

Working Holiday Makers

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Programme provides for the temporary entry and stay of young people wanting to combine a holiday in Australia with the opportunity to supplement travel funds through incidental employment and, consequently, experience closer contact with the local community.

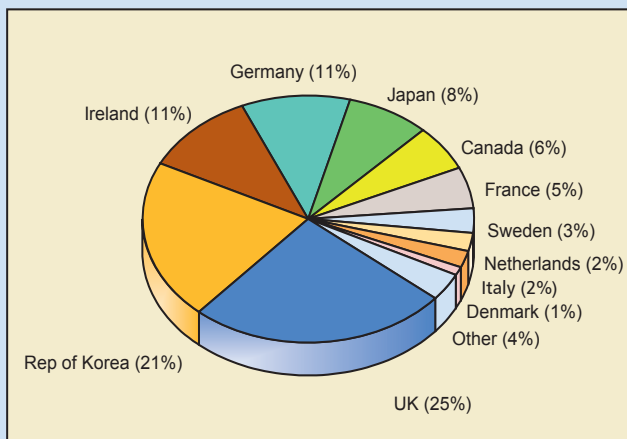
The programme is an integral part of Australia's tourism industry and provides not only economic benefits, but also significant other benefits, such as enhancing the cultural and social development of young people, and promoting mutual understanding between Australia and other nations. It also supports the Australian economy by providing supplementary labour for industries requiring short-term casual workers, particularly the hospitality, horticultural and rural industries.

Research carried out by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research in 2002 indicates that Australia benefits from the money WHMs spend and from the employment they create in the labour market. On average the WHMs surveyed stayed in Australia for nine months and spent \$16,000 during their stay, or an estimated \$1.3 billion annually based on 80,000 arrivals. In addition the report estimates that 80,000 WHMs take up the equivalent of about 41,000 full-year jobs, but about 49,000 full-year jobs are created through their expenditure, i.e. a net gain of 8,000 full-year jobs.

Australia has 19 reciprocal working holiday arrangements in effect, as follows:

- Belgium
- Denmark
- France
- Republic of Ireland
- Malta
- Republic of Korea
- United Kingdom (UK)
- Canada
- Estonia
- Germany
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- Cyprus
- Finland
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Norway
- Taiwan

Fig. 5-10: Working Holiday Maker Grants by Country of Citizenship 2005-06



Source Data: IMIRS

The WHM Programme has enjoyed steady growth in the past ten years due to a combination of increased demand among existing arrangement passport holders and the signing of new arrangements.

In 2005-06, 111,973 Working Holiday visas were granted, a 7.3 per cent increase over 2004-05. The main passport holders for Working Holiday visa grants in 2005-06 were:

• UK	28,353	• Japan	9,102
• Republic of Korea	23,536	• Canada	6,754
• Ireland	12,369	• France	6,044
• Germany	11,925		

Criteria for Visas

Working Holiday visa applicants need to be aged between 18 and 30 years, without dependent children, and from countries and locations with which Australia has a reciprocal WHM arrangement. WHMs are permitted a stay of 12 months from the date of initial entry to Australia, regardless of whether or not they spend the whole period in Australia. Since 1 November 2005, people who have undertaken seasonal work in regional Australia for a minimum of three months, while on their first Working Holiday visa, may be eligible to apply for a second Working Holiday visa. WHMs could study or train for up to three months. They could also work for up to three months with any one employer.

Work Conditions

From 1 July 2006, the work limitation with each employer has been increased from three to six months and the study/training limitation from three to four months. In addition, the definition of 'seasonal work', for the purpose of second Working Holiday visa eligibility, has been expanded to include other primary industries- plant and animal cultivation, fishing and pearling, and tree farming and felling.

WHMs are permitted to work on a temporary or casual basis provided that the period of employment with any one employer does not exceed six months. Although permitted to stay in Australia for up to 12 months, WHMs should not work for the full period of their stay but rather use incidental employment to supplement their travel funds. The wages and conditions of WHMs should be consistent with Australian standards.

WHM Delivery

Since 1 July 2002, WHM applicants have been able to lodge their visa application electronically over the internet. This "eVisa" initiative is part of the overall streamlining and improving of visa service delivery.

