

Skilled Temporary Residents

Employer-sponsored temporary business visas allow employers to fill skill shortages from overseas and to access new ideas, skills and technology. These visa holders are generally highly skilled and have relatively high income levels, and contribute to economic growth through improved productivity and increased demand for goods and services. The entry of managers and skilled specialists under these categories also enhances 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 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.

There are minimum skill and salary levels for personnel sponsored under the Business (Long Stay) visa program. As at December 2004, they must be paid a minimum gross annual salary of AUD \$37,720 (\$46,620 for those in the IT professions), excluding allowances, and must be in skilled occupations (managers, professional or associate professional or skilled trades positions).

Skilled temporary residents are not able to access health care without payment or social security benefits. They must pay to access health and higher education services and must pay Australian taxes (including income tax and GST) and the Medicare levy. Given that they have salary rates generally above the Australian average, they make a disproportionately high positive contribution to Commonwealth, State and Territory budgets.

Independent modelling suggests that the Commonwealth budget can be expected to benefit by over \$2 billion over a four year period from the temporary business entrants arriving in 2003-04. The modelling also indicates that State and Territory budgets may benefit by about \$800 million over four years.

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. This is achieved by ensuring a high skill focus. 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.

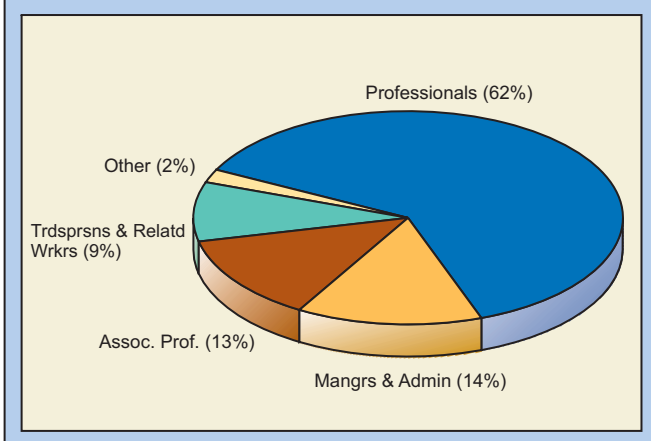
In 2003-04, a total of 40,124 Business (Long Stay) visas were granted, excluding Independent Executives who were establishing

businesses in Australia, a rise of 6.0 per cent compared with 2002-03. The falling demand for ICT professionals in the previous years appears to have levelled off, while demand within the health industry continues at a high level.

Registered nurse is the largest single occupation sought by Australian employers. The importance of meeting this demand for nursing professionals is acknowledged by giving priority processing to applications for nursing positions. The top five occupational groups nominated by employers in 2003-04 were computing professionals (17.2 per cent), registered nurses (11.5 per cent), managers (11.1 per cent), chefs (3.0 per cent) and accountants (2.5 per cent).

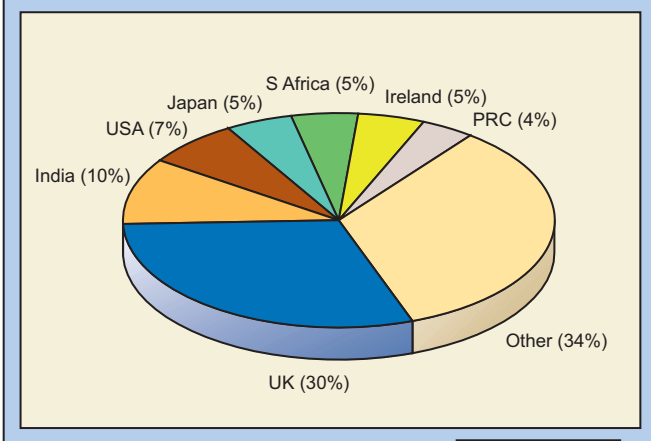
In 2003-04, 9,788 people holding the Business (Long Stay) visa applied to remain in Australia permanently. The majority of these (68 per cent) applied for permanent entry under the Employer Nominations Scheme, the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme and Labour Agreements. These applications represented 67 per cent of the applicants for these visa categories onshore.

Fig. 5-20: Long Stay Temporary Business Onshore Approved Nominations by Major Occupation Group (excl. Independent Executives), 2003-04



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-21: Long Stay Temporary Business Grants by Country of Citizenship (excl. Independent Executives), 2003-04



Source Data: IMIRS

The Business (Long Stay) visa is one of the key tools for employers seeking to fill skilled vacancies, and aims to provide a rapid and simple process for the recruitment of overseas personnel. In keeping with this focus, two major initiatives completed were:

- the introduction of electronic lodgement facilities for applications for sponsorship, for nomination by temporary business employers and for visas for their employees; and
- the relocation of visa processing from DIMIA offices overseas to DIMIA offices in Australia, to give a single point of contact for employers and their employees for the entire application process.

