

## 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.

### Business (Long Stay) visa(subclass 457)

Australia has modern, flexible and streamlined temporary entry arrangements to assist business people and skilled personnel seeking to stay in Australia for up to four years. The arrangements are designed to cater for the entry of:

- skilled overseas employees for businesses operating in Australia and

- personnel from offshore businesses seeking to establish a branch in Australia, participate in joint ventures, transfer personnel between their branches, or fulfil a contract awarded to an offshore company.

The key aim of the Business (Long Stay) 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.

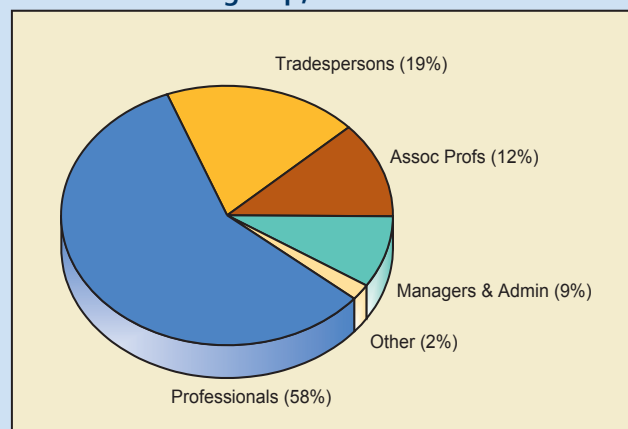
There are minimum skill and salary levels for personnel sponsored under the Business (Long Stay) visa Program. They must be paid in line with Australian workplace laws or a set immigration minimum salary level (whichever is the higher). The minimum salary level was set on 3 May 2006 at \$41 850 (\$57 300 for those in the IT professions), excluding allowances and salary packaging. Salary levels are reviewed and adjusted from time to time in line with general wage movements. The occupations visa holders can fill must also be skilled (broadly equivalent to manager, professional, associate professional or skilled trade roles). A broader range of skilled occupations and a lower minimum salary level can be accessed in defined regional and low-population growth areas of Australia.

Skilled temporary residents are generally 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.

In 2006-07, a total of 87 310 Business (Long Stay) visas were granted (excluding Independent Executives who were establishing businesses in Australia), a rise of 22.7 per cent compared with the previous financial year. Of the total grants, 53.5 per cent were primary applicants.

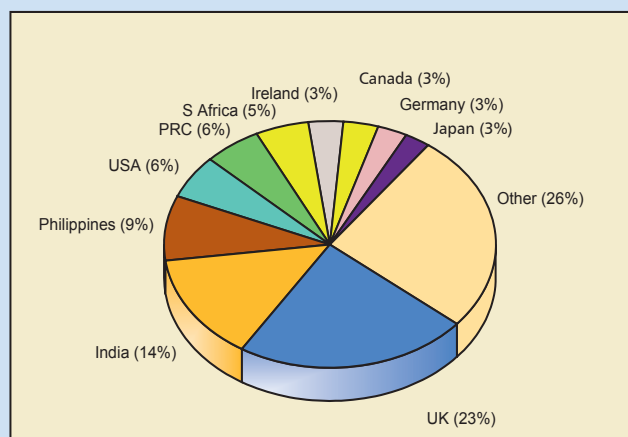
In the 2005-06 financial year, registered nurses comprised the largest single occupation sought by Australian employers. In the 2006-07 financial year, computing professionals nominated by employers exceeded that of registered nurses. The top five occupational groups nominated by employers in 2006-07 were computing professionals (7.6 per cent), registered nurses (6.4 per cent), general medical practitioners (3.5 per cent), business and information professionals (3.3 per cent) and medical practitioners in training (2.8 per cent).

**Fig. 3-24: Long Stay Temporary Business onshore approved nominations by major occupation group, 2006-07**



Source Data: IMIRS

**Fig. 3-25: Long Stay Temporary Business grants by country of citizenship, 2006-07**



Source Data: IMIRS

In 2006-07, 19 170 people who last held a Business (Long Stay) visa were granted a permanent visa. The majority of these (80 per cent) were granted a permanent visa under the Employer Nomination Scheme, the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, a Labour Agreement or under the Skilled Independent visa program.

The Business (Long Stay) visa program assists Australian employers to fill skilled vacancies that they have been unable to fill through local employment and training measures, providing a rapid and simple process for the recruitment of overseas personnel. Australian businesses and skilled overseas workers continue to enthusiastically utilise the department's internet electronic lodgement facility. The take up-rate for the 2006-07 year remained high with the majority of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications lodged online.

DIAC sets and publicises standards for its processing times for applications in various visa subclasses. The service standard for the Business (Long Stay) visa is for 75.0 per cent of cases to be finalised in three months for high risk cases and two months for low risk cases. In 2006-07 the actual processing time for 75.0 per cent of cases was 84 days for high risk cases and 55 days for low risk cases.

Sponsors of Business (Long Stay) visa holders are monitored on their compliance with the undertakings they make to the department with respect to sponsored personnel and their family. In 2006-07, the monitoring of 6518 sponsors was finalised. There were 1680 site visits, based on targeted risk profiles or in cases where further checking was warranted.

Where a sponsor is found to have breached their undertaking, the department may seek to impose a sanction. Sanctions include sponsorship cancellation and/or barring the employer from sponsoring overseas personnel for up to five years. Separate action may be taken by Commonwealth or state government agencies for identified breaches of other Australian laws.

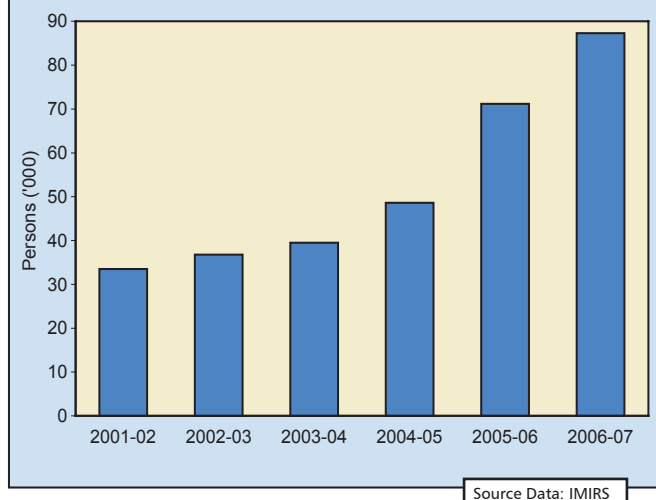
## Business Skills visa

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.

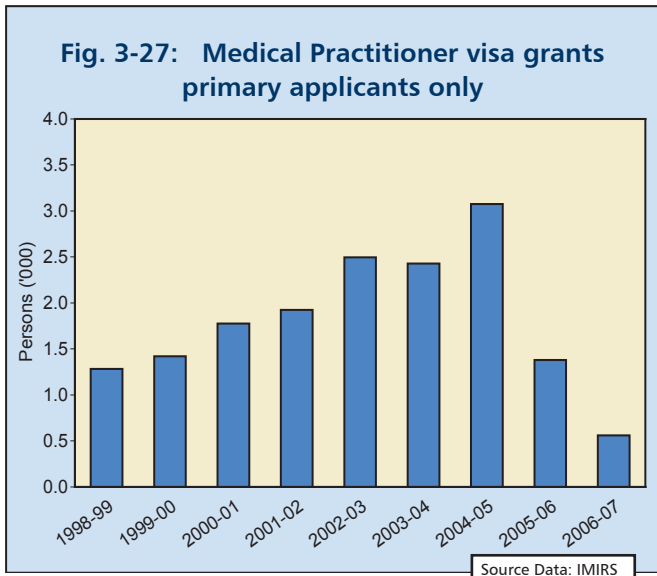
**Fig. 3-26: Long stay temporary business grants**



## 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. 90 visas were granted in 2006-07, down considerably from 135 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

This visa allows for qualified general and specialist medical practitioners to work in Australia for up to four years. In 2006-07, there has been a significant decrease in the number of temporary resident doctors entering and working in Australia through the Medical Practitioner visa. In 2006-07, 560 visas were granted to doctors and a further 820 visas to their dependants. This is a decrease of 60.0 per cent from 1380 visa grants to doctors in 2005-06.

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 2006-07, 3530 visas were granted to doctors under this visa.