Of the total number of Working Holiday visas granted in 2005–06, 110,352 (98.6 per cent) were lodged electronically over the internet and 1,621 (1.5 per cent) were lodged at overseas posts (compared with 98.6 per cent electronic lodgement in 2004–05, 93.3 per cent in 2003–04 and 47.0 per cent in 2002–03). The continuing increase in electronic lodgement of Working Holiday visas during 2005–06 is an important development, indicating better client servicing and greater operational efficiency.

WHM Visa Compliance

Of the 123,045 Working Holiday Maker arrivals in Australia whose visas ceased in the 2005–06 reporting period, 99.4 (compared with 99.3 per cent in 2004–05) per cent complied with Australian visa legislation:

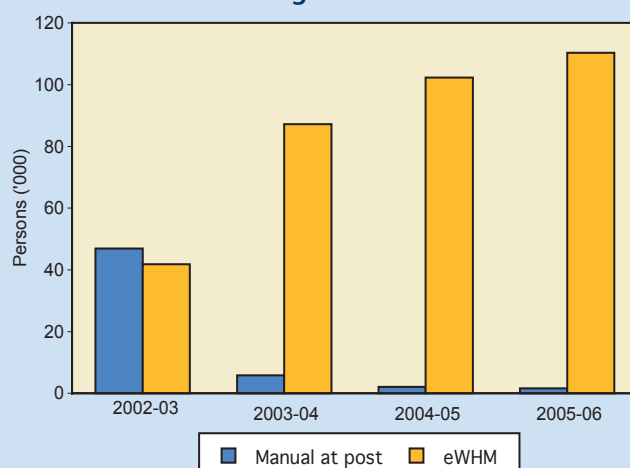
- 115,326 (93.7 per cent) departed lawfully on their initial visa;
- 6,548 (5.3 per cent) remained in Australia on a subsequent visa;
- 384 (0.3 per cent) departed lawfully on a subsequent visa.

There were 244 Working Holiday Maker arrivals who departed as unlawful non citizens after their initial visa ceased and 543 Working Holiday Maker arrivals who remained unlawfully in Australia after their initial visa ceased.

Fig 5-11: Current Working Holiday Arrangements and Year Commenced

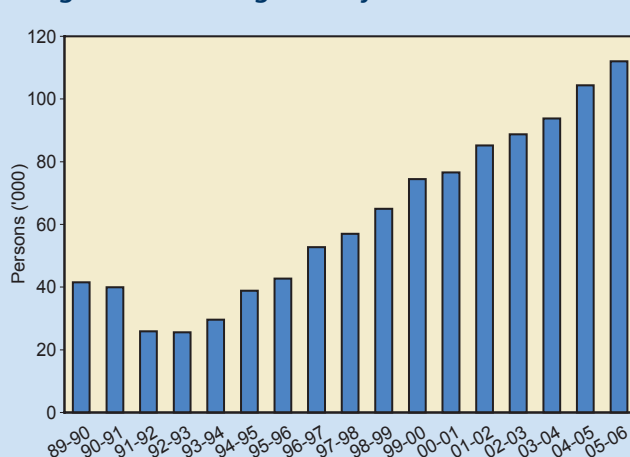
UK	1975	Norway	2001
Canada	1975	Hong Kong (SAR of China)	2001
The Netherlands	1980	Finland	2002
Japan	1980	Cyprus	2002
Ireland	1985	Italy	2004
Korea	1995	France	2004
Malta	1996	Taiwan	2004
Germany	2000	Belgium	2004
Denmark	2001	Estonia	2005
Sweden	2001		

Fig 5-12: Electronic and Manual WHM visa lodgements



Source Data: IMIRS

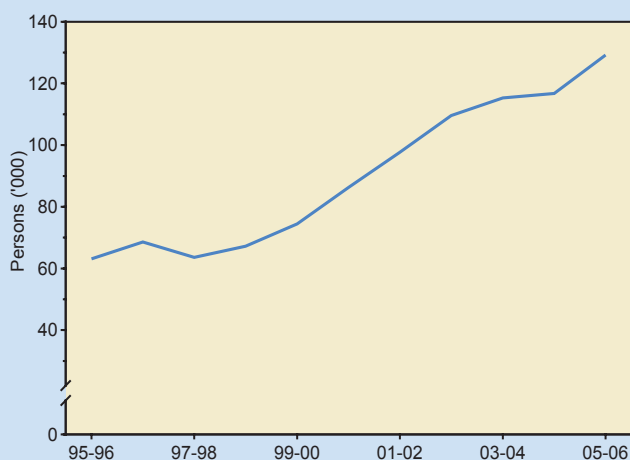
Fig. 5-13: Working Holiday Maker Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

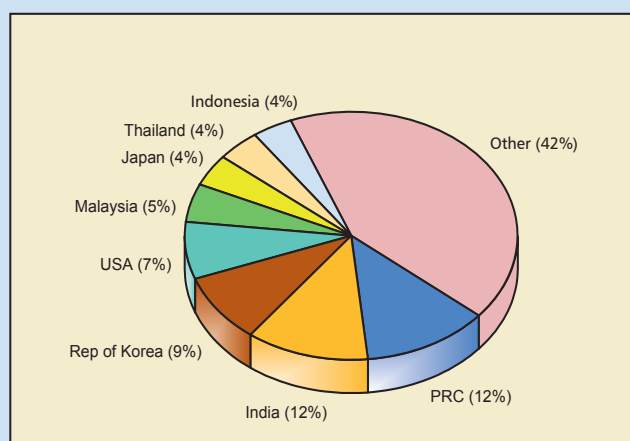
Student Visa Programme

Fig. 5-14: Student Visas Granted Offshore from 1995–96 to 2005–06



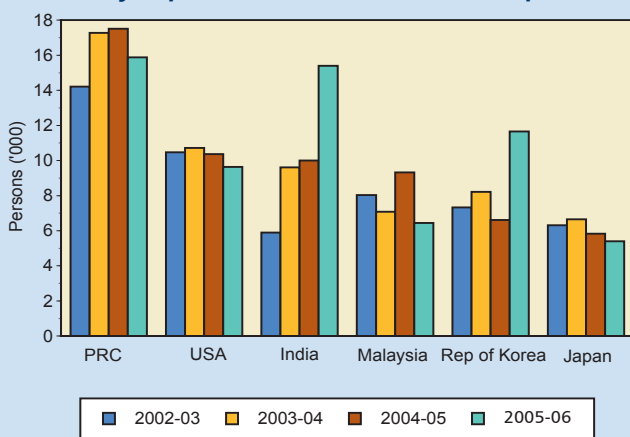
Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-15: Student Visas Granted Offshore by Country of Citizenship 2005–06



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-16: Student Visas Granted Offshore by Top Six Countries of Citizenship



Source Data: IMIRS

The Student Visa Programme enables international students to come to Australia for the purpose of full-time study. The programme is aimed at providing an efficient service that facilitates access to visas for genuine students while ensuring the integrity of Australia's immigration policies and procedures.

The broad objectives of the programme are to increase export revenue by promoting Australia's education services internationally, to develop trade and commercial links and to promote goodwill and understanding of Australia. According to the Department of Education, Science and Training, education is Australia's second largest service export after tourism and fourth largest overall in terms of goods and services (after coal, iron ore and tourism). It directly and indirectly contributes about 51,000 jobs for Australians.

The structure of the Student Visa Programme broadly reflects Australia's different education sectors. Student visas issued across the seven categories and the comparison of 2005–06 with 2004–05 were:

- Independent ELICOS* 26,683 grants, up 17.8%
- Schools 12,659, up 0.4%
- Vocational Education Training 29,942 grants, up 18.9%
- Higher Education 93,732 grants, up 14.1%
- Postgraduate Research 5,510 grants, down 49.9%
- Non-Award 17,573 grants, down 0.5%
- AusAID/Defence 4,575 grants, up 28.7%

* English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students

In addition, there has been a small increase in Student Guardian visa grants in 2005–06 with 1,135 grants recorded compared to 1,126 grants in 2004–05.

Growth in the Overseas Student Visa Programme

As at 30 June 2006 there were 208,038 people on Student visas in Australia, representing a 9.3 per cent increase on the 30 June 2005 figure.

The demand by international students to study in Australia remains very strong. A record number of 190,674 visas were granted in 2005–06, a 9.1 per cent increase over the 2004–05 figure of 174,787. These figures do not include Student visa grants for permission to work or change of education provider.

Offshore

The programme has experienced considerable growth offshore over the past 14 years, from 39,529 visa grants in 1991–92 to 129,175 grants in 2005–06 (see Figure 5-14).

