

Bridging Visas

Bridging visas allow certain non-citizens, who would otherwise be considered unlawful and would therefore be subject to detention, to remain lawfully in Australia. In 2005–06 257,140 Bridging visas were granted, compared with 245,950 in 2004–05. The majority of these were Bridging Visa A (78.9 per cent), followed by Bridging Visa E (Class WE/Subclass 050) (15.9 per cent).

In general, the non-citizens covered by Bridging visas are those who:

- have made (or plan to make) an application in Australia for a substantive visa which can be granted while they are in Australia, and the application has not been decided;
- are seeking review through an administrative review body (such as the Migration Review Tribunal, the Refugee Review Tribunal or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal) of a decision in relation to their substantive visa application;
- have made an application for review to the courts;
- are seeking intervention from the Minister to substitute a more favourable decision to that of the Tribunal; or
- are making departure arrangements to leave Australia.

Bridging Visa Classes

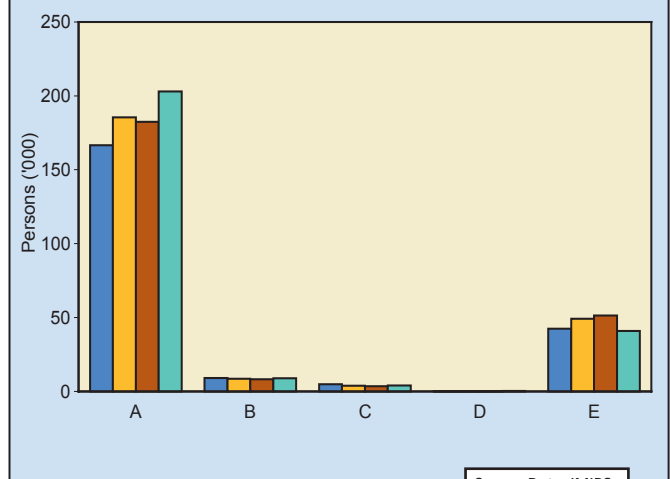
The classes of Bridging visas are:

- **Bridging Visa A (BVA)**- available to non-citizens who apply for a substantive visa within Australia and who hold another substantive visa (other than a Bridging visa or Criminal Justice visa) at time of application. 202,937 were granted in 2005–06, compared to 182,427 in 2004–05.
- **Bridging Visa B (BVB)** - available to Bridging Visa A holders who have a substantial reason for wanting to travel outside Australia while their visa application is being considered. 8,916 were granted in 2005–06, compared to 8,315 in 2004–05.
- **Bridging Visa C (BVC)** - available to applicants who do not hold a substantive visa when they apply for another substantive visa while in Australia. 3,944 were granted in 2005–06 compared to 3,508 in 2004–05.
- **Bridging Visa D (BVD) Prospective Applicant** - a short term Bridging visa available to persons who want to make an application for a visa but are temporarily unable to do so (subclass 040); or, who do not want to apply for a visa but a compliance officer is not available to interview them (subclass 041). 335 BVD visas were granted in 2005–06, compared to 192 in 2004–05.
- **Bridging Visa E (BVE)** - available to certain unlawful non-citizens who come to the attention of DIMA and who may be applying for visas or making arrangements to depart Australia. 40,964 BVEs (subclass 050 and 051), were granted in 2005–06, compared with 51,447 in 2004–05. In 2005–06, 16 BVE (Subclass 051) visas were granted.

- **Bridging Visa F (BVF)** - under the provisions of this visa, unlawful non-citizens who are of interest in relation to a people trafficking matter may be able to remain in Australia for up to either 30 days or a date specified by the Minister, depending on the circumstances of the unlawful non-citizen. The visa period allows time for the person to reflect on whether they wish to further assist the Australian Federal Police (AFP), or State and Territory Police. It also allows the AFP, or State or Territory Police to assess whether they wish to seek a Criminal Justice Stay Certificate (CJSC) for that person. The issue of a CJSC is a criterion for the grant of a Criminal Justice Stay visa. 10 BVF visas were granted in 2005–06.
- **The Removal Pending Bridging Visa (RPBV)** - enables the release, pending removal, of people in immigration detention who have been cooperating with efforts to remove them from Australia, but whose removal is not reasonably practicable at that time. A RPBV may be granted using the Minister's non delegable, non compellable public interest power, under section 195A of the Migration Act 1958, to grant a visa to a person in immigration detention. 34 RPBV were granted in 2005–06.

