountants (1.9 per cent) and secondary school teachers (1.7 per cent).

SIR Primary Applicants were generally positive towards their job. Only 1 per cent of those employed reported their job as being *bad* or *really bad*. Those who had a similar occupation as nominated in their SIR visa application had a very favourable attitude towards their job compared to those who were employed in a different occupation.

Income

After employment outcomes, income is a good indicator of the success of the settlement in Australia of new migrants. The median income at wave two for SIR Primary Applicants was \$42 100. There was a significant improvement in the median income between wave one and two, an increase of \$4000. The people most likely to have higher income can be classified as males, the older cohort, offshore SIR applicants, MES country-born, those with higher International English Language Test Scores (IELTS) and those employed in their nominated occupation.

Location

Almost two-thirds of the SIR visa holders lived in South Australia followed by 14.0 per cent in Victoria and 9.9 per cent Queensland.

It is a requirement of the SIR visa that those who want to apply for permanent residence should live and work in regional Australia for a specified period of time. At wave two of the survey, around 96 per cent of the Primary Applicants had lived in a regional area for 13 to 18 months. It should be noted that based on the residential address at the time of the wave two survey only one per cent were living outside a designated regional area.

Just over 93 per cent of the Primary Applicants were living in their sponsoring state/territory at wave two. The main reason behind living away from their sponsoring state/territory was related to securing a job in another state/territory.

Settlement and experiences

The majority of the survey population were satisfied with their settlement experiences in regional Australia. Around 17 per cent of the respondents experienced *difficult* or *very difficult* experiences. The common problems experienced were *difficulty finding a job, housing and accommodation issues and living away from family or friends*.

Pathway to permanent residence

The SIR visa gives the visa holder the opportunity to apply for permanent residency after they live for two years and work for at least 12 months in a specified regional area of Australia. Respondents who intend to apply for permanent residence in Australia were asked to indicate which pathway they would choose. The former State/Territory Nominated Independent visa and the newly created Skilled Regional visa were the most popular choices of pathways among the survey respondents (68.0 per cent). This is mainly due to the fact that some requirements for these two pathway visas were modified and/or waived to assist SIR visa holders obtain a permanent visa (The new Skilled Regional visa does not require nomination by a state or territory government authority).

Migrating unit partner

At wave two of the survey, 66.4 per cent of the survey respondents had a partner in Australia. Of those who had a partner in Australia, 85.7 per cent had a partner who was included in their SIR visa applications (migrating unit partner). The employment outcomes of the migrating unit partner had improved between the two waves. The employment and participation rates of the migrating unit partner at wave two were 77.8 per cent and 85.1 per cent respectively. The median annual income of migrating unit partners at wave two was \$33 500, an increase of around \$2000 from wave one.

1. Introduction

This report describes the findings from wave two of the longitudinal survey of the Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) visa holders in Australia. The SIR visa was introduced on 1 July 2004 to enable state and territory governments to nominate skilled people who wish to live and work in regional Australia but are unable to meet the criteria to be granted a permanent visa. The requirements of this temporary three year visa at the time of the survey was that the holder must live and work in a regional area and after meeting the conditions set out by the SIR visa, can then go on to apply for a permanent visa.

On 1 September 2007 changes were introduced to the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program. As part of these changes, the SIR and Skilled Designated Area Sponsored (SDAS) visa categories were incorporated into the provisional Skilled Regional Sponsored visa category, which includes options for either state/territory government agency nomination or sponsorship by an eligible relative living in a regional area. Like SIR, this visa also provides a pathway to permanent residency. Since the SIR survey population were Primary Applicants who were granted their visa between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2006 the above mentioned changes to the GSM program did not affect the survey population or the outcomes.

The aim of the SIR survey was to assess the success of the visa by surveying this group as they progressed towards permanent migration. It is a longitudinal survey comprising of two waves of questionnaires. Wave one was conducted at six months of residence in Australia and wave two at 18 months residence in Australia.

Objectives of the survey

The survey was conducted to:

- Monitor the likelihood of SIR visa holders going on to apply for permanent residence in Australia
- Assess their labour market and settlement outcomes
- Assess their contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.

Description of the survey

The scope of the SIR survey population for wave two was:

- Primary Applicants granted their SIR visa and residing in Australia between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2006
- As some Primary Applicants were overseas during the 18 month residence in Australia, only those who had been in Australia for at least 12 months were included.

For wave two of the survey at 12 to 18 months of residence in Australia or grant of visa in Australia, the Primary Applicants were given a mail-back survey of 26 questions. The number eligible for the survey was 1656 (80.6 per cent being offshore applicants); of this 953 responded to the questionnaire (78.2 per cent of the respondents were offshore applicants).

Of those who did not respond to the survey, 301 or 18.2 per cent of those eligible for the survey were overseas at the time of their survey. For practical reasons and because it was likely that most would not have lived in Australia for the required survey period, no attempt was made to contact this group. If we exclude them from the eligible population, the response rate for wave two was 70.3 per cent. This was a slightly better outcome than wave one which had a response rate of 66.7 per cent.

The survey data covered in this report has been weighted to address bias caused by non-response.

The main topics covered by the survey and this report are as follows:

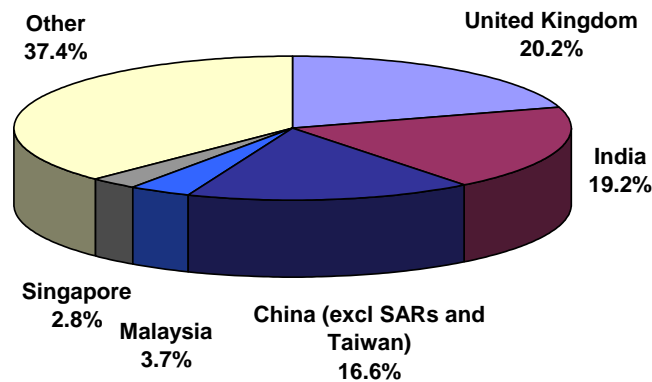
- Labour market outcomes
- Income
- Mobility
- Settlement experiences in Australia
- Pathway to permanent residency
- Experiences of the migrating unit partner.

2. Migrant demographics

Where migrants came from

Figure 2.1 shows that the United Kingdom-born accounted for just above 20 per cent of those surveyed. There were also relatively large number in the survey from India (19.2 per cent), China (excluding SARs and Taiwan) (16.6 per cent) and Malaysia (3.7 per cent). In terms of English and non-English speaking countries, 24.3 per cent were born in Main English Speaking¹ (MES) countries and 75.7 per cent in non-MES countries.

Figure 2.1 Country of birth at wave two



Age: Sex

Around 67 per cent of the SIR Primary Applicants were male and 33 per cent were female. The difference in age structure between males and females is shown in Figure 2.2 at the following page.

At the time of being granted their SIR visa the median age for males was 32.9 and females were slightly younger at 29.6 years. 42.0 per cent of the SIR Primary Applicants were aged 20 to 29 years and 44.6 per cent were in the 30 to 39 age group.

Migrating unit partner

At wave two of the survey 56.9 per cent stated that they had a partner in Australia who was included on their SIR visa application while 9.5 per cent stated that they had a partner who was not included in the SIR visa application. 33.4 per cent did not have a partner in Australia. A comparison of partner status in Australia at the time of wave one and wave two of the SIR survey is at Figure 2.3 at the following page.

¹ For the SIR survey MES countries only includes United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, USA and South Africa.

