

Skill Migration

Fig. 2-4: Skill Visa Grants by Category

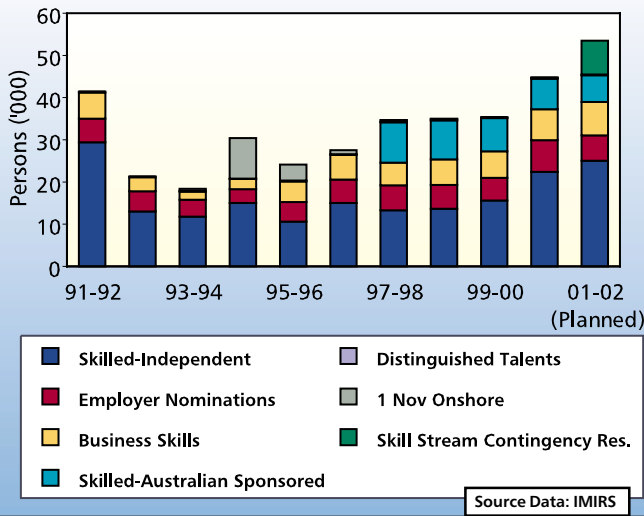


Fig. 2-5: Skill Visa Grants by Country of Birth 2000-01

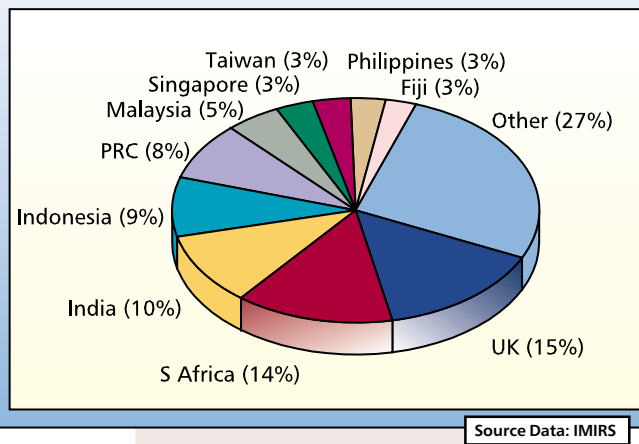
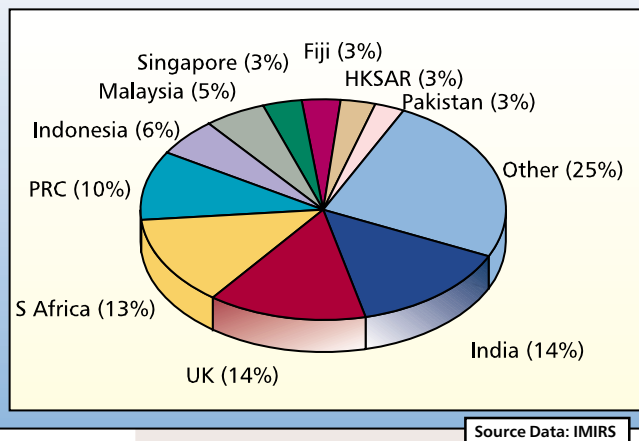


Fig. 2-6: Independent Visa Grants by Country of Birth 2000-01



Skill Visa Grants

The Skill Stream of Australia's Migration (non-Humanitarian) Program is specifically designed to target migrants who have skills or outstanding abilities that will contribute to the Australian economy.

The migration to Australia of people with qualifications and relevant work experience can help to address skill shortages in Australia and enhance the size, skill level and productivity of the Australian labour force.

In 2000-01, there were 44,730 people granted Skill visas, an increase of 9,400 (26.6 per cent) on the 1999-2000 level. Of total Skill Stream visas, 17.1 per cent (7,649) were granted to onshore applicants.

The United Kingdom accounted for 15 per cent of all 2000-01 Skill Stream visa grants. Other major source countries included South Africa (14 per cent), India (10 per cent), Indonesia (9 per cent) and the PRC (8 per cent). Skill visa grants to people from Hong Kong again fell in 2000-01 by 49.3 per cent from the number in 1999-2000, while Skill visa grants to people from India rose by 15.1 per cent.