The conditions attached to a Bridging visa may vary according to any substantive visa applied for, as well as the applicant's immigration status and personal circumstances at time of application.

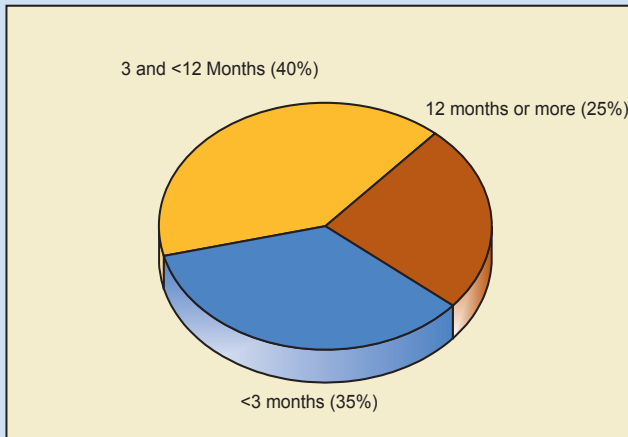
Fig. 5-30: Total Number of Bridging Visa Grants



Source Data: IMIRS

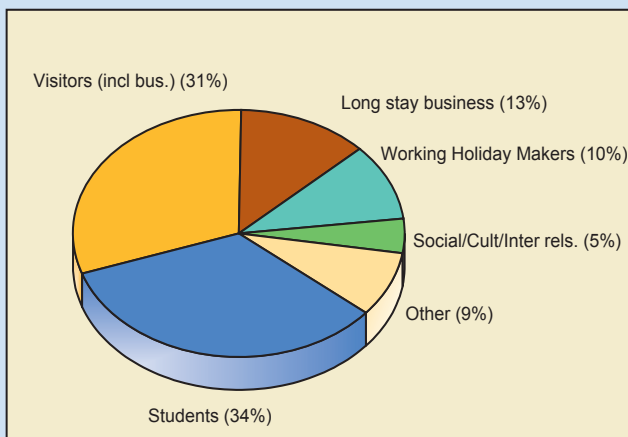
Stock of Temporary Entrants

Fig. 5-31: Stock of Temporary Entrants by Duration of Stay 30 June 2006



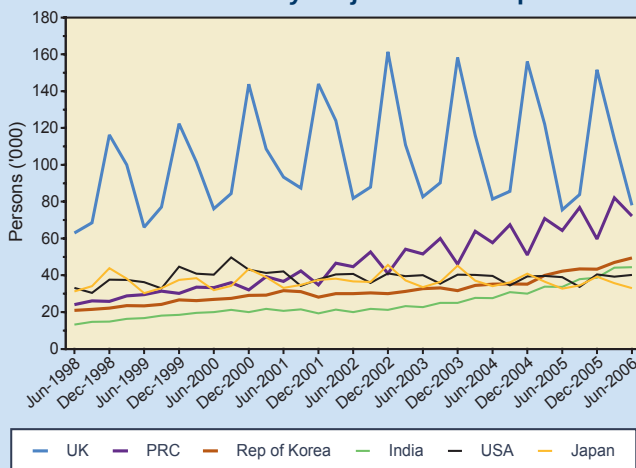
Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMA

Fig. 5-32: Stock of Temporary Entrants by Entry Category 30 June 2006



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMA

Fig. 5-33: Stock of Temporary Entrants in Australia by Major Citizenship



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMA

An estimate of the Temporary population in Australia at a particular point in time can be made by counting the stock of Temporary Entrants, that is, the number of Temporary Entrants physically present in Australia at a particular date.

At 30 June 2006, there were an estimated 630,513 people in Australia on Temporary Entry visas excluding New Zealand citizens. This estimate has increased by 8.5 per cent compared to the number at 30 June 2005. Of these people, 220,712 had been in Australia for less than three months; 254,455 had been here for between three and up to 12 months; and 155,346 had been here for 12 months or more. This includes Temporary Entrants who have recently arrived and have an actual stay of only a few days or weeks but intend to legally stay much longer.

Temporary Entrants include tourists, students, Working Holiday Makers (WHM), business people and executives, and entrants for social, cultural, international relations and other purposes. They also include people holding Bridging visas who have applied for a permanent visa eg. asylum seekers who have applied for Protection visas.

While the individuals are constantly turning over and there are seasonal fluctuations in the number and type of Temporary Entrants in Australia at any given time, the number of Temporary Entrants to Australia has increased consistently over the last five years. As is evident from Figures 5-34 and 5-36, seasonal fluctuations are most prevalent for individuals arriving in Australia on Student and Visitor visas. Student numbers increase in the March and September quarters each year reflecting the attendance requirements of the academic year. Visitor numbers are highest during the Australian summer, and are lowest in the middle of the year.

Of those here temporarily at 30 June 2006, the largest group were citizens of the UK (77,995 persons), followed by the PRC (72,178 persons), Republic of Korea (49,475 persons), India (44,354 persons) and the USA (40,262 persons). Compared with June 2005, the stocks of citizens of the above countries have increased while the stock for the PRC, the Republic of Korea and India have increased significantly. The stock of the PRC citizens has increased by 12.2 per cent, Republic of Korea by 17.0 per cent and India by 31.7 per cent in the last year.

The median age of the total stock of Temporary Entrants was 27 years at 30 June 2006.

The stock of Temporary Entrants comprised 210,690 students, 175,399 visitors (excluding business visitors), 50,289 Bridging visa holders, 80,137 Long Stay Business entrants, 63,130 Working Holiday Makers, 28,235 who entered for social, cultural or international relations purposes, 16,020 business visitors, and 3,246 who came for other purposes.

Stock of Visitors

The number of visitors in Australia fluctuates throughout the year depending on the season. At 30 June, the stock of visitors in Australia is at the lowest point for the year. 175,399 visitors (excluding business visitors) were in Australia at 30 June 2006. This was 3.8 per cent higher than the previous year, which was 1.9 per cent lower than the number in Australia at 30 June 2004.

Individuals on Visitor visas (excluding business visitors) do not stay in Australia for as long as other Temporary Entrants, with the median length of current stay at 30 June 2006 being 24 days.

The number of visitors present in Australia at 30 June 2006 represented 4.9 per cent of all Visitor visas issued in 2003–04. The median age of visitors is a little higher than for other visa categories, at 43 years for June 2006.

Fig. 5-34 shows the stock of visitors (excluding business visitors) in the five largest countries of citizenship from June 1997 to June 2006. Of the current top citizenship groups, citizens from the UK have the strongest seasonal trend.

Stock of Business Visitors

Business visitors comprised just under 17 per cent of all Temporary Business entrants in Australia at 30 June 2006. The median age of Short Stay Temporary Business residents was higher at 39 years than for Long Term Business entrants.

Figure 5-35 shows the number of business visitors by country of citizenship in Australia at quarterly intervals since June 1998. At 30 June 2006 there were a total of 16,020 business visitors, an increase of 19.4 per cent compared to the previous year. The top five citizenship groups, the USA, the PRC, the UK, Japan and India showed increases since the previous year.

Although 339,424 business visitor visas were granted in 2004–05, the number in Australia at any time that year was low. This is consistent with the purpose of the Business Visitor visa, which is typically for pursuing business interests over a few days or weeks. The median duration of stay of business visitors in Australia at 30 June 2006 was nine days.

Stock of Students

The stock of students in Australia is highest in the March quarter and lowest in the December quarter, consistent with the requirements for the academic year. Numbers are a little lower for the June quarter but pick up slightly for the September quarter of each year. At 30 June 2006 the stock of 210,690 students in Australia had increased by 9.3 per cent compared with the number at 30 June 2005. The median duration of stay at 30 June 2006 of this stock was just under five months. The median age of students was 23 years.

