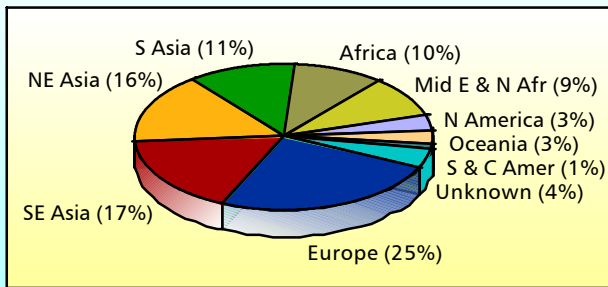


Summary of 1999 2000 Visa Grants

Fig. 2-28: Visa Grants by Region of Birth

1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-29: Visa Grants by Top Ten Countries of Birth

1999-00

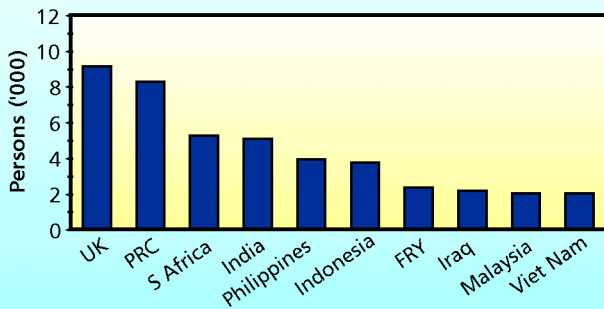
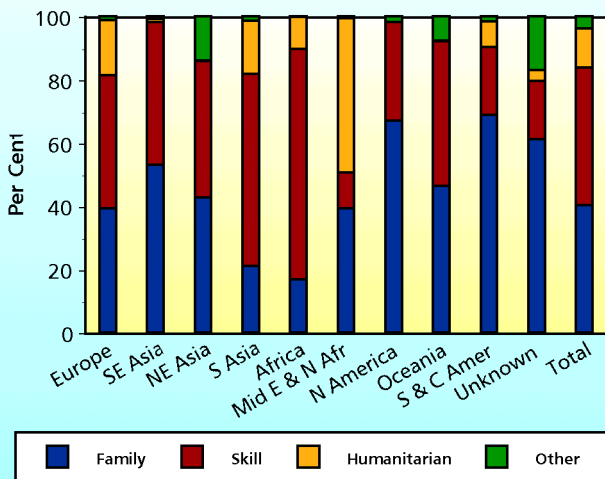


Fig. 2-30: Visa Grants by Region of Birth and Stream

1999-00



Source Regions and Countries

The total number of onshore and offshore visas granted to migrants and humanitarian applicants in 1999–2000 was 80,553 (that is, a combination of the Migration and Humanitarian Program visa grants, excluding Protection Visas granted to asylum seekers in Australia, which are discussed on page 27).

These figures do not include New Zealand citizens who are not part of Australia's Migration or Humanitarian Programs. New Zealand settler arrivals are discussed in Chapter 3.

One quarter of all permanent residence visa grants in 1999–2000 were to persons from Europe (including the former USSR), making it the largest region of birth for migrants to Australia. Other major source regions were Southeast Asia (accounting for 17.3 per cent of visa grants) and Northeast Asia (15.8 per cent).

The top five permanent residence visa grant source countries for 1999–2000 were, the United Kingdom (9,091 visas or 11.3 per cent), the PRC (8,222 or 10.2 per cent), South Africa (5,231 visas or 6.5 per cent), India (5,046 or 6.3 per cent) and the Philippines (3,886 visas or 4.8 per cent).

Source Regions and Eligibility Stream

Visa grants by eligibility stream vary between source regions. Of visa grants as a whole, Skill Stream visas accounted for 43.9 per cent (35,330), Family Stream visas for 39.7 per cent (31,990 persons) and Humanitarian Program visas 12.8 per cent (10,383 persons). Special Eligibility visas made up the last 3.5 per cent (2,850 persons) of all visa grants.

