

Working Holiday Makers

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program provides for the temporary entry and stay of young people wanting to combine holidaying in Australia with the opportunity to supplement travel funds through incidental employment, and thus experience closer contact with the local community.

The program has been found to be of value to Australia because it:

- generates economic benefits;
- is an important component of the tourism industry;
- enhances the cultural and social development of young people; and
- promotes mutual understanding between Australia and other nations.

Australia has reciprocal working holiday maker arrangements with Canada, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malta, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and from 1 July 2000, with Germany. Applicants from other countries are considered where there might be a benefit both to the applicant and to Australia.

More than 26,000 young Australians travelled overseas under WHM arrangements in 1999. In 1999–2000 there were 74,454 visas granted to young people from overseas to undertake a working holiday in Australia.

In 1996–97 the Joint Standing Committee on Migration (JSCM) held an enquiry into Australia's WHM program. Significant changes come into effect from 1 July 2000 including:

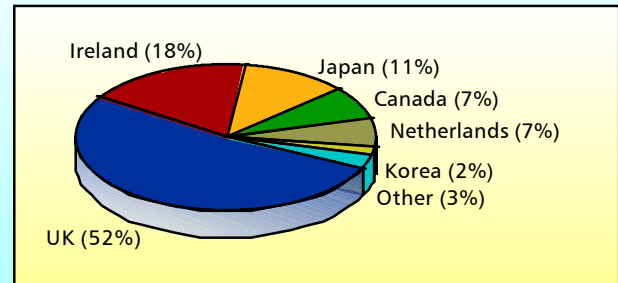
- only citizens of a country with which Australia has a working holiday maker agreement are eligible to apply for a Working Holiday visa;
- applicants must be aged between 18 and 30 years;
- the 'benefit criterion' has been abolished;
- working holiday makers are able to study or train for up to three months;
- working holiday makers are permitted a stay of 12 months from the date of initial entry to Australia, regardless of whether or not they spend the whole period in Australia; and
- no Working Holiday visa applications will be able to be lodged or granted onshore (that is, working holiday makers are no longer eligible to apply for a further Working Holiday visa to 'top up' or recover in any way time spent outside Australia).

Program Numbers

The number of Working Holiday Maker visas granted has increased in recent years, from around 35,000 in 1994–95 to almost 74,500 in 1999–2000. Factors affecting the growth of visa applications include the strength of economies around the world, the growth of tourism and the staging of events such as the Olympic Games in Sydney this year.

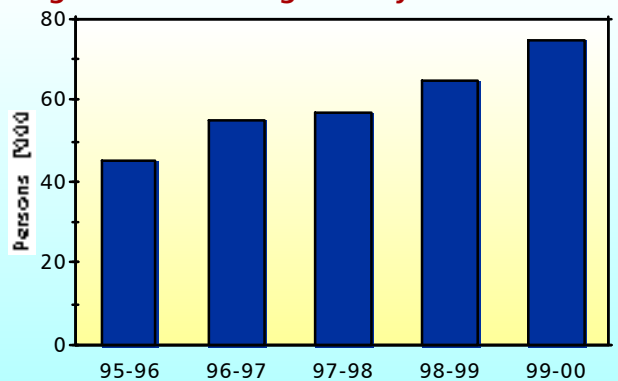
Fig. 4-13: Working Holiday Makers by Country of Citizenship

1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 4-14: Working Holiday Maker Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

Citizens of the United Kingdom received most Working Holiday Maker visas in 1999–2000 (38,900 persons). This was followed by Ireland (13,250 persons), Japan (8,510 persons), Canada (5,420 persons), the Netherlands (4,820 persons), Korea (1,200 persons) and Malta (59 persons).

Work Conditions

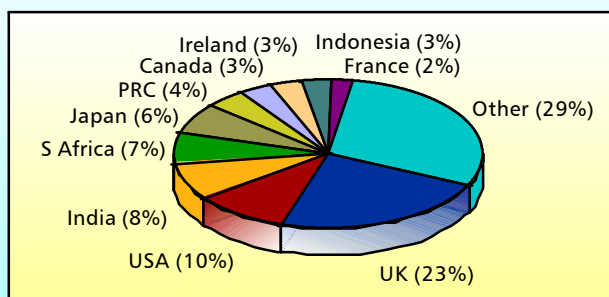
The WHM program benefits industries that rely heavily on casual labour at peak times, particularly the hospitality, horticultural and rural industries.

WHMs are permitted to work on a temporary or casual basis provided that the period of employment with any one employer does not exceed three months. Although permitted to stay in Australia for up to 12 months, they should not work for the full period of their stay but rather use incidental employment to supplement their travel funds. WHMs are paid according to Australian agreements, awards and conditions. Surveys indicate that the average period of each job is around seven weeks, and the average number of jobs held by working holiday makers who respond to the surveys was 2.3. Further research on WHM is currently underway.