Figure 2.2: Age group and sex distribution at wave two

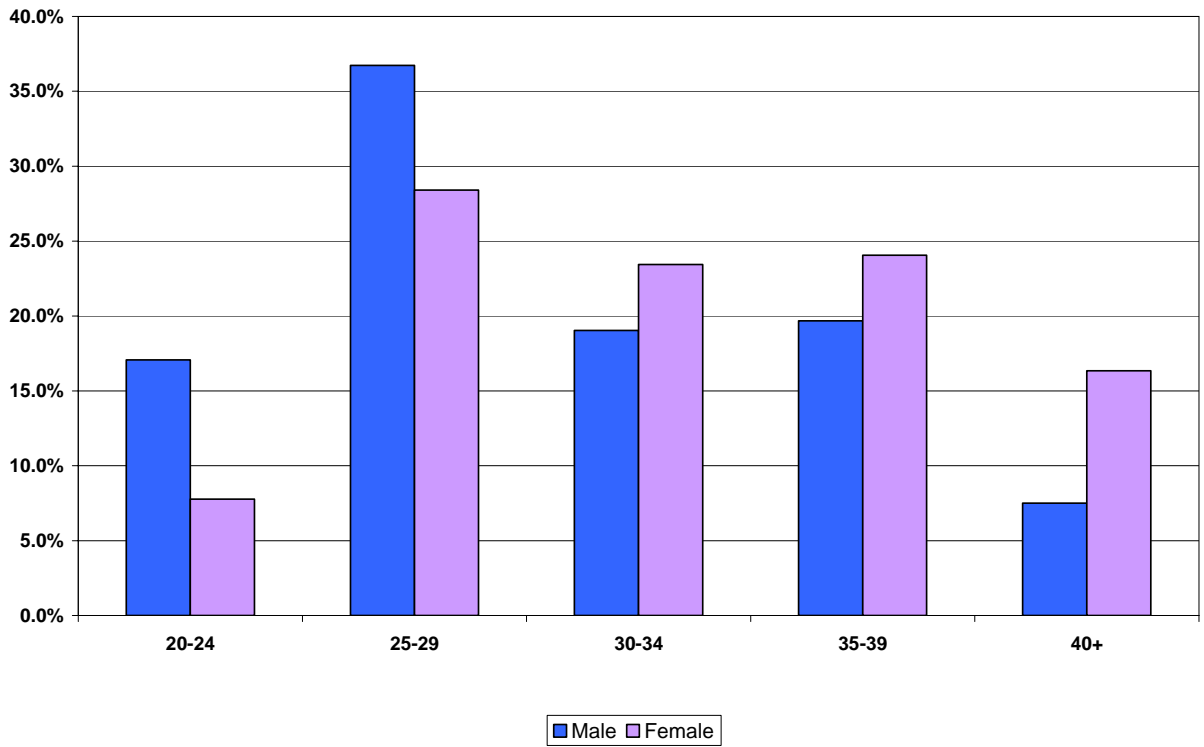
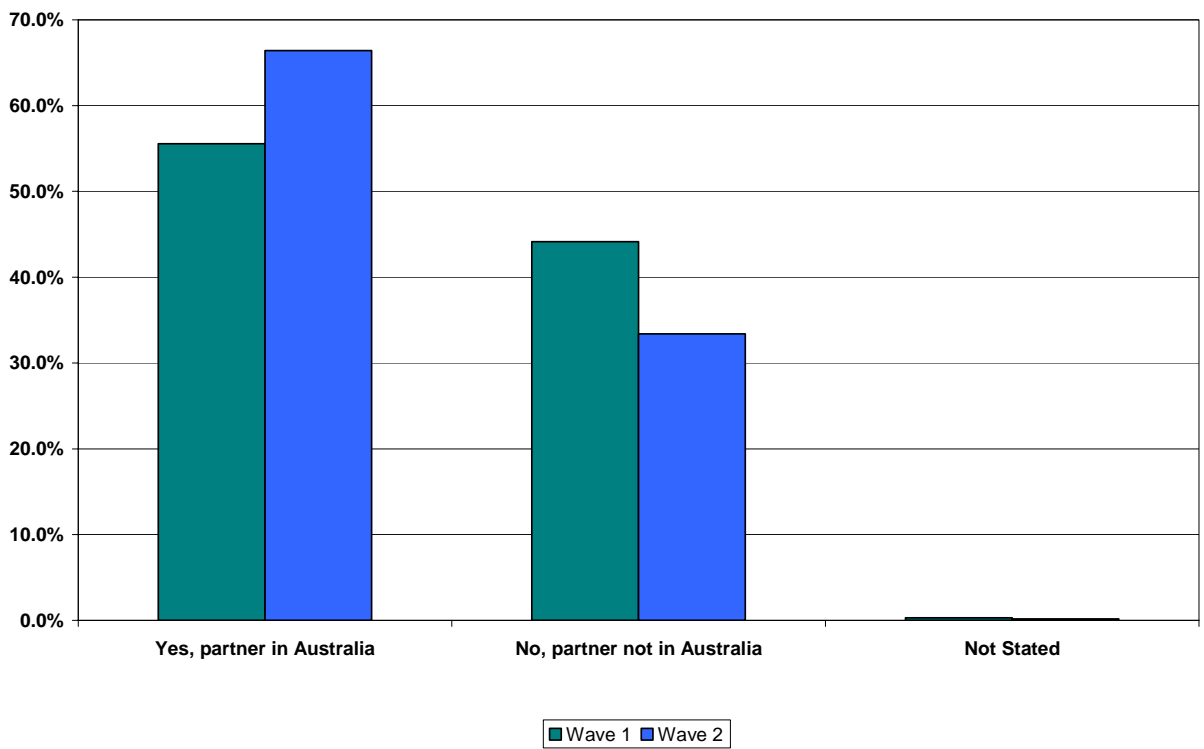


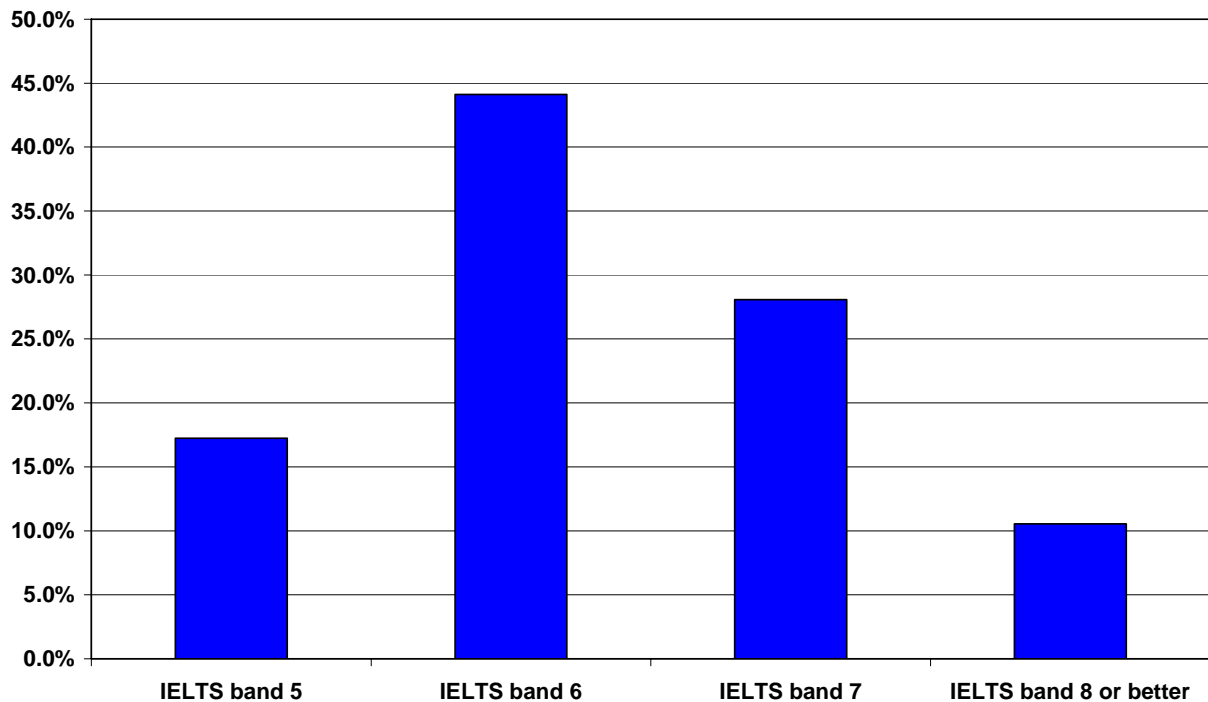
Figure 2.3: Status of partner in Australia, waves one and two



Proficiency in English

To qualify for a SIR visa, an applicant required vocational level of English. This means they had to achieve a band score of at least 5.0 for all four components of the International English Language Test Scores (IELTS). The four components of IELTS are speaking, writing, listening and reading. At wave two of the survey the participants were asked for their IELTS scores as stated in their SIR visa application, 36.3 per cent stated that they *did not do an IELTS test*, 6.1 per cent *did not remember* their scores and 1.0 per cent did not respond to the question. As can be seen from Figure 2.4, of those who reported their IELTS scores nearly half of the SIR Primary Applicants had an IELTS band score of 6. IELTS band 7 was the next popular score with 28.1 per cent followed by 17.2 per cent with IELTS band 5 and 10.6 per cent with IELTS band 8 or better.