Impact of Changes to the Skill Stream

The points test introduced on 1 July 1999 has been overwhelmingly successful in attracting highly skilled migrants. Applicants can apply in a range of visa categories including: Skilled Independent, Skilled Australian Sponsored and Skilled Designated Area Sponsored. To acknowledge the potential contribution of overseas students who have successfully completed study in Australia, the following onshore visa categories were introduced on 1 July 2001: Skilled Independent Overseas Student, Skilled Australian Sponsored Overseas Student and Skilled Designated Area Sponsored Overseas Student. Applicants are selected who are able to meet specified requirements for skill, age, work experience and English language ability.

The targeting of migrants to meet skills shortages in the Australian labour market has been achieved by the Skilled Occupations List (SOL) and the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). Additional points are available for applicants with occupations (with or without a job offer) on the MODL. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) occupations are prominent on the MODL.

Other attributes are also recognised, including Australian qualifications and work experience, fluency in a language other than English, and spouse skills. Applicants with Australian qualifications who apply within six months of completion of their studies are exempt from the recent work experience requirement and can remain in Australia by applying in the new onshore categories introduced on 1 July 2001. This is because of the preference shown by the Australian labour market for Australian qualifications over many overseas qualifications.

The changes made to the points test categories of the Skill Stream are now delivering significant economic benefits to Australian society. More than 50 per cent of all applicants in the new points tested categories have skills in a MODL occupation. Of all applications lodged under the new Skill Stream categories, approximately 25 per cent are from ICT professionals, and approximately 13 per cent are from accountants with nurses the next biggest occupational group.

Of the 14,207 visas granted in the points tested category visas in 2000–01, 11,801 were for Skilled Independent migrants. Under the points test used to select most skilled migrants in 2000–01, about 60 per cent of Skilled Independent visa principal applicants were in the age group 18–29, around 88 per cent scored maximum points for English language ability, and nearly 90 per cent scored the maximum points for skill. About 40 per cent of Independent Skilled migrants granted visas in 2000–01 were in occupations in national shortage and about 50 per cent had Australian qualifications.

Skill Visa Categories

The main categories of Skill Stream migrants include:

Skilled Independent, Skilled Independent Overseas Student (from 1 July 2001) and Independent migrants – not sponsored by an employer or relative in Australia. They must pass a points test that includes skills, age, work experience and English language ability (22,376 visas in 2000–01).

Skilled Australian Sponsored, Skilled Australian Sponsored Overseas Student (from 1 July 2001) and Skilled Australian Linked – Applicants must pass a points test that includes skills, age, recent work experience and English language ability and receive additional points for sponsorship by relatives in Australia (7,167 visas in 2000–01). Also includes Skilled Regional Sponsored and Regional Linked for those sponsored by relatives in designated areas (not points tested).

Employer Sponsored – Employers may nominate (or ‘sponsor’) personnel from overseas through the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS), Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS), Labour Agreements and State/Territory Nominated Independent. These visas enable Australian employers to fill skilled permanent vacancies with overseas personnel if they cannot find suitably qualified workers in Australia. A total of 7,510 visas were granted in 2000–01.

257 individuals whose country of birth was Australia are also included in the top 10. These individuals are children who were born in Australia of parents who are granted an ENS visa.

Business Skills migration–encourages successful business people to settle permanently in Australia and develop new business opportunities (7,364 visas in 2000–01).

Distinguished Talent – for distinguished individuals with special or unique talents of benefit to Australia (229 visas in 2000–01)

Fig. 2-7: Skilled Australian Sponsored Visa Grants by Country of Birth

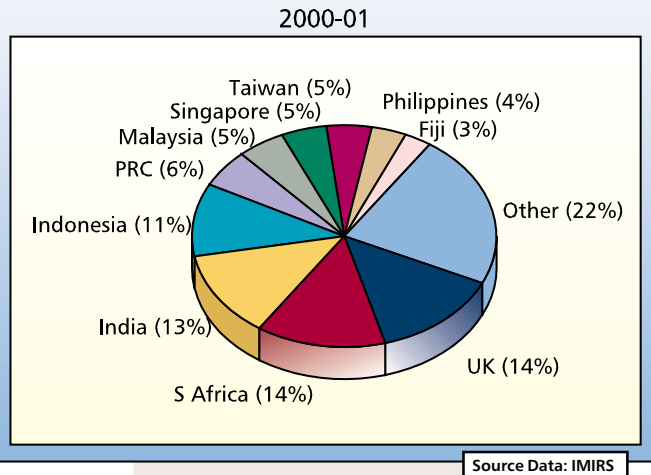


Fig. 2-8: Employer Sponsored Visa Grants by Country of Birth

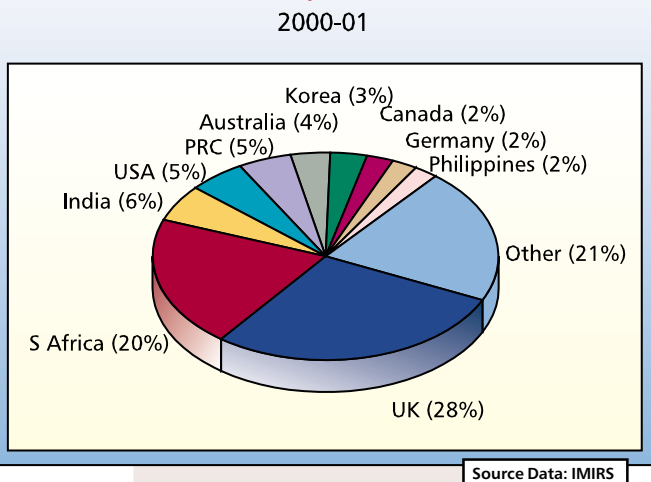
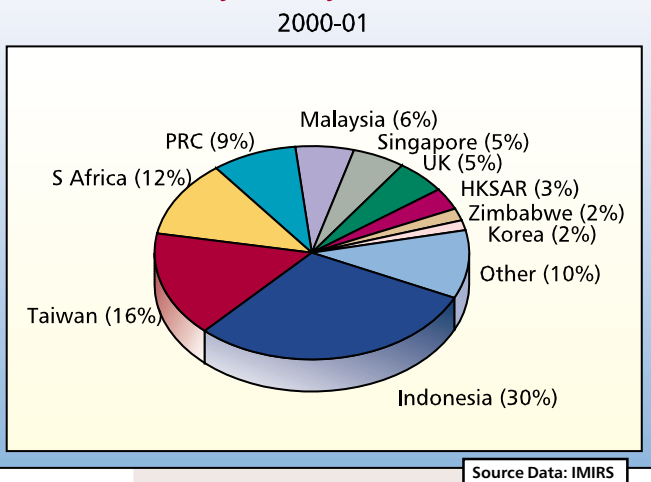


Fig. 2-9: Business Skill Visa Grants by Country of Birth



State Specific Migration Mechanisms

The Commonwealth Government, in consultation with State and Territory Governments, has introduced over the last five years a number of initiatives designed to assist State and Territory Governments to:

- encourage a more balanced dispersal of Australia's skilled migrant intake; and
- address skill shortages that may exist in specific regions of Australia.

Research into patterns of population distribution and the reasons why migrants decide to settle in certain areas of Australia shows that there are three factors which are of primary importance in determining where migrants settle: location of family members; the availability of employment; and business opportunities. The initiatives are based on these factors.

State and Territory Governments determine the extent of their involvement in these initiatives depending on their own individual development priorities. These initiatives are collectively referred to as State Specific Migration Mechanisms (SSMMs) and include the following.

State/Territory Nominated Independent (STNI) Scheme

STNI enables State and Territory Governments to sponsor Independent category applicants identified through skill matching, who are willing to settle in their States and Territories. These nominations are based on an audit conducted by the State or Territory Government to establish which skills are in short supply and where they are needed. Applicants must meet the pool mark for the Independent category to be eligible for STNI.

Skilled Designated Area Sponsored (SDAS) category (previously known as Skilled Regional Sponsored and Regional Linked)

Allows the sponsorship of applicants by relatives (including by first cousins and grandparents) to join them in designated areas. Designated areas are identified by State and Territory Governments. Currently Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Perth, Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast are not designated areas. All other parts of Australia are designated. Applicants must meet threshold English language, age and skill criteria. This category is not points tested.

Applicants in the Skilled Australian Linked (SAL) category receive 5 bonus points if their sponsor lives in a designated area. No further applications could be lodged in this category after 1 July 1999. The bonus points are no longer available in the Skilled Australian Sponsored category which replaced SAL, as applicants who would be eligible for the bonus points can apply directly under SDAS.

Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS)

Enables employers in regional Australia to nominate overseas personnel for permanent entry where the employer has been unable to recruit suitable skilled personnel through the local labour market. Applicants must meet English language, age and skill criteria but there is no points test.

Regional Established Business in Australia (REBA)

The Regional Established Business in Australia (REBA) category (introduced in July 1997) allows temporary residents who have established a successful business in Australia and who are sponsored by their State or Territory Government, to apply for permanent residence if their business is in a designated area.

State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner and Senior Executive

Provision also exists for bonus points for State or Territory sponsorship of Business Skills applicants which also attracts concessions in relation to net assets and the number of employees required.

Skill Matching Database

Operated by the Commonwealth, the database identifies skilled applicants who meet threshold criteria for English language, age and skills, and who are willing to settle in areas where their occupational skills are in demand. It is disseminated to State and Territory Governments and regional organisations, to encourage skilled migration to their regions through the RSMS or the STNI. It also assists in the targeting of regional promotional campaigns. The database is available on the Internet.

Skill Matching Visa

The Skill Matching Visa Class, although similar in many respects to the STNI scheme and RSMS, has specific features designed to complement major reforms to Skill Stream selection arrangements that came into effect on 1 July 1999. Applicants must meet threshold English language, age and skill criteria but there is no points test.

State Specific Migration Mechanisms (SSMMs) accounted for 3,846 visa grants in 2000–01, the highest level since the initiatives were introduced. This represents an increase of 16.2 per cent over the 1999–2000 grant level of 3,309 visas. Most grants were made to applicants going to Victoria (47.5 per cent), followed by South Australia (19.5 per cent). This is comparable to the situation in 1999–2000. All States and Territories recorded increases with the exception of Queensland.

The increase in 2000–01 came from grants in the RSMS, the State/Territory Sponsored Business Skills categories and REBA, all reaching their highest level since the categories were introduced.

Grants under the RSMS have increased by 53.8 per cent from 664 grants in 1999–2000 to 1,021 in 2000–01, with the most grants going to South Australia (42.8 per cent) and Western Australia (12.6 per cent). All States recorded increases in 2000–01.

The number of grants in the various categories that comprise State Sponsored Business Skills increased from 44 in 1999–2000 to 122 in 2000–01. Grants under REBA have increased from 13 in 1999–2000 to 41 in 2000–01. There were 23 grants in Tasmania and 10 in South Australia under REBA.

Grants under STNI increased from 9 in 1999–2000 to 85 in 2000–01. This was still below the 1998–99 level of 169 when South Australia was particularly active. Victoria and South Australia have been the main States using STNI in 2000–01 with Victoria receiving 55.3 per cent of all grants and South Australia 42.4 per cent. The ACT received the remaining 2.3 per cent of STNI grants.

Fig. 2-10 and Fig 2-11 provide details of activities in the various SSMMs.

Fig. 2-10: SSMM Visa Grants by Category: 1997–98 to 2000–01

Category	97–98	98–99	99–00	00–01
RSMS	581	765	664	1,021
STNI, Skilled-STNI, Skill Matching Visa	16	169	9	85
Regional Linked & Skilled Regional Sponsored	111	67	195	1,002
Skilled-Australian Linked(a)	984	1,744	2,384	1,575
State Sponsored Business Skills(b)	61	59	44	122
REBA	0	0	13	41
Total	1,753	2,804	3,309	3,846

(a) Refers to applicants under this category who obtained bonus points because their sponsor lived in a designated area.

(b) Includes applications processed under offshore subclass 129 (State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner), offshore subclass 130 (State/Territory Sponsored Senior Executive), onshore subclass 842 (State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner) and onshore subclass 843 (State/Territory Sponsored Executive)

Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-11: Distribution of Migrants Granted Visas Under State Specific Migration Mechanisms in 2000–01

Category	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Total
RSMS	70	75	97	437	129	84	54	75	1,021
STNI/Skilled-STNI/Skill Matching	0	47	0	36	0	0	0	2	85
Regional-Linked, SRS	61	712	42	67	48	24	2	46	1,002
SAL(a)	116	968	94	184	92	15	19	87	1,575
SSBS(b)	24	25	21	16	16	9	5	6	122
REBA	0	0	1	10	3	23	4	0	41
Total	271	1,827	255	750	288	155	84	216	3,846

(a) Refers to applicants under this category who obtained bonus points because their sponsor lived in a designated area.

(b) Includes applications processed under offshore subclass 129 (State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner), offshore subclass 130 (State/Territory Sponsored Senior Executive), onshore subclass 842 (State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner) and onshore subclass 843 (State/Territory Sponsored Executive).

Source Data: IMIRS