Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Compendium

Australia's Migration Trends 2023–24

Australia's Migration Trends was prepared by:

Data Services Branch | Data and Economic Analysis Centre
Department of Home Affairs

Comments about this publication can be emailed to

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Media and Communication Branch
Department of Home Affairs

PO Box 25
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Table of Contents

Migration Program visas 2
- Skill stream visas 2
  - Employer Sponsored 2
  - Regional migration 2
  - State/Territory Nominated 3
  - Skilled Independent 3
  - Business Innovation and Investment Program 3
  - Global Talent (Independent) 4
  - Distinguished Talent 4
- Family stream 4
- Special Eligibility visas 5

Temporary visas 5
- Visitor visas 5
- Special Category visa 6
- Student visas 6
- Working Holiday Maker visas 6
- Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment) visas 7
- Temporary Resident (Other Employment) visas 7
  - Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485) 7
- Other Temporary visas 8
- Crew and Transit visas 8

Humanitarian Program visas 8
- Offshore resettlement component 8
- Onshore protection component 8

Visa non-compliance 9

Net Overseas Migration 9

Citizenship in Australia 9

Labour market 10

Migration Program visas

Australia's permanent Migration Program incorporates economic and family migration, and is the main pathway to permanent residence. The only other way for migrants to obtain permanent residence is acceptance into Australia on humanitarian grounds. Australia's permanent Migration Program is comprised of:

- Skill stream visas
- Family stream visas (including Child visas)
- Special Eligibility visas.

For further information see Permanent resident.

Skill stream visas

The Skill stream offers a pathway to permanent residence for migrants who have the skills, qualifications and entrepreneurship that will contribute to the Australian economy. There are seven components:

1. Employer Sponsored
2. Regional
3. State/Territory Nominated
4. Skilled Independent
5. Business Innovation and Investment Program
6. Global Talent (Independent)
7. Distinguished Talent.

For further information see Work-stream and business investment stream permanent visas.

Employer Sponsored

An Australian employer can only sponsor applicants to fill a genuine job vacancy in the employer's business. These workers can be from outside Australia or living in Australia on a temporary visa. There are three streams for which a potential migrant can apply.

Employer Nomination Scheme visa (subclass 186):

1. Direct Entry stream
2. Labour Agreement stream
3. Temporary Residence Transition stream.

For further information see Employer Nomination Scheme visa.

Regional migration

Regional work visas are available to skilled migrants and dependent family members who want to live and work in regional Australia. Only an employer in regional Australia or an eligible family member can sponsor applicants, or a State or Territory government can nominate applicants.

For further information see Regional migration.

State/Territory Nominated

Only an Australian state or territory government agency may nominate applicants. These workers can be from outside Australia or living in Australia on a temporary visa.

For further information see Skilled Nominated visa.

Skilled Independent

This visa does not require an employer sponsor or Australian state or territory government nominator, and is for invited workers and New Zealand citizens. The visa, Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189) consists of three streams:

1. Points tested stream—allows invited workers with the skills needed to live and work permanently in Australia
2. New Zealand stream—for eligible New Zealand citizens who have demonstrated a commitment to live and work in Australia permanently
3. Hong Kong stream—for eligible Hong Kong or British National (overseas) passport holders, who have demonstrated a commitment to live and work in Australia permanently.

The Skilled Independent (subclass 189) (New Zealand stream) visa permanently closed to new applications on 1 July 2023.

For further information see Skilled Independent visa.

Business Innovation and Investment Program

The program is for migrants with a demonstrated history of success or talent in innovation, investment and business. Only a state or territory government or the Australian Trade and Investment Commission can nominate migrants for the Business Innovation and Investment Program. There are two visa subclasses:

1. Business Innovation and Investment (Provisional) visa—seven streams:
    i. Business Innovation
    ii. Business Innovation Extension
    iii. Significant Investor
    iv. Significant Investor Extension
    v. Investor
    vi. Premium Investor
    vii. Entrepreneur.
2. Business Innovation and Investment (Permanent) visa.

For further information see Business Innovation and Investment.

The Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP) closed to new applications on 1 July 2024.

For further information see: BIIP closure.

Global Talent (Independent)

The Global Talent Independent Program (Global Talent Visa Program) offers a streamlined priority pathway for highly skilled and talented individuals in selected industries to work and live permanently in Australia. There are 10 industry sectors:

1. Resources
2. Agri-food and AgTech
3. Energy
4. Health Industries
5. Defence, Advanced Manufacturing and Space
6. Circular Economy
7. DigiTech
8. Infrastructure and Tourism
9. Financial Services and FinTech
10. Education.

For further information see Global Talent Visa Program.

Distinguished Talent

On 27 February 2021, the Distinguished Talent visa became the Global Talent visa. Prior to this, only an eligible Australian resident or organisation with a national reputation in relation to the applicant's area of talent could nominate the applicant for a Distinguished Talent visa. The applicant must have had an internationally recognised record of exceptional and outstanding achievement in:

- a profession
- a sport
- the arts
- academia and research.