Figure 2.4: IELTS test band scores

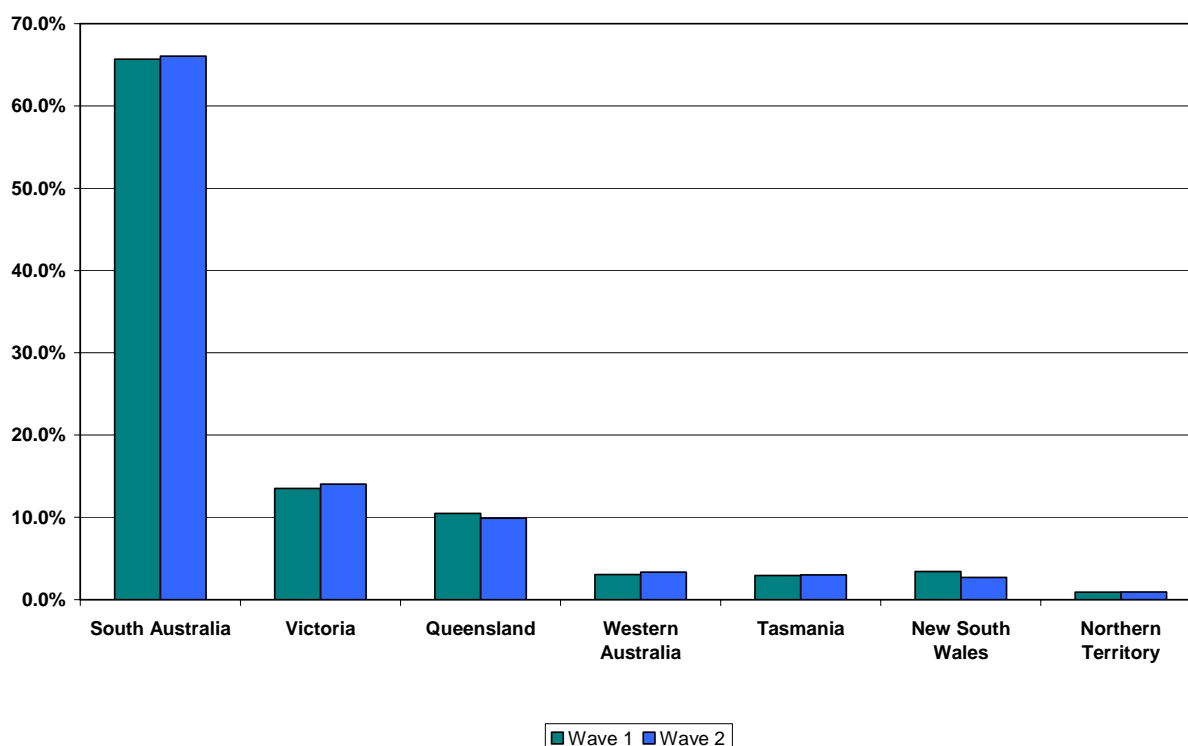


3. Location and Sponsor

Where they live

Almost two-thirds of SIR visa holders lived in South Australia followed by 14.0 per cent in Victoria, 9.9 per cent in Queensland and 3.3 per cent in Western Australia. Overall there was no significant difference in the state by state distribution of SIR visa holders between wave one and two of the SIR survey. Detailed distribution of SIR visa holders at wave one and two across the states and territory is at Figure 3.1. A summary of selected characteristics for the top 3 residence states is at Table 3.2 at the following page.

Figure 3.1: State of residence at waves one and two



Movement between states and territory has been very minimal. For instance, of the SIR visa holders who responded to both the waves, 34 were living in a different state between wave one and wave two. Table 3.1 shows the actual movement between both the waves.

Table 3.1: Interstate movement of SIR Primary Applicants between waves one and two

State/Territory	Movement between waves one and two	Net loss/gain
South Australia	7 in, 18 out	loss of 11
Victoria	9 in, 3 out	gain of 6
Queensland	9 in, 2 out	gain of 7
Western Australia	4 in, 2 out	gain of 2
Tasmania	none in, 5 out	loss of 5
New South Wales	4 in, 3 out	gain of 1
Northern Territory	1 in, 1 out	no loss or gain

Table 3.2: Selected characteristics by residence state/territory for wave two

	SA	VIC	QLD	Other*	Total
	Percentages				
Age Group					
20-24 years	12.7	4.5	8.1	10.3	10.9
25-29 years	35.4	23.9	15.4	29.2	31.2
30-34 years	19.1	32.0	27.3	21.8	22.0
35-39 years	21.2	24.4	23.8	28.3	22.6
40+ years	11.7	15.3	25.4	10.4	13.4
Sex					
Female	36.1	28.4	30.1	25.1	33.3
Male	63.9	71.6	69.9	74.9	66.7
Where visa was obtained					
Offshore	79.3	86.7	88.3	73.0	80.6
Onshore	20.7	13.3	11.7	27.0	19.4
County of birth					
Main English Speaking Country	22.3	23.5	36.4	26.5	24.1
Non-Main English Speaking Country	77.7	76.5	63.6	73.5	75.9
Top 3 countries of birth:					
United Kingdom	19.6	14.2	28.9	24.5	20.2
India	20.5	22.6	13.0	11.8	19.2
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	21.1	7.7	5.6	10.5	16.6
Nominated Occupation at Time of Application					
Professionals	71.2	75.7	57.9	69.0	70.3
Tradespersons and related workers	18.5	16.7	35.7	24.1	20.5
Managers and administrators	5.3	3.7	4.3	2.1	4.7
Associate Professionals	3.9	3.1	2.2	3.7	3.6
IELTS scores					
Did not do IELTS	32.9	35.3	52.9	43.9	36.3
IELTS band 8 or better	6.3	7.7	1.2	6.3	6.0
IELTS band 7	17.7	14.5	10.7	11.5	15.9
IELTS band 6	27.0	27.0	21.4	13.1	25.0
IELTS band 5	8.7	12.2	9.0	14.2	9.8

* includes WA, Tas, NSW and NT

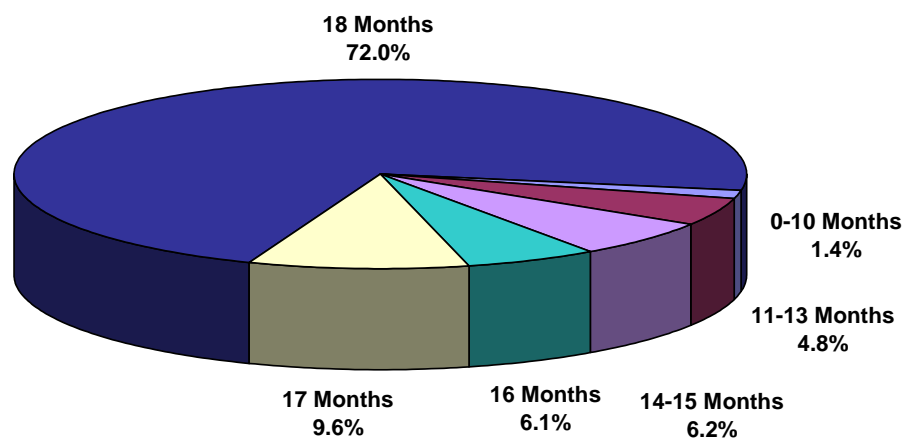
Living in sponsoring state/territory

Based on state of residence at the time of the survey, 93.1 per cent of Primary Applicants were living in their sponsoring state/territory at the time of wave two. This compares to 94.0 per cent who were living in their sponsoring state/territory at wave one. Of those who did not live in their sponsoring state/territory, 53.7 per cent found a better job in a different state/territory and 24.9 per cent were living elsewhere because there was no appropriate work available in the sponsoring state.

Living in regional Australia

It is a requirement of the SIR visa that those who want to apply for permanent residence should live and work in regional Australia for a specified period of time. After 18 months of residence or grant of visa, 0.2 per cent had never lived in a regional area, 3.7 per cent had lived in a regional area for six to 12 months and 96.0 per cent had lived in a regional area for 13 to 18 months. It should be noted that at the time of the wave two survey 97.7 per cent of those surveyed had spent a total of 13 to 18 months in Australia.

Figure 3.2: Length of residence in regional Australia at wave two



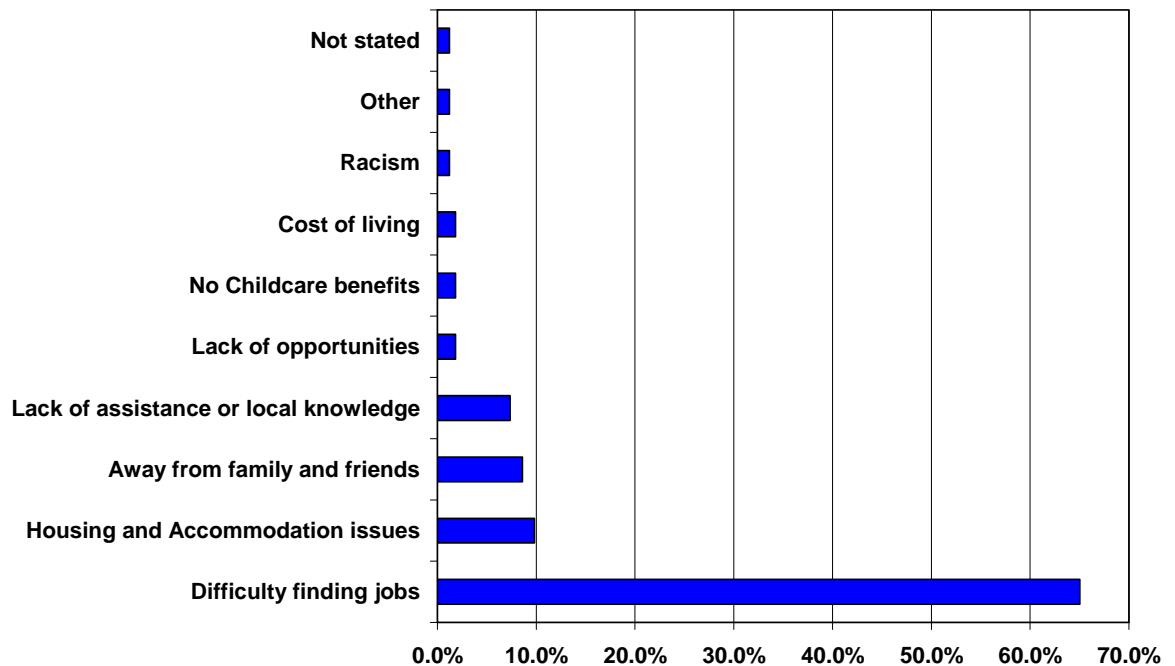
4. Migrant experiences

Settlement experiences

The surveyed population were asked to describe their experience of settlement in regional Australia. Among the Primary Applicants, 13.0 per cent had stated that they had a *very easy* experience and 30.8 per cent had an *easy* experience. The majority at 39.5 per cent had *neither an easy nor a difficult* experience.

