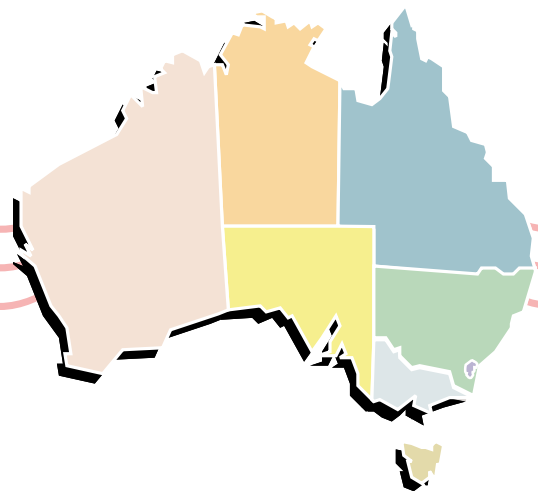


## Chapter 5

### Migrants and the Labour Market

- Almost one quarter of the Australian workforce was born overseas.
- The number of skilled migrants has risen rapidly. Skill Stream visa grants have increased by 62.4 per cent since 1996–97.
- General managers, computer professionals and accountants were the top three occupations of migrants prior to coming to Australia in 1999–2000.
- Unemployment rates for migrants are closely related to proficiency in English, age, skill level and qualifications.
- Unemployment rates of immigrants who arrived since 1995 have improved more significantly than the rate for the Australian population.



# Skill Level of Migrants

## Skill Level

The skill level of migrants is important in determining employment and settlement outcomes. In recent years, the Government has emphasised attracting skilled migrants, recognising the important economic contribution they make. Research suggests that skilled migrants have substantially lower unemployment rates, an ability to find work more quickly, and higher levels of income and expenditure.

Skill Stream visas granted have increased from 27,550 in 1996–97 to 44,730 in 2000–01, while the planning level for 2001–02 is set at 45,500 plus a contingency reserve of 8,000. This has occurred within a Migration Program where Skill Stream visas have risen from 37.3 per cent in 1996–97 to a planned 57.5 per cent of the total Migration Program in 2001–02.

Visas granted under the Family Stream, which generally has a lower skill profile, declined from 44,580 in 1996–97 to 33,470 in 2000–01. In 2001–02 the planned level is 37,900 plus a contingency reserve of 1,000.

In general, Skill Stream applicants have to demonstrate a high level of skill, a strong employment history, good English language ability and be under 45 years of age. No skill requirements apply to Family Stream migrants.

Self identification of skill level by settler arrivals as stated on their inbound passenger cards indicates that, of those in the workforce prior to coming to Australia, Independent and Distinguished Talent migrants are most likely to be highly skilled.

In 1999–2000, some 44.3 per cent of all settler arrivals under the Migration Program were in a skilled occupation immediately prior to migrating. Comparative figures for settler arrivals in 1999–2000 under the Humanitarian Program were 4.6 per cent and 31.3 per cent for New Zealand citizens.

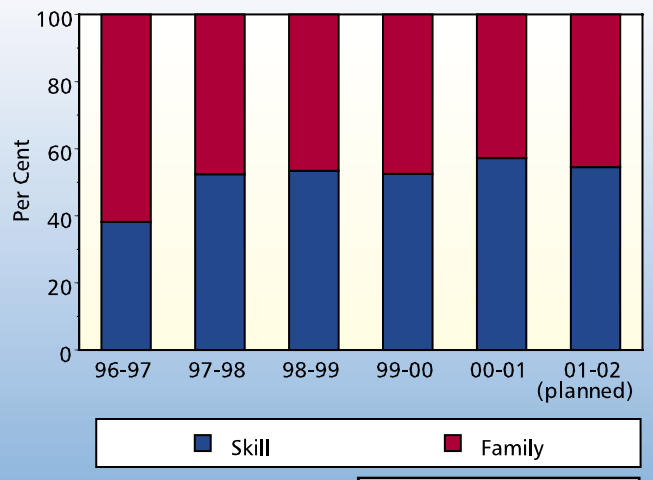
## Migrants in the Workforce

Of the 92,272 settlers arriving in Australia in 1999–2000, 54.3 per cent were in the workforce prior to migration. Of these, 11.0 per cent were in managerial and administrative occupations, 34.1 per cent in professional occupations, 9.6 per cent were associate professionals, and 12.1 per cent were tradespersons. These four groups contain all the skilled occupations. Semi-skilled migrants made up 16.8 per cent of those in the workforce prior to migration and the unskilled 8.2 per cent.

The remaining 8.3 per cent of the workforce prior to migration were not in employment.

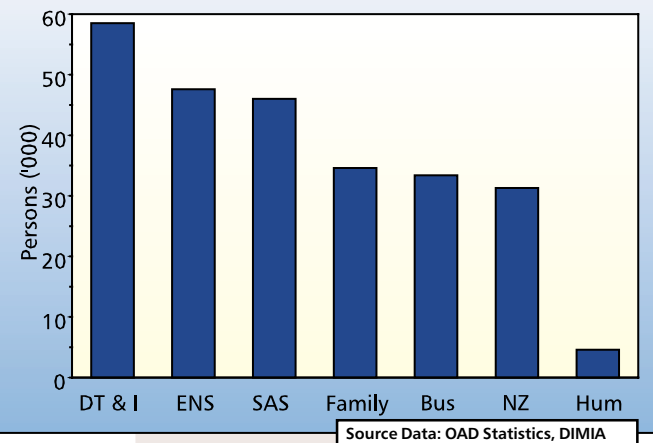
Overall, 66.8 per cent of migrants, who were in the labour force (employed plus not in employment) prior to migrating in 1999–2000, were skilled.

Fig. 5-1: Skill/Family Streams by Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS and MPMS

Fig. 5-2: Skill Level of Arrivals by Eligibility Category 1999-2000



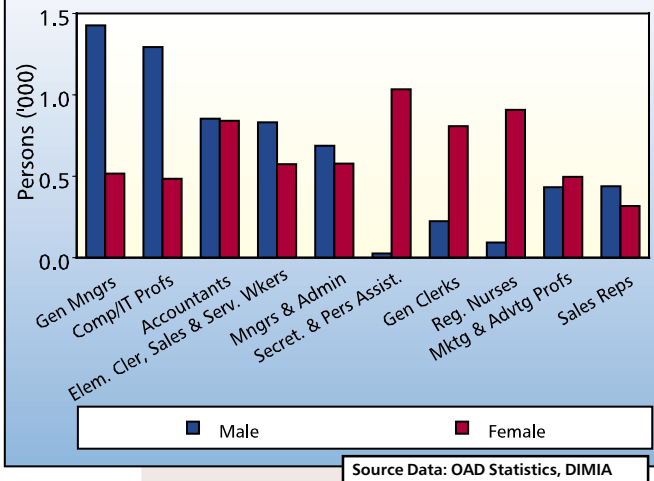
Source Data: OAD Statistics, DIMIA

## Occupational Profile

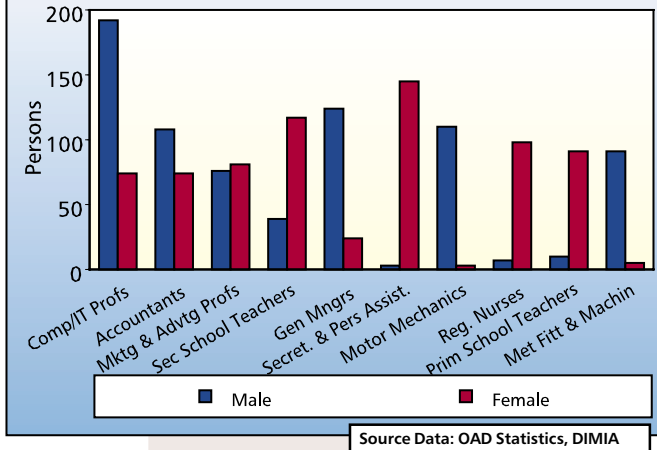
Australia continues to attract migrants with a wide variety of skills and occupations. In 1999–2000, general managers (1,943 persons), computer professionals (1,778 persons) and accountants (1,694 persons) were the top three occupations of new migrants prior to their arrival in Australia. These were also among the top occupations of migrant arrivals in recent years.

The occupational and gender profile of migrants varies across eligibility categories. In the Skill Stream categories, the top occupations tend to be more heavily weighted to professional and management occupations.

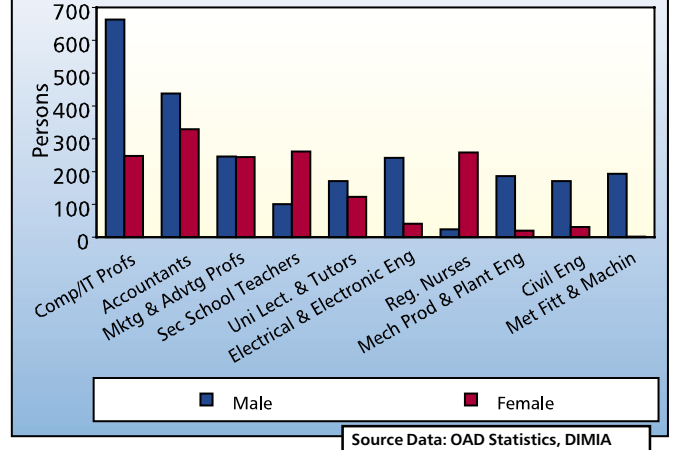
**Fig. 5-3: Top Ten Occupations by Gender**  
1999-2000



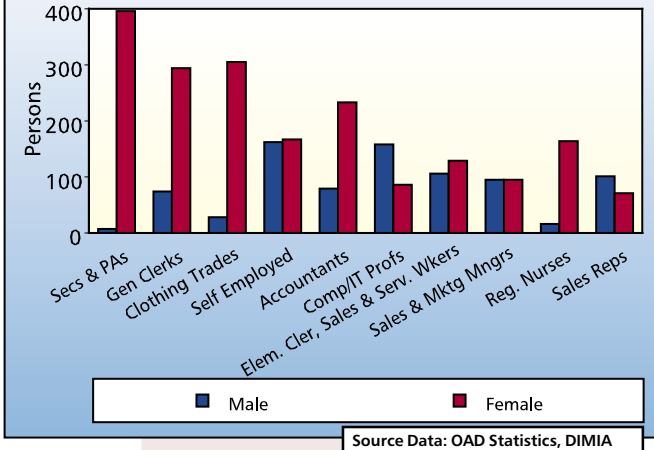
**Fig. 5-4: Skilled-Australian Sponsored Top 10 Occupations by Gender**  
1999-2000



**Fig. 5-6: Independent Top 10 Occupations by Gender**  
1999-2000



**Fig. 5-5: Family Stream Top 10 Occupations by Gender**  
1999-2000



**Fig. 5-7: Employer Nomination Scheme Top 10 Occupations by Gender**  
1999-2000

