

Bridging Visas

Bridging visas provide lawful status to certain non-citizens who would otherwise be unlawful and therefore liable to be detained. In 2002–03, 223,053 bridging visas were granted, compared with 210,001 in 2001–02. The majority of these were Bridging Visa A (74.7 per cent), followed by Bridging Visa E (19.1 per cent).

In general, the non-citizens covered by bridging visas are those who:

- have made (or plan to make) an application in Australia for a visa which can be granted while they are in Australia, and a decision on that application is being considered or reviewed by administrative review bodies (such as the Migration Review Tribunal) or the courts;
- are seeking review of visa-related decisions; or
- are making departure arrangements to leave Australia.

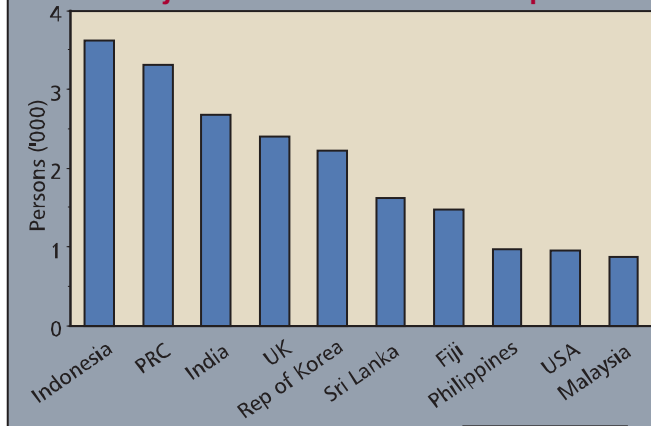
Bridging Visa Classes

The classes of bridging visas are:

- Bridging Visa A (BVA) - available to non-citizens who apply for a visa within Australia and who hold another visa (other than a Bridging Visa or Criminal Justice Visa) at time of application. 166,514 were granted in 2002–03, compared to 161,032 in 2001–02.
- Bridging Visa B (BVB) - available to Bridging Visa A holders who have a substantial reason for wanting to travel outside Australia while their visa application is being considered. 9,007 were granted in 2002–03, compared to 10,272 in 2001–02.
- Bridging Visa C (BVC) - available to applicants who do not hold a visa when they apply for another visa while in Australia. 4,813 were granted in 2002–03, compared to 6,463 in 2001–02.
- Bridging Visa D (BVD) - a short term bridging visa available to persons who want to make an application for a visa but are temporarily unable to do so; or, who do not want to apply for a visa but a compliance officer is not available to interview them. 211 were granted in 2002–03, compared to 251 in 2001–02.
- Bridging Visa E (BVE) - available to certain unlawful non-citizens who come to the attention of DIMIA and who may be applying for visas or making arrangements to depart Australia. 42,508 were granted in 2002–03, compared to 31,983 in 2001–02.

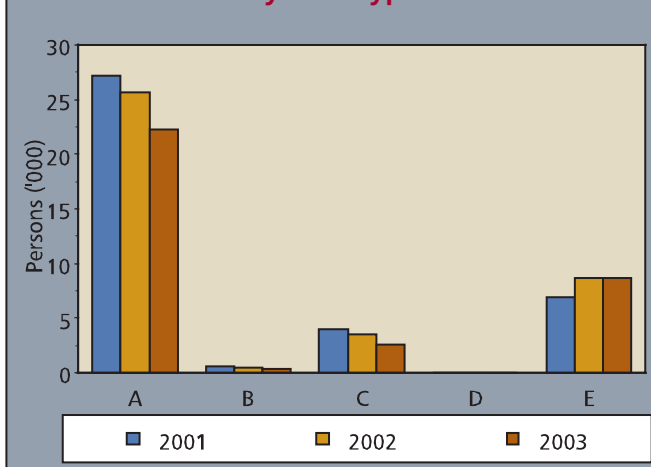
The conditions attached to a bridging visa may vary according to the substantive visa applied for, as well as the applicant's immigration status and personal circumstances at time of application.