For further information see Global Talent Visa Program - Distinguished Talent pathway.

Family stream

The Family stream of the Migration Program allows the permanent migration of close family members of Australian citizens, permanent residents, and eligible New Zealand citizens. It focuses on partners and parents, but also provides the opportunity for additional family members, such as aged dependent relatives, carers, remaining relatives and children (including child adoption and orphan relatives), to join their family in Australia. There are four visa categories:

1. Partner
2. Parent
3. Child
4. Other Family.

For further information see Family stream permanent residence visas.

Special Eligibility visas

Special Eligibility visas allow former residents and certain people who served in the Australian Defence Force to live in Australia as permanent residents. It also includes visas granted under Ministerial intervention.

For further information see Former Resident visa.

Temporary visas

People travel to Australia and stay temporarily for a range of reasons, including visiting Australia for tourism or attending a conference, undertaking medical treatment, study, skilled work or a working holiday.

There are eight main categories reflecting these reasons that can cover stays of more than three months in Australia:

1. Visitors
2. Special Category (for New Zealand citizens)
3. Students
4. Working Holiday Makers
5. Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)
6. Temporary Resident (Other Employment)—includes Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485)
7. Other Temporary
8. Crew and Transit.

Visitor visas

Visitor visas are mostly used by people visiting Australia for holidays, tourism and recreation, or to see family and friends. People may also use Visitor visas for certain short-term business activities that do not entail working in Australia. There are three visa subclasses:

1. Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)—allows visits to Australia for tourism or business activities
2. Visitor visa (subclass 600)—allows visits to Australia for tourism or business activities. There are five visa streams:
    i. Tourist
    ii. Business Visitor
    iii. Sponsored Family
    iv. Approved Destination Status (ADS)—for people from the People's Republic of China travelling in an organised tour group.
    v. Frequent Traveller—for passport holders from the People's Republic of China.
3. eVisitor visa (subclass 651)—allows visits to Australia for tourism or business activities.

For further information see Visiting family or friends.

Special Category visa

Under the 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, New Zealand citizens can enter and leave Australia freely and live in Australia indefinitely on grant of a temporary Special Category visa (subclass 444).

As with other potential migrants, New Zealand citizens are eligible to apply for a permanent visa.

From 1 July 2023, New Zealand citizens who have been living in Australia for four years or more will be eligible to apply directly for Australian citizenship. They will no longer need to first apply for and be granted a permanent visa. These changes apply to New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa (SCV) who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001. Protected SCV holders will continue to be eligible to apply directly for Australian citizenship.

For further information see New Zealand citizens.

Student visas

The Student visa program enables international students to come to Australia to study full-time in a registered course. Student visa (subclass 500), allows the visa holder to undertake study within the following categories:

- English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS)
- Schools
- Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Higher Education
- Postgraduate Research
- Non-award
- Foreign Affairs or Defence.

For further information see Studying in Australia.

Working Holiday Maker visas

The Working Holiday Maker Program is a program between agreement countries that allows young adults to have an extended holiday and engage in short-term work and study. There are two visa subclasses:

1. Working Holiday visa (subclass 417)
2. Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462).

For further information see Working holiday.

Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment) visas

The Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment) visa category allows a business to sponsor a skilled overseas worker if they cannot find an appropriately skilled Australian citizen or permanent resident to fill a skilled position.

There are two visa subclasses that fall within this category:

1. Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457)—closed to new applications from 18 March 2018
2. Temporary Skill Shortage (subclass 482)—commenced 18 March 2018.

For further information see repeal of the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa or Temporary Skill Shortage visa.

Temporary Resident (Other Employment) visas

Visas in the Temporary Resident (Other Employment) visa category allow people to undertake short-term, non-ongoing highly specialised work, enrich social and cultural development, strengthen international relations, or provide training opportunities of benefit to Australia. The main visa types included in this category are:

- Post Study Work
- Australian Government Endorsed Events
- Highly Specialised Work
- Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme
- Entertainment
- Invited for Other Social and Cultural Activity
- Graduate Work
- Family (Temporary)
- Research Activities
- Diplomatic
- Religious Work
- Sporting Activities.

For further information see Visa list.

Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485)

The Temporary Graduate visa is one of the main visa types included in Temporary Resident (Other Employment) visas, and provides recent Student visa graduates an opportunity to remain and work temporarily in Australia. From 1 July 2024, there was a re-alignment of the Temporary Graduate visa streams of which there were four, to levels of study:

1. Post-Vocational Education Work stream (formerly Graduate Work stream)
2. Post-Higher Education Work stream (formerly Post-Study Work stream)
3. Second Post-Higher Education Work stream (formerly Second Post-Study Work stream)
4. Replacement—now ceased.

For further information see Temporary Graduate visa.