DIMIA sets and publicises standards for its processing times for applications in various visa subclasses. For the temporary business (long stay) visa, the service standard for high risk cases is 60 days and 30 days for low risk cases. For 2003–04, processing times both overseas and in Australia were 43 days for high risk cases and 14 days for low risk cases overseas, and 29 days for high risk and 18 days for low risk cases processed in Australia.

All sponsors of Business (Long Stay) visa holders are monitored to ensure that they comply with the conditions of their sponsorship. This monitoring may be by a document check to ensure that employees are receiving their correct entitlements, or may involve a site visit to the workplace to perform more detailed checks. This ensures that employers are complying with their undertakings with respect to their temporary overseas employees and that the workers are not being exploited.

In 2003–04, 7,759 sponsors were monitored. In 2002–03, 7,061 sponsorships were approved.

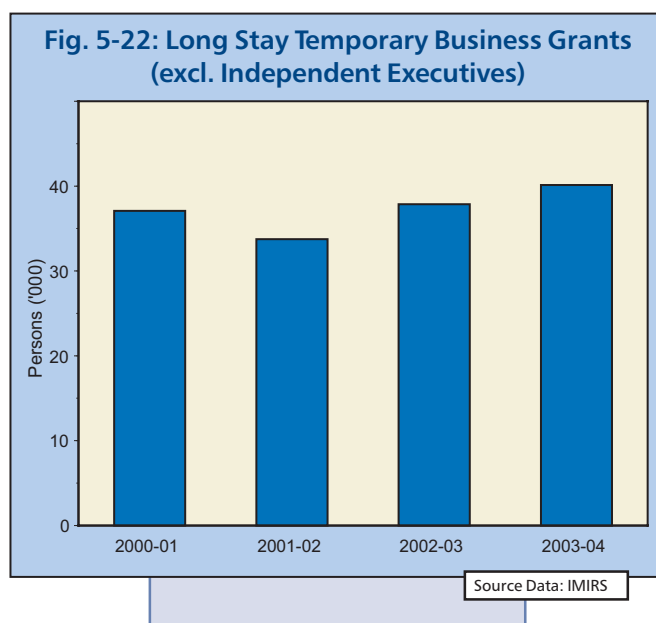
Since 1 March 2003, the majority of all Business Skills entrants enter Australia initially on a provisional (temporary) visa for four years. After satisfactory evidence of a specified level of business or investment activity, they may apply for permanent residence. Further detail is provided in Chapter 2.

Although new applications for Business (Long Stay) Independent Executive visas ceased with the introduction of two-stage processing arrangement in March 2003, over 7,000 visa holders were present in Australia as at 30 June 2004. Over 65% of these visa holders reside in New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland.

Independent Executive visa holders with successfully operating businesses in Australia are eligible to apply for permanent residence under:

- Established Business in Australia;
- Regional Established Business in Australia; and
- State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner (Residence) subclasses.

In cases where Independent Executive visa holders are not yet able to meet visa criteria for permanent residence, they are still eligible to apply for a Further Application Onshore and if granted this allows a two year visa extension.



Medical Practitioner

This visa allows the entry of 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' or specialist and hospital positions that can not be filled by suitably qualified Australian residents.

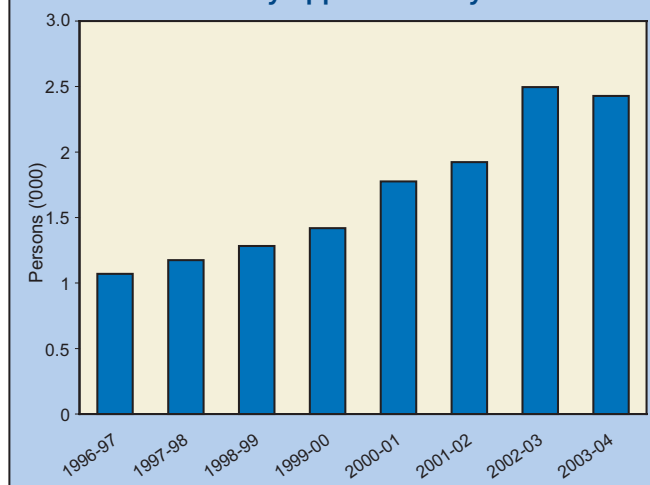
4,967 visas were granted in 2003–04 (2,429 principal applicants and 2,538 dependants). Many temporary resident doctors are providing services in regional and remote areas of Australia, as entry under this category must be to an 'area of need' as identified by State Health Authorities. This category showed a 29.5 per cent increase in 2002–03 over 2001–02, due to the increasing demand for doctors in rural and regional areas of Australia but a 1.3 per cent drop in 2003-04. Previously a visa was valid for up to two years but in 2003-04 the validity of visas in this category was extended so that doctors with conditional registration can obtain a visa for up to four years, providing greater certainty and less processing demands on visa holders. It is this change that is likely to have contributed to the small drop in there visas granted in 2003-04.

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. The June 2002 Review of the Temporary Residence Program recommended that the needs met by this visa class could equally well be met within the Business (Long Stay) program, so numbers are diminishing as applicants and sponsors are referred to that program. (509 visas were granted in 2003–04, down considerably from 1,385 in the previous year).

Australia benefits from the appointment by educational and research institutions of internationally regarded academics and researchers who are able to contribute new ideas and knowledge as well as enhancing international cooperation. There benefits will continue to flow under the Business (Long Stay) visa.

Fig. 5-23: Medical Practitioner Visa Grants
Primary Applicants Only



Source Data: IMIRS

Other Temporary Entrants

Social/Cultural Entrants

The Social/Cultural Stream under the temporary visa category allows for the entry of people taking part in a range of sporting, entertainment, academic and cultural activities. A total of 26,400 Social/Cultural temporary visas were granted in 2003-04, an increase of 0.7 per cent compared with 26,215 in 2002-03.

Sport - for amateur or professional sports people who currently play at Australian national competition level or higher. The Sports visa holder is to improve the quality of a sport in Australia through participation in high-level competition and training with Australian residents (2,657 visas granted in 2003-04).

Entertainment - for people seeking to perform or take part in a film or television production. From 1 March 2003, the Sydney Business Centre became the central point for lodgement of all Entertainment visa applications and sponsorships. Most Entertainment visa holders - ie. those who are ETA eligible nationals - are able to travel without a visa label in their passport (10,493 visas granted in 2003-04).

Religious Worker - for religious workers, including ministers, priests and spiritual leaders to serve the spiritual needs of people of their faiths in Australia (1,596 visas granted in 2003-04).

Visiting Academic - allows the entry of academics whose primary purpose of stay is to observe or participate in research projects at the invitation of an Australian tertiary institution or research organisation. Applicants must provide a letter of invitation from the institution. No remuneration must be paid to the applicant under this visa (3,804 visas granted in 2003-04).

Public Lecturer - intended for persons who are professional lecturers or subject experts and who have been invited to make a public presentation by an organisation in Australia for a period of less than three months (26 visas granted in 2003-04).

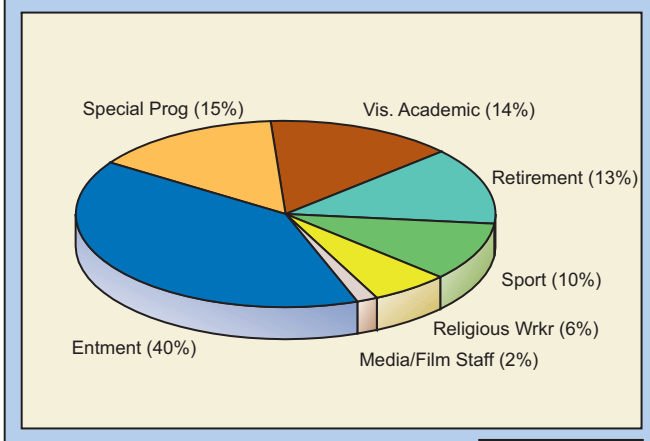
Retirement - is to allow the temporary entry of people who may not be eligible for permanent residence but who are self-sufficient and unlikely to pose a burden on Australia's health and welfare budget. Continuing temporary status ensures that access to Medicare, citizenship and sponsorship provisions is precluded, while minimised ongoing visa requirements give greater certainty to extended long term stay (3,520 visas granted in 2003-04).

Special Program - for persons to participate in youth exchange schemes, approved community-based non-commercial programs or to visit Australia as a Churchill Fellowship holder (3,820 visas granted in 2003-04).

Media and Film Staff - for professional staff members of overseas news organisations or television/film crew producing documentary programs or commercials for use outside Australia. Applicants seeking to enter as media staff are being directed to apply under the Business (Long Stay) visa (429 visas granted in 2003-04).

