

Visitors

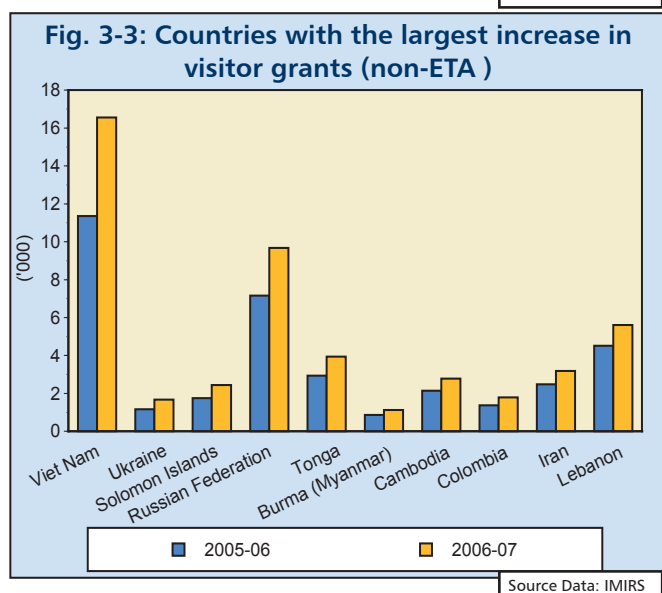
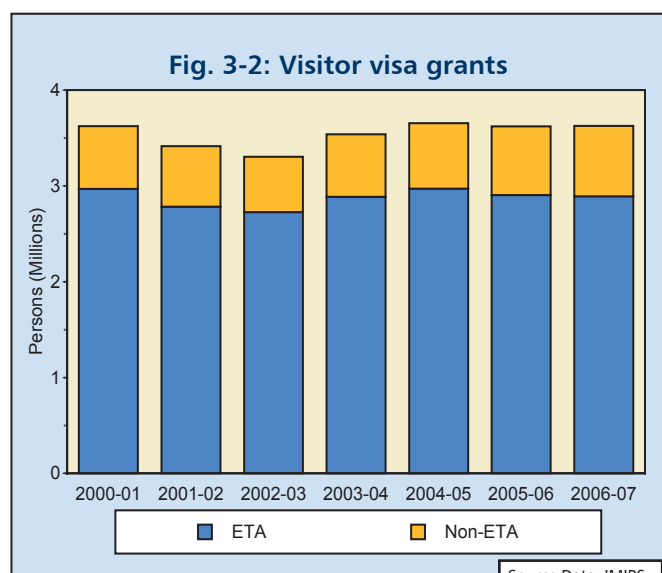
During 2005-06, visitors to Australia generated tourism export earnings of \$21.0 billion. This amounted to 10.5 per cent of Australia's total export earnings.

Major source countries

The top ten countries of passport holders for Visitor visa grants during 2006-07 were:

- UK 674 771
- Japan 556 453
- USA 385 384
- PRC* 239 061
- Republic of Korea 235 186
- Germany 138 230
- Singapore 128 422
- Malaysia 126 030
- France 101 505
- Canada 101 276

*non-ETA country



UK passport holders were granted 18.6 per cent of all Visitor visas granted (compared with 18.3 per cent in 2005-06). Japanese passport holders were granted 15.3 per cent of all Visitor visas granted (compared with 17.3 per cent in 2005-06).

Electronic lodgement

Many visitors now come to Australia on an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA).

In 2006-07, the ETA accounted for 79.7 per cent of all tourist and short-term Business visas issued worldwide.

The electronic Tourist visa product (known as e676) is also available for certain visitors to Australia. The main difference between e676 and ETA is that e676 allows tourists to apply for stays in Australia for up to 12 months. Unlike ETAs, e676 is only available to tourists and not to business visitors. Nevertheless, e676 offers many of the same benefits of ETAs including greater convenience for applicants, faster processing times and visa label free travel, which means applicants do not need to send or deliver their passport to a visa office.

Australia's e676 service, which was first rolled out in March 2003, was initially only available to passport holders from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It has subsequently been extended to passport holders from:

- Kuwait in March 2004
- the European Union (EU) accession countries (Czech Republic, Republic of Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) in July 2004
- Bahrain, Oman and Qatar in April 2005
- the additional 32 ETA eligible countries in July 2005
- India in September 2006 (where applications are lodged by a Preferred Aussie Specialist) and
- Romania and Bulgaria in March 2007.

In 2006-07, 59.3 per cent of Tourist visa (Subclass 676) applications that could be lodged electronically were lodged that way. The following passport holders had the highest electronic take-up rates:

- Slovenia 98.1 per cent
- Estonia 97.3 per cent
- Switzerland 96.2 per cent
- Iceland 94.4 per cent
- Sweden 91.2 per cent
- Latvia 90.1 per cent
- Czech Republic 89.8 per cent.

Visitor visa grants

In 2006-07, passport holders from the UK, Japan, the USA, the Republic of Korea and the PRC constituted 57.6 per cent of all Visitor visas granted.

The largest increases for 2006-07, compared to 2005-06 in Visitor visa grants, to non-ETA passport holders included (where there were more than 1000 grants) countries such as Viet Nam, Ukraine and Solomon Islands (Fig. 3.3)

Fig. 3.4 shows the largest increases in grants for 2006-07, compared to 2005-06 among ETA passport holders.

Non-Return Rate of visitors

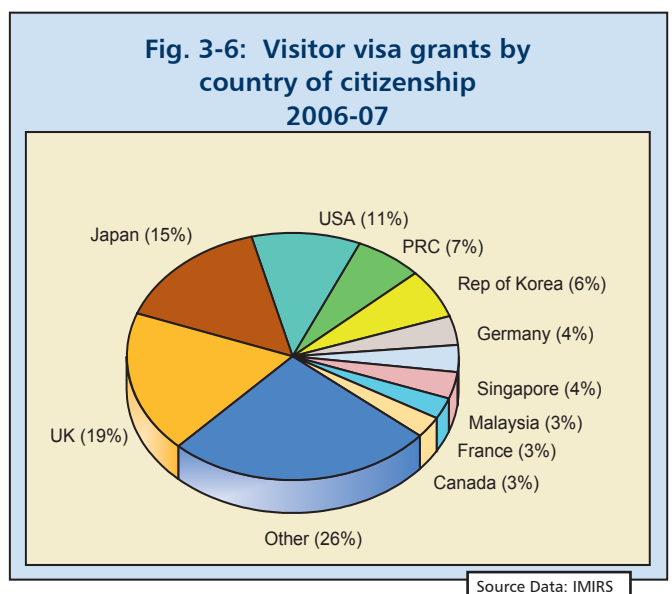
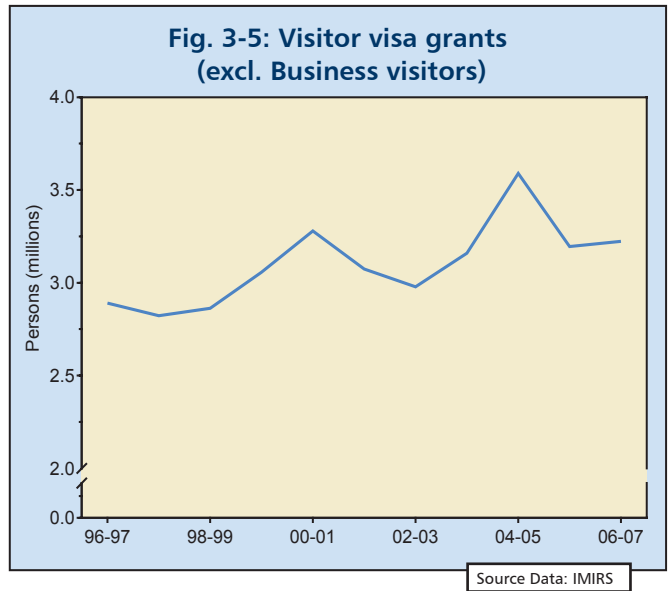
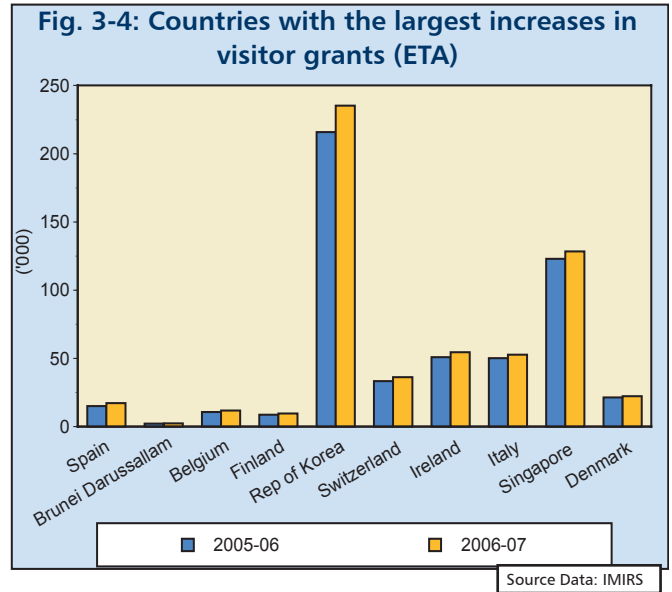
The Non-Return Rate (NRR) is a calculation of the visitors who arrived in Australia on a visa that has now ceased but who did not depart within the validity of that initial visa - as a percentage of all visitor arrivals (whose visas have ceased) in the period. The NRR includes those who:

- remained in Australia unlawfully, or
- departed Australia on a ceased visa, or
- have applied for another type of visa while in Australia and have:
 - since departed Australia on that subsequent visa;
 - remained in Australia on that subsequent visa; or
 - been granted a Bridging visa.

The extent to which different passport holders do actually depart within the validity of their Visitor visas is relevant feedback to overseas posts and state/territory offices to assist them in making decisions on future Visitor visa applications.

The rising Visitor visa approval rate has not been at the expense of the integrity of the Visitor Program as the visitor NRR remains relatively low. The NRR across all Visitor visa subclasses (including ETA) in 2006-07 was 1.23 per cent, compared with 1.20 per cent in 2005-06, 1.22 per cent in 2004-05, 1.47 per cent in 2003-04, 1.60 per cent in 2002-03 and 1.85 per cent in 2001-02.

A number of countries registered a decrease in their passport holders visitor NRRs in 2006-07 at the same time that Visitor visa approval rates were increasing. For example, the NRR for visitors holding passports from the PRC in 2006-07 was 0.63 per cent (down from 0.64 per cent in 2005-06, down from 0.65 per cent in 2004-05, 0.84 per cent in 2003-04 and 1.17 per cent in 2002-03) while their Visitor visa approval rate increased to 95.1 per cent (from 94.7 per cent in 2005-06, 93.3 per cent in 2004-05, 91.8 per cent in 2003-04 and 88.9 per cent in 2002-03).



Other countries registering improved Visitor visa NRRs in 2006-07, compared with 2005-06, included Cambodia, Belgium, Kenya and Cyprus.

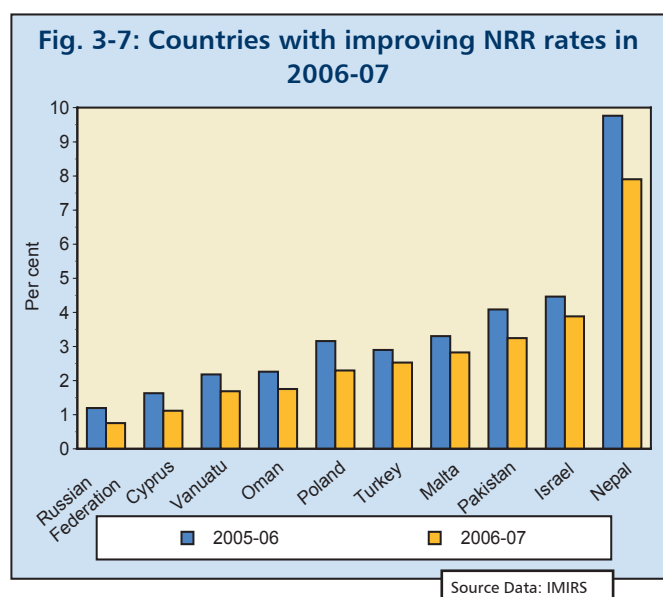
Passport holders with the lowest NRRs included:

- Kuwait 0.22 per cent of 3048 arrivals
- Japan 0.34 per cent of 592 984 arrivals
- Argentina 0.42 per cent of 4151 arrivals
- UAE 0.48 per cent of 5711 arrivals
- Mexico 0.62 per cent of 4940 arrivals
- PRC 0.63 per cent of 268 416 arrivals
- Singapore 0.66 per cent of 141 201 arrivals
- Taiwan 0.75 per cent of 81 908 arrivals
- Russia 0.75 per cent of 9517 arrivals
- Denmark 1.00 per cent of 23 156 arrivals.

The total non-ETA visitor NRR for 2006-07 was 1.89 per cent (1.70 per cent in 2005-06). The NRR for non-ETA visitor subclasses are as follows:

Subclass	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
	per cent		
Business Short stay	0.87	0.82	0.88
Tourist – Short Stay	1.43	1.73	2.14
Sponsored Family	1.57	2.47	5.06
Tourist – Long Stay	6.63	5.83	3.57

The NRR for visitors travelling on ETAs for 2006-07 across the three ETA subclasses was 1.05 per cent (down from 1.08 per cent in 2005-06, 1.10 per cent in 2004-05, 1.32 per cent in 2003-04 and 1.33 per cent in 2002-03).



In 2006-07 the number of people applying for protection visas after entering Australia on Visitor visas, was 2617, this is a 7.2 per cent increase over 2005-06 (2441).

In 2006-07, the protection visa rate (i.e. the number of protection visa applications as a percentage of visitor arrivals) was 0.07 per cent, the same as 2005-06, 0.06 per cent in 2004-05, 0.07 per cent in 2003-04 and 0.10 per cent in 2002-03.

Sponsored Family Visitor visa

The Sponsored Family Visitor visa (Subclass 679) program allows Australian citizens and permanent residents to formally sponsor their relatives to visit Australia. This program has proven to be successful in allowing some applicants about whom there are some residual concerns about their intentions, to be granted a visa to visit family in Australia. In order to strengthen the integrity of the program, a security bond may be requested, which is refunded if the visa holder departs Australia lawfully.

On 2 April 2005, following extensive community consultations, the processing of the Sponsored Family Visitor applications was repatriated to Australia and now allows a period of stay of up to 12 months (compared to the previous maximum of three months) in certain circumstances.

There were 18 737 Sponsored Family Visitor visa applications lodged in 2006-07, compared with 13 928 applications in 2005-06.

The approval rate decreased to 84.5 per cent, compared with 89.4 per cent in 2005-06, 80.0 per cent in 2004-05, 75.0 per cent in 2003-04 and 63.2 per cent in 2002-03. The non-return rate for 2005-06 was 2.5 per cent, compared with 1.6 per cent in 2004-05 and 2.0 per cent in 2003-04.

The top 10 passport holders for Sponsored Family Visitor visas were, Viet Nam, the PRC, Lebanon, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Pakistan, Iran, and Fiji.

In 2006-07, 73.7 per cent of Sponsored Family Visitor visas had a bond imposed, compared to 86.8 per cent in 2005-06 post repatriation. There were 10 405 bonds lodged totalling \$106 294 460. The average bond amount increased to \$10 216 (from \$9443 in 2005-06). The most frequently applied bond amount was \$10 000 (in 24.0 per cent of cases).

Business Visitor visas

The Business Visitor visas (Subclass 456,459,956,977) are for people who wish to enter Australia for business purposes (i.e: attending business meetings, events or conferences; pursuing business investment opportunities consistent with their overseas business operations). Some short-term work may also be permitted where it is highly specialised and non-ongoing, and appropriate workers have not been able to be sourced from the Australian job market.

404 795 Business Visitor visas were granted in 2006-07, a 9.9 per cent increase over the 368 333 grants in 2005-06.

The top 10 passport holders for Business Visitor visa grants overall in 2006-07 were the PRC*, the USA, the UK, Japan, India*, Singapore, Indonesia*, Germany, Malaysia and Thailand*. (*Non-ETA countries.)

There were 199 516 Non-ETA Short Stay Business Visitor grants in 2006-07, 7.1 per cent higher than in 2005-06. The approval rate was 96.6 per cent of applications, compared with 96.4 per cent in 2005-06. Significant increases in grants included countries such as Singapore, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam and Mexico (Fig. 3.10).

The Non-Return Rate for business visitors in 2006-07 was 0.9 per cent (similar to 2005-06), 1.1 per cent in 2003-04 and 1.3 per cent in 2002-03.

The protection visa application rate for business visitors in 2006-07 was 0.21 per cent, up from 0.11 per cent in 2005 -06, but down from 0.26 per cent in 2004-05 and 0.28 per cent in 2003-04.

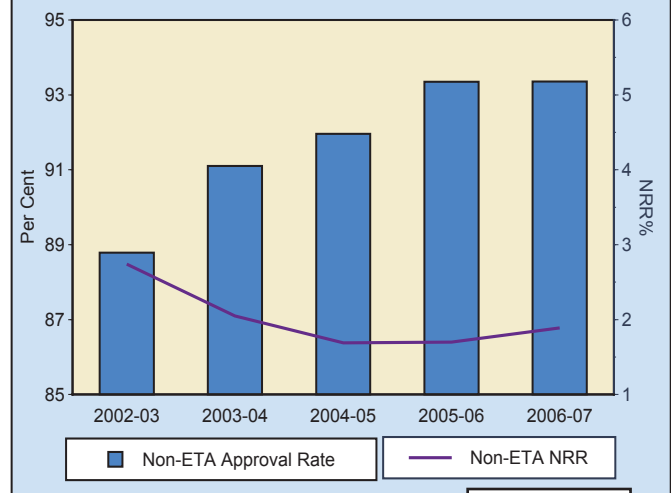
Sponsored Business Visitor visa

In 2006-07, 2429 Sponsored Business Visitor visa applications were received, a substantial increase on 724 in 2005-06, 140 in 2004-05, 19 in 2003-04 and 30 in 2002-03. Passport holders from the PRC accounted for 15.1 per cent of applications received, followed by the Russian Federation (9.3 per cent), India (5.7 per cent), Brazil (4.6 per cent) and Hungary (4.0 per cent).

International Events Coordinator Network

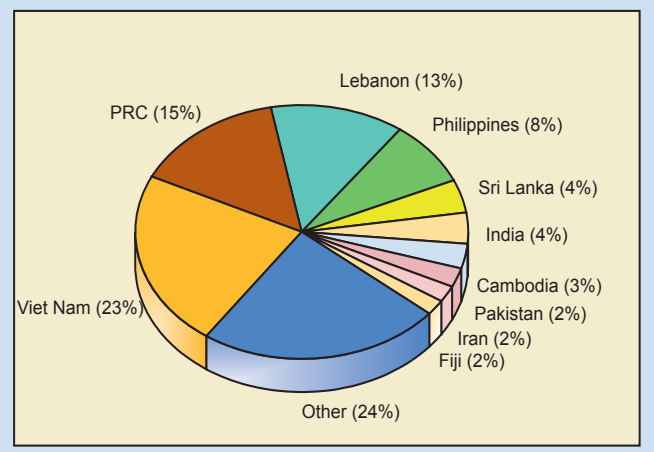
Australia continues to grow in popularity as a destination for events, conferences and meetings. This can be attributed to the country's strengthened reputation as a leading provider of high-quality event/conference facilities and attractions. In October 1999, DIAC established the International Event Coordinator Network (IECN) in recognition of the importance of hosting events to the Australian economy and to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to facilitating the entry of genuine visitors.

Fig. 3-8: Non-ETA visitor visa grant rate vs NRR



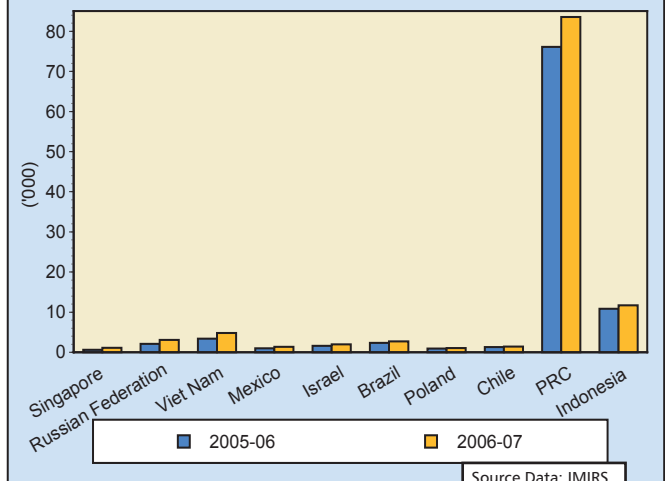
Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 3-9: Sponsored family visitor visa applications 2006-07



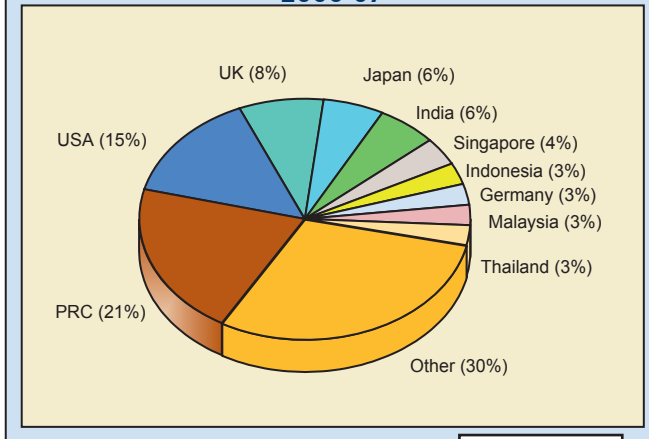
Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 3-10: Countries with large increases in Business visitor grants in 2006-07



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 3-11: Business Visitor grants by country of citizenship 2006-07



Source Data: IMIRS

The IECN provides a free service to event organisers and participants. Its role is to assist organisers and participants of international events in Australia to prepare for the immigration related entry requirements. They also act as a conduit between event organisers and Australian immigration offices overseas by facilitating event participants' visa applications.

IECN assisted 902 events in the 2006-07 program year, compared to 790 in 2005-06. The workload will continue to increase as more event organisers become aware of the beneficial services that IECN provides.

This outcome confirms that the IECN is continuing to gain broader recognition in the global events and conference industry.

Tourism and Visa Advisory Group

The Tourism and Visa Advisory Group (TVAG) was established by DIAC in July 2002 as a forum where the department and peak bodies in the tourism industry can discuss tourism and visa-related issues. The TVAG has been successful in ensuring that the key stakeholders in the tourism industry are included in the policy consultation process.

The TVAG consists of representatives from Tourism Australia, the Australian Tourism and Export Council, Tourism Taskforce Australia, Qantas, the Board of Airline Representatives Australia, the Australian Hotels Association, state and territory tourism authorities and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

Approved Destination Status

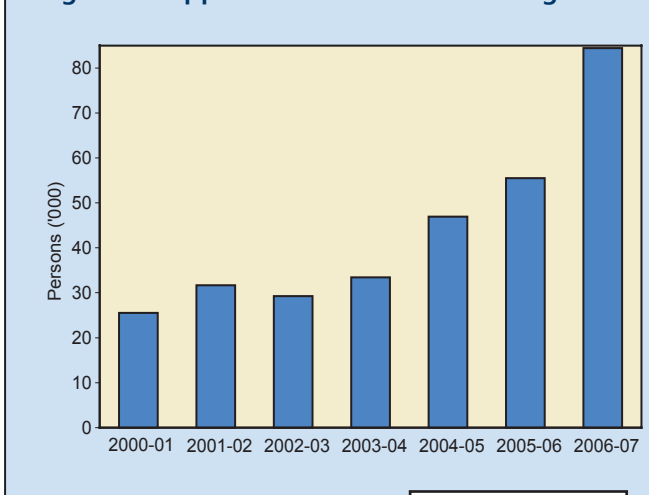
The Approved Destination Status (ADS) scheme is an initiative of the Chinese government giving passport holders of the PRC access to streamlined group travel to other countries. Australia was the first western country to be approved as a destination under the scheme.

Under the ADS scheme, approved PRC and Australian travel agents arrange group tours for the PRC tourists to Australia, accompanied by a tour leader. A condition of their visas is that ADS tourists must adhere to an approved itinerary.

Since the inception of ADS in August 1999, more than 300 000 tourists have arrived on ADS visas. In 2006-07, 84 404 visas were granted under the ADS scheme, compared with 55 487 in 2005-06.

Since August 2006, tourists from all over the PRC have been able to travel to Australia via the ADS scheme. There are 89 approved ADS agents in the PRC and 57 Australian travel agencies now participating in the ADS.

Fig. 3-12: Approved Destination Status grants



Source Data: ADS Statistics