Those who had *difficult* (13.6 per cent) or *very difficult* (3.1 per cent) experiences in settlement were asked to describe the main problem they experienced in their settlement. Common problems were *difficulty finding a job* (65.1 per cent), *housing and accommodation issues* (9.8 per cent) and *away from family or friends* (9.2 per cent). Figure 4.1 shows the main problems experienced when settling in regional Australia.

Figure 4.1: Problems experienced while settling in regional Australia



Note: The above figure is based on responses given by those who stated that they had a *difficult* or *very difficult* experience settling in regional Australia

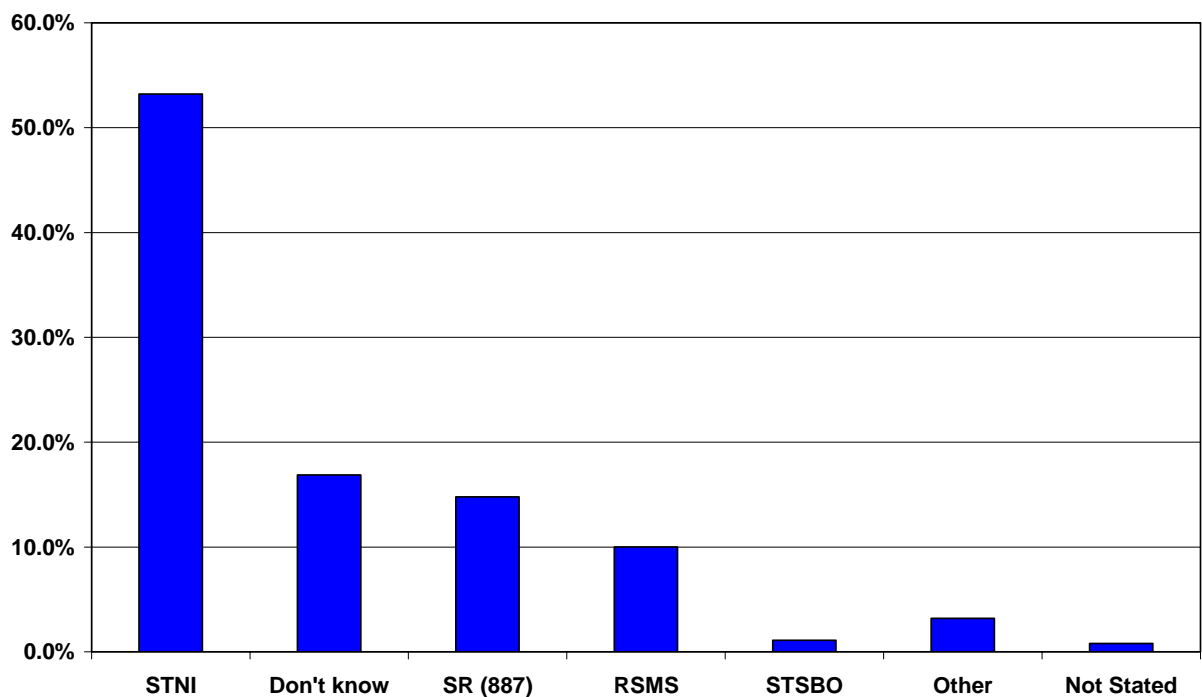
5. Permanent residence

Pathway to permanent residence

The SIR visa gives the visa holder the opportunity to apply for permanent residency after they live for two years and work for at least 12 months in a specified regional area of Australia. To assist SIR visa holders to obtain a permanent visa, requirements for some permanent visas have either been modified or waived. The most important being the requirement to obtain state/territory nomination for the second stage, permanent visa. The permanent visa options are Skilled Regional (subclass 887), Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) and State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner (STSBO). The Skilled Regional (subclass 887) visa replaced the State/Territory Nominated Independent (STNI) visa on 1 September 2007 when changes were made to the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program.

SIR survey respondents were asked which pathway to permanent residence they will opt for at the time of applying for their permanent residence. Figure 5.1 shows that the former STNI visa was the popular choice at 53.2 per cent followed by a *Don't know* response (16.9 per cent), Skilled Regional (14.8 per cent) and RSMS (10.0 per cent). After the replacement of the STNI visa with the Skilled Regional visa in September 2007, 56.1 per cent of those who were surveyed in the months from October to December 2007 were planning on applying for the newly formed Skilled Regional visa.

Figure 5.1: Pathway options to permanent residency



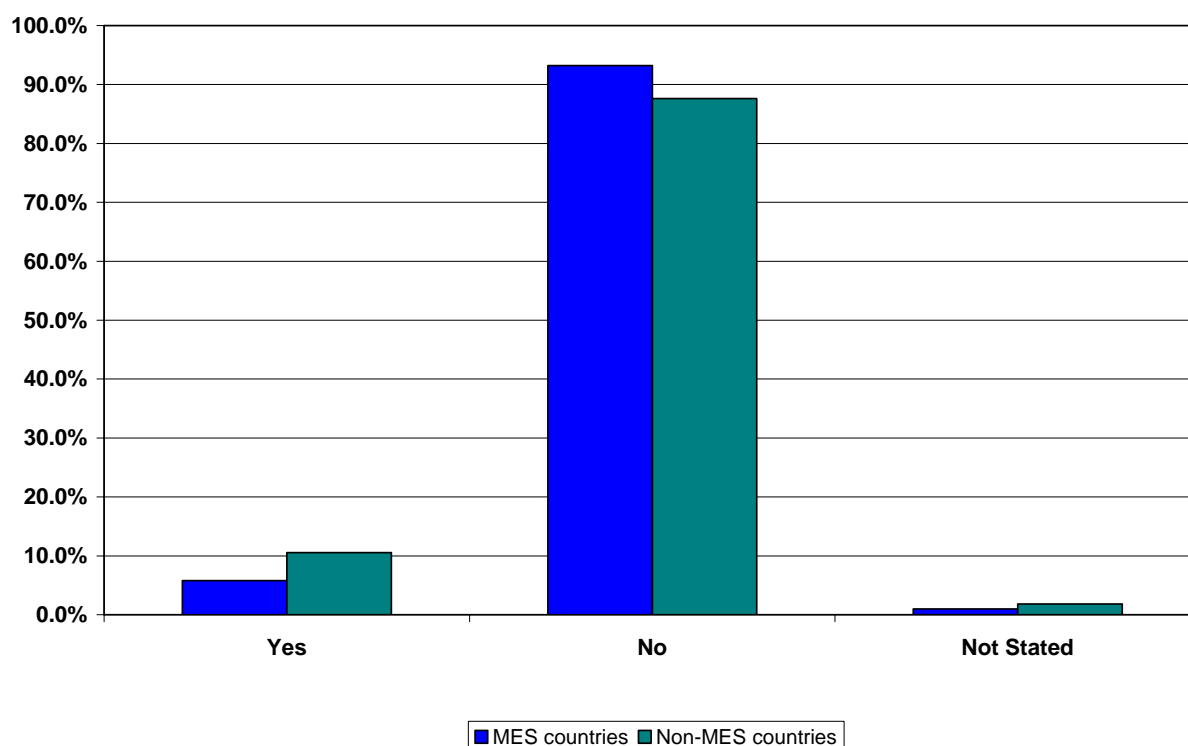
Intention to move after grant of permanent residence

SIR visa holders were asked if they intend to move away from their current city or town after being granted their permanent residence, 89.0 per cent had no such intention of moving and 9.4 per cent were planning on moving. Of those who were planning on moving, about 60 per cent were moving for *better employment opportunities* and 15.7 per cent for *better opportunities*. Around 15 per cent were moving to *live close to family or friends* and the remainder for *better schooling for children* (3.0 per cent) and *other reasons* (7.0 per cent).

From those who intended to move the majority (29.9 per cent) planned on moving to Victoria. Almost three quarters of those moving to Victoria were already residing in regional Victoria but planned on moving to the more metropolitan areas of the state. The larger states of Queensland (17.5 per cent) and New South Wales (14.0 per cent) were the other popular intended destinations. 25.7 per cent were unsure of where to move.

A comparison of the intention to move after grant of permanent residence for people born in MES countries and non-MES countries is at Figure 5.2. Of the top 10 countries of birth Japan-born had the highest proportion of those intending to relocate elsewhere in Australia at 14.4 per cent. This was closely followed by Sri Lanka-born (13.7 per cent), India-born (12.9 per cent) and Malaysia-born (12.2 per cent).

Figure 5.2: Intention to move after grant of permanent residence for those born in MES and non-MES countries



6. Labour force outcomes

In this section the following measures of labour market success are described:

- Employment and participation rates
- Occupation same as nominated in SIR application
- Occupational skill level
- Job satisfaction
- Hours worked.