Offshore grants in 2005–06 increased by 10.7 per cent in comparison with 2004–05. The major source countries for offshore grants were the PRC with 15,877 Student visas granted (down 9.3 per cent), India with 15,396 (up 54.0 per cent), Republic of Korea with 11,657 (up 25.0 per cent), the USA with 9,635

(down 7.1 per cent), Malaysia with 6,446 (down 2.5 per cent) and Japan with 5,406 (down 7.3 per cent) (see Figure 5-15). Other important markets include Thailand with 5,391 (up 11.9 per cent), Indonesia with 5,059 (up 6.5 per cent), Hong Kong (SAR of China) with 4,561 (down 5.7 per cent) and Brazil with 4,439 (up 42.4 per cent).

Onshore

Onshore Student visas grants (excluding permission to work and change of education provider visas) increased by 5.9 per cent in 2005–06 compared with the previous year. The major source countries for Onshore Student visa grants were the PRC with 14,093 Student visas granted (up 9.4 per cent), the Republic of Korea with 5,260 (down 3.4 per cent), Japan with 4,961 (down 9.3 per cent), India with 4,877 (up 47.2 per cent), Hong Kong (SAR of China) with 3,527 (down 8.8 per cent), Thailand with 3,444 (up 3.8 per cent), Indonesia with 2,513 (down 8.9 per cent), Brazil with 2,240 (up 62.0 per cent) and Malaysia with 2,168 (up 2.3 per cent).

By Education Sector

The Vocational Education and Training sector experienced an 18.9 per cent increase in total visa grants in 2005–06 from 25,187 in 2004–05 to 29,942 in 2005–06. Grants in the Higher Education sector increased by 14.1 per cent from 82,116 in 2004–05 to 93,732 in 2005–06. The AusAID/Defence Sector showed considerable growth from 3,554 to 4,575 in 2005–06 (up 28.7 per cent) and the Schools sector grew 0.4 per cent from 12,612 in 2004–05 to 12,659 in 2005–06.

The Non-Award sector, which covers study abroad, foundation, bridging and other courses not leading to an Australian award, experienced a 0.5 per cent decline in visa grants (to 17,573) during 2005–06 when compared with the previous year. The Postgraduate Research sector also experienced a decline from 11,008 to 5,510 (down 49.9 per cent) in 2005–06 (see Figure 5-17).

In 2005–06, 49.2 per cent of Student visas were granted in the Higher Education sector. The Vocational Education and Training sector has the second largest share of Student visas with 15.7 per cent, followed by the Independent ELICOS sector with 14.0 per cent.

Approval Rate

During 2005–06, 93.0 per cent of Student visa applications processed offshore were approved. This represents a slight increase in the approval rate which was 91.3 per cent in the previous year. Onshore approval rates also rose from 96.0 per cent in 2004–05 to 97.1 per cent in 2005–06.

Processing Times

The processing times for Student visa applications lodged offshore continues to improve. In 2005–06, the offshore median processing time for low immigration risk applications was; Assessment level 1, 6 days and Assessment level 2, 13 days, and for high-risk applications - Assessment level 3, 36 days and Assessment level 4, 54 days. Onshore, the median processing time for low-risk applications was 16 days (both Assessment level 1 and 2) and high-risk applications (Assessment level 3 and Assessment level