Europe (including the United Kingdom) was the largest source region of birth for people granted Family visas, accounting for 24.2 per cent followed by Southeast Asia with 22.7 per cent. Europe, including the United Kingdom, was also the largest source region for Skill visas granted in 1999–2000 accounting for 24.0 per cent. 18.0 per cent of Skill visa grants were made to people from Southeast Asia and Africa accounted for a further 16.2 per cent (mainly South Africa). 45.5 per cent of all Humanitarian Program visas were granted to people from Europe (predominantly the former Yugoslavia), while 36.0 per cent were granted to people from the Middle East and Southern Asia.

Age Profile

Overall, a larger proportion of visas were granted to children (aged 0 to 14 years, normally accompanying parents) in the Humanitarian Program than in either the Skill or Family Streams of the Migration Program. Visas granted to this age group in 1999–2000 comprised 35.9 per cent of the Special Humanitarian Program, 29.2 per cent of Refugee visas and 25.8 per cent of the Special Assistance Category. In the Migration Program, 27.5 per cent of Skill visas and 11.4 per cent of Family visas were granted to children.

Visas granted to people aged between 15 and 64 years in 1999–2000 comprised 83.4 per cent of the Family Stream, 72.2 per cent of the Skill Stream, 68.2 per cent of the Special Assistance Category, 62.3 per cent of Refugee entrants and 57.4 per cent of the Special Humanitarian Program.

A larger proportion of visas were granted to people of retirement age (over 65 years) in the Special Assistance Category (4.8 per cent) than in the Family Stream (4.7 per cent), followed by the Special Humanitarian Program (1.4 per cent), Refugees (1.7 per cent) and the Skill Stream (0.2 per cent).

Gender Profile

With the exception of the Family Program, more visas were granted to males than females in 1999–2000. Females were the recipients of 60.5 per cent of all Family Stream visas. Males were granted the majority of Skill Stream visas (52.2 per cent), 51.8 per cent of Special Assistance Category visas, 51.3 per cent of Refugee visas and 50.4 per cent of Special Humanitarian Program visas. The predominance of females in the Family Stream is due largely to the fact that significantly more spouse/fiance visa grants were made to females than to males in 1999–2000 (62.4 per cent to females).

Fig. 2-31: Age profile of Visa Grants

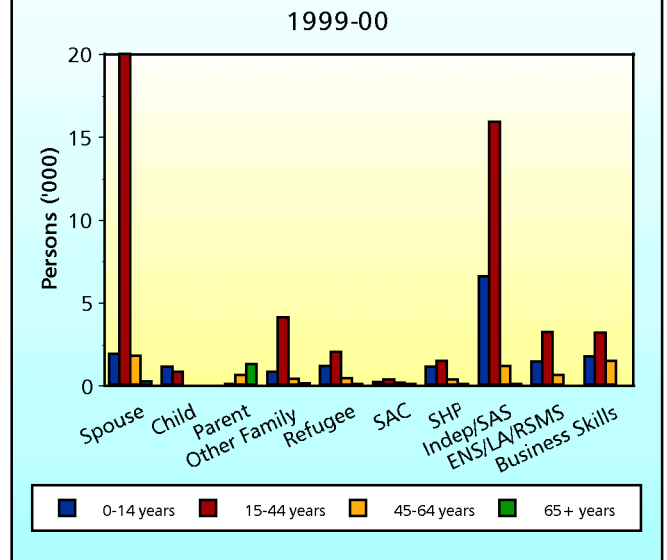
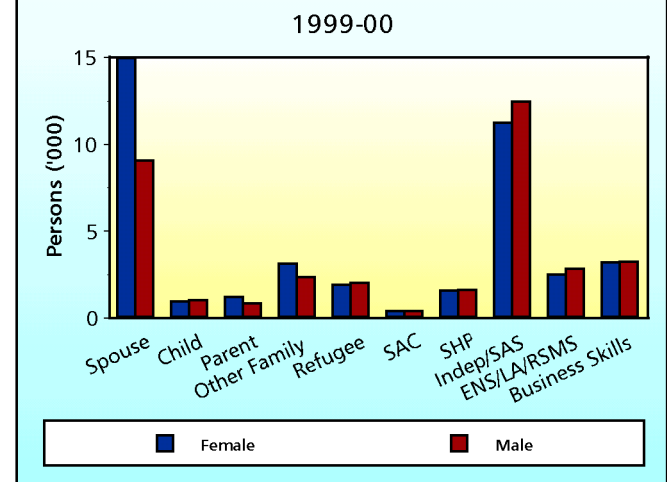
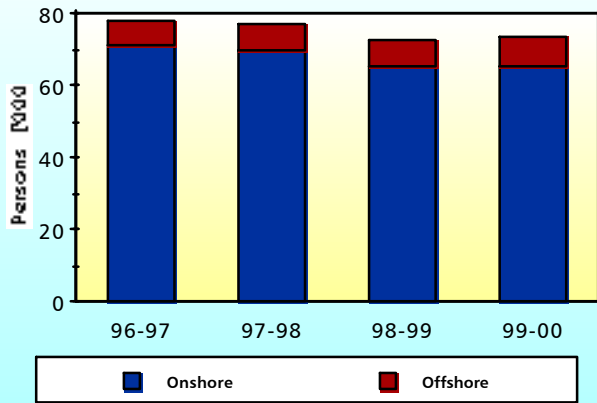