Skilled Temporary Residents

Fig. 4-15: Business Temporary Residents by Country of Citizenship

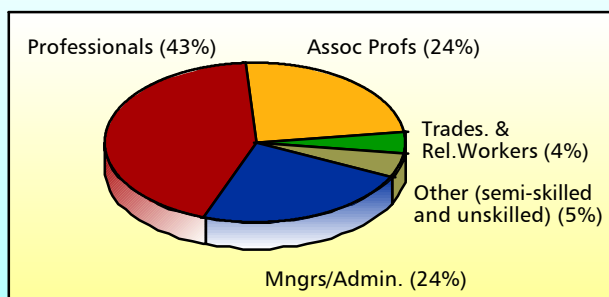
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Source Data: IMIRS

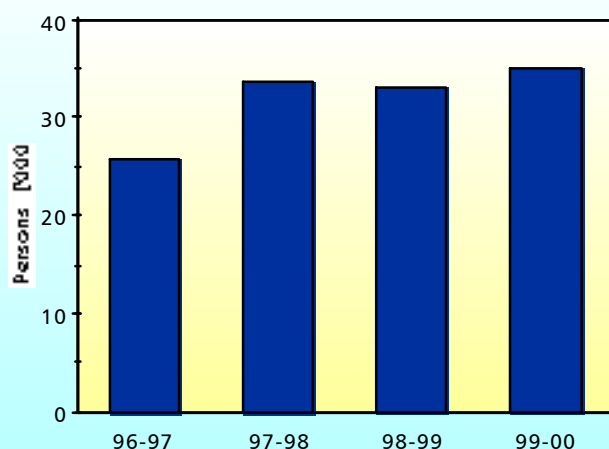
Fig. 4-16: First Arrivals of Business (Long Stay) Primary Applicants by Occupation

1999-00



Source Data: OAD Statistics, DIMA

Fig. 4-17: Long Stay temporary Business Grants



Long stay temporary business visa introduced 1 August 1996.

Source Data: IMIRS

The employer-sponsored temporary business visas allow employers to fill skill shortages from overseas and to access new ideas, skills and technology. These visa holders tend to be highly skilled and have relatively high income levels and are therefore able to contribute to economic growth through improved productivity and increased demand for goods and services. The entry of managers and skilled specialists under these categories can also enhance Australia's ability to compete in international markets, including the markets from which the temporary residents have come.

Business (Long Stay)

Australia has modern, flexible and streamlined temporary entry arrangements which provide for business people and skilled key personnel seeking to stay in Australia for up to four years. The arrangements provide for:

- personnel (executives, managers and specialists) for companies operating in Australia;
- personnel from offshore companies seeking to establish a branch in Australia, participate in joint ventures, or fulfil a contract awarded to an offshore company;
- independent executives seeking to establish a new business or joining existing businesses in Australia; or
- personnel coming under a labour or regional headquarters agreement.

Skilled temporary residents are not able to access Medicare or social security benefits. They must pay to access health and education services, they still pay Australian taxes (income tax and GST), superannuation and the Medicare levy. Given that they have salary rates generally above the Australian average, they make a disproportionately high contribution to Commonwealth, State and Territory budgets.

The program's key aim is to enable business to enhance international competitiveness through the quick and smooth transfer of key skills, while safeguarding employment and training opportunities for Australian workers.

The key benefits for Australia under this category include:

- expanding trade;
- improving links with international markets;
- increasing local industry global competitiveness; and
- maintaining or increasing local training and employment opportunities.

Most Business (Long Stay) visa holders are employed in professional or management positions. 25 per cent are employed in the IT & T industry where there is intense pressure on Australia to remain internationally competitive in attracting such workers.

Australia is a net importer of IT skills. The proportion of these highly sought workers entering Australia has increased markedly since 1997. Many of these are former Australian residents returning home after gaining international experience in their professions. But 43 per cent of all permanent and long-term temporary IT & T arrivals were long-term temporary.

In 1999–2000, a total of 35,006 Temporary Residence Business visas were granted, an increase of 5.5 per cent compared with 1998–99. As Fig. 4–16 shows, professionals comprised the major occupation group of long-term temporary business arrivals. The top five occupations in 1999–2000 were computing professionals (12.6 per cent), self-employed (10.4 per cent), general managers (8.3 per cent), accountants (5.1 per cent) and chefs (4.4 per cent).

Independent Executives

The Independent Executive stream of the Business (Long Stay) visa is a non-sponsored temporary visa that enables a person to enter Australia for the purpose of establishing, or buying into, a business and managing that business.