Fig. 5-17: Student Visas Granted Offshore by Educational Sector, 2005–06

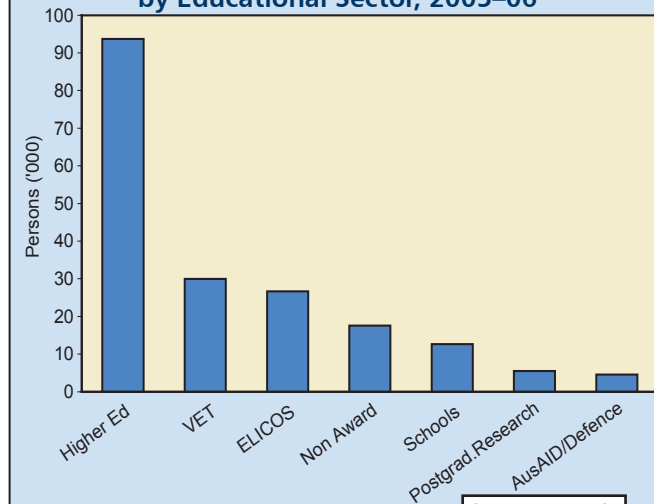
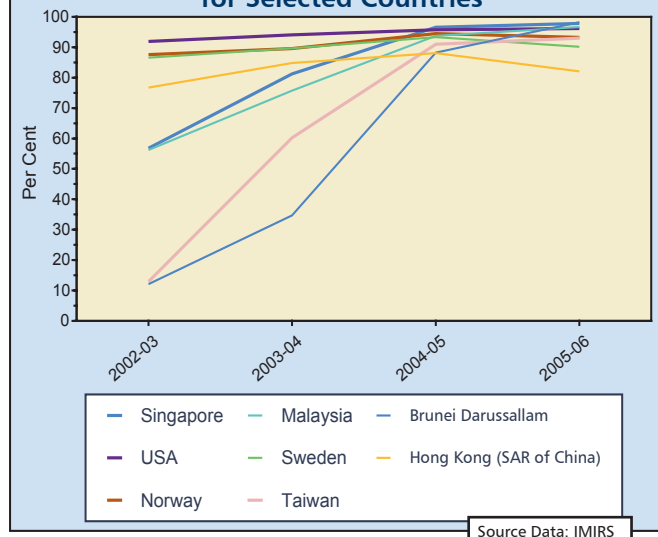


Fig 5-18: eVisa Take-up Rates for Selected Countries



4) was 27 and 21 days respectively. New client service initiatives such as the redevelopment of the department's website and the expansion of online lodgement services is expected to deliver better processing times to clients.

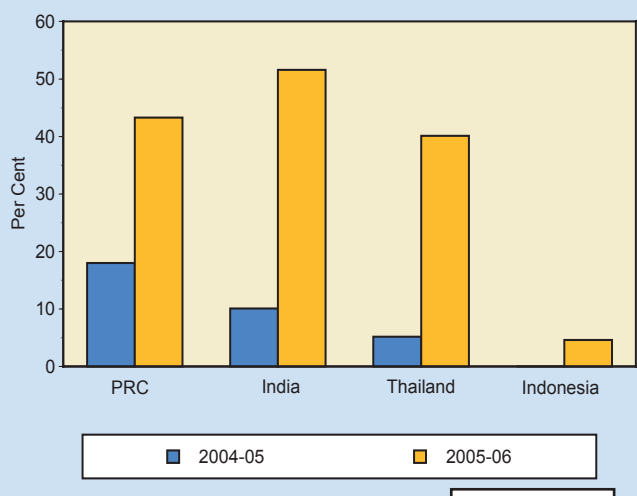
Service Delivery

DIMA continues to improve its service to clients through the use of new technologies which help to support the competitive advantage of Australia's international education sector. Initiatives in the delivery of our services enable eligible students to apply for and be granted a Student visa via the internet (eVisa). This allows the department to offer international students a more streamlined, efficient service and faster processing times. Since its introduction, an increasing number of international students, both in and outside Australia, are applying online for a student eVisa.

Offshore

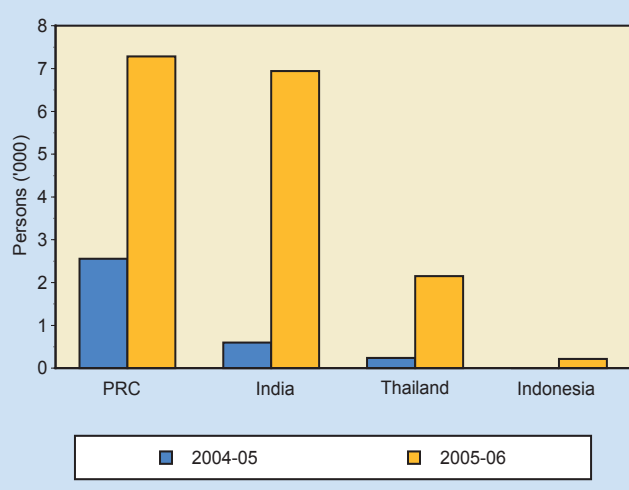
Assessment Level 1 - The student eVisa service was first introduced as a limited trial in August 2001, before being expanded to all Assessment

