

Family Migration

The Family Stream of Australia's migration program enables the migration of immediate family members such as spouses, children, parents and certain other members of extended families. Migrants in the family stream are selected on the basis of their family relationship with their sponsor in Australia. There is no test for skills or language ability as there is for skilled stream migrants.

The Family Stream has grown steadily from 31,310 visas in 1997-98 to 41,740 visas in 2004-05. Over the same period, however, the Family Stream's share of the Migration Program fell from 47 to 35 per cent as the Skill Stream grew at a much faster rate.

This shift in the balance of the Migration Program reflects a growing focus on skilled migration and its contribution towards Australia's social and economic welfare. At the same time, the absolute increase in the Family Stream indicates the continuation of a strong commitment to family migration.

In 2004-05, 15.8 per cent of Family Stream visas were granted to citizens of the United Kingdom, followed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) (11.7 per cent) and the Philippines and India (4.8 per cent).

The planned level for the Family Stream in 2005-06 is 42,000 visas, which represents 30 per cent of the total migration program (planned as 140,000 places).

Partner

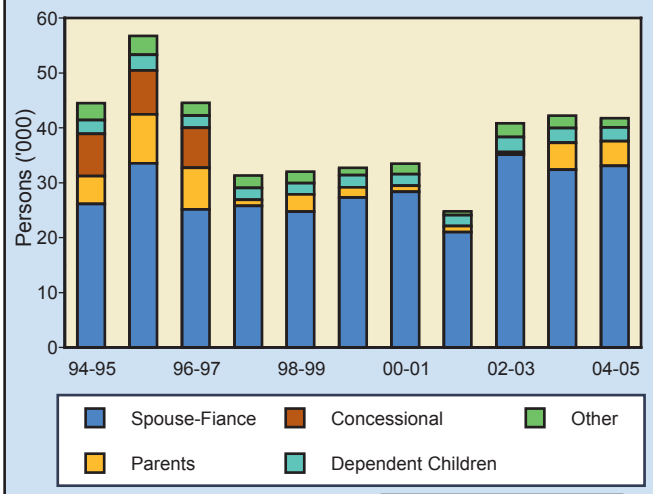
Partner visas include the spouse, prospective marriage (fiancé(e)) and interdependency visa subclasses. In 2004-05, partners accounted for 79.2 per cent (33,060 persons) of family stream visa grants. Most of the partner visas granted were spouse visas (27,122), with 5,440 prospective marriage visas granted and 498 interdependency (generally same sex partner) visas granted.

In 2004-05, the largest number of partner visas was granted to people who held citizenship in the United Kingdom (15.7 per cent), followed by the PRC (9.8 per cent), Philippines (5.3 per cent) and the USA (5.1 per cent). Afghanistan is ninth on the top ten list of countries of origin of partner visa grants, with 2.7 per cent.

Women outnumbered men as primary applicants in the grant of spouse and prospective marriage visas in 2004-05; females accounted for 69.1 per cent of these visas. However, men outnumbered women as the primary applicants in the grant of interdependency visas, accounting for 64.6 per cent of these visas.

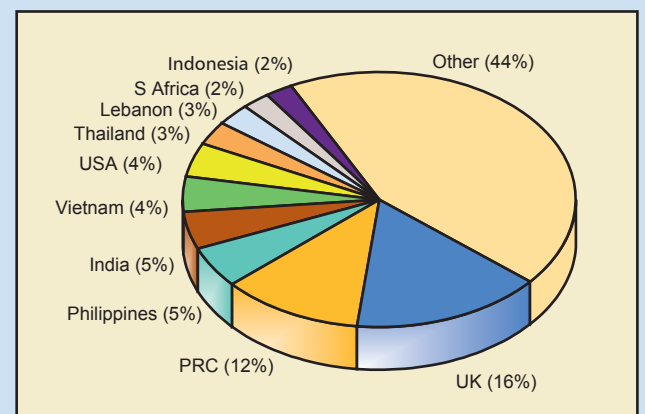
While those granted partner visas in 2004-05 included more than 200 applicants aged over 65, most were much younger. While prospective marriage visa recipients were generally younger than

Fig. 2-12: Family Stream Outcomes by Visa



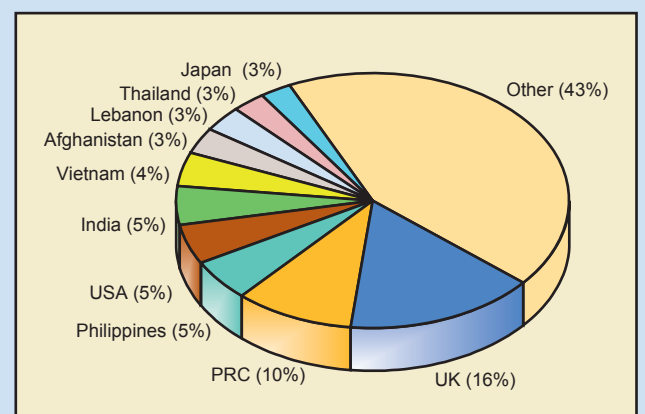
Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

Fig. 2-13: Family Stream Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

Fig. 2-14: Partner Outcomes by Citizenship



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

spouse and interdependency visa recipients, for all three visa categories more than 70 per cent of the primary applicants were aged between 20 and 39 years. In 2004-05, partner visa holders also brought with them 3,912 dependants, mainly children, (most aged between 0 and 19) who migrated as secondary applicants on partner visas.

Processing arrangements for partner visas, introduced in Australia in 2000 and overseas in late 2001, continue to reduce processing times. Processing times in Australian offices are now approximately 2.2 months, and the median processing time for partner visa applications overseas is 3 months.

Bona Fides Units (BFUs) were established in all Australian DIMIA offices at the beginning of 2002 to further enhance the integrity of partner visa processing. These specialist units undertake more intensive checking in cases where possible fraud has been identified.

During the 2004-05 program year 1,733 cases were referred to the BFUs and 1,136 home visits were conducted. This represents an increase of 17 per cent and 49 per cent respectively on the 2003-04 figures. Following BFU activity 1,315 cases were finalised, 132 cases more than in 2003-04. Of these 23 per cent were refused by the BFU as the parties were not in a genuine relationship; 72 per cent were granted after establishing the bona fides of the relationship; five per cent resulted in the application being withdrawn.

Child

The child category includes visas for dependent children, orphan relatives and adopted children. In 2004-05, a total of 2,490 visas were granted (6.7 per cent decrease on the 2003-04 total of 2,662) which represented 6.0 per cent of grants in the Family Stream.

In 2004-05, the largest number of visas in the child category was granted to citizens of the PRC (17.4 per cent), followed by the Philippines (11.4 per cent), with UK (6.8 per cent) and Thailand at 6.2 per cent.

Preferential / Other Family

The Preferential/Other Family category includes visas for aged dependent relatives, remaining relatives and carers. In 2004-05, a total of 1,690 visas were granted in the Other Family category, representing 4.0 per cent of Family Stream visa grants. Of these grants, around 74 per cent were remaining relatives, 19 per cent were carers and 7 per cent were aged dependent relatives. In 2003-04, a total of 2,284 visas were granted in the Other Family category, representing 5.4 per cent of Family Stream visa grants.

In 2004-05, the largest number of visas in the Preferential/Other Family category was granted to citizens of the PRC (13.9 per cent), followed by the United Kingdom (12.2 per cent), Vietnam (9.1 per cent) and Cambodia (6.0 per cent).

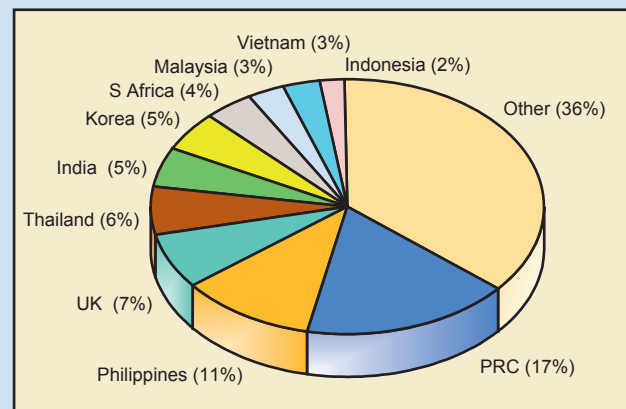
Parents

Since 1999-2000, the Australian Government has limited the number of parent places available to parents each program year. This followed research indicating that migrants in the parent category pose a relatively high ongoing cost to the Australian community. 2003-04 saw the introduction of the new contributory parent category thus creating two distinct parent visa categories.

Parents (non-contributory)

In 2004-05, 1,001 (non-contributory) parent visas were granted, comprising 1,000 visas in the parent subclasses and one visa in the designated parent subclass (this now-closed category was introduced in November 1999 to allow for parents affected by the Senate's disallowance of a new parent category in March 1999). This compares with 1,502 parent visas granted in 2003-04, comprising 1,500 visas in the parent subclasses and 2 visas in the designated parent subclass.