The category attracts independent business people who do not wish to apply for permanent business entry or cannot meet the Business Skills category business assets and experience criteria. Independent Executive visa holders are the main feeder group for onshore Business Skills (Residence) (subclasses 845 and 846) although there is no formal link between them at this stage.

In 1999–2000, a total of 3,937 Independent Executive visas were granted. At 30 June 2000, there were an estimated 5,363 Independent Executive visa holders in Australia, up by 58.8 per cent on the 3,377 present in June 1999.

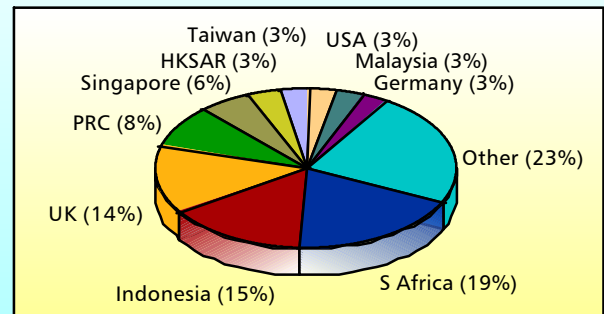
Medical Practitioner

This visa allows for qualified general and specialist medical practitioners where there is a demonstrated need for employing practitioners from overseas. Temporary resident doctors are recruited to fill identified ‘area of need’ positions (2,515 visas in 1999–2000, that is 1,419 principal applicants and 1,096 dependents).

Australia benefits from this category as many temporary resident doctors are providing services in regional and remote areas of Australia, as entry under this category must be to ‘an area of need’ as identified by State Health Authorities. Without this category, many more country towns in Australia would be without a doctor.

Fig. 4-18: Business (Long Stay) Independent Executive Visa Grants by Country of Citizenship

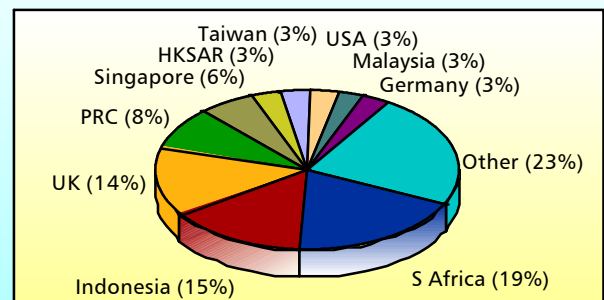
1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 4-19: Medical Practitioner Grants by Country of Citizenship

1999-00



Source Data: IMIRS

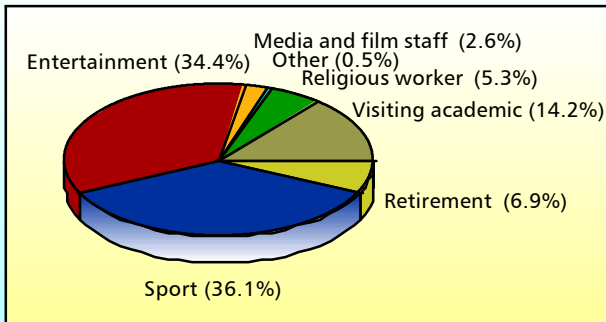
Educational

This visa is for qualified people to join educational and research institutions or organisations to fill academic, teaching and research positions that cannot be filled from within the Australian labour market (1,700 visas).

This category provides benefits to Australia by allowing educational and research institutions to appoint internationally regarded academics and researchers who are able to contribute new ideas and knowledge as well as enhancing international cooperation. Given the concerns about the ‘brain drain’ from Australia of key academics, this category is essential to making sure Australia maintains a net inflow of people with such skills.

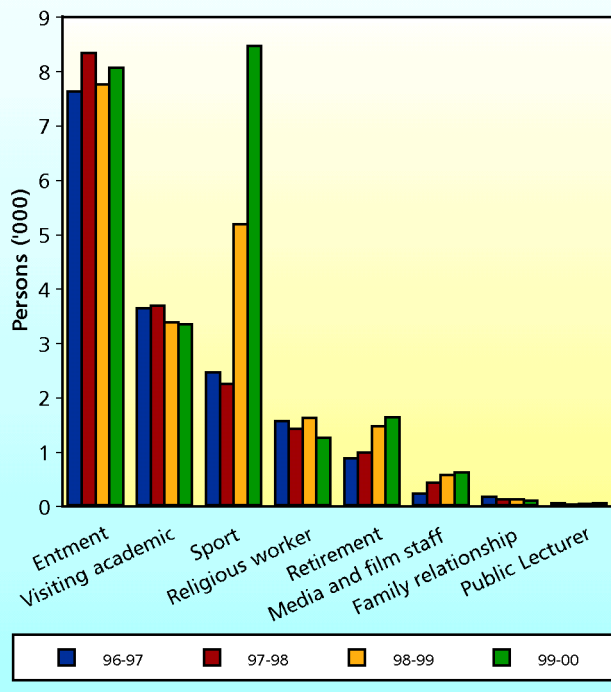
Other Temporary Entrants

Fig. 4-20: Social/Cultural Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 4-21: Social/Cultural Visa Grants



Social/Cultural Entrants

A total of 23,405 social/cultural temporary visas were granted in 1999–2000, up by 16.7 per cent compared with 20,054 in 1998–99 (due mainly to Olympics related sports entry). This group is made up of people entering on the following visas:

Sport — for amateur or professional sports people from other countries to engage in competition with Australian residents and to improve general sporting standards in Australia through high calibre competition and training (8,448 visas).

Entertainment — for people taking part in a wide range of social and cultural events and activities, taking into account the need to protect employment of Australians in the entertainment industry (8,046 visas).

Media and Film Staff — visas granted to correspondents and other professional media staff posted to Australia by overseas news organisations, and photographers and film and television teams making documentaries or commercials for overseas consumption (607 visas).

Religious Worker — for religious workers, including ministers, priests and spiritual leaders to serve the spiritual needs of people of their faiths in Australia (1,238 visas).

Retirement — for the extended temporary stay of people who want to retire in Australia (1,620 visas).

Visiting Academic — allows the entry of people who will contribute to the sharing of research knowledge (3,326 visas).

Public Lecturer — professional lecturers or subject experts invited to make public presentations (34 visas).

Family relationship — is intended to allow young people of secondary school age to have an extended holiday for up to 12 months. This provides an opportunity to learn about Australia and, where appropriate, learn English on an informal basis while staying with relatives or close family friends, of which one or more are Australian citizens or permanent residents (86 visas).

Increase in Social/Cultural Entrants

Increases in visa approvals for the Sport visa, Media and Film Staff visa and the Entertainment visa can be largely attributed to the Sydney Olympics. The 63.3 per cent increase in Sport visas in particular would reflect the many overseas competitors who trained and participated in competitions in Australia during the months leading up to the Olympics in September 2000.

International Relations Entrants

A total of 14,475 international relations visas were granted in 1999–2000, up marginally from 14,257 in 1998–99. This group is made up of people entering on the following visas:

Diplomatic — for diplomats, consular staff and other officials, accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2,303 visas).

Foreign government agency — to enable foreign government officials to conduct official business on behalf of their government where the officials do not have diplomatic or official status in Australia (282 visas).

Domestic worker (diplomatic) — for the entry of domestic staff for diplomats and consular staff posted to Australia, granted on advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (111 visas).

Domestic worker (overseas executive) — for domestic workers for independent/senior executives temporarily in Australia where a domestic worker is necessary for the proper discharge of the executive's representational duties (19 visas).

Exchange — for skilled people overseas who want to broaden their work experience while guaranteeing Australian residents similar opportunities overseas; or for people under certain bi-lateral exchange agreements (2,448 visas).

Special program — to promote opportunities for people to experience other cultures and enhance international relations and broaden their experience and knowledge by participating in approved youth exchange schemes or community based non-commercial programs (1,908 visas).

Occupational trainee — for people to undertake a supervised training program that is workplace based rather than classroom based. The training should provide visa holders with additional or enhanced skills in their area of expertise or occupation which they can utilise in their employment upon return to their home country (7,140 visas).

Supported Dependant — for dependants of Australian citizens and permanent residents who plan to reside in Australia temporarily (198 visas).

Expatriate — for family members of people employed in remote localities in South east Asia, South Pacific or Papua New Guinea by international companies that have business associations with Australia (66 visas).

Fig. 4-22: International Relations Visa Grants

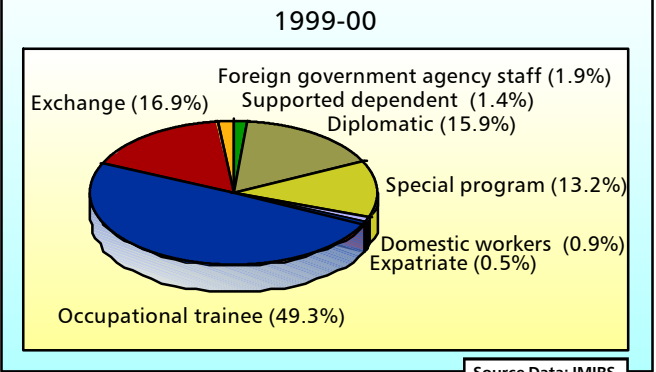


Fig. 4-23: International Relations Visa Grants