Fig. 5-19: Offshore eVisa Take-up Rates for Assessment Level 2 – 4 Trial Countries



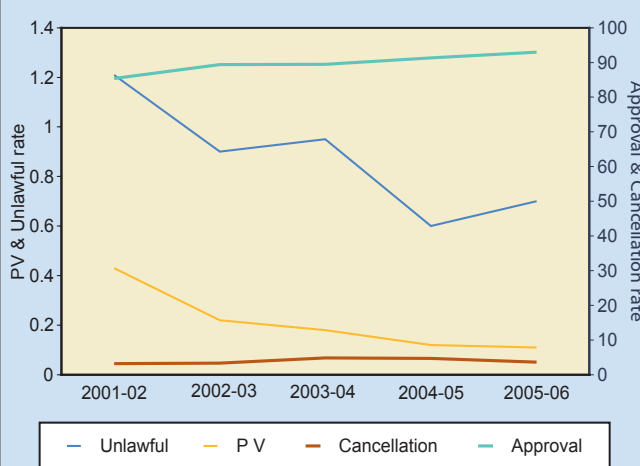
Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-20: eVisa Grants in Assessment Level 2 – 4 Trial Countries



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-21: Non-compliance Trends in Student Visas 2001-02 to 2005-06



Source Data: IMIRS

level 1 countries on 1 July 2002. It now enables all Assessment Level 1 (low immigration risk) students and their family members to apply for and be granted a Student visa via the internet.

On 1 November 2005, changes to the Assessment Levels for 15 countries gave access to online Student visa services to nationals of Bahrain, Chile, Kuwait, Peru and the UAE for the first time.

Figure 5-18 illustrates the increasing take-up rate of Assessment Level 1 eVisa offshore since its introduction.

Assessment Level 2 - 4 - The number of students in the PRC, India, Indonesia and Thailand who lodge their applications via the internet has increased in 2005-06 as the trial of the online service for these four markets continues from its introduction in November 2004. The overall rate of use by eligible applicants across the four countries in 2005-06 was 42.1 per cent, up from 13.3 per cent in 2004-05 (see Figure 5-19).

In 2005-06 51.6 per cent of Student visa applications from India were lodged online. In the same period 43.3 per cent of new Student visa applications from the PRC were lodged online and 40.1 per cent from Thailand. In Indonesia, where the trial only commenced on 19 August 2005, 4.6 per cent of new Student visa applications were lodged online (see Figure 5-19). A total of 16,591 visa were granted in 2005-06 to students using this service (see Figure 5-20).

Unlike the Assessment Level 1 model, access to the service is only available to students who lodge through education agents who have entered into a facility access agreement with the department. As at 30 June 2006, a total of 723 education agents had been registered to lodge eVisa applications across the four trial countries - 376 in the PRC, 112 in Thailand, 216 in India and 19 in Indonesia. In addition to education agents operating in-country, Australian Registered Migrations Agents (RMAs) are also eligible to use the facility and as at 30 June 2006, 176 RMAs had been registered to participate in the trial.

Onshore

Online lodgement of visa applications by students in Australia continued to increase in 2005-06. Since 28 January 2002 Assessment Level 1 (low immigration risk) students have been able to lodge online applications for an initial Student visa in Australia. The take-up rate of 89.8 per cent demonstrates the preference for this service delivery method.

Students in Australia have also been able to apply online for a further Student visa since 28 January 2002. 41.0 per cent of students chose to lodge their application using eVisa in 2005-06.

Students applying for Permission to Work visa have been able to do so via the internet since 28 January 2002 and the take-up rate for this internet service has increased significantly from 58.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 66.1 per cent in 2005-06.

Student Visa Compliance Activity

One of the main goals of the Student Visa Programme is to support the growth of Australia's international education sector, while minimising the number of students not complying with their visa conditions. These levels of non-compliance are measured by:

- protection visa applications by Student visa holders;

- number of Student visa holders who become unlawful; and
- visa cancellation rates

Since the implementation of significant reforms to the Student Visa Programme in 2001, there has been a steady improvement in compliance levels of Student visa holders while approval rates have increased slightly. Figure 5-21 shows the trends in approval rates and Student visa non-compliance.

The number of students applying for Protection Visas (PV) continues to decline. During 2005–06 PV application numbers increased from 202 in 2004–05 to 217 in 2005–06. The rate of PV applications compared with Student visa grants now stands at its lowest level of 0.1 per cent.