Employment and participation rates

The overall employment rate for SIR Primary Applicants was 97.8 per cent and the participation rate was 99.0 per cent. The employment rate is the number of people employed described as a percentage of the sum of those employed and the number of people unemployed and looking for work. The participation rate is the number of people employed and those unemployed and looking for work described as a percentage of the total population.

Between wave one and two there was a dramatic increase in the employment rate, from 84.7 per cent at wave one to 97.8 per cent at wave two. The participation rate on the other hand was virtually static: 99.1 per cent at wave one compared with 99.0 per cent at wave two.

Significant differences in the overall employment rate at wave two were as follows:

- Better employment rate for males (98.1 per cent) compared to females (97.1 per cent). A comparison of employment rate by age for males and females is at Figure 6.3
- Lower employment rate for the 40 and over age group (95.9 per cent) compared to the other age groups
- Higher employment rate for MES country-born (99.6 per cent) compared to non MES country-born (97.2 per cent)
- Employment rate was higher for offshore applicants (98.2 per cent) compared to onshore applicants (95.7 per cent).

Table 6.1 shows how the employment and participation rate varies across both the waves and between the different categories. It should be noted that the overall rates were higher than the national benchmark of 95.7 per cent (employment rate) and 65.2 per cent (participation rate) at December 2007. The December 2007 national employment figures were the highest in the two year period for when wave two was conducted.

Contrary to wave one outcomes, the employment rate at wave two for offshore applicants was much higher than that of the onshore applicants. The difference in employment rate for offshore and onshore applicants was positive 2.5 percentage points at wave two compared to a positive 0.4 percentage points at wave one.

As can be seen from Figure 6.1, of the Primary Applicants who were living in a regional area for 18 months, 78.5 per cent were employed on a full time basis for 12 to 18 months and 3.9 per cent were never employed on a full time basis during the 18 month period. The full time employment status of those who did not live in a regional area for the full 18 month period of their grant or residence in Australia is at Figure 6.2.

Table 6.1: Employment and participation rates for selected characteristics

	Wave one		Wave two	
	Employment rate	Participation rate	Employment rate	Participation rate
Total SIR respondents	84.7	99.1	97.8	99.0
Age Group				
20-24 years	89.9	98.4	96.8	100.0
25-29 years	79.9	99.2	97.8	98.8
30-34 years	89.4	99.7	98.4	98.0
35-39 years	83.1	98.9	98.7	99.3
40+ years	86.1	99.0	95.9	100.0
Sex				
Female	78.0	98.1	97.1	98.0
Male	88.0	99.6	98.1	99.6
Where visa was obtained				
Offshore	84.8	99.2	98.2	99.5
Onshore	84.4	98.7	95.7	97.0
Sponsoring State				
SA	83.5	99.4	97.7	99.0
VIC	81.6	98.3	97.0	100.0
QLD	94.2	98.9	98.9	96.9
WA	89.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
NSW	80.6	100.0	96.9	100.0
TAS	90.0	96.8	97.7	100.0
NT	85.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
County of birth				
Main English Speaking Country	91.5	100.0	99.6	99.6
Non-Main English Speaking Country	82.5	98.8	97.2	98.9
Top 3 countries of birth:				
United Kingdom	93.1	100.0	99.5	99.5
India	91.2	98.8	99.4	98.7
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	74.6	99.0	96.3	99.3
Nominated Occupation at Time of Application				
Professionals	82.6	98.9	97.4	98.8
Tradespersons	94.4	100.0	98.1	99.4
Managers and Administrators	74.6	97.5	100.0	100.0
Associate Professionals	89.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
Spouse/Partner	72.0	68.0	77.8	85.1

Figure 6.1: Period of full time employment for those who lived in regional Australia for 18 months – wave two

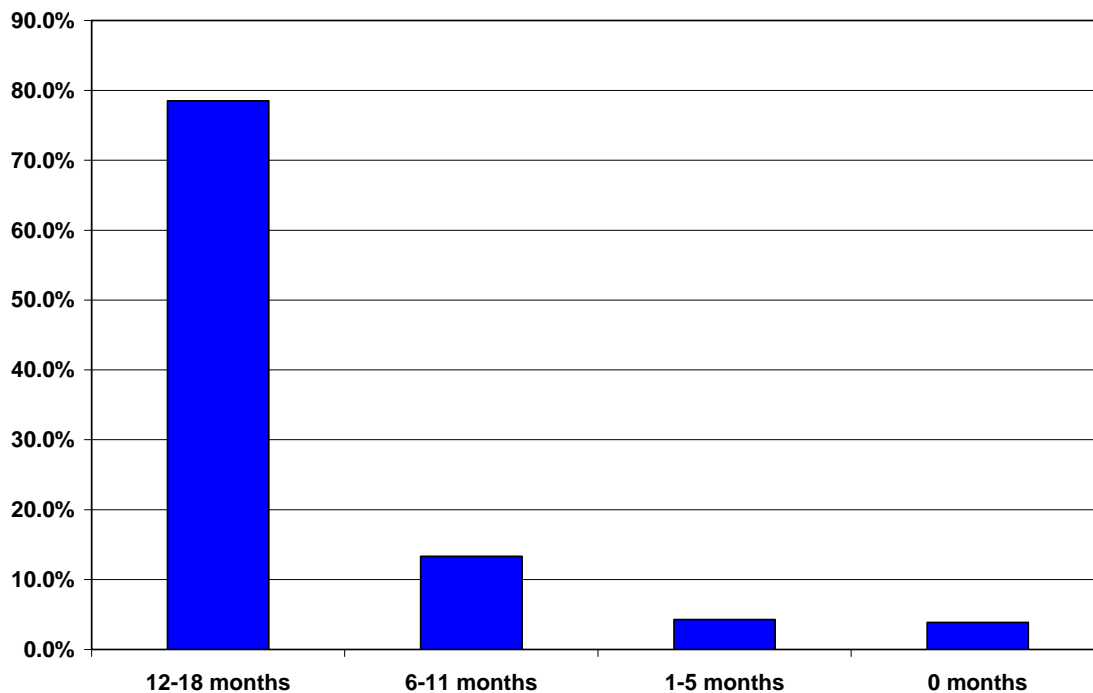


Figure 6.2: Period of full time employment for those who did not live in regional Australia for 18 months – wave two

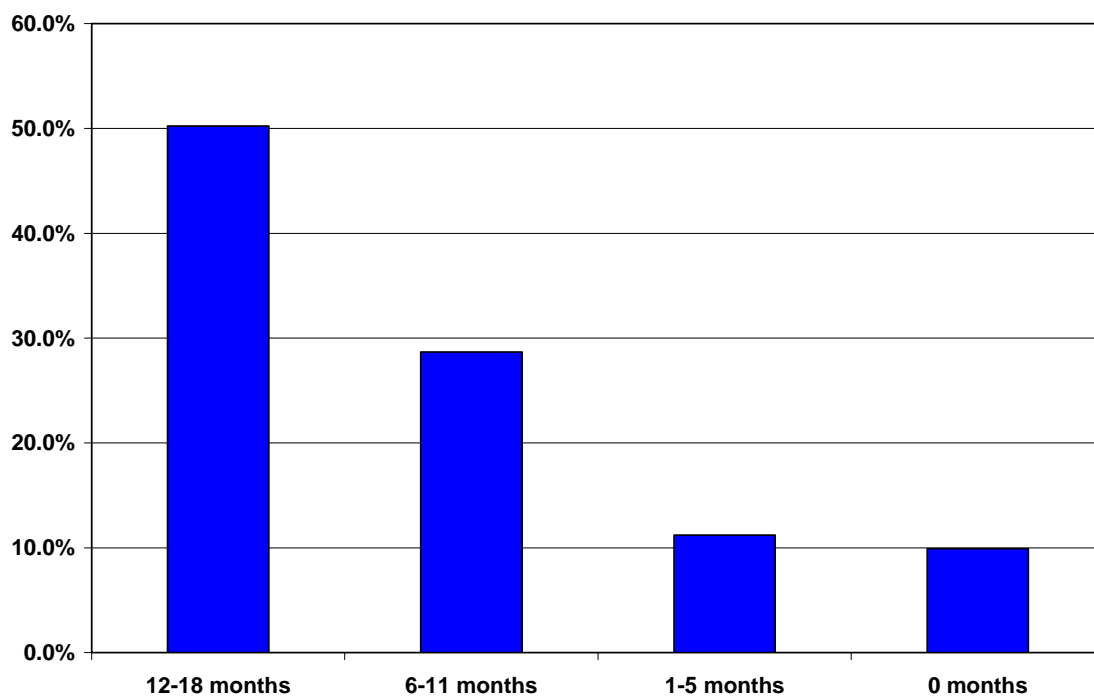
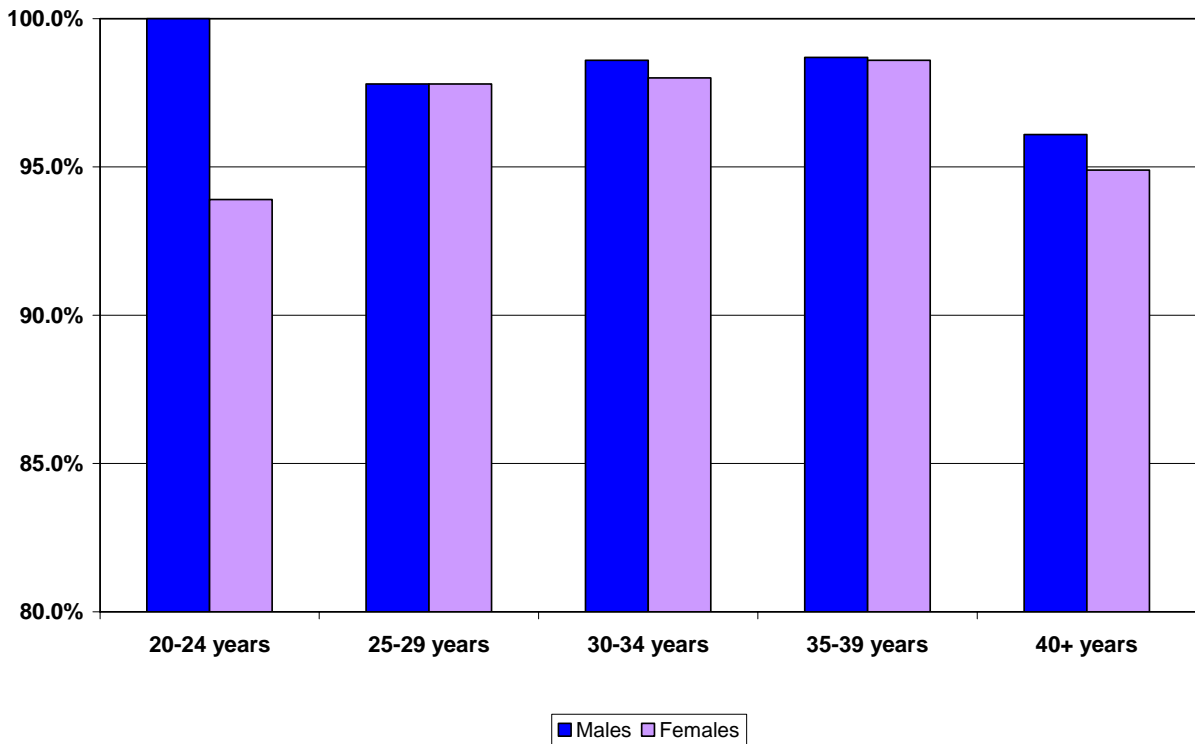