Fig. 5-29: Bridging Visas in Effect at 30 June 2003 by Major Countries of Citizenship



Source Data: IMIRS

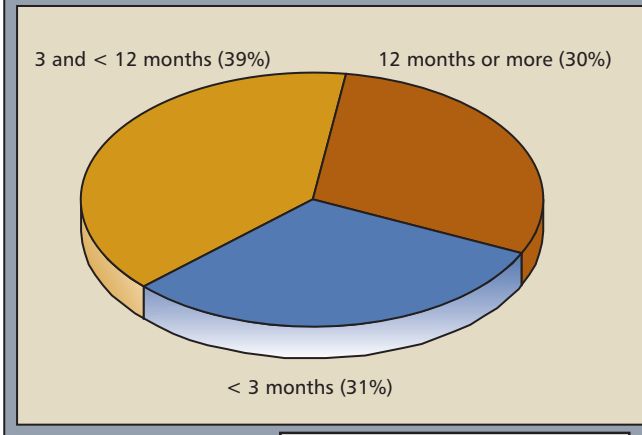
Fig. 5-30: Bridging Visas in Effect at 30 June by Visa Type



Source Data: IMIRS

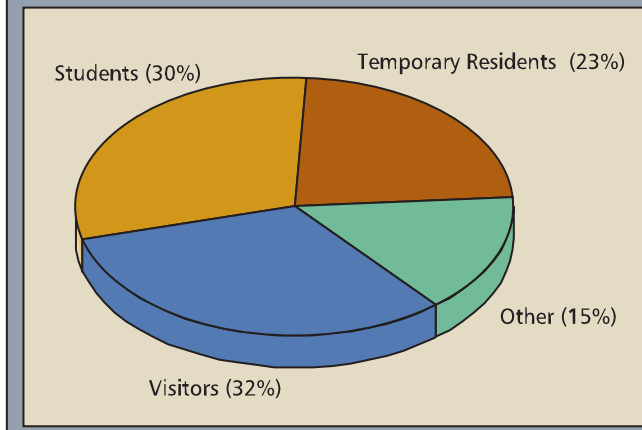
Stock of Temporary Entrants

Fig. 5-31: Stock of Temporary Entrants by Duration of Stay (30 June 2003)



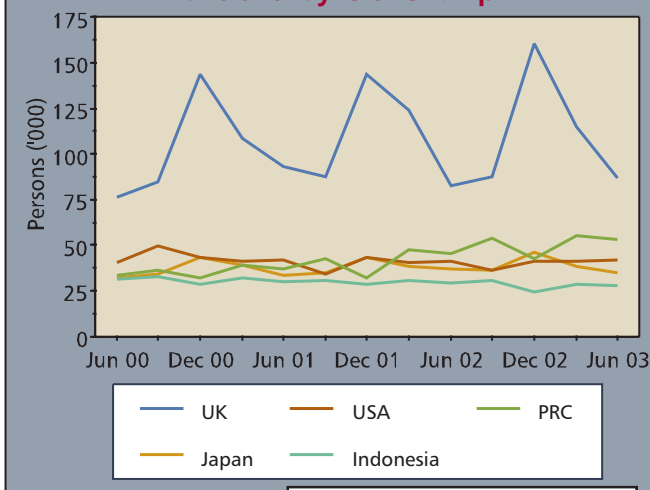
Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

Fig. 5-32: Stock of Temporary Entrants by Entry Category (30 June 2003)



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

Fig. 5-33: Stock of Temporary Entrants in Australia by Citizenship



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

An estimate of the temporary population in Australia at a particular point in time can be made by counting the stock of temporary entrants, that is, the number of temporary entrants physically present in Australia at a particular date.

At 30 June 2003, there were an estimated 584,862 people in Australia on temporary entry visas excluding New Zealand citizens. This estimate has increased by 5 per cent compared to the number at 30 June 2002. Of these people, 181,622 had been in Australia for less than three months; 230,112 had been here for between three and up to 12 months; and 173,128 had been here for more than twelve months. The median length of stay of the stock as at this date was just over 5 months. This includes temporary entrants who have recently arrived and have an actual stay of only a few days or weeks but intend to legally stay much longer.

Temporary entrants include tourists, students, working holiday makers (WHM), business people and executives, and entrants for social, cultural, international relations and other purposes. They also include people holding bridging visas who have applied for a permanent visa eg. asylum seekers who have applied for Protection visas.

While the individuals are constantly turning over and there are seasonal fluctuations in the number and type of temporary entrants in Australia at any given time, the number of temporary entrants to Australia has increased consistently over the last five years. As is evident from the graphs, seasonal fluctuations are most prevalent for individuals arriving in Australia on student and visitor visas. Student numbers increase in the March and September quarters each year reflecting the attendance requirements of the academic year. Visitor numbers are highest during the Australian summer, and are lowest in the middle of the year.