Fig. 2-32: Gender Profile of Visa Grants



Resident Return Visas

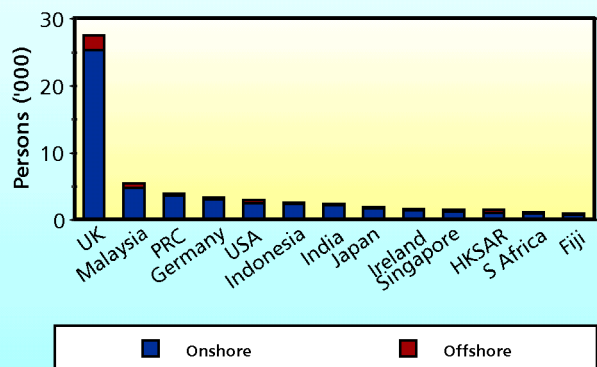
Fig. 2-33: Resident Return Visas Granted Onshore and Offshore



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-34: Resident Return Visas Granted by Country of Citizenship

1999-00



The purpose of Resident Return visas is to facilitate the re-entry into Australia of non-citizen permanent residents; and ensure that only those people who have a genuine commitment to residing in Australia, or who are contributing to Australia's well-being, retain the right to return to Australia and remain permanently.

In 1999–2000, 73,129 Resident Return visas were granted to Australian permanent residents. The majority of applications (65,348 or 89.4 per cent) were granted to applicants in Australia, with the remaining 7,781 (10.6 per cent) granted to applicants overseas. The number of Resident Return visas granted during 1999–2000 increased by 437 over the total granted in 1998–99 (72,692). This outcome is against the downward trend of the previous three years. In 1997–98 the total of resident return visas granted was 76,906, down from the previous year's total in 1996–97 of 77,827.

Fig. 2-34 illustrates the distribution of Resident Return visas granted in 1999–2000 by country of citizenship. In 1999–2000 around one third of all Resident Return visas were granted to people with United Kingdom citizenship, followed by citizens of Malaysia, the PRC and Germany.

Australian Citizenship

Acquiring Australian citizenship is a significant expression of a person's commitment to this country and means recognition as an equal member of Australian society. Usually, people born in Australia of Australian parents become Australian citizens by birth; those who migrate may acquire it, upon application, by meeting certain criteria.

Applying for Australian Citizenship

Generally, people can apply for Australian citizenship when they have been present in Australia as a permanent resident for a total of two years in the previous five years, including twelve months in the two years immediately before they apply. While there may be some exceptions, a person seeking citizenship must:

- be a permanent resident and at least 18 years old;
- understand the nature of the application;
- be of good character;
- have a basic knowledge of the English language;
- have an 'adequate knowledge' of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship;
- intend to reside, or continue to reside, in Australia, or maintain a close and continuing association with Australia.

Children under 16 years of age may be included on a responsible parent's application.

Citizenship Responsibilities and Privileges

New Australian citizens have the same basic responsibilities and privileges as Australian-born.

New citizens:

- are entitled, under Australian law, to the same rights as all Australian citizens;
- must enrol on the electoral register and vote in State/Territory and Federal elections;
- may apply for appointment to public office, nominate to stand for election as a Member of Parliament (subject to section 44(i) of the Constitution), apply to enlist in the defence forces or for those government jobs for which citizenship is required;
- may apply for an Australian passport and may re-enter Australia without the need for a re-entry visa when they travel overseas;
- may be protected by Australian diplomatic arrangements while they are overseas and may register their children who are born overseas as Australian citizens; and
- should serve on a jury if called to do so and help defend Australia should the need arise.

