

Family Migration

Family Visa Grants

The Family Stream of Australia's Migration Program enables the reunion of immediate family members such as spouses, fiancé(e)s, interdependent partners, dependent children, adopted children, stepchildren, and certain other members of extended families such as parents, orphan relatives, carers, aged dependent relatives, and remaining relatives. There are no skill or English language requirements for applicants in this stream; family migrants are selected on the basis of their family relationship with their sponsor or nominator in Australia.

As illustrated by Fig. 2-12, the annual number of Family visas issued fell sharply from 1995-96 when they represented 68.7 per cent of total Migration Program grants, to 1997-98 when they stabilised at around 46.7 per cent of total grants. This shift occurred as the Australian Government refocused the Migration Program towards skilled migration, to reflect Australia's current social and economic needs, while maintaining a strong commitment to family migration.

The total number of Family visas granted in 1999-2000 was 32,000 (45.6 per cent of the Migration Program), further shifting the balance of the Migration Program towards skilled migration. 3,751 Family Stream visas were granted to people born in the PRC, 3,464 to people from the United Kingdom, 2,659 to people from the Philippines and 1,882 to people from Viet Nam.

Partner

The Partner category includes spouse, prospective marriage and interdependency visa subclasses. In 1999-2000 Partners, 62.4 per cent of whom were female, accounted for 83.3 per cent (26,650 persons) of Family Stream visa grants; 22,970 were spouse visa grants, 3,360 prospective marriage visas and 320 interdependency visas. While the planning level for 2000-01 Family Stream visa grants has remained steady, the planning level of spouse and prospective marriage visas has increased, reflecting increased demand for this uncapped component.

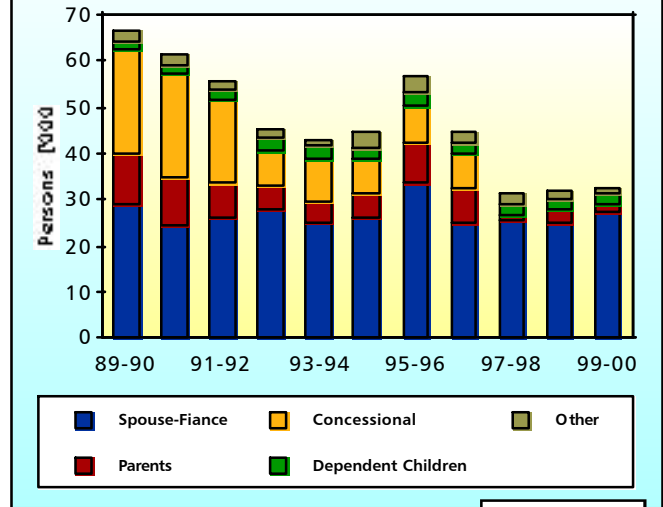
Fig. 2-14 illustrates the proportion of spouses and fiancé(e)s granted a permanent visa from particular countries in 1999-2000. The largest number came from the United Kingdom (2,999 persons), followed by the PRC (2,258 persons), the Philippines (2,135 persons), Viet Nam (1,601 persons) and Lebanon (1,308 persons).

Child

The Child category includes Dependent Children, Orphan Relatives and Adopted Children. In 1999-2000 Child visas accounted for 6.8 per cent (2,160 persons) of Family Stream visa grants.

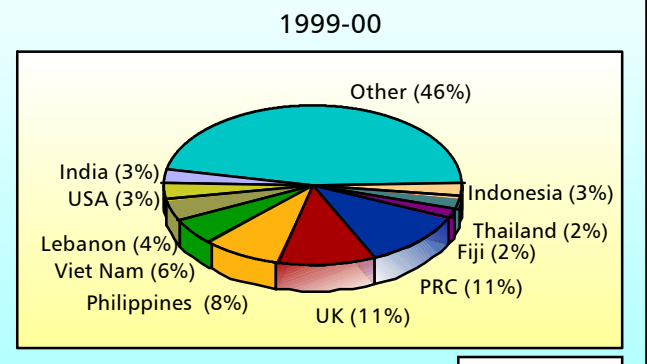
In 1999 an adoption agreement was signed with China. At this stage, the adoption of Chinese children into Australian families is unlikely to have a significant impact on the number of Child visas granted.

