

Humanitarian Program (onshore)

Onshore Humanitarian Program performance

There were 5067 Protection visa finalisation decisions in 2006-07 and a total of 2243 Protection visas granted following primary, review or ministerial intervention decisions. These figures represent reduced activity compared to 2005-06. In that year there were 8226 Protection visa finalisations and a total of 5215 Protection visa grants. The lower number of finalisations and grants in 2006-07 reflects the finalisation in the preceding year of a large number of further Protection visa applications from temporary Protection visa (TPV) and offshore temporary Humanitarian visa (THV) holders. In 2006-07 there were 3743 initial Protection visa applications lodged, which is some 13.4 per cent up on the level of 3300 reported in 2005-06.

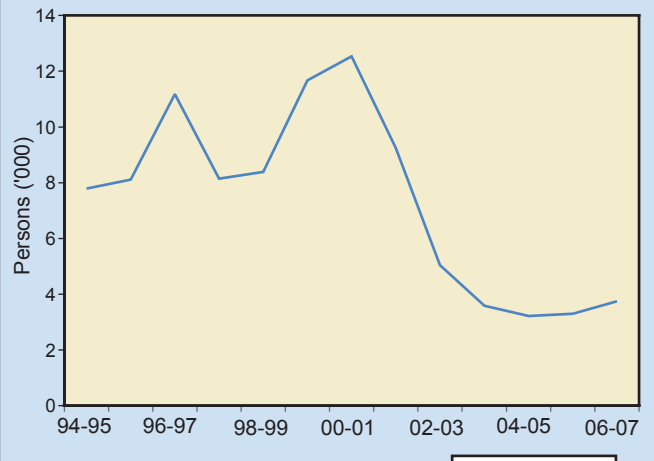
Of the 2243 Protection visas granted in 2006-07, 1699 grants resulted from initial applications, 532 resulted from applications for further protection and 12 resulted from ministerial intervention. Of these, 1701 were counted as part of the Humanitarian Program. The remainder includes grants of further protection to TPV holders and THV holders who have already been counted as part of the Humanitarian Program, and grants to Australia-born children of Protection visa holders.

Some 85 per cent of the 2243 Protection visas granted in 2006-07 were permanent Protection visas (PPV). This reflects both the small number of unauthorised boat and air arrivals during 2006-07 and that almost all further Protection visas granted to TPV and THV holders were PPVs.

Legislative changes - processing times

The department continued to focus on improving mechanisms to ensure the integrity of Protection visa decision-making and further enhanced its biannual quality assurance process. While this mechanism showed an overall high level of compliance with policy and procedural requirements, it also identified some opportunities to further strengthen processes, for example through increased focus on accurate and timely data entry on case progress and on other improvements in record keeping. The department continued to work with other agencies to reduce waiting times for character and other checks beyond its direct control.

Fig. 4-7: Initial applications for Protection visas (lodged)



Source Data: ICSE

Fig. 4-8: Initial Protection visa applications by citizenship 2006-07

PRC	1034
Sri Lanka	458
India	383
Iraq	207
Indonesia	182
Malaysia	102
Pakistan	91
Lebanon	87
Rep of Korea	82
Fiji	77
Other	1040
Total	3743

Source Data: ICSE

Fig. 4-9: Initial Protection visa grants by citizenship 2006-07

PRC	412
Sri Lanka	363
Iraq	158
Iran	61
Pakistan	52
Egypt, Arab Republic of	50
Burma (Myanmar)	42
Bangladesh	40
India	37
Zimbabwe	28
Other	456
Total	1699

Source Data: ICSE

In line with the commitment made by the Prime Minister on 17 June 2005 and consequential legislative changes, the department continued to closely manage the timeliness of Protection visa processing and provide reports on applications not finalised within the specified 90 day timeframe.

In 2006-07, the department met the new decision standard for initial Protection visa applications in more than 83 per cent of cases where applicants were in the community and in 94 per cent of the cases where applicants were in immigration detention.

During 2006-07, the secretary provided three reports to the minister on the implementation of the 90 day decision timeframe - the first covering the period 1 March 2006 to 30 June 2006, the second covering the period 1 July 2006 to 31 October 2006, and the third from 1 November 2006 to 28 February 2007. The reports demonstrated a continuing improvement across the year, including a reduction in the number of cases on hand and an increasing proportion of cases finalised within 90 days. In the majority of cases not processed within 90 days, the reasons for not meeting the standard were outside the department's control such as awaiting security or character assessment by external agencies or client delay in providing information.