Of those here temporarily at 30 June 2003, the largest group were citizens of the United Kingdom (86,900 persons), followed by the PRC (52,826 persons), the USA (41,836 persons), Japan (34,571 persons) and Republic of Korea (33,465 persons). Compared with June 2002, the stock of citizens from the United Kingdom, the PRC, the Republic of Korea and the United States has increased while the stock of Japanese citizens has decreased. The stock of PRC citizens has increased by 44 per cent in the last two years.

The median age of the total stock of temporary entrants was 27 years at 30 June 2003.

The stock of temporary entrants comprised 172,973 students, 172,841 visitors (excluding business visitors), 58,539 bridging visa holders, 56,404 long stay business entrants, 49,100 working holiday makers, 27,412 who entered for social, cultural or international relations purposes, 12,392 business visitors, and 35,201 who came for other purposes.

Stock of Visitors

The number of visitors in Australia fluctuates throughout the year depending on the season. At 30 June, the stock of visitors in Australia is at the lowest point for the year, although they still comprise the largest visa group. The number of visitors (excluding business visitors) in Australia at 30 June 2003 was 5 per cent lower than the previous year, which was 8 per cent lower than the number in Australia at 30 June 2001.

Individuals on visitor visas do not stay in Australia for as long as other temporary entrants, with the median length of current stay at 30 June 2003 being 33 days.

The number of visitors present in Australia at 30 June 2003 represented 6 per cent of all visitor visas issued in 2002–03. The median age of visitors is a little higher than for other visa categories, at 39 years for June 2003.

Fig. 5-34 shows the stock of visitors (excluding business visitors) in the five largest countries of citizenship from June 2000 to June 2003. Of the current top citizenship groups, citizens from the United Kingdom have the strongest seasonal trend.

Stock of Business Visitors (Short Stay)

Business visitors comprised just over 18 per cent of all temporary business residents in Australia at 30 June 2003. The median age of short stay temporary business residents was higher than for long-term business entrants at 39 years.

Fig. 5-35 shows the number of business visitors by country of citizenship in Australia at quarterly intervals since June 2000. At 30 June 2003 there was a total of 12,392 business visitors, down slightly compared with the previous year. Of the major countries, the United Kingdom and India were the only citizenship groups to have increased since the previous year.

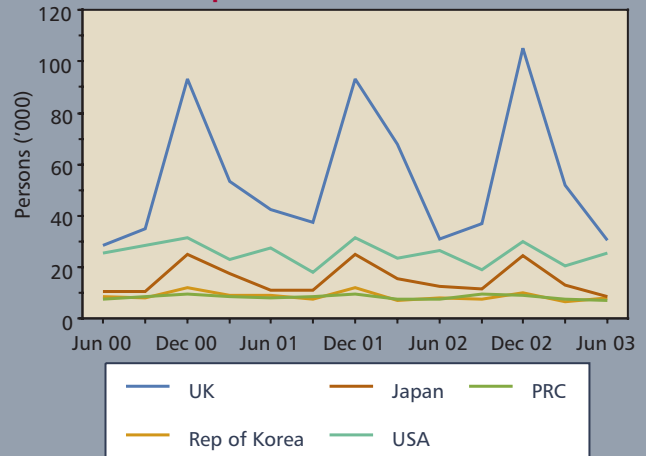
Although 254,191 Business Visitor visas were granted in 2002–03, the number in Australia at any time that year was low. This is consistent with the purpose of the Business Visitor visa, which is typically for pursuing business interests over a few days or weeks. The median duration of stay of business visitors in Australia at 30 June was 15 days.

Stock of Students

The stock of students in Australia is highest in the March quarter and lowest in the December quarter, consistent with the requirements for the academic year. Numbers are a little lower for the June quarter but pick up slightly for the September quarter of each year. At 30 June 2003 the stock of 172,973 students in Australia had increased by 13 per cent compared with the number at 30 June 2002. The median duration of stay at 30 June 2002 of this stock was just under 5 months. The median age of students was 22 years.

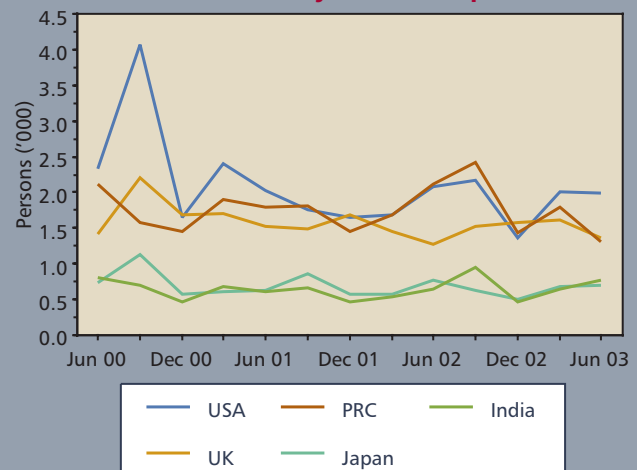
Fig. 5-36 shows the changes in numbers of the top citizenship groups for the last three years. The data suggest that students from neighbouring countries are more likely to return home for holidays