Fig. 2-12: Family Visa Grants by Visa Sub-class



Source Data: IMIRS

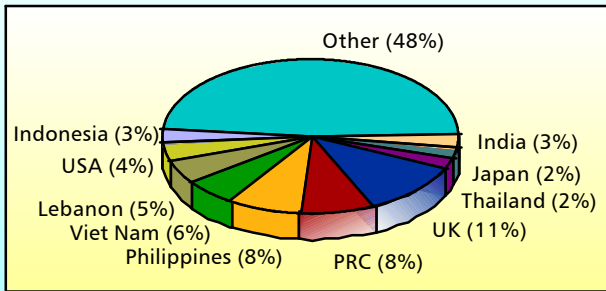
Fig. 2-13: Family Stream Visas Grants by Country of Birth



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-14: Spouse and Fiance Visa Grants by Country of Birth

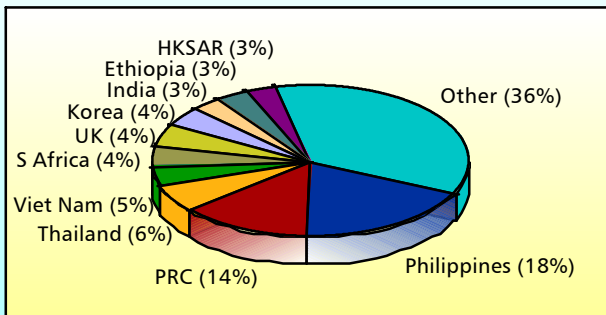
1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-15: Dependent Children Visa Grants by Country of Birth

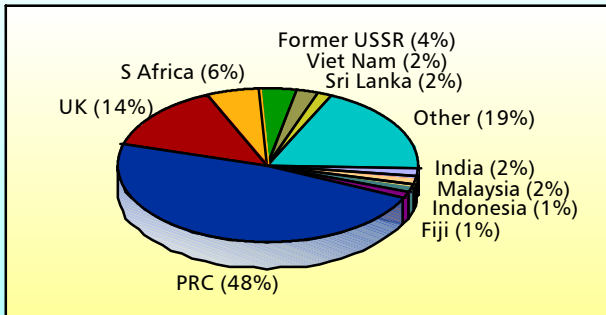
1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-16: Parent Visa Grants by Country of Birth

1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-15 illustrates the proportions of dependent children migrating to Australia in 1999-2000 from particular countries. Figures include children who were adopted overseas and children born of people resident in Australia. The largest number came from the Philippines (396 persons), followed by the PRC (293 persons) and Thailand (120 persons).

Parent

Following research indicating that migrants in the Parent category pose a significantly higher ongoing cost to the Australian community, the Government decided to introduce changes to parent entry arrangements whereby some of those costs were shifted to the sponsor and the applicant. In March 1999, these changes were disallowed in the Senate. As a result of the disallowance and in order to better manage the financial costs associated with aged migrant entry, the Government reduced the number of parent places available in 1999-2000 to 500.

In November 1999, the Government introduced the Designated Parent to assist only those parents who applied for the parent visa that was disallowed. In 1999-2000, 1,390 Designated Parent visas were granted and the remaining 750 visas are expected to be granted in the 2000-01 program year. A total of 1,900 Parent visas were granted in 1999-2000 (including Parent and Designated Parent subclasses), representing 5.9 per cent of the Family stream. In 1998-99, a total of 3,120 Parent visas were granted including 270 visas in the disallowed visa category.

For the 2000-01 program year, a visa place contingency reserve of 4,000 places was made available for a proposed new visa category. However, in October 2000, the legislation for the proposed visa category was defeated in the Senate. Therefore the Government has maintained the number of Parent visa places at 500 for the 2000-01 program year.

Fig. 2-16 illustrates the proportions of parents granted a permanent visa from particular countries in 1999-2000. The largest number came from the PRC (910 persons), followed by the United Kingdom (269 persons), South Africa (108 persons), the former USSR (71 persons), Viet Nam (43 persons) and Sri Lanka (35 persons).

Priority Processing

Under the Government's General Direction on the order of priority for processing Family stream applications, higher priority is given to immediate family categories such as dependent children (including children for adoption and orphan relatives), spouses, fiancé(e)s and interdependent partners of sponsors in Australia. Lower priority is accorded to all other Family stream applicants such as parents and other family members.