Figure 6.3: Employment rate by age and sex at wave two



Occupation same as nominated in SIR visa application

Respondents were asked if their current job at wave two of the survey was the same occupation as that which was nominated in their SIR application, 60.7 per cent reported working in the same occupation as nominated in their SIR application.

Those born in MES countries were more likely to be employed in their nominated occupation, 83.4 per cent compared to 53.1 per cent for those born in non-MES countries. Of the top three source countries, 84.2 per cent of the United Kingdom-born were working in their nominated occupation compared with 50.6 per cent of the India-born and 50.2 per cent of the China-born.

Among the larger states, Queensland had the largest percentage of residents who were employed in their nominated occupation (71.9 per cent) followed by South Australia (59.6 per cent) and Victoria (59.7 per cent). Those who had resided in a regional area for the full 18 months were more likely to be in their nominated occupation than those who had not (62.9 per cent compared to 54.6 per cent).

Reasons for not working in their nominated occupation varied, with 29.7 per cent stating *English language difficulties*, 21.5 per cent *qualifications not recognised*, 18.3 per cent *insufficient experience or training* and 16.4 per cent *employers think you are too young*.

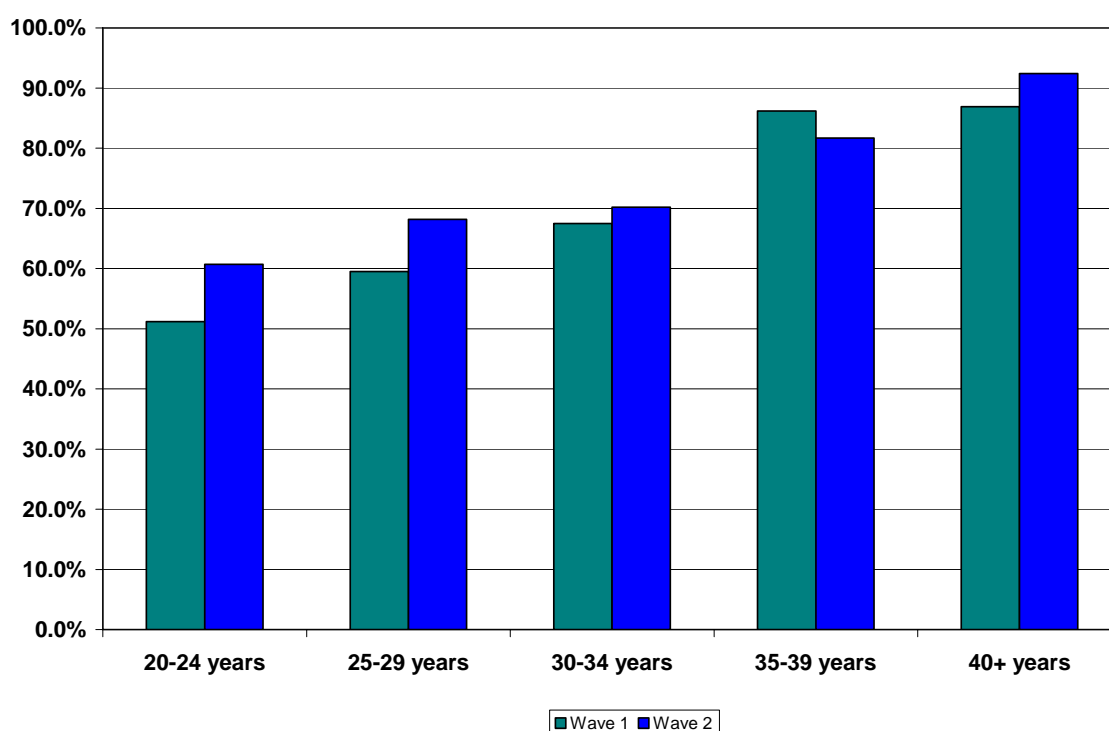
Occupational skill level

At the time of their wave two survey, respondents were asked to state their current job and describe the specific duties of the job. These jobs were coded against the 4 digit code of the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), second edition. For the purpose of this analysis, all the occupations that have an ASCO code starting with 1, 2, 3 or 4 (i.e. Managers and administrators, Professionals, Associate professionals and Tradespersons and related workers) were categorised as skilled occupations. Elementary, clerical, sales and service workers and Labourers and related workers were defined as unskilled. The remaining occupations were classified as semi-skilled.

Of those who were employed, 74.1 per cent reported working in a skilled occupation. The MES country-born (95.5 per cent) were much more likely to be working in a skilled occupation than the non-MES country-born (67.1 per cent). Among the three larger SIR states, Queensland had the highest proportion working in a skilled occupation (80.5 per cent) followed by Victoria (76.2 per cent) and South Australia (73.0 per cent).

The likelihood of a job being skilled increased with age. The 20-24 age group had a lower rate of holding a skilled job (60.7 per cent) compared to the 40 and over age group (92.4 per cent). Figure 6.4 compares the proportion of those who were employed in a skilled job by age group at wave one and wave two.

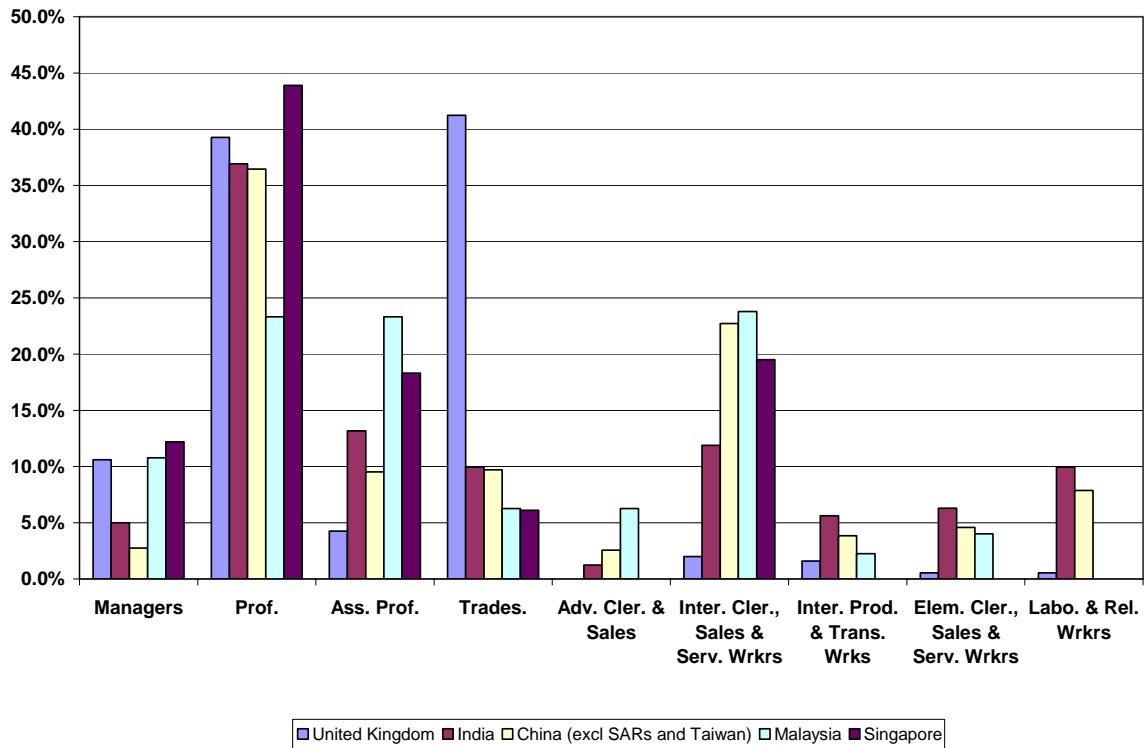
Figure 6.4: Likelihood of job being skilled by age, waves one and two