Figure 5-36 shows the changes in numbers of the top citizenship groups for the last eight years. The data suggest that students

Fig. 5-34: Stock of Visitors in Australia by Major Citizenship (excl. Business Visitors)

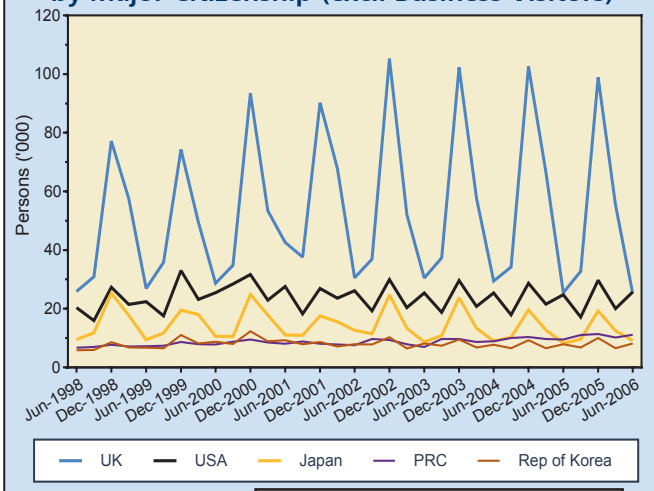


Fig. 5-35: Stock of Temporary Business Visitors in Australia by Major Citizenship