Other Temporary visas

Visas in the Other Temporary category cater for a range of situations not covered elsewhere, such as providing care and support to a Student visa holder or receiving medical treatment. The following visa types comprise Other Temporary visas:

1. Border
2. Criminal Justice
3. Medical Treatment
4. Student Guardian.

Crew and Transit visas

Maritime Crew visa (subclass 988) is for foreign crew on non-military ships on international voyages, allowing them to perform work in Australia as a crew member that meets the normal operational requirements of the ship.

For further information see Maritime Crew visa.

Humanitarian Program visas

Australia's Humanitarian Program has an offshore resettlement component and an onshore protection component.

For further information see Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

Offshore resettlement component

The offshore component of the Humanitarian Program has three categories:

1. Refugee—four visa subclasses:
   i. Refugee visa (subclass 200)
   ii. In-country Special Humanitarian Program visa (subclass 201)
   iii. Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
   iv. Woman at Risk visa (subclass 204).
2. Special Humanitarian Program—Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202).
3. Community Support Program.

Onshore protection component

The onshore protection component is for people seeking asylum in Australia who have their claims assessed in Australia. A Permanent Protection visa is available for people who arrived in Australia legally. A Temporary Protection visa or Safe Haven Enterprise visa is available for Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals and Unauthorised Air Arrivals found to engage in Australia's *non-refoulement* obligations. These grants do not count towards the Humanitarian Program but are in addition to current places available.

Visa non-compliance

The Department's approach to compliance applies to the full continuum of departmental activity—pre-border, at the border, and post border. Visas can be cancelled for a range of non-compliance reasons, for example, where a visa holder breaches a condition of their visa, provides incorrect information to the Department (at, or post the border), or engages in certain criminal activity. When a person's visa is cancelled (if they are in Australia) the person becomes an Unlawful Non-Citizen (UNC) and arrangements are made to resolve their immigration status and/or their removal from Australia.

Net Overseas Migration

Net Overseas Migration (NOM) is a measure of the net gain, or loss, of population through migration into and out of Australia. The ABS is responsible for calculating preliminary and final NOM estimates and, as of October 2019, the Centre for Population, based in Treasury, is responsible for NOM forecasts. This forecast takes into account the expected effects of announced policy decisions.

NOM is one component of population growth, the other being natural increase—births less deaths.
An international traveller's duration of stay is the basis of determining NOM, and is the difference between:

- **NOM arrivals**—the number of incoming travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more during a 16-month period ('12-in-16-month rule'), and are added to the population
- **NOM departures**—the number of outgoing travellers (Australian residents and long-term visitors to Australia) who leave Australia for 12 months or more during a 16-month period, and are subtracted from the population.

The '12-in-16-month rule' applies when counting NOM arrivals or departures. NOM arrivals or departures can therefore include people who are not permanent residents of Australia, regardless of visa type, even if they leave Australia briefly, provided their time in Australia adds up to at least 12 months in a 16-month window. It therefore includes permanent and temporary migrants, as well as New Zealand and returning Australian citizens.

Final NOM is based on a person's actual travel movements with the '12-in-16-month rule' fully applied. As a result, final NOM data is not available until 18 months after the reference period.

For further information see National, state and territory population or Overseas Migration.

Citizenship in Australia

The *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* (the Citizenship Act) defines who is, who can become, and who ceases to be, an Australian citizen. Most people who acquire Australian citizenship do so automatically, for example, by being:

- born in Australia to an Australian citizen or permanent-resident parent
- born in Australia and being ordinarily resident in Australia throughout the first 10 years of their life
- a permanent resident adopted in Australia by an Australian citizen.

Non-citizens who wish to acquire Australian citizenship must lodge an application, meet certain legal requirements, and be approved to acquire Australian citizenship. The legal requirements are different for each Australian citizenship application pathway, and each pathway caters for particular categories of non-citizens. There are four pathways:

1. Citizenship by conferral
2. Citizenship by descent
3. Citizenship by adoption
4. Citizenship by resumption.

For further information see Applying for citizenship.

Labour market

The Department employs information from a variety of sources to examine the labour market outcomes of both new and established migrants. This includes the Department's Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants (CSAM), which reports on outcomes for recently arrived migrants and their spouses.

CSAM is an ongoing set of surveys primarily designed to provide information on labour market outcomes of recent migrants, and their spouses, from Australia's permanent Migration Program. CSAM provides data across the various visa categories of the Skill stream and Family stream.

The CSAM captures labour market outcomes of migrants at their six-month, 18-month and 30-month settlement periods, with the 30-month survey first included from 2019. Migrants and their spouse are first surveyed six months after the migrant's arrival (in the case of offshore migrants) or six months after visa grant (in the case of onshore migrants). These respondents undertake a second and third survey 12 months and 24 months after their initial survey, to examine how outcomes for a given cohort have changed with additional settlement time in Australia.

For further information see Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants.