

# 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 enhance Australia's ability to compete in international markets, including the markets from which the temporary residents have come.

- personnel (executives, managers and specialists) for companies operating in Australia; and
- 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. They must be paid a minimum gross annual salary of AUD \$39,100 (\$50,775 for those in the IT professions), excluding allowances, and must be in skilled occupations (managers, professional or associate professional or skilled trades positions).

## Business (Long Stay) Visa

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:

Skilled temporary residents are not able to access Medicare or social security benefits. They must pay to access health and higher education services and must pay Australian taxes (income tax and GST), superannuation 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 \$2.5 billion over a four year period from the temporary business entrants arriving in 2004-05. The modelling also indicates that state and territory budgets may benefit by about \$1 billion over four years.

The key aim of the business temporary entry visa 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.

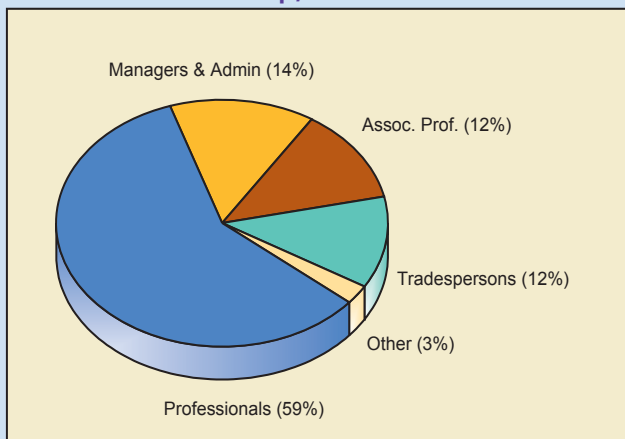
The key benefits for Australia under this category include:

- expanding trade;
- improving links with international markets;
- increasing local industry global competitiveness; and
- maintaining or increasing local training and employment opportunities.

In 2004-05, a total of 49,855 Business (Long Stay) visas were granted, a rise of 24 per cent compared with 2003-04. The demand for ICT professionals fell slightly (3%) in 2004-05, while demand within the health industry continues at a high level. There were 2,833 nominations for positions as registered nurses in 2004-05, a 8.0 per cent increase over 2003-04.

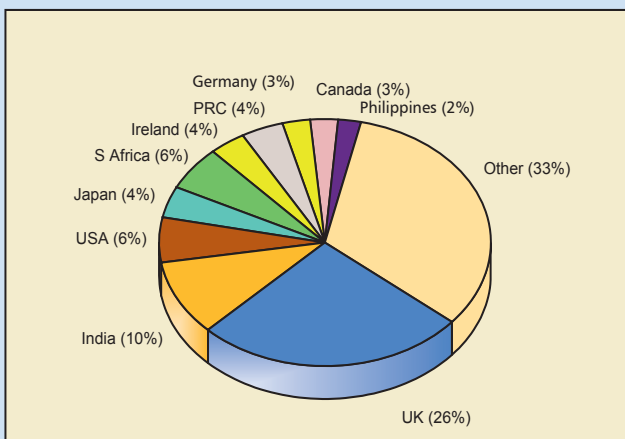
Registered nurse is the largest single occupation sought by Australian employers. The importance of meeting this demand for nursing professionals is acknowledged by giving priority processing to applications for nursing positions. The top five occupational groups nominated by employers in 2004-05 were computing professionals (11.9 per cent), managers (10.8 per cent), registered nurses (9.2 per cent), business and information professionals (3.8 per cent) and chefs (3.0 per cent).

**Fig. 5-20: Long Stay Temporary Business Onshore Approved Nominations by Major Occupation Group, 2004-05**



Source Data: IMIRS

**Fig. 5-21: Long Stay Temporary Business Grants by Country of Citizenship, 2004-05**



Source Data: IMIRS

In 2004-05, 14,604 people holding the Business (Long Stay) visa applied to remain in Australia permanently. The majority of these (64 per cent) applied for permanent entry under the Employer Nominations Scheme, Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme and Labour Agreements. These applications represented 86 per cent of the applicants for these visa categories onshore.