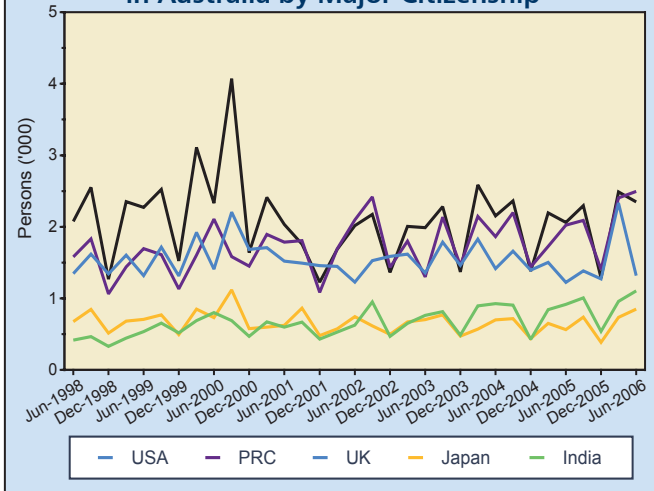


Fig. 5-36: Stock of Students in Australia by Major Citizenship

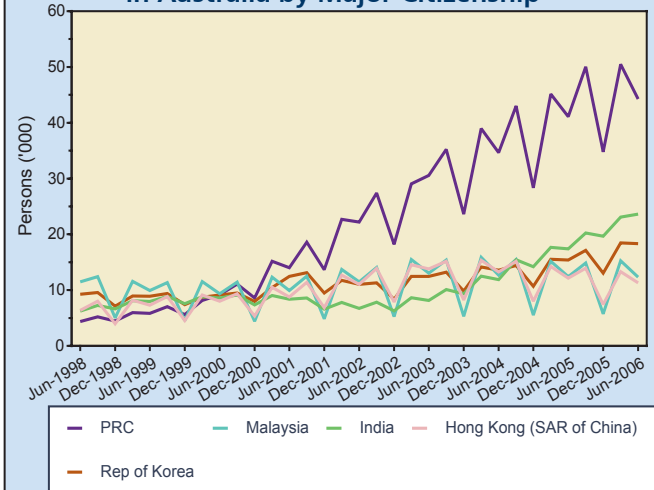
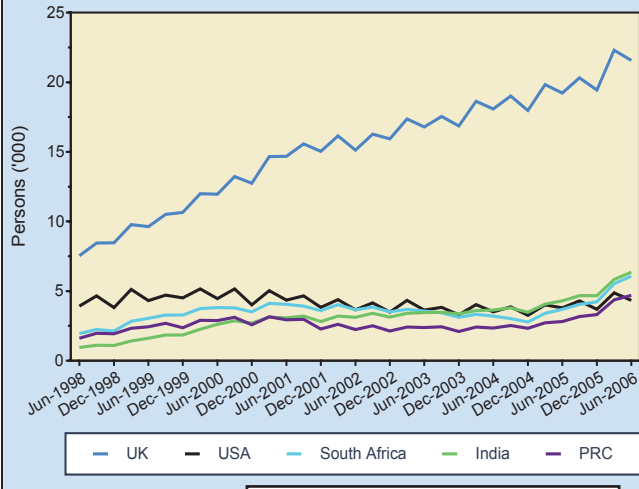
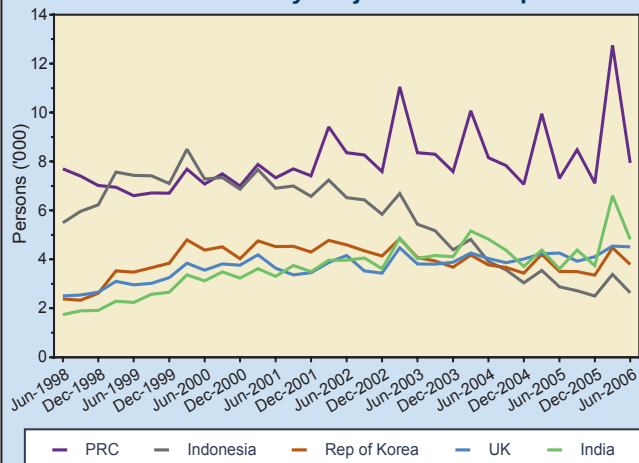


Fig. 5-37: Stock of Temporary Business (Long Stay) Residents in Australia by Major Citizenship



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMA

Fig. 5-38: Stock of Bridging Visas in Australia by Major Citizenship



Source Data: Stock of Temporary Entrants, DIMA

from neighbouring countries are more likely to return home for holidays at the end of the school year than other overseas students. Of particular note is the continued significant growth in the number of students from the PRC. The stock of the PRC students more than tripled between June 1998 and June 2001, and increased by 58.0 per cent between June 2001 and June 2002 (from 14,037 to 22,184 persons). Between June 2002 and June 2004, the increase was 56.2 per cent and the increase from June 2005 to June 2006 was 7.7 per cent. Other top citizenship groups to have significant growth over the last two years are the Republic of Korea and India. DIMA has facilitated this growth by enhancing and streamlining visa requirements. The government implemented recommendations from the 2001 review, commencing from 1 December 2003. These changes introduced more flexibility to the evidentiary requirements for higher risk student visa applicants, while ensuring that key integrity measures are maintained.

Stock of Working Holiday Makers

The stock of Working Holiday Makers has increased from 57,703 at June 2005 to 63,130 at June 2006. Citizens from the UK continue as the largest source of WHM, but citizens from the Republic of Korea are a rapidly increasing component, at 30 June 2006 32.9 per cent higher than at 30 June 2005. The median age of the stock of Working Holiday Makers at June 2006 was 24 years, and their median duration of stay was around four months.

Stock of Temporary Business (Long Stay) Residents

There were 80,137 Long Stay Business people at 30 June 2006, 27.8 per cent higher than at the same time last year. This visa is for specialist workers in Australia for up to 4 years, but many on this visa travel in and out of Australia. As with many visas, this visa can be issued onshore. The median duration of Long Stay Business entrants at June 2006 was around 5.5 months.

Figure 5-37 shows the top five citizenship groups of those currently visaed as Long Stay Business entrants in Australia since June 1998. The stock of the UK citizens continues to dominate Long Stay Business visa holders, 26.9 per cent of this group at 30 June 2006. The median age of the Long Stay Business visa group at June 2006 was 31 years.

Stock of Entrants on Bridging Visas

The stock of people in Australia on Bridging visas at 30 June 2006 was 50,289, up by 2.8 per cent compared to June 2005. The median age of Bridging visa holders was 33 years.

Figure 5-38 highlights the stock of Bridging visa holders in Australia by country of citizenship. Citizens from the PRC and India, followed by, the UK, the Republic of Korea and Indonesia, hold larger numbers of Bridging visas than entrants from other countries.

Overstayers

Who are Overstayers?

“Overstayers” are people who are suspected of remaining in the Australian community unlawfully after their temporary visa expires. They are people who arrived in Australia with valid temporary visas, mainly as tourists but also as Working Holiday Makers, students and temporary residents.

Overstayers by Visa Category

The number of visa overstayers in the Australian community at 30 June 2006 was estimated to be around 46,400. This continues a downward trend on previous estimates of 47,800 at 30 June 2005, just under 51,000 at 30 June 2004, and around 59,800 at 30 June 2003.

The continued decline in the estimated number of overstayers is attributed to a number of factors, one of which is a sustained improvement in relevant data quality. There has also been a high level of adherence to conditions of entry to Australia, which is a product of effective screening arrangements overseas.

At 30 June 2006, Visitor visa holders comprised the greatest number of overstayers (around 39,100), followed by Student visa overstayers (around 2,700) and temporary resident visa overstayers (around 2,200), with “other” visa categories making up around 2,400 overstayers.

Nationality of Overstayers

At 30 June 2006, the largest number of overstayers were from the USA (approximately 4,800), the UK (approximately 3,800) the PRC (approximately 3,700), the Philippines (approximately 2,700) and the Republic of Korea (approximately 2,600).

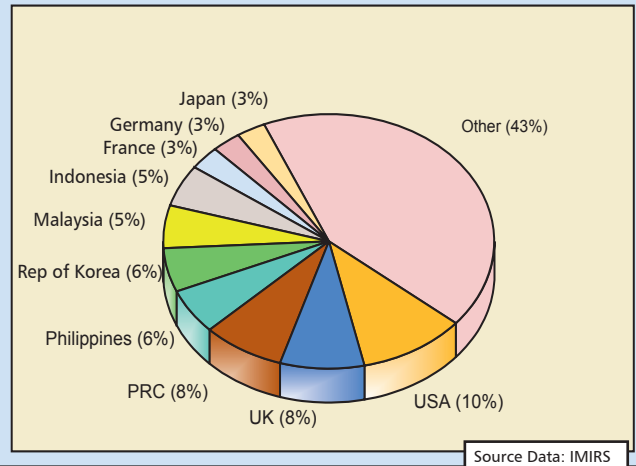
This ranking reflects, to a certain extent, that many of these countries are also the source of the biggest number of Visitors. While visitors from countries such as the USA and the UK are the highest overstayers in absolute terms, as a percentage of the number of Visitor and Temporary visas issued to people from those countries, they are a low overstay risk.

Age and Sex of Overstayers

At 30 June 2006, approximately 61 per cent of recorded overstayers were male and 39 per cent were female.

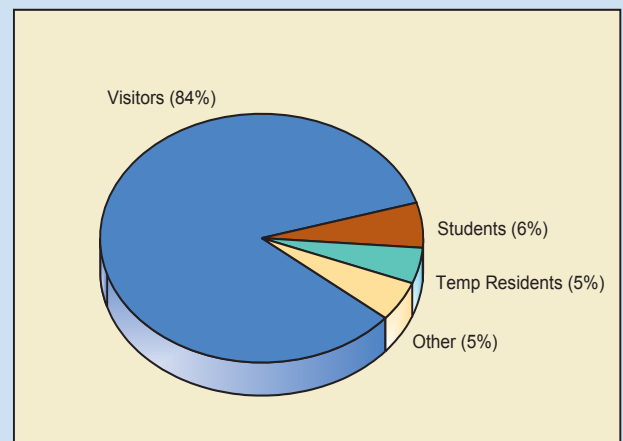
The largest age group of overstayers is 41-50 years of age, followed by 31-40 years of age.

Fig. 5-39: Composition of Overstayers by Citizenship at 30 June 2006



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 5-40: Overstayers at 30 June 2006 by Visa Category



Source Data: IMIRS