Of the employed, 37.3 per cent worked in a Professional occupation, 17.2 per cent were Tradespersons and related workers, 13.2 per cent worked as Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers and 12.6 per cent worked as Associate professionals. SIR Primary Applicants born in an MES country were much more likely to be working as a Tradesperson and related worker (35.6 per cent) than those born in a non-MES country (11.1 per cent). The occupation group for the top 5 source countries are at Figure 6.5 in the following page.

The most popular occupations were computing professionals (9.2 per cent), marketing and advertising professionals (2.7 per cent) and special care workers (2.1 per cent). MES country-born were predominantly employed as computing professionals (9.4 per cent), painters and decorators (4.9 per cent) and communications tradespersons (4.9 per cent). Among non-MES country-born, the following occupations were popular - computing professionals (9.1 per cent), marketing and advertising professionals (3.1 per cent) and special care workers (2.8 per cent).

Figure 6.5: Occupation by top 5 countries of birth at wave two



Job satisfaction

SIR Primary Applicants were generally positive towards their job. Overall, 86.4 per cent of the employed reported their job as being *really good* or *good* and 12.0 per cent said their job was *neither good nor bad*. Only 1.0 per cent described their job as being *bad* or *really bad*.

When it came to attitude towards the job there were similar responses between males and females and the various age groups. According to Table 6.2, when comparing the larger SIR states Queensland residence had a more positive attitude towards their job. There were notable differences in the job attitudes of those born in MES countries and those born in non-MES countries (Figure 6.6). As expected those who had a similar occupation as nominated in their SIR visa application had a very favourable attitude towards their job compared to those who were employed in a different occupation (Figure 6.7).

Table 6.2: Attitude towards job by resident state at wave two

Job attitude	State of residence (percentage)							Overall
	SA	VIC	QLD	WA	NSW	TAS	NT	
Really Good	44.4	46.2	55.1	65.2	54.0	46.0	60.0	46.9
Good	40.6	40.8	38.7	28.2	21.1	43.1	33.5	39.5
Neither good nor bad	13.3	10.9	4.9	3.3	24.9	10.9	6.4	12.0
Bad	0.8	2.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Really Bad	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Not stated	0.8	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6

Figure 6.6: Attitude towards job by MES and non-MES source countries at wave two

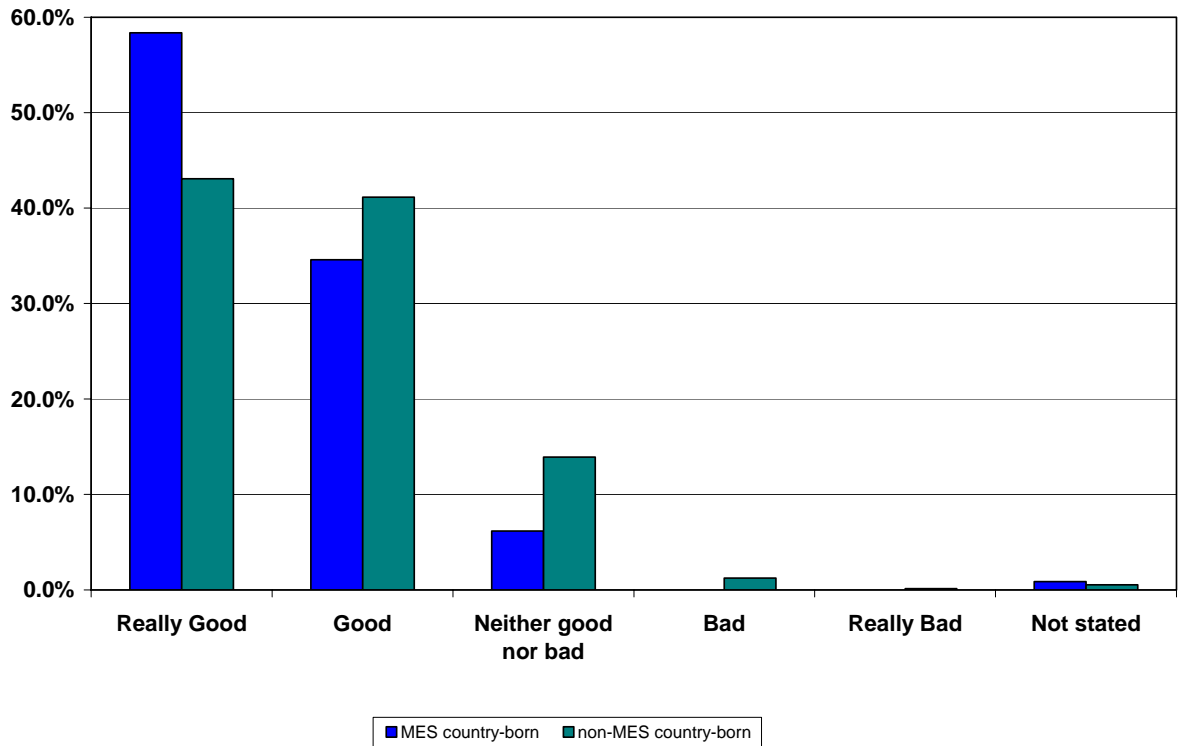
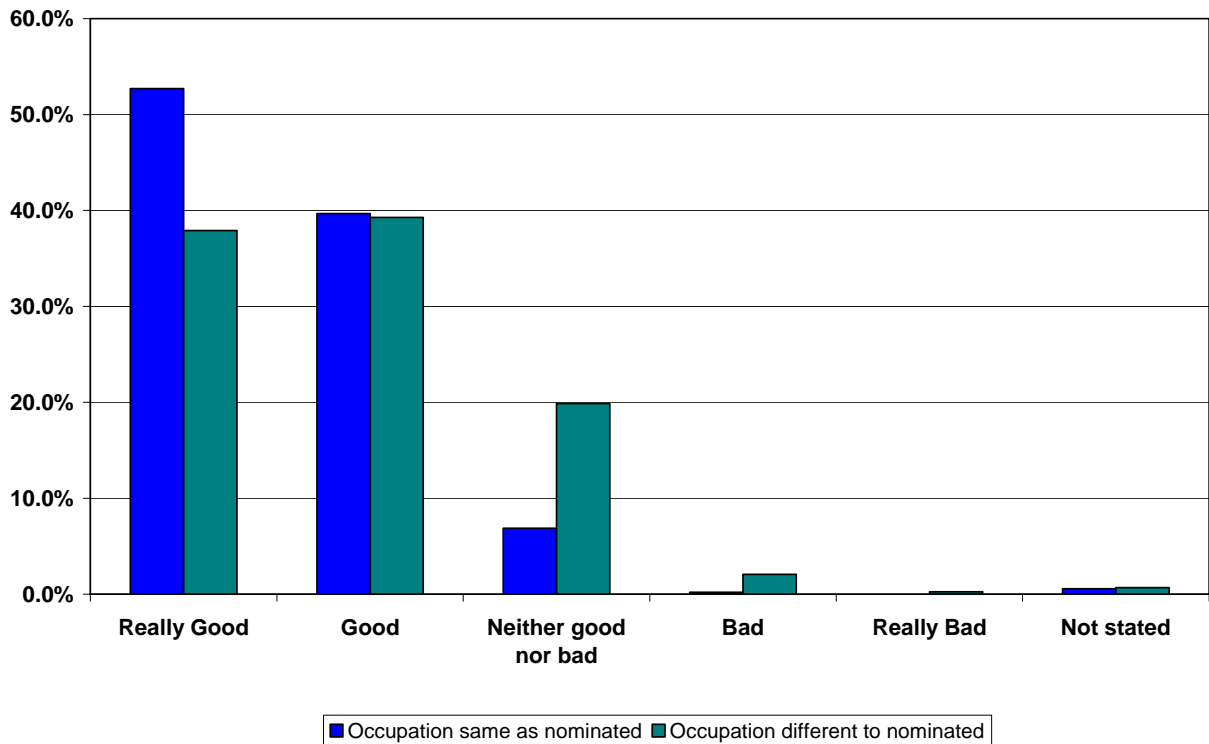


Figure 6.7: Attitude towards job by those in occupation same as nominated or different at wave two



Hours worked

Of the SIR Primary Applicants who were employed, 92.5 per cent were working in full-time employment, that is working 35 hours or more per week. 7.7 per cent of those who were employed worked 50 hours or more per week.

Offshore applicants were more likely to be in full-time employment than onshore applicants (93.6 per cent compared to 87.4 per cent).

MES country-born had a slightly higher median hours worked of 40.3 hours per week compared to 38.9 hours per week for those born in non-MES country. This compares to an overall median of 39.0 hours per week for all SIR Primary Applicants.

7. Income

Median annual income

The median annual income of SIR Primary Applicants who were employed was \$42 100. There had been significant improvements in earnings between both the waves with a \$4000 increase in the median annual income. Compared to wave two of the third Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA 3) the median income at wave two of SIR was between the median income for Family Stream Primary Applicants (\$37 000) and Skill Stream Primary Applicants (\$47 000).

Table 7.1 compares the median income for different categories at wave one and wave two. The people who are most likely to have higher incomes can be classified as follows:

- The median income of males were \$5000 more than females
- At both the waves older SIR visa holders had a higher Median income than younger SIR visa holders. The 20-24 age group had a median income of \$37 800 compared to \$55 100 for the 40 and over age group at wave two
- Offshore SIR applicants had a higher median income than onshore applicants (\$44 200 compared to \$39 900 for onshore applicants at wave two)
- MES country-born had a higher median income than non-MES country-born, a difference of about \$21 000
- Median income increased with higher IELTS scores (\$36 600 for IELTS band 5 and \$51 000 for IELTS band 8 or over)
- Those who were employed in their nominated occupation had a median income which was \$10 000 higher than those who were not employed in their nominated occupation.

Table 7.1: Median income by selected characteristics at waves one and two

	Annual Income	
	Wave one	Wave two
Age group		
20-24 years	\$31,900	\$37,800
25-29 years	\$36,100	\$40,000
30-34 years	\$36,700	\$41,600
35-39 years	\$46,800	\$49,900
40+ years	\$50,000	\$55,100
Sex		
Female	\$33,300	\$39,800
Male	\$41,600	\$45,100
Where visa was obtained		
Offshore	\$40,200	\$44,200
Onshore	\$31,800	\$39,900

Table 7.1: continued

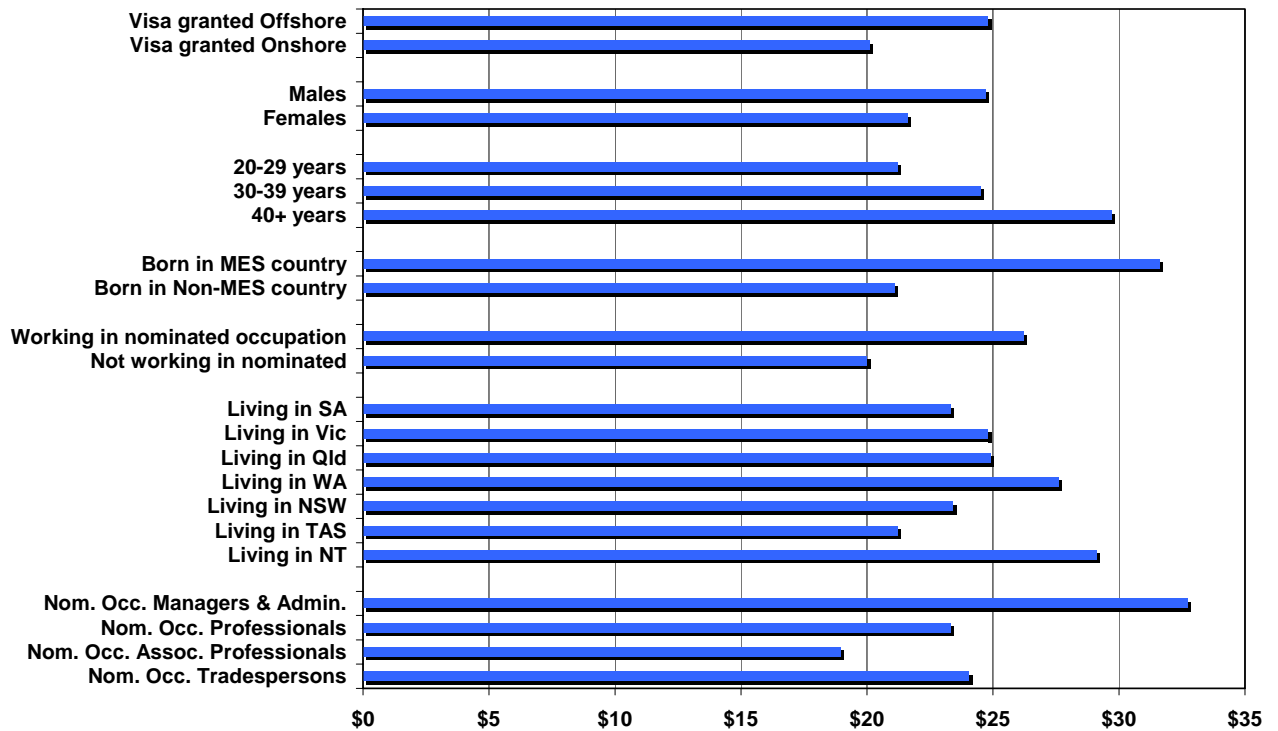
Residence state		
SA	\$38,300	\$41,700
VIC	\$36,600	\$42,500
QLD	\$42,300	\$47,100
WA	\$52,400	\$51,800
NSW	\$31,300	\$44,600
TAS	\$31,100	\$43,900
NT	\$47,500	\$55,900
Location		
In regional area from arrival/grant to wave	n.a	\$44,200
Not in regional area from arrival/grant to wave	n.a	\$39,800
County of birth		
Main English Speaking Country	\$52,400	\$60,600
Non-Main English Speaking Country	\$34,200	\$39,800
Top 3 countries of birth:		
United Kingdom	\$53,000	\$60,400
India	\$36,400	\$39,600
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	\$30,000	\$36,700
IELTS scores		
Did not do IELTS	n.a	\$50,200
IELTS band 8 or better	n.a	\$51,100
IELTS band 7	n.a	\$43,100
IELTS band 6	n.a	\$38,600
IELTS band 5	n.a	\$36,600
Nominated occupation at time of application		
Professionals	\$36,400	\$41,700
Tradespersons and related workers	\$41,800	\$46,800
Managers and administrators	\$57,800	\$62,400
Associate professionals	\$34,400	\$38,700
Working in nominated occupation		
Working in nominated occupation	\$44,200	\$48,700
Not working in nominated occupation	\$31,300	\$38,300
Skill level of current occupation		
Skilled	\$44,200	\$47,000
Semi-skilled	\$29,900	\$36,800
Unskilled	\$30,400	\$33,900
Full or part-time job		
Full-time	\$41,700	\$44,100
Part-time	\$22,400	\$28,700

Note: n.a indicates that the statistics is not available at wave one.

Average hourly pay rate

The average hourly pay rate between the two waves increased, from \$22 at wave one to \$24 at wave two. A comparison of the hourly pay rate at wave two for selected characteristics is at Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Hourly pay rate by selected characteristics



8. Outcomes of migrating unit partner

Though the scope for the SIR survey population was Primary Applicants, there were a few questions asked that were related to experiences of the partner of the Primary Applicant. At wave two of the survey 66.4 per cent of the Primary Applicants had a partner in Australia. Of those who had a partner in Australia, 85.7 per cent had a partner who was included on their SIR visa application (migrating unit partner) while 14.3 per cent had a partner who was not included in their SIR visa application. Those who had a migrating unit partner in Australia were further asked for the labour force status of their partner, their current job and the income generated from this or other jobs.

Labour force status

The employment rate for partners at wave two increased to 77.8 per cent from 72.0 at wave one. The participation rate had a larger increase of around 17 percentage points to 85.1 per cent to wave two. Partners of Primary Applicants who were born in MES countries had higher employment and lower participation rate than those partners of Primary Applicants born in non-MES countries (91.0 per cent employment rate and 82.2 per cent participation rate compared to 71.0 per cent and 86.7 per cent respectively for non-MES country-born).

Table 8.1 shows the large variance in employment rates and participation rates between migrating unit partners and their accompanying Primary Applicant for both the waves.

Table 8.1: Employment and participation rates at waves one and two

	Wave one		Wave two	
	Employment rate	Participation rate	Employment rate	Participation rate
SIR Primary Applicants	84.7	99.1	97.8	99.0
Migrating unit partner	72.0	68.0	77.8	85.1

Of the migrating unit partners who were employed, 25.2 per cent worked in the Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers occupation, 20.0 per cent as Professionals, 16.0 per cent as Associate professionals and 13.3 per cent worked as labourers and related workers.

Median annual income

The median annual income of migrating unit partners who were employed at wave two was \$33 500, this compares to the wave one median income of \$31 800. A comparison of median annual income between SIR Primary Applicants and their accompanying migrating unit partners is at Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Median annual income at waves one and two

	Median annual income	
	Wave one	Wave two
SIR Primary Applicants	\$38 400	\$42 100
Migrating unit partner	\$31 800	\$33 500