Onshore Residence Visa Grants

While most people apply for migration at an Australian mission overseas and enter on a permanent visa, in some circumstances people already in Australia on a temporary visa are able to apply to remain permanently, have their applications processed onshore and be granted a permanent visa. People granted residence after arrival in Australia are included in the Migration Program. Permanent visas may be granted onshore to applicants for most Family Stream categories, except fiances, and to some Skill Stream categories, including the Employer Nomination Scheme, the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, the Business Skills category and the '1 November 1993' categories.

In 1999–2000, 17,340 persons were granted residence after applying for a permanent visa in Australia. This was 15.2 per cent more than in 1998–99. The increase in 1999–2000 reflects the grant of 2,560 'Resolution of Status' visas. These visas were introduced in 1997 and provided for certain groups to be granted permanent residence after ten years in Australia. This was the largest cohort and the remaining visas are expected to be spread over the next four years. Fig. 2–17 illustrates the trend of onshore visa grants over the past decade. The large one-off increase in 1994–95 reflects the grant of the majority of '1 November' visas, mainly to Chinese nationals in Australia at the time of the Tiennanmen Square uprising.

There has been a 43.5 per cent increase in total Employer Nomination Scheme, Labour Agreements and Business Skills grants onshore (included in the Skill Stream in Fig. 2–18) since 1996–97. This increase corresponds to a rise in the number of skilled workers and business people coming to Australia on temporary visas who later apply for permanent visas, sponsored by their employer or on the basis of having operated a successful business in Australia. The Temporary Entry Section on page 39 has more details about these temporary visas.

As in previous years, the majority of people granted residence onshore in 1999–2000 were approved on spouse grounds (50.5 per cent). Employer Nomination Scheme, Labour Agreements and Business Skills visas accounted for a further 26.9 per cent of all onshore grants. The Resolution of Status visa grants (included in 'other' in Fig. 2–18) accounted for 14.8 per cent of all onshore grants.

In 1999–2000, persons born in the PRC accounted for 2,549 onshore residence visas, an increase of 124 per cent from 1998–99. The United Kingdom accounted for a further 2,234, a fall from 2,926 in 1998–99. South Africans decreased their share of onshore visa grants from 6.0 per cent in 1998–99 to 3.7 per cent in 1999–2000. The share of onshore visas granted to people from the USA continued to fall from 4.6 per cent to 3.7 per cent and the share of onshore grants to people from Indonesia also declined from 3.5 per cent in 1998–99 to 2.6 per cent.

Fig. 2-17: Onshore Residence Visa Grants

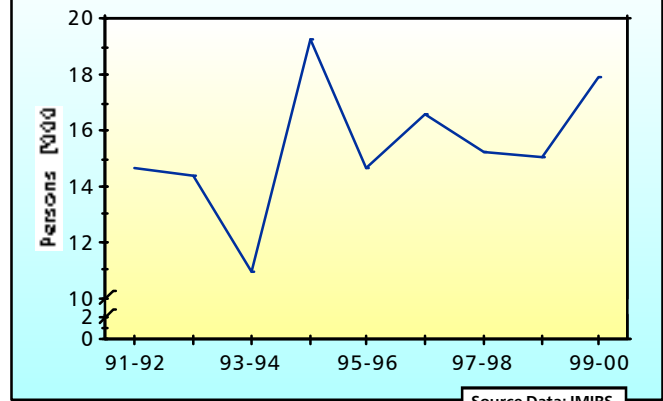


Fig. 2-18: Onshore Residence Visa Grants by Visa Category

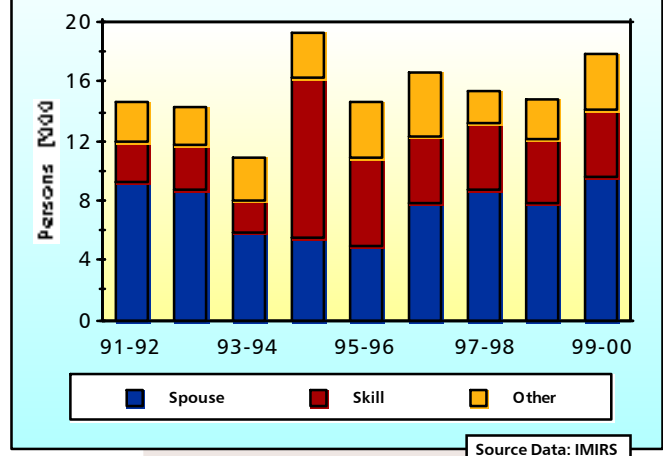


Fig. 2-19: Onshore Residence Visa Grants by Country of Birth