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

The Department 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 2004-05, processing times were 35 days for high risk cases and 22 days for low risk cases processed in Australia.

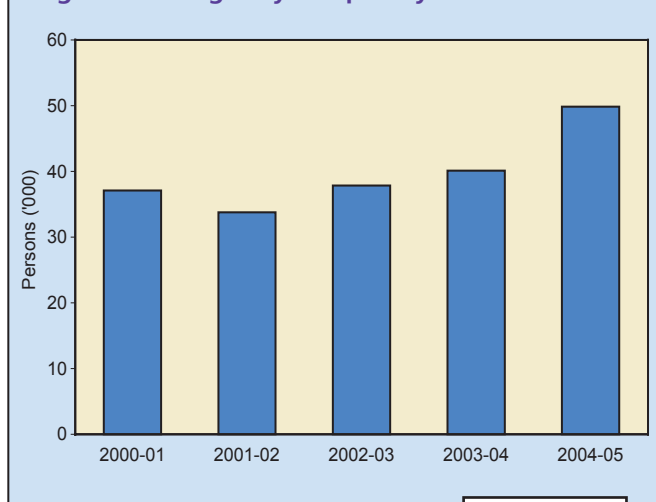
All sponsors of Business (Long Stay) visa holders are monitored to ensure that they comply with the conditions of their sponsorship. In 2004-05, 7,963 sponsors were monitored. In addition, 25 per cent of sponsors are site visited where more detailed checks occur. Sponsors in higher risk industries are usually site visited. This ensures that employers are complying with their undertakings with respect to their temporary overseas employees and that the workers are not being exploited. On 1 July 2004 provisions were made in the Migration Regulations for sanctions to be imposed against a sponsor who has breached their sponsorship undertakings. Sanctions may include sponsorship cancellation and/or barrings from sponsoring for up to five years.

### Business Skills Visa

Business entrants holding provisional (four year) visas must establish and manage genuine businesses in Australia in order to qualify for permanent residence. In 2003-04, almost 80 per cent of all business skills provisional visas granted were State/Territory government sponsored. Some smaller jurisdictions, particularly South Australia and Tasmania, had particular success in attracting greater numbers of sponsorship applications. Each State/Territory manages and varies its sponsorship regime to match regional economic development needs.

Although new applications for Business (Long Stay) Independent Executive visas ceased with the introduction of two-stage processing arrangement in March 2003, almost 5,200 visa holders were present in Australia as at 30 June 2005. New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland have over 74% of these visa holders.

Fig. 5-22: Long Stay Temporary Business Grants



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.

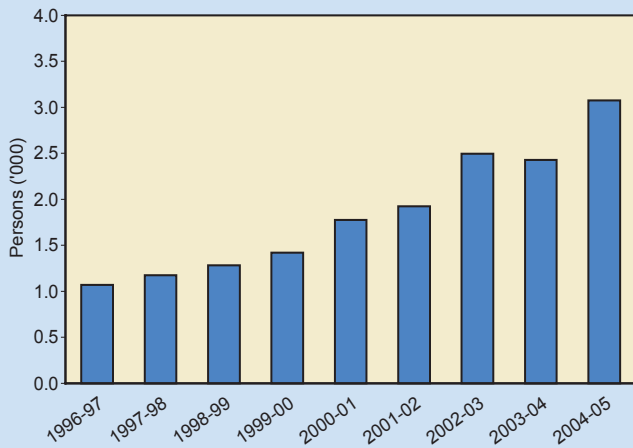
### Educational Visa

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 Review of the Temporary Residence Program recommended that the needs met by this visa class could equally well be met through the Business (Long Stay) visa. Numbers, therefore, are diminishing as applicants and sponsors are referred to the Business Long Stay visa. (227 visas were granted in 2004-05, down considerably from 505 in the previous year).

This category has provided benefits to Australia by allowing educational and research institutions to appoint internationally regarded academics and researchers who are able to contribute new ideas and knowledge as well as enhancing international cooperation.

## Medical Practitioner Visa

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



Source Data: IMIRS

This visa allows for qualified general and specialist medical practitioners to work in Australia for up to four years.

In 2004-05, there has been a further significant increase in the number of temporary resident doctors entering and working in Australia. In 2004-05, 3,074 visas were granted to doctors and a further 3,237 visas to their dependants. This is an increase of 27 per cent from 2,428 visa grants to doctors in 2003-04. At the end of June 2005, there were 2,437 temporary resident doctors in Australia, an increase of 31 per cent to the number of doctors in Australia on this visa at the end of June 2004.

To support the Strengthening Medicare initiatives, doctors were added to the list of approved occupations for Business (Long Stay) visa (subclass 457) on 2 April 2005. This provides doctors and their employers with access to more streamlined processing arrangements, as well as the ability to lodge applications over the internet. In 2004-05, 72 visas were granted to doctors under this visa.

# Other Temporary Entrants

## Social/Cultural Visas

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 22,070 Social/Cultural temporary visas were granted in 2004-05, a decrease of 3.9 per cent compared with 26,400 in 2003-04.

**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 (2,286 visas granted in 2004-05).

**Entertainment** – for people seeking to perform or take part in a film or television production. Since 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. ETA eligible nationals - are able to travel without a visa label in their passport (10,568 visas granted in 2004-05)

**Religious Worker** – for religious workers, including ministers, priests and spiritual leaders to serve the spiritual needs of people of their faiths in Australia (1,489 visas granted in 2004-05).

**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 (4,115 visas granted in 2004-05).

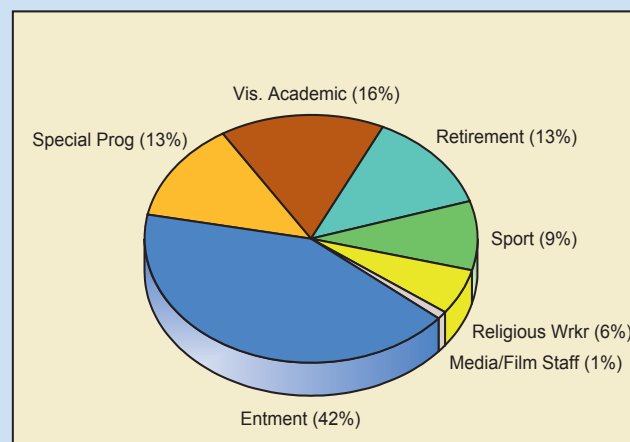
**Public Lecturer** – intended for persons who are professional lecturers or subject experts and who have been invited to make a public presentation by an organisation in Australia for a period of less than three months (23 visas granted in 2004-05).

**Special Program** - for persons to participate in youth exchange schemes, approved community-based non-commercial programs or to visit Australia as Churchill Fellowship holders (3,291 visas granted in 2004-05).

**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 visa (283 visas granted in 2004-05).

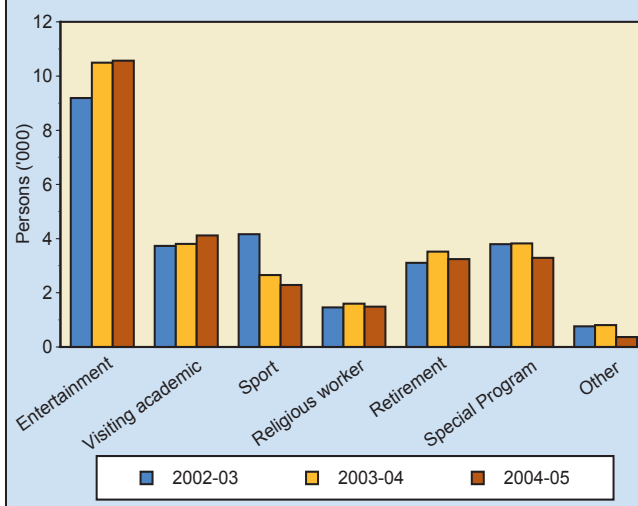
**Family Relationship** – for single persons under 18 years of age to have an extended holiday of up to 12 months, to stay with relatives or close family friends. Applicants are being directed to apply under the visitor visa class given the closeness of the conditions of the visas (62 visas granted).

Fig. 5-24: Social/Cultural Visa Grants 2004-05



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-25: Social/Cultural Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

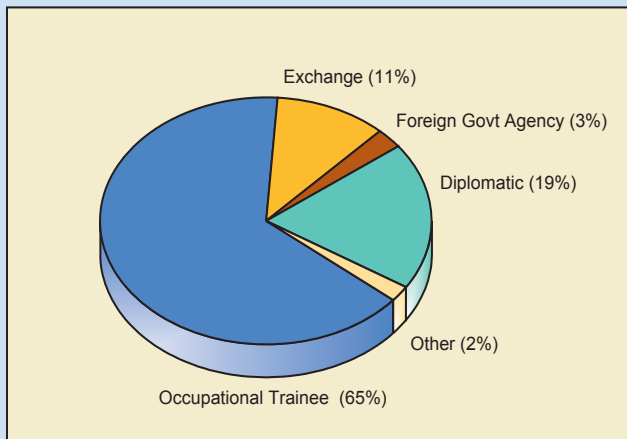
## Retirement

Retirement visas 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 long term stay (3,244 visas granted in 2004-05).

## International Relations Visas

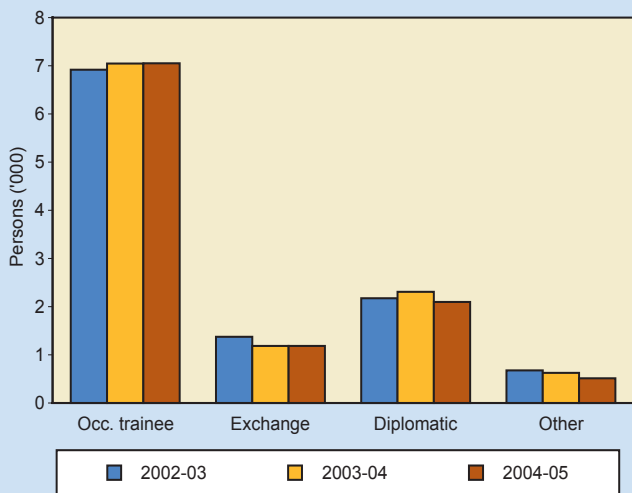
The International Relations Stream under the temporary visa category aims to promote Australia's relations with other countries and foster goodwill. For example, by allowing for the entry of

**Fig. 5-26: International Relations Visa Grants 2004-05**



Source Data: IMIRS

**Fig. 5-27: International Relations Visa Grants**



Source Data: IMIRS

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 14,525 international relations visas were granted in 2004-05, down by 2.9% compared with 11,165 in 2003-04.

**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 (286 visas granted).

**Domestic Worker (diplomatic)** – intended for adult domestic workers employed in a private capacity by diplomatic and consular representatives posted to Australia. DFAT endorsement is required (93 visas granted).

**Domestic Worker (Executive)** – provides for the entry of persons to be employed as domestic workers by certain holders of Temporary Business Entry visa 457 in order to assist executives with their representational and entertainment responsibilities (28 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 (7,144 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 (89 visas granted).

**Expatriate** – for family members of persons employed in remote localities in SE Asia, South Pacific or PNG, by international companies that have business associations with Australia. Applicants are being directed to apply for a visitor visa (17 visas granted).

**Exchange** – for skilled persons entering under exchange arrangements giving Australian residents reciprocal opportunities to work with overseas organisations. (1,185 visas granted).

**Diplomatic** – for diplomats, consular staff and other officials, accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2096 visas granted).