Fig. 2-15: Child Outcomes by Country of Citizenship 2004-05



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

In 2004-05, the largest number of parent non-contributory visas was granted to citizens of the PRC (27.2 per cent), followed by the United Kingdom (11.8 per cent), Fiji (8.1 per cent) and India (5.2 per cent).

At 30 June 2005, some 20,189 persons remained in the parent pipeline with some 16,307 (75 per cent) in the queue. The offshore component of this pipeline is around 14,740 persons while around 5,450 persons are in the onshore component. This compares with 14,520 and 5,560 respectively at the end of 2003-04.

Parents (contributory)

Legislation making provision for the new contributory parent migration category was passed by Parliament in March 2003 and commenced on 27 June 2003 (offshore applicants) and 1 July 2003 (onshore applicants).

This category substantially increases the number of places available for parents to migrate each year on the basis that they or their sponsor make a fairer contribution to their health and welfare costs. In the contributory category, parents are required to pay a more substantial second visa application charge, and a ten-year \$10,000 Assurance of Support bond for the main applicant and \$4,000 for adult secondary applicants.

In 2004-05, 3,500 contributory parent visas were granted. In the contributory parent category, the largest number of visas was granted to citizens of the United Kingdom (25.5 per cent), followed by the PRC (19.2 per cent), South Africa (9.1 per cent) and Vietnam (4.8 per cent).

personalised document checklists to inform applicants and sponsors on the supporting documentation required to be lodged with their application. Applicants are not yet able to lodge these online forms over the internet. Once completed, the forms can be printed out in hard copy and lodged at a DIMIA office in accordance with current practice.

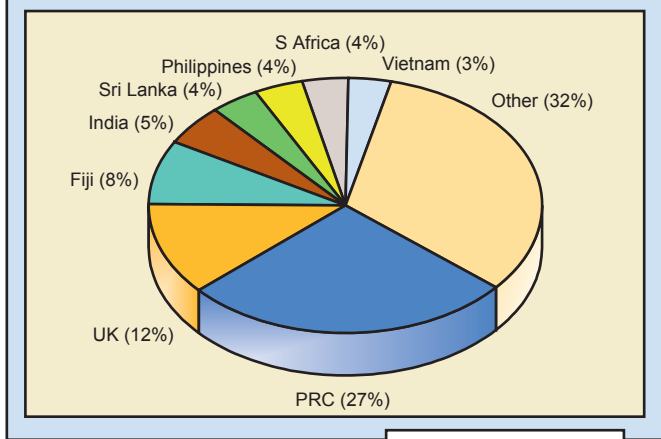
Global Working

All applications for parent visas previously lodged at overseas offices are now processed centrally at the Perth Offshore Parents Centre (POPC). This includes applications for the contributory parent migration category. Economies of scale and specialisation have enabled POPC to develop more efficient and effective processing procedures.

Temporary Child visa applications from onshore applicants are lodged and processed centrally at DIMIA's Hobart office. This ensures consistency and focus on the special needs of these children, who are seeking this temporary visa that will allow them to be included in their parent's application for grant of a permanent Partner visa. In 2004-05, 35 applications were lodged and 27 granted.

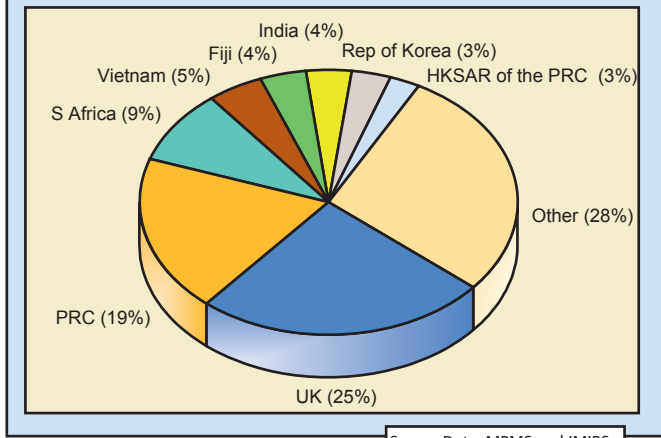
On 2 April 2005, new interactive versions of application and sponsorship forms for partner visas were released on the DIMIA website. These online forms include a number of inbuilt information and help text features that assist applicants and sponsors with filling out their forms. The forms also auto-generate

