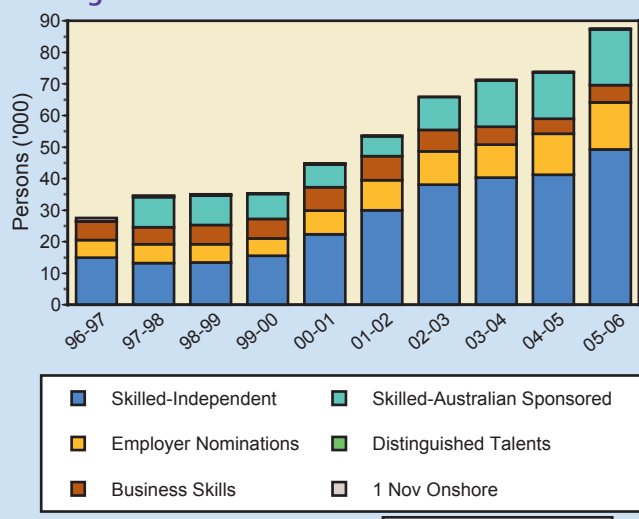


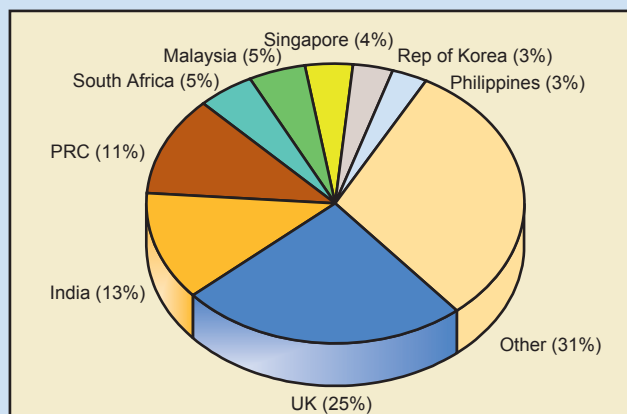
# Skill Migration

**Fig. 2-4: Skill Stream Outcomes 2004-05**



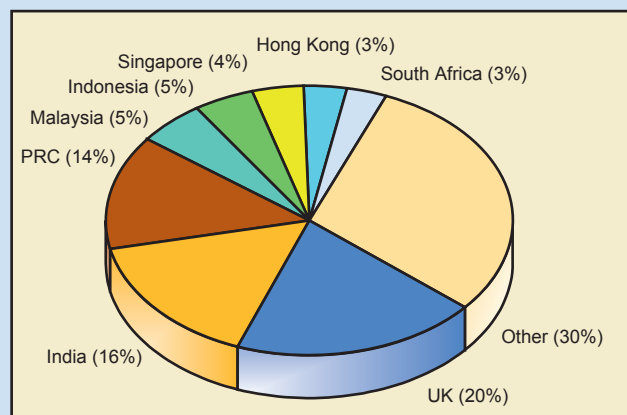
Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

**Fig. 2-5: Skill Stream Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

**Fig. 2-6: Skilled Independent Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

## Skill Stream Outcomes

The Skill Stream of Australia's Migration (non-Humanitarian) Program is specifically designed to target migrants who have skills or outstanding abilities that will contribute to the Australian economy.

In 2004-05, there were 77,880 people granted Skill Stream visas, an increase of 6,640 (9.3 per cent) on 2003-04. Of total Skill Stream visas, 36.9 per cent (28,760 persons) were granted to onshore applicants.

## Skill Stream Visa Categories

The Skill Stream includes the following categories:

**Skilled Independent and Skilled Independent Overseas Student** – caters for applicants who do not have a family or employer sponsor or who do not wish to be sponsored. Successful applicants must satisfy the basic General Skilled Migration requirements, including skills, age, work experience and English language ability and achieve the required passmark on the General Skilled Migration points test (41,180 visas in 2004-05).

**State /Regional Sponsored** - includes the permanent State Territory Nominated Independent (STNI) and Skill Matching visas as well as the Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) (Provisional) visas (4,140 in 2004-05).

STNI enables State and Territory governments to sponsor Skilled-Independent category applicants who are willing to settle in States and Territories where their skills are in demand. State and Territory governments participating in the Scheme establish which skills are in short supply and where skill shortages are occurring. Based on this information States and Territories aim to select applicants who have a sound chance of gaining employment in their State or Territory within a short time of their arrival. Grants under STNI have increased by 65.5 per cent from 1,628 in 2003-04 to 2,695 in 2004-05.