While there has been a slight increase in the number of international students remaining unlawfully in Australia (from 0.6 per cent in 2004–05 to 0.7 per cent in 2005–06), this figure is proportional to the increase in overall Student visa numbers in past programme years.

Student visa cancellations in 2005–06 were lower than in the previous year (6,983 compared to 8,140). The proportion of cancellations compared to grants also declined from 4.7 per cent in 2004–05 to 3.6 per cent in 2005–06.

The Student visa cancellation data for 2004–05 included 2,060 visa cancellations that have subsequently been reversed as a result of the Federal Magistrates Court decision of *Uddin v Minister for Immigration* [2005] FMCA 841.

Assessment Level Review

The improved levels of compliance by Student visa holders is a good measure of the success of the 2001 Student visa reforms. As a result, it is now possible to review the risk ratings allocated to individual nationalities by education sector, to better reflect their current compliance levels.

In recognition of improving compliance levels, Assessment Levels for a number of countries and education sectors were reduced in November 2005. In all, 15 nationalities had their risk ratings reduced in one or more sectors, totalling 59 Assessment Level adjustments. These reductions reflect the on-going success of the reforms introduced in 2001, and will provide more people with the opportunity to study in Australia.

Following these reforms, we are seeing rising approval rates and a general decline in non-compliance rates for Student visa holders. The changes are likely to increase the numbers of students from different countries, adding to the diversity of the industry.

Applications for Permanent Residence by Overseas Students

A range of onshore General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa categories are available which enable international students to apply for and be granted permanent residence following the completion of their studies without the need to leave Australia.

International students applying for one of these categories must

apply within six months of completing an Australian qualification (degree, diploma or trade qualification) which has been obtained after a minimum of two years of full time study at an Australian educational institution while physically present in Australia. They must also hold a positive skills assessment for a 60 point skill level occupation, unless they have completed an Australian doctorate. Australian doctorate students must hold a positive skills assessment for at least a 50 point skill level occupation.

There are a range of extra points available under the General Skilled Migration points test for international students who have recently completed an Australian qualification in Australia. Holders of an Australian degree, diploma or trade certificate can be awarded five points; holders of an Australian Masters or Honours degree (at least at upper second class level) can be awarded ten points but only after completion of at least one year of Australian undergraduate study; and holders of an Australian PhD resulting from two consecutive years of study in Australia can be awarded fifteen points. Further, five additional points can be awarded to international students who have completed a degree, diploma or trade qualification at an Australian educational institution while living and studying at a campus in regional Australia, or a low population growth metropolitan area, for at least two years.

The number of onshore General Skilled Migration visas granted increased by over 3,450 in 2005–06 from 2004–05. This represents an increase of over 19.0 per cent in visa grants.

For international students unable to meet the Skilled Independent Overseas Student passmark, it is open to them to apply for the Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) (Provisional) visa which was introduced on 1 July 2004. Applicants for the SIR (Provisional) visa only need to achieve 110 points on the General Skilled Migration points test.

There were 284 SIR (Provisional) visas granted to international students in Australia in 2005–06, which represented about 7.2 per cent of the whole SIR intake for the year. The number of international students granted SIR visas increased by about 60.0 per cent compared to 2004–05 as the effect of the increase in the Skilled Independent Overseas Student passmark of 1 April 2005 from 115 to 120 made the SIR (Provisional) visa an attractive option for graduates wanting to remain in Australia. More information about the SIR (Provisional) visa is available in Chapter 3 – State-Specific and Regional Migration (SSRM).

Of 17,896 visa grants (including dependants) across the other three General Skilled Migration visa categories, 15,504 were in the Skilled Independent Overseas Student visa category and 1,379 were in the Skilled Australian Sponsored Overseas Student visa category. The remaining 1,013 grants were in the Skilled Designated Area Sponsored Overseas Student visa category.

In terms of citizenship of the persons granted a visa in one of these three overseas student categories in 2005–06, the top 16 countries comprised nearly 90 per cent of the total. The main countries of citizenship were the PRC (comprising 31.0 per cent of the total), India (16.0 per cent), Malaysia (7.0 per cent), Indonesia (6.0 per cent) and Hong Kong (SAR of China) (6.0 per cent).