Fig. 5-34: Stock of Visitors in Australia by Citizenship (excl. Business Visitors)



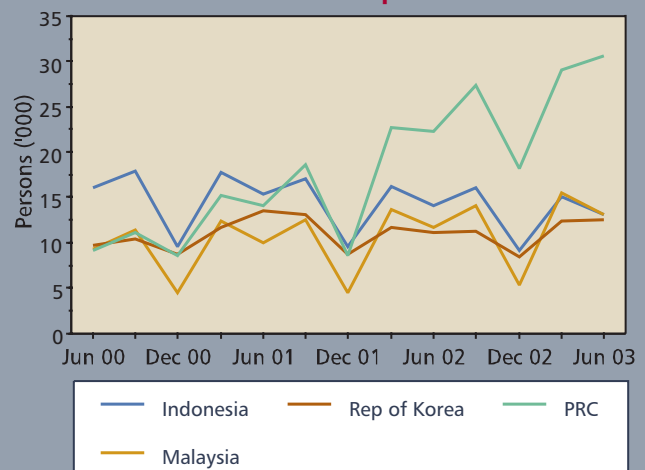
Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

Fig. 5-35: Stock of Temporary Business Visitors in Australia by Citizenship



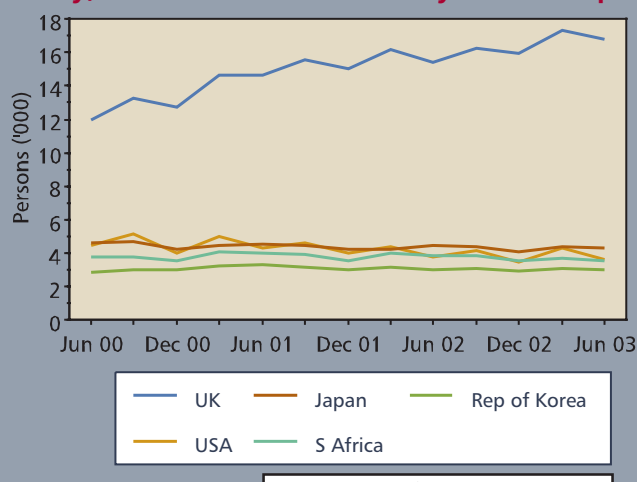
Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

Fig. 5-36: Stock of Students in Australia by Citizenship



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMIA

Fig. 5-37: Stock of Temporary Business (Long Stay) Residents in Australia by Citizenship

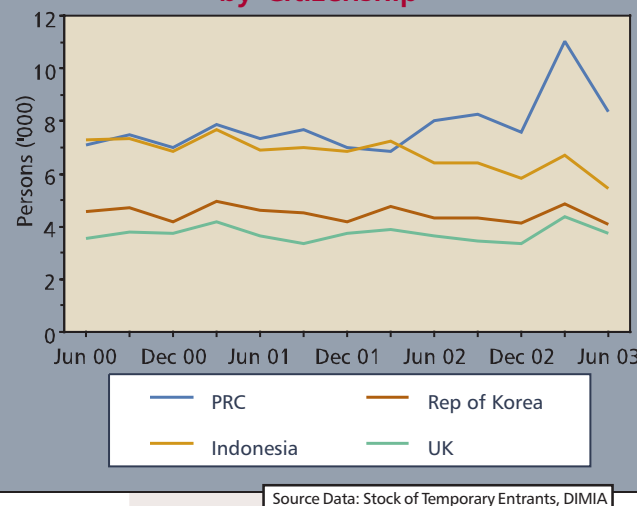


at the end of the school year than other overseas students. Of particular note is the continued significant growth in the number of students from the PRC. The stock of PRC students more than tripled between June 2001 and June 1998, and increased by 59 per cent between June 2001 and June 2002 (from 14,037 to 22,341 persons). Between June 2002 and June 2003, the increase was 8,393 (38 per cent). The growth in the number of Chinese is due to the opening of the Chinese market over the last few years assisted by the marketing of agents and Australia's independent international educational organisation, IDP Education Australia.

Stock of Working Holiday Makers

The stock of working holiday makers has increased from 48,075 at June 2002 to 49,100 at June 2003. Citizens from the United Kingdom continue to dominate this visa group. The median age of the stock of working holiday makers at June 2003 was 24 years, and their median duration of stay was a little over 4 months.

Fig. 5-38: Stock of Bridging Visas in Australia by Citizenship



Stock of Temporary Business (Long Stay) Residents

There were a total of 56,404 long stay business entrants at 30 June 2003, 5 per cent higher than at the same time last year. This visa is for specialist workers in Australia for up to 4 years, but many on this visa travel in and out of Australia. As with many visas, this visa can be issued onshore. The median duration of long stay business entrants at June 2003 was a little over 6 months.

Fig. 5-37 shows the top five citizenship groups of those currently visaed as long stay business entrants in Australia since June 2000. The stock of United Kingdom citizens continues to grow and makes up 30 per cent of all long stay business entrants. In 2001–02, the stock of Japanese citizens overtook that of the United States by a clear margin for the first time. The median age of the Long Stay Business visa group at June 2003 was 30 years.

Stock of Entrants on Bridging Visas

The stock of entrants in Australia on Bridging visas at 30 June 2003 was 58,539, down by 10 per cent compared to June 2002. The median age of Bridging visa holders was 34 years.

Fig. 5-38 highlights the stock of bridging visa holders by country of citizenship in Australia over a three-year period. Citizens from the PRC and Indonesia, followed by the Republic of Korea, India and the United Kingdom, hold larger numbers of Bridging visas than entrants from other countries.

Overstayers

Who are Overstayers

Overstayers are those non-citizens who do not depart by the expiry of their visa and remain in Australia illegally. They are people who arrive in Australia with valid temporary visas, mainly as tourists but also as working holiday-makers, students and temporary residents.

Profile of Overstayers

A total of 59,800 people were estimated to have overstayed their visas and remained illegally in Australia at 30 June 2003. This is a slight decrease on the December 2002 estimate of 59,900 and the June 2002 estimate of 60,400. The largest group were those who had overstayed their visas by more than 10 years (28 per cent). Those who had overstayed their visas for less than one year constituted around 18 per cent, followed by those who had overstayed between two and three years (11 per cent).

Many people who are recorded as overstayers are simply extending a short stay in Australia by a few days or weeks, and leave of their own accord within a short period. Visitor visa holders comprise the greatest number of overstayers (around 49,100 or 82 per cent), followed by student visa overstayers (approximately 3,700 or 6 per cent), with temporary resident overstayers constituting around 2,700 or 5 per cent.

Nationality of Overstayers

The largest number of overstayers at 30 June 2003 were from the UK with approximately 6,200, the USA with approximately 5,600, the People's Republic of China with approximately 3,900, the Philippines with approximately 3,200 and Indonesia with approximately 3,100.

This ranking reflects, to a certain extent, the fact that many of these countries are also the source of the biggest numbers of visitors. While visitors from countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States are the highest overstayers in absolute terms, as a percentage of the number of visitor and temporary visas issued to persons from those countries they are low-risk.

Age and Sex of Overstayers

As at 30 June 2003, approximately 39 per cent of recorded overstayers were females and 61 per cent were males. The largest age group of overstayers are between the ages of 31-40 (approximately 13,800 overstayers) followed by those aged between 41-50 years old (approximately 12,400 overstayers).

Fig. 5-39: Estimate of Overstayers at 30 June 2003 by Length of Overstay

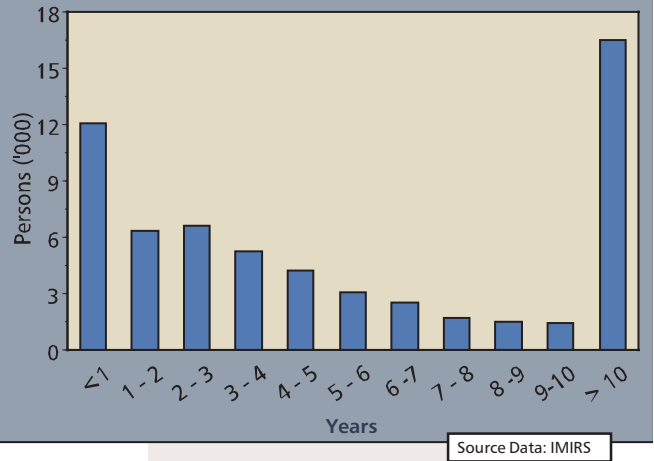


Fig. 5-40: Overstayers at 30 June 2003 by Visa Category