Fig. 2-16: Parent Outcomes by Country of Citizenship (Non-Contributory) 2004-05



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

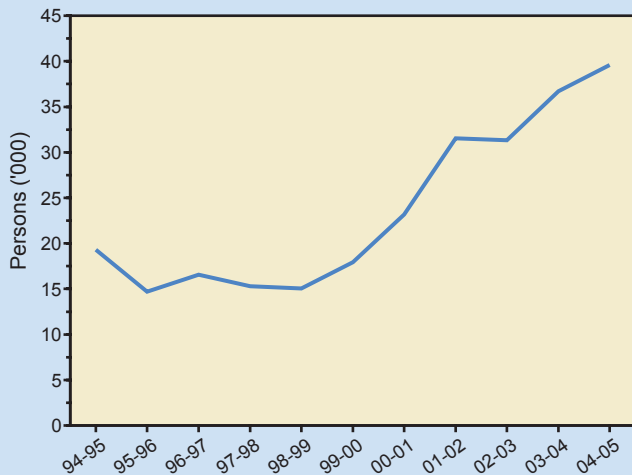
Fig. 2-17: Parent Outcomes by Country of Citizenship (Contributory) 2004-05



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

Onshore Residence Outcomes

Fig. 2-18: Onshore Residence Outcomes

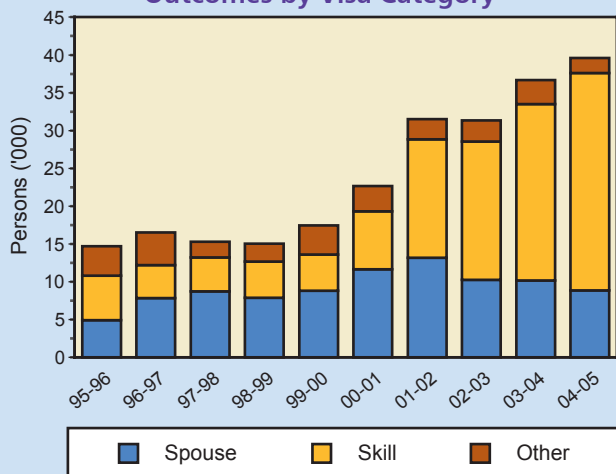


Source Data: IMIRS

While the majority of people still apply for migration while they are overseas, an increasing number of people already in Australia on a temporary visa are applying onshore for a permanent visa. People granted residence on a skill, family or special eligibility basis after arrival in Australia, are included in the Migration Program. Permanent visas may be granted onshore to applicants for most Family Stream categories, except fiancés, and to some Skill Stream categories, including the Employer Nomination Scheme, the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, and the Business Skills category. From 1 July 2001, overseas students completing their courses in Australia can also apply onshore for permanent residence in the Skill Stream.

In 2004-05, the Migration Program included 39,600 persons granted residence after applying for a permanent visa in Australia, representing 32.9 per cent of the outcome of the Migration Program.

Fig. 2-19: Onshore Residence Outcomes by Visa Category

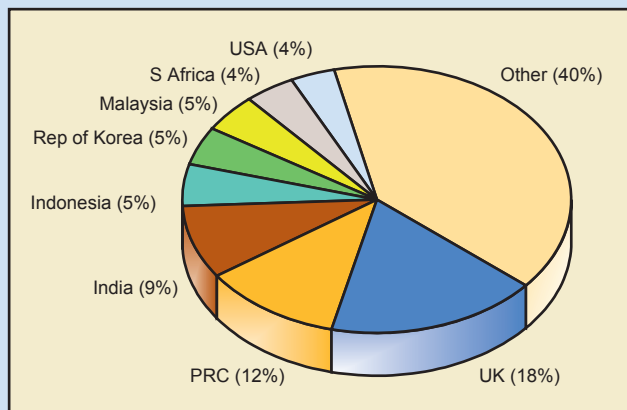


Source Data: IMIRS

In 2004-05 some 16,485 visas were granted in Australia to successful overseas students in the General Skilled Migration categories under provisions introduced on 1 July 2001. This is an increase of 25.4 per cent over the outcome for 2003-04. In addition, there has been a 24.5 per cent increase in the total Employer Nominations onshore (included in the Skill Stream in Fig. 2-19) over 2003-04. This increase reflects the rise in the number of skilled workers coming to Australia on temporary visas who later apply for permanent visas, sponsored by their employer in Australia. Chapter 5, Temporary Entry has more details about these temporary visas.

In 2004-05, the main countries of citizenship for people granted onshore residence visas were the United Kingdom (17.6 per cent), the PRC (11.6 per cent), India (8.9 per cent), Indonesia (5.1 per cent), the Republic of Korea (4.6 per cent) and Malaysia (4.6 per cent).

Fig. 2-20: Onshore Residence Outcomes by Country of Citizenship



Source Data: IMIRS