The **SIR (Provisional)** visa is for skilled people who are unable to meet the passmark for a permanent visa and wish to live and work in a regional or low population growth metropolitan area in Australia. Applicants must still be assessed against the points test and meet the SIR (Provisional) visa passmark which is slightly lower than for the permanent Skilled-Independent visas. Applicants must also be sponsored by an authorised State or Territory government agency. Once SIR (Provisional) visa holders have complied with the visa's conditions and have lived for at least 2 years, and worked for a minimum of at least 12 months, in a regional or low population growth metropolitan area in Australia, they are eligible to apply for a permanent regional visa. There were 1,440 SIR (Provisional) visas granted in 2004-05.

**Skilled Australian Sponsored and Skilled Australian Sponsored Overseas Student** - this category is for skilled people who are sponsored by an eligible family member who is an Australian citizen or permanent resident. The applicant must be able to satisfy the basic requirements of skills, age, work experience and English language ability. Most applicants are assessed against the General Skilled Migration points test, although the passmark is lower than for the Skilled Independent category and applicants receive additional points for sponsorship by an Australian relative. Those applicants whose sponsor lives in a designated area of Australia can meet a lesser work experience requirement, and in some cases a lower standard of English language ability, and are not assessed against the General Skilled Migration points test (14,530 visas in 2004-05).

**Employer Sponsored** - employers may nominate (or 'sponsor') personnel from overseas through the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS), Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) and Labour Agreements. These visas enable Australian employers to fill skilled permanent vacancies with overseas personnel if they cannot find suitably qualified workers in Australia. 13,020 visas were granted in 2004-05.

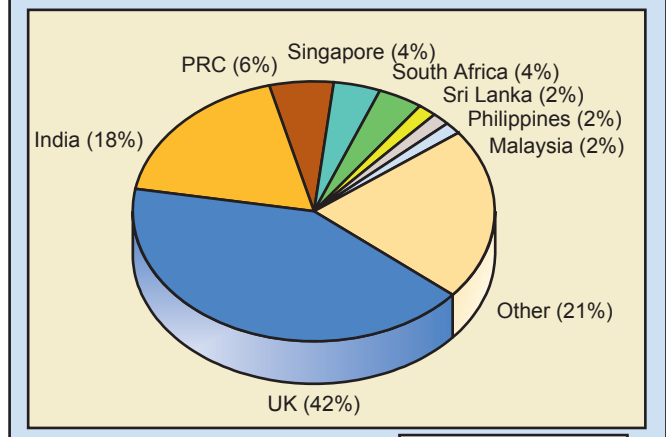
**Business Skills** - encourages successful business people to settle permanently in Australia and develop new business opportunities (net outcome of 4,820 visas in 2004-05).

**Distinguished Talent** – This category is for distinguished individuals with special or unique talents of benefit to Australia (outcome of 190 visas in 2004-05.)

Changes introduced in April 2005 mean all offshore visa applications for the ENS, Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme and Labour Agreements (including those from overseas applicants) are now lodged directly with the same DIMIA Business Centres in Australia that approved their employer's nomination application to fill a vacancy with an overseas worker. Advantages are that visa processing is now streamlined, job advertisement requirements are removed and a clearer pathway is provided to permanent residence for holders of temporary work visas.

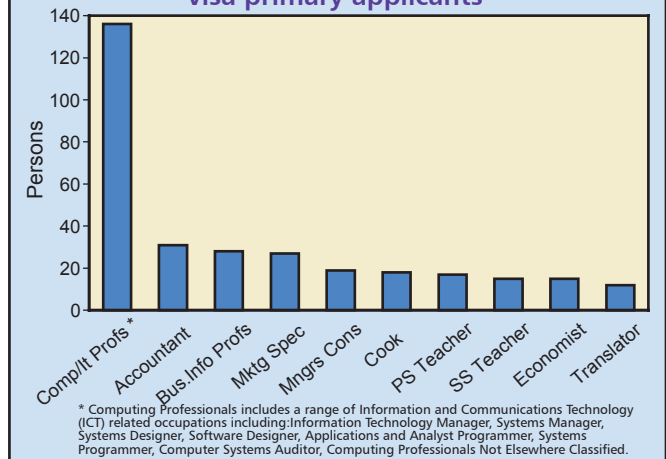
An additional 5,000 places have been allocated in the 2005/2006 ENS, RSMS and Labour Agreement programs to support the government's push to increase skilled migration.

**Fig. 2-7: State Regional Sponsored Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

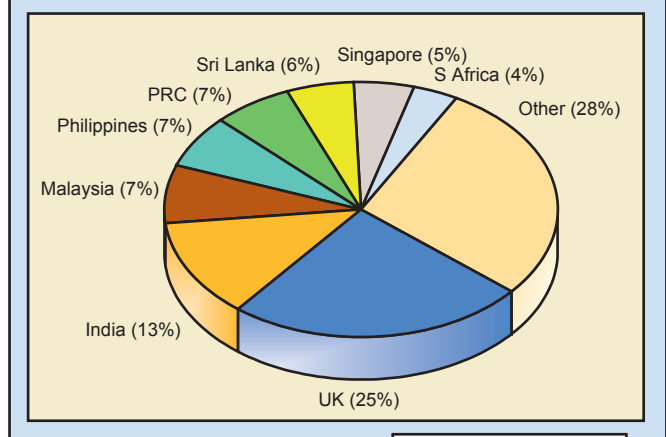
**Fig. 2-8: Top 10 occupations nominated by successful SIR (Provisional) visa primary applicants**



\* Computing Professionals includes a range of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) related occupations including: Information Technology Manager, Systems Manager, Systems Designer, Software Designer, Applications and Analyst Programmer, Systems Programmer, Computer Systems Auditor, Computing Professionals Not Elsewhere Classified.

Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

**Fig. 2-9: Skilled Australian Sponsored Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

## Overview of General Skilled Migration

Australia's General Skilled Migration Program is designed to attract people who have skills in particular occupations that are required in Australia. These occupations are listed on Australia's Skilled Occupations List (SOL).

General Skilled Migration includes the Skilled Independent, Skilled Australian Sponsored, Skilled Designated Area Sponsored (SDAS), STNI, SIR (Provisional) and Skill Matching visa categories. Visa grants in the Skilled Australian Linked and Skilled Regional Linked categories are also counted towards the General Skilled Migration program though these visa categories were closed for new applications on 1 July 1999.

Depending on their circumstances, applicants can apply for a General Skilled Migration visa while they are in Australia or outside Australia. Applicants who can be granted their visa while they are in Australia are referred to as 'onshore' applicants while those who must be outside Australia for their visa to be granted are called 'offshore' applicants.

Through the onshore General Skilled Migration visa categories, overseas students in Australia can apply for and be granted permanent residence following the completion of their studies without the need to leave Australia.

Overseas students applying for one of these categories must apply within six months of completing an Australian qualification (degree, diploma or trade qualification). The qualification must have been obtained after a minimum two years of full time study at an Australian educational institution while the applicant was physically present in Australia. They must also hold a positive skills assessment for an occupation on the Skilled Occupations List that attracts 60 points on the General Skilled Migration points test, unless they have completed an Australian doctorate. Australian doctorate students may hold a positive skills assessment for a 50 point occupation.

Overseas students who have completed their award at a regional campus may also nominate a 50 point occupation if applying for the SIR (Provisional) visa.

To be successful, applicants in all the General Skilled Migration visa categories must meet threshold criteria for skill, work experience, age and English language ability. Applicants with Australian qualifications who apply within six months of course completion are exempt from the recent work experience requirement. All applicants, other than those applying for a Skilled Designated Area Sponsored visa, are then assessed against the General Skilled Migration points test.

## General Skilled Migration points test

A points test is used to assess applicants against a range of skill-related factors. The number of points prescribed for each factor reflects their relative importance in the context of an applicant's potential contribution to Australia. The skill, age, English language, work experience and Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL) components therefore earn the highest points. Other factors recognised include Australian qualifications, spouse skills, designated investments, work experience obtained in Australia and fluency in a community language other than English.

In 2004-05, more than 48 per cent of successful General Skilled Migration (points-tested) applicants claimed points for an Australian qualification, the large majority of whom also took advantage of the recent work experience waiver.

A significant increase in demand in both the onshore and offshore General Skilled Migration categories resulted in 59,850 visas being granted in the General Skilled Migration categories in 2004-05. Of these, 68.8% per cent were in the Skilled Independent and Skilled Independent Overseas Student category.

Of successful applicants assessed against the points test, more than 56 per cent were aged less than 30 years, more than 80 per cent scored maximum points for skill and approximately 70 per cent scored maximum points for English language proficiency. Approximately 20 per cent had an occupation that was listed on MODL at the time their visa was granted.

## Changes to General Skilled Migration program

In recent years, changes to General Skilled Migration selection criteria and the points test have been introduced to ensure that Australia's skilled migrant intake meets identified demands in the Australian labour market, particularly in regional Australia.

Increases in the passmark for the Skilled Independent category (April 2004) and the Skilled Independent Overseas Student category (April 2005) were implemented to increase the skill level of migrants coming to Australia. These passmark increases have placed greater emphasis on the points for 'regional study' which were introduced on 1 July 2003 to encourage overseas students to live and study in regional Australia or a low population growth metropolitan area.

The changes have also increased the attractiveness of the new regional visa which was introduced on 1 July 2004 and has a lower passmark than those for the Skilled Independent and Skilled Independent Overseas Student visas. The Skilled Independent Regional (Provisional) (SIR) visa is available to potential migrants outside Australia as well as to overseas students in Australia wishing to remain permanently. From 1 July 2005, SIR (Provisional) visa applicants are eligible for 10 "sponsorship" points when sponsored by an authorised state or territory government agency.

To further encourage overseas students to consider settling permanently in regional Australia, students can apply for and be granted a SIR (Provisional) visa while in Australia even if they can only nominate a 50 point occupation. This concession only applies if they have lived and studied at a campus in regional Australia or a low population growth metropolitan area for a minimum of 2 years prior to applying.

Furthermore, from 1 November 2005, Working Holiday and Occupational Trainee visa holders are eligible to apply for and obtain a SIR (Provisional) visa without leaving Australia. As with other SIR (Provisional) visa applicants, they must be sponsored by an authorised state or territory government agency or regional certifying body and meet the current passmark for the visa. This measure significantly expands the pool of people available for sponsorship by state governments and regional authorities under the SIR (Provisional) visa and have the additional advantage of attracting people who already have work experience in Australia. For more information on the SIR (Provisional) visa refer to Chapter 3 – State Specific and Regional Migration.

In May 2005, a range of new occupations was added to the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), taking the total number of occupations on the list to 56. Applicants whose nominated occupation is on the MODL receive priority processing and are awarded additional points under the General Skilled Migration points test. Of the 17 occupations added, 12 are trade occupations which reflect the findings of labour market research by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). The MODL will be reviewed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations every six months to better reflect emerging labour shortages and further improve targeting.

These changes to the MODL complement the July 2004 increase in MODL points from 10 to 15 for nominating a MODL occupation and from 15 to 20 points for applicants with a full-time job offer in a MODL occupation.

Together, these measures reflect a continued focus on the MODL as a way of ensuring the skills component of Australia's migration program delivers migrants with skills that are in demand by Australian employers.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) professions continued as the main occupational grouping (27%) for General Skilled Migration applicants in 2004-05. However, the removal of ICT specialisations from the MODL, the suspension of priority processing for ICT applications and changes in skills assessment procedures followed by the Australian Computer Society has resulted in the number of successful ICT applicants continuing to decline in 2004-05.

The other main occupation groupings among successful General Skilled Migration applicants were Accountants, Auditors and Corporate Treasurers (17%), Building and Engineering Professionals (12%) and Nurses (4%).

## Client Service Initiatives relating to General Skilled Migration

To assist in delivery of the General Skilled Migration program some General Skilled Migration applicants have been able to lodge their visa application and supporting documentation over the internet since 1 July 2005. Currently people applying for a General Skilled Migration visa that can be granted in Australia and all applicants for the SIR (Provisional) visa are able to use this 'eVisa' facility which provides for:

- internet visa lodgement;
- internet payment using credit cards; and
- electronic document attachment.

To complement this initiative, a new General Skilled Migration website was also launched on 1 July 2005. Following findings from user testing, the website is written in a more engaging tone and uses client friendly language. The website is more comprehensive than either the previous General Skilled Migration website or the relevant migration booklet. Using the website, applicants are able to choose a General Skilled Migration visa, assess themselves against the requirements for that visa, and find out how to complete and lodge an application for that visa. The website is located at [www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/index.htm).

## Employer Sponsored

### Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS)

The ENS is an employer-driven scheme that enables Australian employers to recruit highly skilled migrants to fill highly skilled positions that they have been unable to fill through their own training efforts.

Positions must be "highly skilled", full-time and available for a period of at least three years. Positions must also be in accordance with the standards for wages and working conditions provided for in relevant Australian workplace legislation.

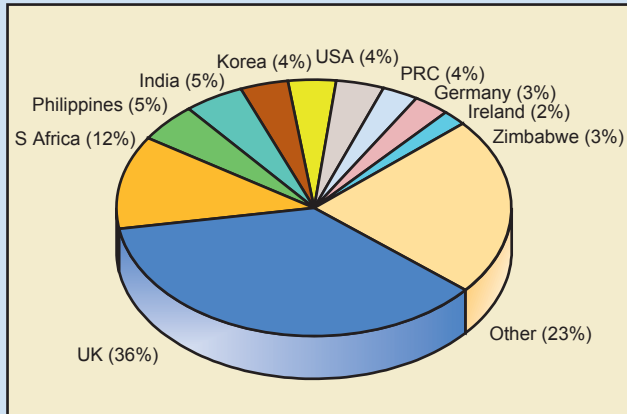
ENS consists of two distinct stages, nomination by an employer and the nominee's application for a visa.

A "highly skilled" position is a position that requires the appointment of a "highly skilled" person. That is, a person who has completed at least three years of formal training (or has an equivalent amount of on the job training - usually 5 years), and has also completed three years of relevant post-training work experience.

Visa applicants can satisfy the skill criteria by showing that they have either been working in Australia in the nominated occupation for at least 2 years including 1 year with their nominating employer or have had their skills formally assessed or been nominated for a senior management position with a base salary of more than \$151,500. The minimum salary is consistent with the salary required under the Temporary Business (Long Stay) program.

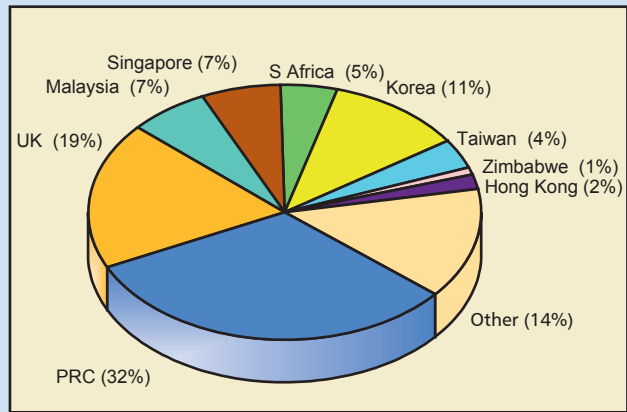
## Business Skills Program

**Fig. 2-10: Employer Sponsored Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

**Fig. 2-11: Business Skill Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05**



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

Successive governments have reaffirmed a commitment to selecting high quality business migrants, in recognition of the benefits they contribute to Australia's increasingly global economy. They bring with them knowledge of overseas markets, business networks, cultural practices and languages other than English, as well as their specific business skills and experience.

Since 1 March 2003, the majority of Business Skills entrants enter Australia initially on a provisional (temporary) visa for four years and, after satisfactory evidence of a specified level of business or investment activity, may apply for permanent residence. High calibre business migrants may apply for a Business Talent visa to obtain direct permanent residence if they have high level business attributes and are sponsored by a State or Territory government agency.

Lower level visa criteria apply where applicants have attained sponsorship from a State or Territory government, at both the provisional and permanent residence stages. For example, sponsored business owners can attract age and English language concessions.

The net outcome for Business Skills for 2004-05 was 4,820 compared to a net outcome of 5,670 in 2003-04. The lower outcome is a reflection of the March 2003 change to two stage processing.

Program integrity continues to improve. Provisional visa holders are required to establish and actively manage a business in Australia before obtaining the benefits of permanent residence. Post-arrival monitoring of Business Skills visa holders resulted in a record 1,112 visa cancellations in 2004-05 (down from 1,183 in 2003-04), where visa holders had not met the requirements attached to their visa.

## Labour Agreements

Labour Agreements are negotiated between the Commonwealth Government (represented by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) and an employer or an industry association.

Under a Labour Agreement a specified number of skilled overseas workers can be recruited within a given period, in response to an identified or emerging labour market (or skill) shortage in the Australian labour market. It can cover both temporary and permanent entry of workers.

Migration criteria under Labour Agreements are based on the ENS. 13,024 visas were granted under the ENS, including Labour Agreements and the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) in 2004-05. There were 2,695 visas granted under the State and Territory Nominated Independent scheme. Details on the RSMS scheme are provided in Chapter 3.