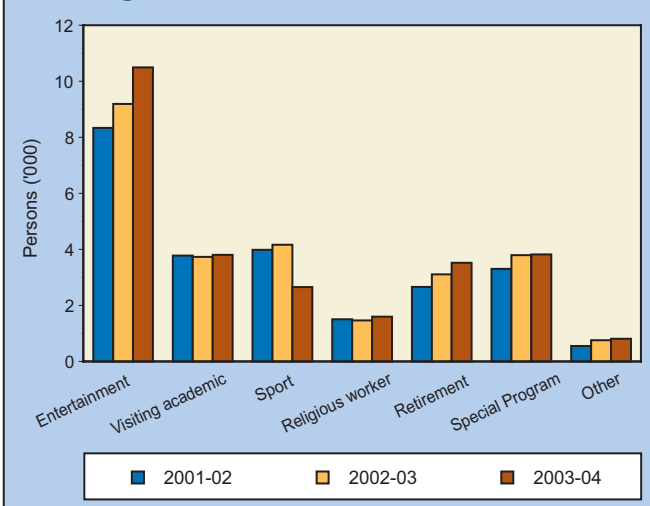
Family Relationship - for single persons under 18 years of age to have an extended holiday of up to 12 months, staying with relatives or close family friends. Applicants are being directed to apply under the visitor visa class given the closeness of the conditions of the visas (55 visas granted in 2003-04).

Fig. 5-24: Social/Cultural Visa Grants 2003-04



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-25: Social/Cultural Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

International Relations Entrants

The International Relations Stream under the temporary visa category aims to promote Australia's relations with other countries and foster goodwill. It allows, for example, for the entry of persons working for foreign governments, organisations funded by foreign governments and international organisations, as well as persons entering under exchange or bilateral agreements.

A total of 11,165 International Relations visas were granted in 2003-04, up by 0.2% compared with 11,142 in 2002-03.

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; and certain foreign language teachers who are to be employed in Australia by their home government. A stay of more than three months requires sponsorship by a foreign government agency. The option of broadening the use of this visa to include certain international organisations is being investigated (296 visas granted).

Domestic Worker (diplomatic) - intended for adult domestic workers employed in a private capacity by diplomatic and consular representatives posted to Australia. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade endorsement is required (99 visas granted).

Domestic Worker (Executive) - provides for the entry of persons to be employed as domestic workers by certain holders of Business (Long Stay) Entry visas in order to assist executives with their representational and entertainment responsibilities (30 visas granted).

Occupational trainee - allows people from overseas to undertake a supervised training program in Australia that is workplace-based rather than classroom-based. It is designed specifically to add to, or enhance, a person's level of skill in their present occupation or area of expertise. A nomination from the Australian organisation providing the training program must be approved before a visa application may be granted (7,043 visas granted).

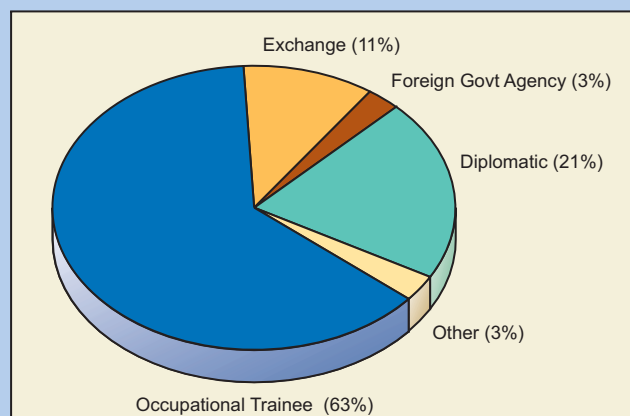
Supported Dependant - for family members who wish to accompany an Australian relative who normally lives overseas but who is intending to reside in Australia temporarily. Applicants are being directed to apply for either a visitor, ETA or student visas, depending on the nature of stay (179 visas granted).

Expatriate - for family members of persons employed in remote localities in South-East Asia, South Pacific or Papua New Guinea, by international companies that have business associations with Australia. Applicants are being directed to apply for a visitor visa (23 visas granted).

Exchange - for skilled persons entering under exchange arrangements that give Australian residents reciprocal opportunities to work with overseas organisations. (1,186 visas granted).

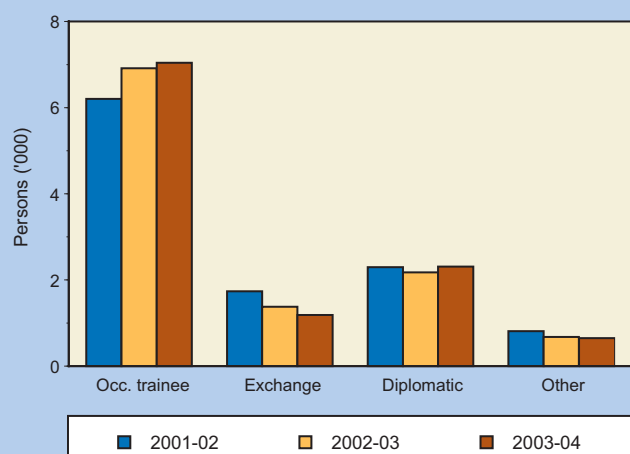
Diplomatic - for diplomats, consular staff and other officials, accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2,309 visas granted).

Fig. 5-26: International Relations Visa Grants 2003-04



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-27: International Relations Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS