



2011-12 Migration Program

This is a brief summary of the size and composition of the 2011-12 Migration Program.

Commonly used terms in this document include:

Migration program—the number of visas for permanent residence (excludes New Zealand citizens and visas issued under the Humanitarian Program).

Stream—the Migration Program is comprised of three streams: skill, family and special eligibility. Within these streams there are various visa categories.

Net Overseas Migration (NOM)—overseas travelers are only included in the population as NOM arrivals if they are in Australia for 12 months or more over a 16 month period. Conversely, overseas travelers are subtracted from the population as NOM departures if they are away for 12 months or more over a 16 month period. The level of NOM is the balance of NOM arrivals minus NOM departures.

Overview

Migration Program planning levels are announced as part of Australia's annual Federal budget announcement.

Australia's permanent migration program complements our temporary work visas by addressing the economy's medium to long-term labour market needs. The Migration Program can be used to redress the effects of the ageing population by maintaining a flow of workers into the labour force and contributing to participation and productivity rates.

It is also important to ensure that Australians have the opportunity to live with their partner of choice and children. In determining the size of the Family Stream, the government balances the demand for and benefits of family migration with the needs of the economy for skilled migration and for the Migration Program overall to support sustainable population growth.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that Net Overseas Migration has fallen to 185 800 for the year ending September 2010. This is a fall by almost half from its peak in 2008-09, slowing the rate of population growth to more sustainable levels, and providing scope for a moderate increase in the migration program in 2011-12.

- The 2011-12 Migration Program planning level is set at 185 000. This is an increase of 16 300 places from 2010-11 planning levels.
- The majority of the increase is allocated to the Skill Stream to help meet the expected increase in demand for skilled migrants given strong employment growth and a tightening labour market conditions.
- There are also additional places in the socially important Family Stream to meet growing demand.
- The 2011-12 Migration Program has specific places allocated to regional areas and initiatives that will assist regional employers to attract and retain skilled workers.

	2010-11	2011-12	Variation	% Change
FAMILY STREAM				
Partner	42 000	45 400	3400	
Child	3300	3450	150	
Preferential/Other Family	750	1250	500	
Parent	1000	2000	1000	
Contributory Parent	7500	6500	-1000	
Total Family	54 550	58 600	4050	7.4%
% of program	32.3%	31.7%		
SKILL STREAM				
Employer Sponsored	44 150	46 000	1850	
ENS + Labour Agreement ¹	33 990	30 000	-3990	
RSMS ¹	10 160	16 000	5840	
Skilled-Independent	34 200	44 350	10 150	
Skilled – State/Territory Sponsored	24 000	24 000	0	
Skilled – Australian Sponsored	3500	4100	600	
Distinguished Talent	200	200	0	
Business Skills	7800	7200	-600	
Total Skill	113 850	125 850	12 000	10.5%
% of Program	67.5%	68.0%		
Special Eligibility	300	550	250	
TOTAL	168 700	185 000	16 300	9.7%

¹ RSMS notional allocation for 2010-11 based on 24 per cent of the total Employer Sponsored sub-program as indicated by visa grants (year to date). As the program is demand-driven, actual outcomes may vary depending on demand.

Skill Stream

The Skill Stream has increased by 12 000 places on 2010-11 program planning levels.

The Skill Stream ceiling is set at 125 850 places.

The final composition of the Skill Stream may vary as places between the categories can be readjusted by the minister during the program year based on demand by employers.

Family Stream

The Family Stream planning levels are set at 58 600 places, which is an increase of 4050 places from 2010-11 planning levels.

The majority of the increase in the Family Stream has been allocated to the Partner and Child categories which cannot be capped under existing legislation.

The Partner category will be set at 45 400 - an increase of 3400

The Child category will be set at 3450 - an increase of 150.

Allocations for parents have been redistributed with the Contributory Parent category being reduced by 1000 to 6500 and the (non-Contributory) Parent Category being increased by 1000 to 2000.

Regional Migration Programs

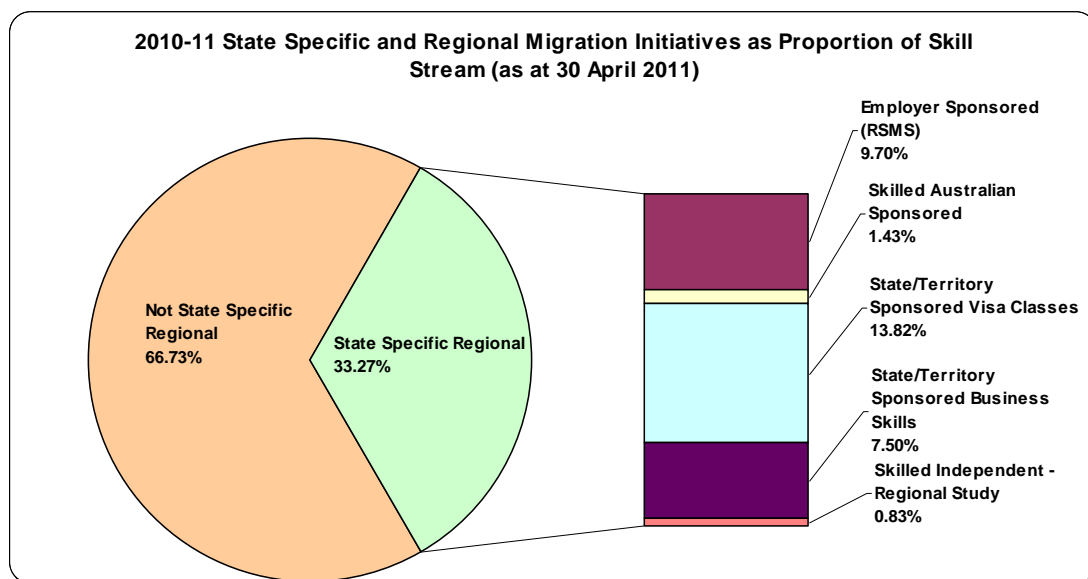
Skilled migrants who settle in regional Australia are critical to supporting the viability of many regional enterprises. Our migration programs play an important role in assisting regional employers to address critical skill needs through access to overseas skilled workers. The ability to employ overseas skilled workers, on a temporary or permanent basis, allows regional employers to maintain and grow their businesses, which positively contributes to both their local and the national economy.

The department has a number of regional initiatives, which have played an important role in supporting regional Australia. However, there is scope to improve these programs. Given the constantly changing labour market, it is important that the department's programs remain responsive to the needs of employers to deliver the best outcomes for regional Australia, and, more generally, the Australian labour market.

In 2010-11 state-specific and regional migration initiatives represented one third of Skill Stream visa grants.

Category	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2010-11 at 30 April 2011
Employer Sponsored - Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS)	3454	3784	5062	8811	8313
Skilled Australian Sponsored - Regional	33	16	0	0	0
Skilled Australian Sponsored - Regional (Designated Area)	9936	7711	5729	2770	1175
Skilled Australian Sponsored - Regional Study ⁽¹⁾	35	14	39	46	47
Sub-Total Skilled Australian Sponsored - Regional	10 004	7741	5768	2816	1222
State/Territory Sponsored Visa Classes	8024	6928	7530	14 055	11 843
Skilled Independent - Regional Study ⁽¹⁾	898	1314	1084	659	711
State/Territory Sponsored Business Skills	5108	6078	6718	7133	6427
Total	27 488	25 845	26 162	33 474	28 516

(1) Refers to persons who received bonus points for living and studying in a regional area.



Regional Initiatives

In recognition of the important role our migration programs play in regional areas and challenges that employers in regional Australia face to maintain and grow their business, in the 2011-12 Budget the Government directed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (the department) to begin investigating the viability of a number of initiative specifically targeted toward assisting regional Australia to manage these challenges.

The regional initiatives announced in the Budget are discussed in more detail below.

Streamlining permanent residence for those holding certain temporary skilled visas

The department will review its employer-sponsored visa categories, including the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, to facilitate streamlined application processing arrangements for skilled workers on temporary visas who are already living and working in regional Australia.

The employer-sponsored visa categories provide employers with the ability to attract workers, whose skills they require to maintain and grow their business, directly from overseas or retaining skilled workers who are currently in Australia on a temporary visa.

This measure will provide a streamlined pathway that facilitates the transition from temporary to permanent residence. This will make it easier for temporary visa holders who have already made a commitment to living in a regional area and are contributing to its productivity by filling a skilled position to transition to permanent residence. Their employers will find it simpler to retain their skills in the region.

Increasing Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme places

For the first time ever, the federal government will specifically allocate permanent visas for regional areas

The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme is expected to deliver up to 16 000 skilled migrants to regional areas in 2011-12, filling vacancies that employers cannot fill from the local labour force.

This recognises demand from regional employers for skilled people in their businesses and underscores the importance of a demand-driven migration program, particularly in ensuring that Australia gets the skills it needs right now.

Priority processing

Applicants for permanent regional migration visas will be afforded the highest level of processing priority, ensuring their applications are processed and finalised as quickly as possible. This will ensure that applicants who have skills, qualifications and work experience that are in demand in regional Australia will be able to more quickly begin utilising these skills and contributing to regional areas.

Regional Engagement Strategy

The government will develop and implement an enhanced Regional Engagement Strategy to ensure that employers in regional areas know which migration programs can assist them to fill skilled vacancies, where there are no local or Australian people to fill the job. Through its Regional Outreach Officer network, the government will develop information specifically for regional areas, and will actively disseminate the information to assist regional employers.

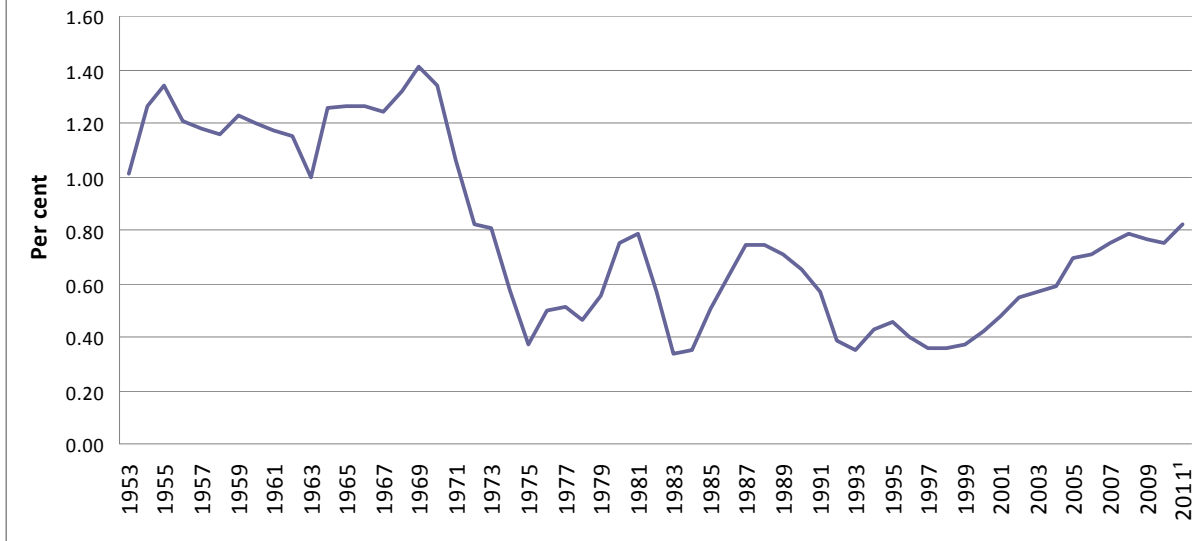
Migration Program and population

The 2011-12 Migration Program as a percentage of Australia's population is broadly consistent with the proportion of migration program intakes in the past 50 years.

The table and graph below shows the average Migration Program intakes since 1950s and the 2010-11 and 2011-12 Migration Program planning levels in proportion to the population in Australia.

Decade	Average Migration Program intake	Percent of Population
1950s	114286	1.20
1960s	140300	1.23
1970s	95311	0.70
1980s	97163	0.61
1990s	78016	0.43
2000s	130597	0.63
2010-11	168700	0.75
2011-12	185000	0.82

Migration Program size as a percentage of Australia's population



¹ 2011 population data obtained from ABS Website Population Clock as at 12 April 2011.