Those choosing Australian citizenship make a pledge to be loyal to Australia and its people, share in the belief of the democratic process, respect the rights and liberties of other Australians, and uphold and obey Australia's laws.

Fig. 2-35: Conferrals of Australian Citizenship

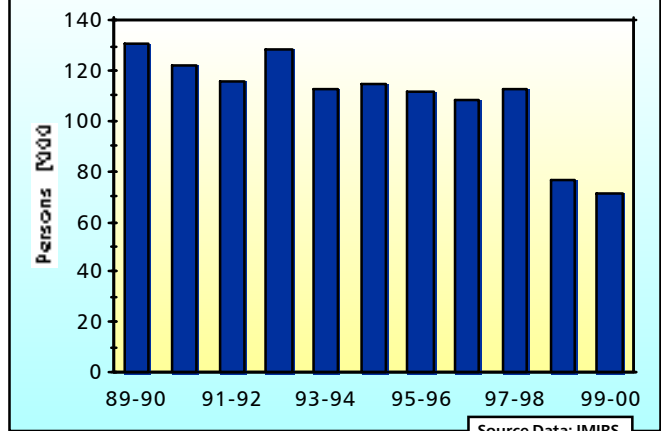
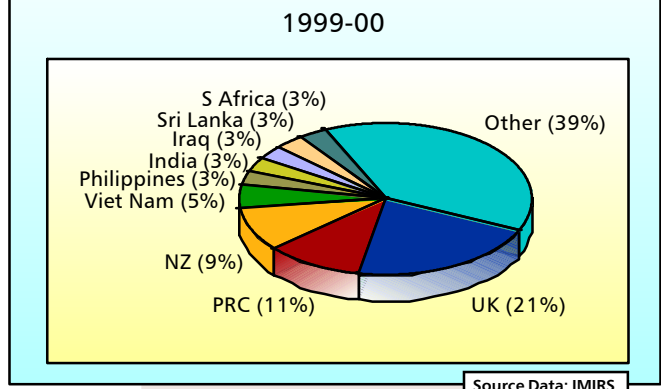


Fig. 2-36: Former Nationality/Citizenship of Persons Conferred Australian Citizenship



Conferrals of Australian Citizenship

In 1999–2000, there were 70,836 persons granted Australian citizenship. This was a decrease of 7.4 per cent from 1998–99 when 76,474 persons became citizens. Despite some fluctuations from year to year, there remains a downward trend in citizenship conferrals from a high in 1989–90 (130,312 conferrals). This decline in the number of people becoming Australian citizens is the result of a number of factors, but in particular is due to reductions in the immigration intake, which is the main feeder group for citizenship applications.

Of the 70,836 who became Australian citizens in 1999–2000, 14,592 were formerly citizens of the United Kingdom. The next highest country of former nationality/citizenship was the PRC (7,664 conferrals) followed by New Zealand (6,676).

Citizenship Rate of Overseas-born

Information from the 1996 Census indicates that there is a wide range of take up of citizenship by people born in different overseas countries. The five countries with the highest take up rates are

Laos and Greece (both with a total take up rate of 96.6 per cent), Latvia (96.4 per cent), Lebanon (96.2 per cent) and Hungary (96.0 per cent). The countries with the lowest take up rates of Australian citizenship at the 1996 Census were Japan (20.0 per cent), New Zealand (34.8 per cent), the USA (50.6 per cent), Malaysia (55.0 per cent) and the PRC (56.1 per cent).

Australian Citizenship Council

The Australian Citizenship Council was established with a two year mandate in August 1998 as an independent body to advise the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs on Australian citizenship matters referred to it by the Government.

On 18 February 2000, the Council's report, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*, was launched by the Minister. The report makes recommendations on contemporary issues in Australian citizenship policy and law and how to promote community awareness of the significance of Australian citizenship for all Australians, particularly as a unifying force. The Council's report is available on the Web at www.immi.gov.au/citizenship/report.htm.