Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs

Addendum – February 2023 (data to 31 December 2022)

Purpose

1. The Department of Home Affairs (the Department) has produced this paper to help external stakeholders understand how it administers Australia's immigration and citizenship programs. It complements existing publicly available sources, including regularly published data, and provides a tri-annual overview of the administration of visa, citizenship, border and compliance programs, focusing on recent environmental factors, program developments and trends.
2. This addendum is in addition to the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and should be read in conjunction with the tenth edition.

Introduction

3. Immigration is a key enabler of Australia's future success. With population and skill challenges mirrored across developed economies, Australia now faces increasing competition for talented migrants, whose human capital is critical to Australia's future economic stability and security. As we confront considerable change and uncertainty, a strategic approach is needed to successfully respond to these challenges and to leverage opportunities both now and into the future. A well-targeted, efficient and equitable migration system with a clear set of objectives is an integral part of that response.
4. Visa and citizenship programs are the bedrock of our migration system. The effective administration of these programs remains fundamental to maintaining high levels of social cohesion and broad public support for immigration. With high expectations and clear priorities set by the Government, the Department made a number of milestone achievements in the first half of the 2022-23 financial year, including:
    a. Reducing the number of visa applications on hand to below the ambitious target of 600,000, a reduction of 360,000 since 1 July 2022, through:
        i. 473 new staff in roles supporting temporary and migration visa processing (since May 2022);
        ii. refinements to policy settings, assessment procedures and system settings; and
        iii. enhanced immigration outreach and engagement to support delivery of visa programs.
    b. Working across government to prepare for the implementation of permanent pathways for holders of Temporary Protection visas (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise visas (SHEV).
5. Despite these achievements, systemic changes to the migration system will be required to sustain us into the future. As we transition away from the wide-ranging disruption generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a valuable opportunity to reconsider the purpose and operation of our migration system to ensure it is well-placed to address the challenges presented by our current and future environment.
6. Our migration system should continue to support the family unification needs of Australian citizens and permanent residents, as well as Australia's commitment to providing resettlement and protection through our humanitarian program. Family and humanitarian visa holders bring important social gains, which themselves translate into economic opportunities. Available evidence suggests that the full potential of family and humanitarian

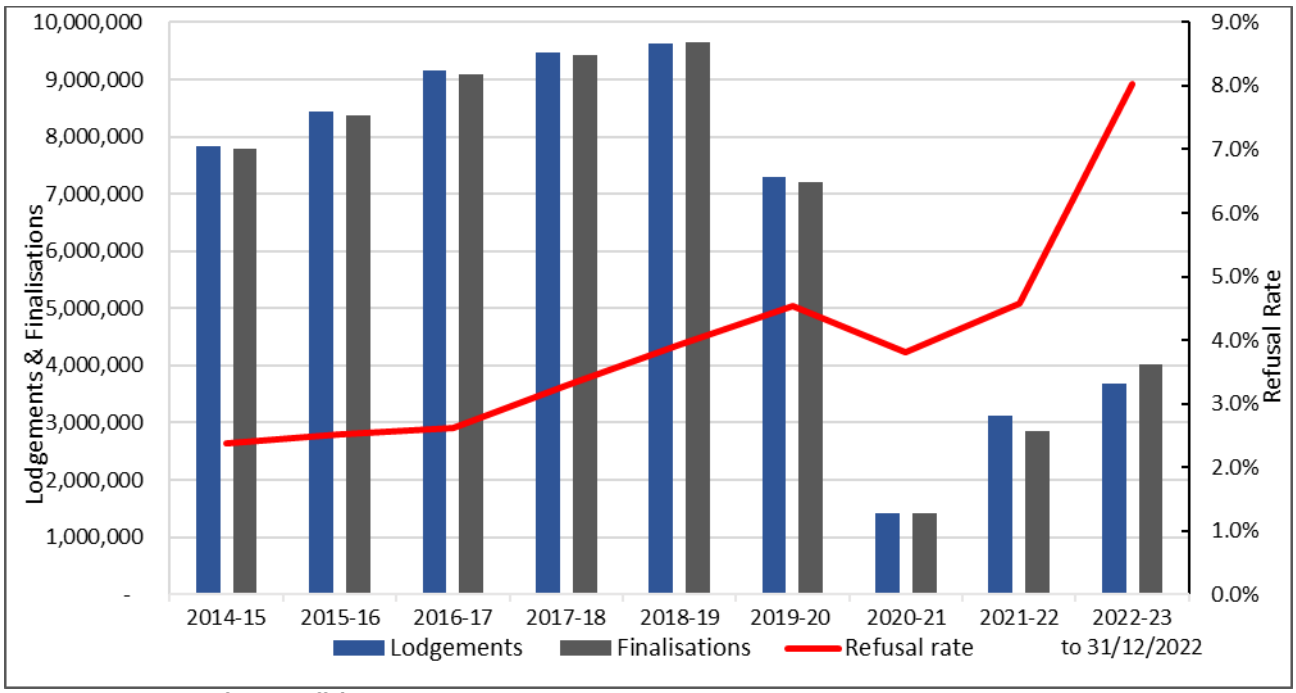
migrants remains untapped due to a range of barriers, even though they bring a wealth of education, experience and skills.

7. Our migration system should also support Australia's transition to a more skilled, innovative and diverse economy, enhance our security and sovereign capabilities, and drive higher productivity, wages and living standards. In particular, a well-targeted migration program will play a vital role in complementing our commitment to employment and training opportunities for Australian workers by contributing new, cutting-edge skills and technological capability. It will allow us to fill critical gaps in our labour force while we expand our domestic skills base.
8. To this end, the Department is supporting a panel of eminent persons appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Clare O'Neil MP, to establish the core principles on which Australia's migration system will rest and guide future reform, with a focus on enhancing Australia's productivity. An interim report will be provided to the Minister for Home Affairs by the end of February 2023 for consideration.

Administering the Immigration Program

Broad visa trends

Figure 1: Total non-humanitarian visa programs trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

9. The increase in refusal rate across a number of visa programs is largely the result of finalisation of visa applications lodged before or during the pandemic, where there has been a change in circumstances, including where the applicant no longer intends to travel to Australia.
10. For more information see paragraphs 30-31 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Temporary visas

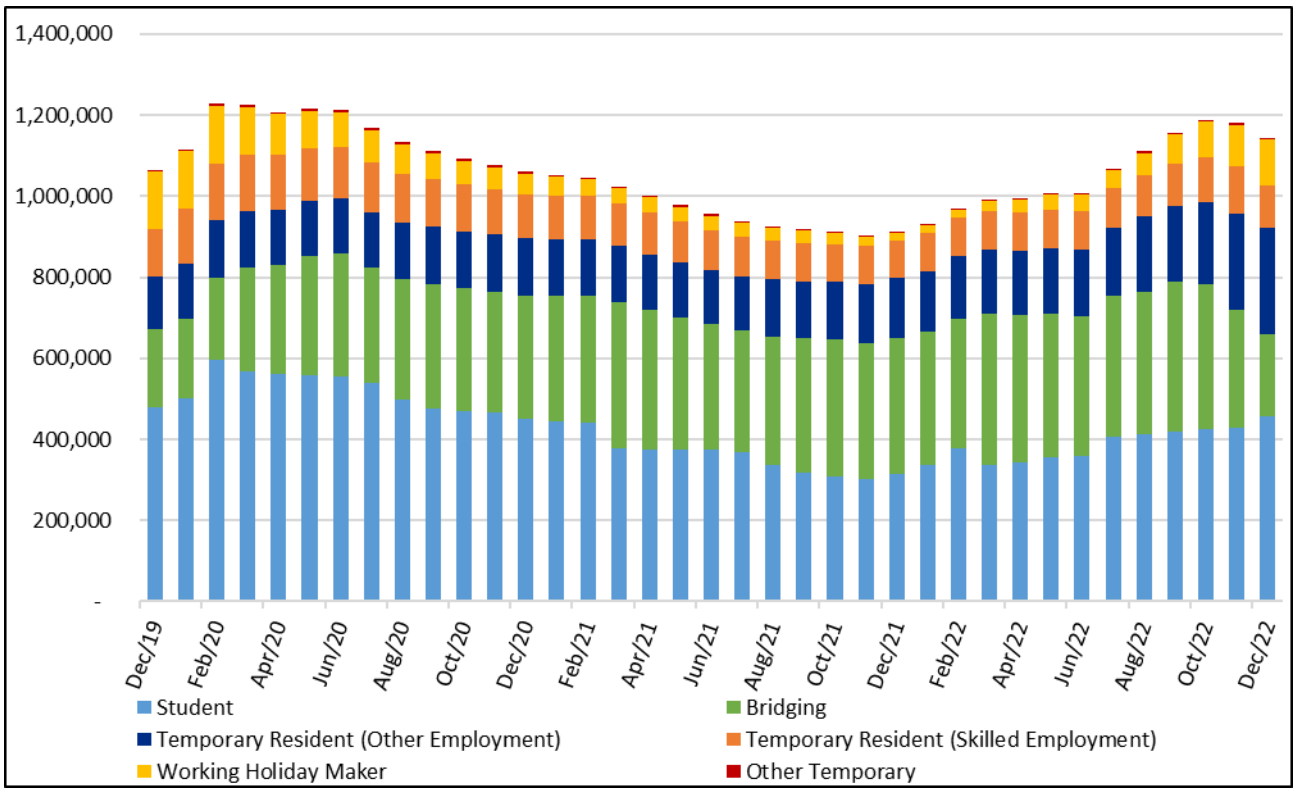
Table 2: Change in the number of temporary visa holders in Australia between 31 December 2021 and 31 December 2022

Visa Category	31/12/2021	31/12/2022	Difference	% Change
Bridging (excluding Bridging visa E)	333,357	203,494	-129,863	-39.0%
Crew and Transit	10,511	23,120	12,609	120.0%
Other Temporary	3,677	3,646	-31	-0.8%
Special Category	656,988	666,172	9,184	1.4%
Student	315,949	456,970	141,021	44.6%
Temporary Protection	18,801	23,447	4,646	24.7%
Temporary Resident (Other Employment)	148,870	262,112	113,242	76.1%
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	90,737	105,319	14,582	16.1%
Visitor	66,583	530,283	463,700	696.4%
Working Holiday Maker	19,324	112,335	93,011	481.3%
Total	**1,664,797**	**2,386,898**	**722,101**	**43.4%**

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

11. The reopening of the border has facilitated an increase in the number of temporary visa holders in Australia (see Table 2). As at 31 December 2022, there were over 2.39 million people in Australia on temporary visas, compared to over 1.66 million at 31 December 2021, an increase of 43.4 per cent.

Figure 2: Number of temporary visa holders in Australia[1], December 2019 to 31 December 2022

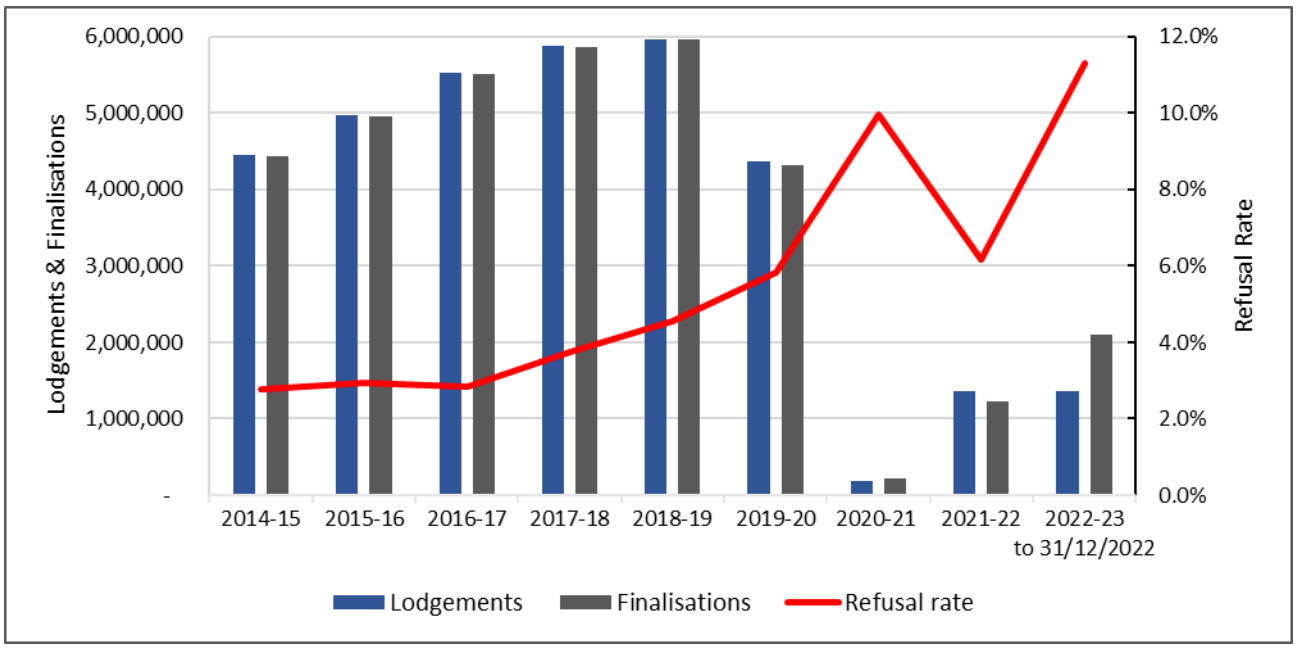


Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

[1] Excludes Visitor, Crew, Transit, Other Protection, Bridging Visa E and Special Category visa holders.

Visitors

Figure 3: Visitor visa program trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

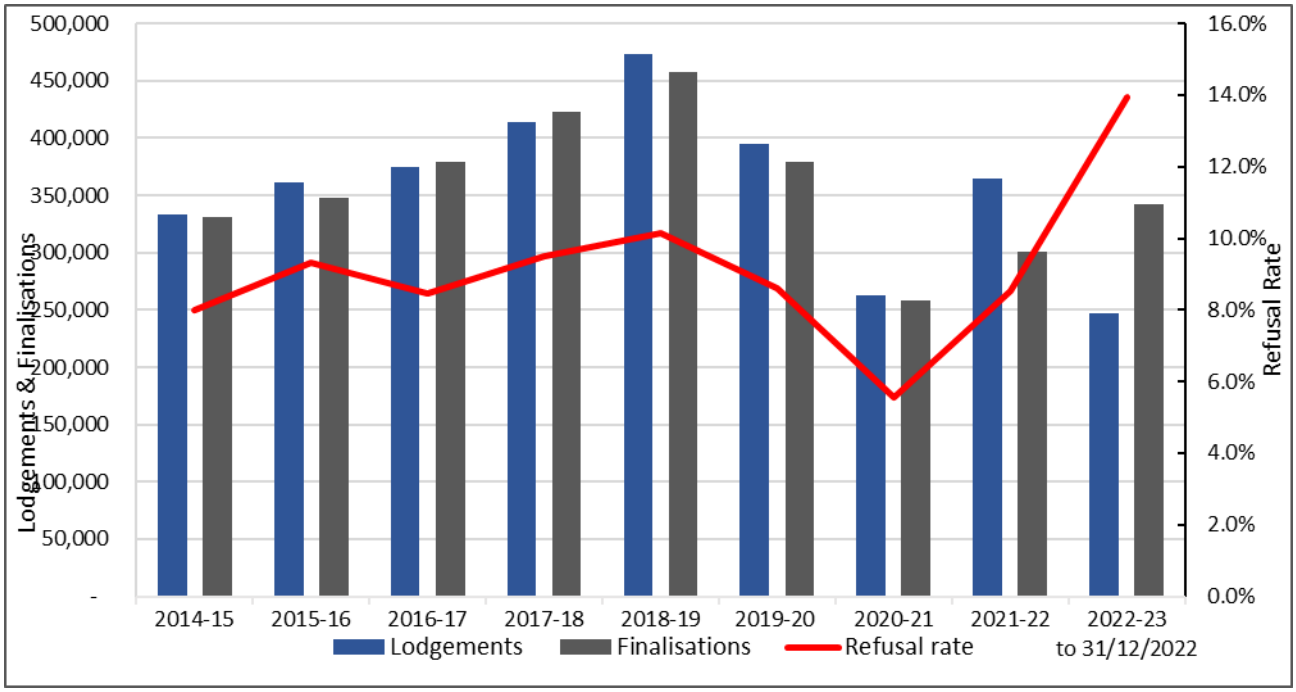


Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

12. The increase in refusal rate in the Visitor visa program is largely the result of finalisation of visa applications lodged before or during the pandemic, where there has been a change in circumstances, including where the applicant no longer intends to travel to Australia.
13. For more information on the Visitor program see paragraphs 56-62 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Students

Figure 4: Student visa program trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)[2]



[2] Includes all primary and secondary Student visa applications.

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

14. The increase in refusal rate in the Student visa program is largely the result of finalisation of visa applications lodged before or during the pandemic, where there has been a change in circumstances, including where the applicant no longer intends to travel to Australia.
15. For more information on the Student program see paragraphs 63-73 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Table 3: Change the number of Student visa applications lodged by sector between 2020-21 and 2021-22, and year to date 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Sector	2020-21	2021-22	Difference	% Change	2022-23 to 31/12/2022
Foreign Affairs or Defence	1,639	3,552	1,913	116.7%	2,448
Higher Education	143,199	194,176	50,977	35.6%	123,083
Independent ELICOS	6,284	32,444	26,160	416.3%	32,422
Non-Award	389	8,368	7,979	2051.2%	7,522
Postgraduate Research	9,611	12,444	2,833	29.5%	7,175
Schools	2,542	5,466	2,924	115.0%	5,231
Vocational Education and Training	98,969	108,554	9,585	9.7%	69,349
Total	262,633	365,004	102,371	39.0%	247,230

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

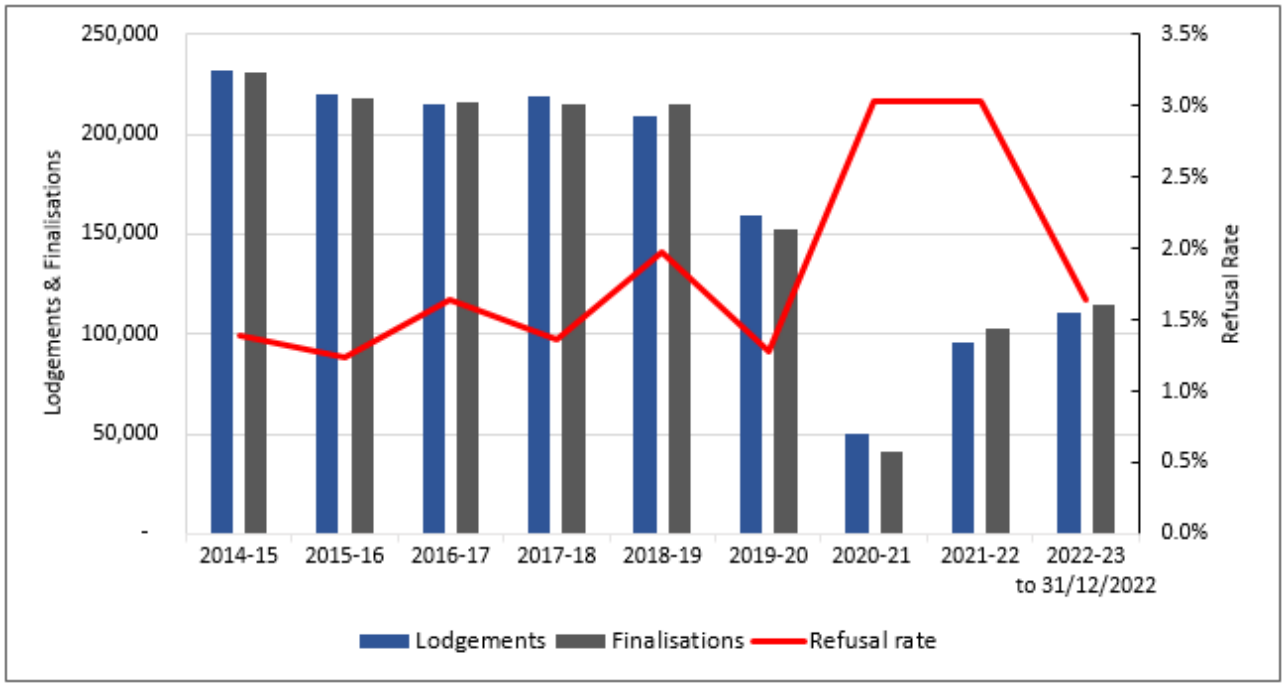
Table 4: Number of Student visa holders in Australia, quarterly to 31 December 2022

Sector	30-Jun-21	30-Sep-21	31-Dec-21	31-Mar-22	30-Jun-22	30-Sept-22	31-Dec-22
Foreign Affairs or Defence	2,084	1,425	1,062	1,252	2,123	2,442	1,979
Higher Education	197,956	153,751	162,658	181,640	196,048	236,674	234,380
Independent ELICOS	3,084	2,262	1,931	5,092	12,065	24,922	35,370
Non-Award	173	152	128	977	993	7,792	3,263
Postgraduate Research	20,628	19,719	19,327	22,534	22,460	23,138	22,816
Schools	10,664	10,532	9,400	7,586	8,006	10,689	7,104
Vocational Education and Training	139,456	130,063	121,432	117,752	116,213	113,657	152,047
Total	**374,045**	**317,904**	**315,938**	**336,833**	**357,908**	**419,314**	**456,959**

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Working Holiday Makers

Figure 5: Working Holiday Maker visa trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

16. During 2020-21 and 2021-22 while Australia's borders were closed, offshore applications were not being processed. This led to an increase in the proportion of Working Holiday Makers refusal decisions. The reopening of the border has seen the refusal rate for Working Holiday Makers return to pre-pandemic levels in 2022-23.

17. For more information on the Working Holiday Makers program see paragraphs 74-80 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Temporary Skilled Work

Table 5: Most frequently nominated occupations for Temporary Skill Shortage visa, 2021-22 and 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

	Nominated Occupation	2021-22 to 31 December 2021	2022-23 to 31 December 2022	% change from 2021-22	2022-23 as % of total
1	261313 Software Engineer	1,113	1,983	78%	6.8%
2	351311 Chef	1,073	1,363	27%	4.7%
3	261111 ICT Business Analyst	429	1,335	211%	4.6%
4	253112 Resident Medical Officer	876	1,067	22%	3.7%
5	261312 Developer Programmer	442	825	87%	2.8%
6	321211 Motor Mechanic (General)	172	674	292%	2.3%
7	224711 Management Consultant	218	598	174%	2.1%
8	221213 External Auditor	236	578	145%	2.0%
9	221111 Accountant (General)	503	525	4%	1.8%
10	351411 Cook	159	496	212%	1.7%
11	141111 Cafe or Restaurant Manager	186	470	153%	1.6%
12	225113 Marketing Specialist	251	463	84%	1.6%
13	263212 ICT Support Engineer	170	442	160%	1.5%
14	261311 Analyst Programmer	340	424	25%	1.5%
15	261112 Systems Analyst	110	392	256%	1.4%
16	Other occupation	8,115	17,315	113%	59.8%
	Total	**14,393**	**28,950**	**101%**	**100.0%**

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Table 6: Number of Temporary Resident (skilled) primary visa applications lodged, with changes between 2020-21 and 2021-22

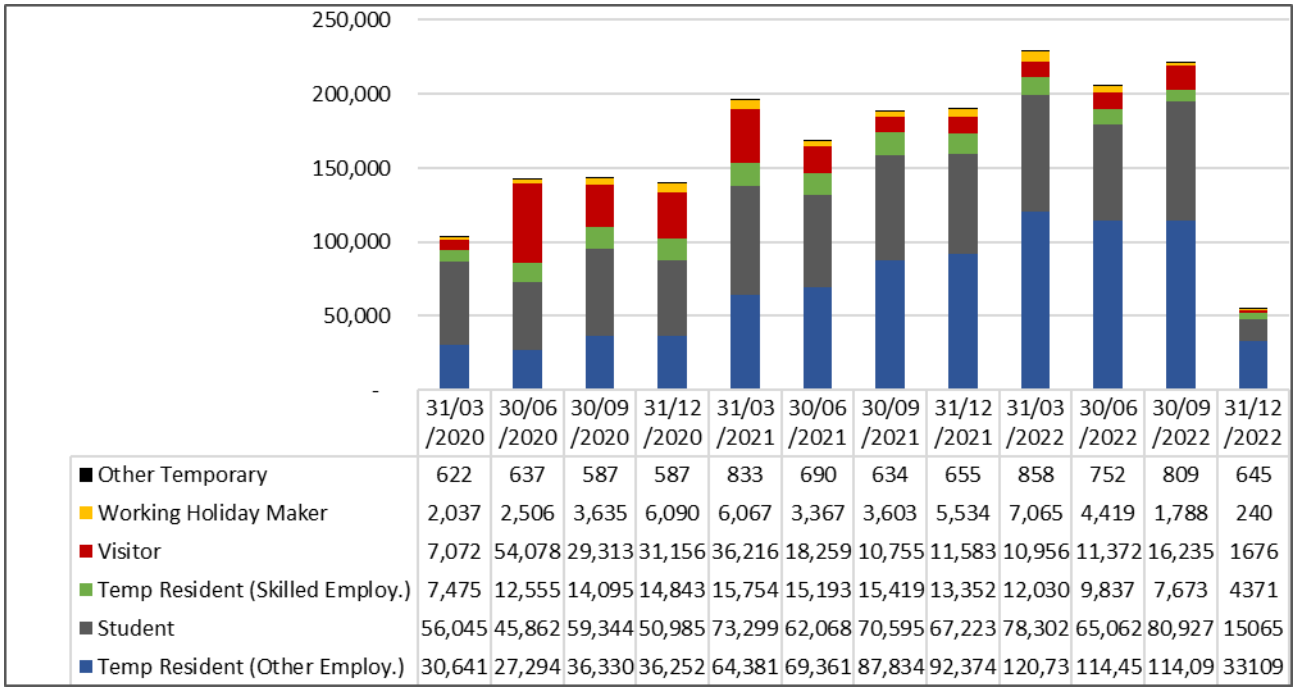
Visa category	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Difference	% Change	2022-23 (to 31/12/2022)
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	36,334	27,190	35,850	8,660	32%	22,843

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

18. Demand for the Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visa fell as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but is now recovering to pre-pandemic levels (see Table 6 above). TSS visa applications from applicants outside Australia are now being prioritised to enable more workers to enter Australia to contribute to the labour market and ease labour shortages.
19. For more information on the Temporary Skilled Work program see paragraphs 81-87 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Bridging visas

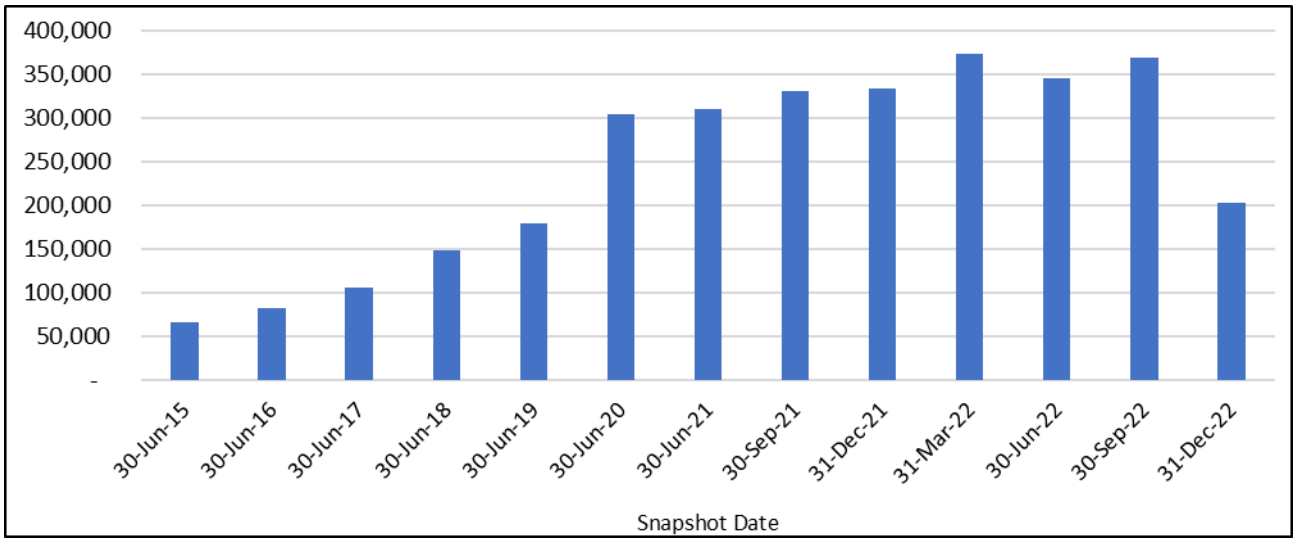
Figure 6: Bridging visa A, B and C holders in Australia by selected temporary visa category applied for, 31 March 2020 to 31 December 2022[3]



	31/03/2020	30/06/2020	30/09/2020	31/12/2020	31/03/2021	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	31/12/2021	31/03/2022	30/06/2022	30/09/2022	31/12/2022
Other Temporary	622	637	587	587	833	690	634	655	858	752	809	645
Working Holiday Maker	2,037	2,506	3,635	6,090	6,067	3,367	3,603	5,534	7,065	4,419	1,788	240
Visitor	7,072	54,078	29,313	31,156	36,216	18,259	10,755	11,583	10,956	11,372	16,235	1676
Temp Resident (Skilled Employ.)	7,475	12,555	14,095	14,843	15,754	15,193	15,419	13,352	12,030	9,837	7,673	4371
Student	56,045	45,862	59,344	50,985	73,299	62,068	70,595	67,223	78,302	65,062	80,927	15065
Temp Resident (Other Employ.)	30,641	27,294	36,330	36,252	64,381	69,361	87,834	92,374	120,73	114,45	114,09	33109

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Figure 7: Number of bridging visa holders in Australia, 30 June 2015 to 31 December 2022[4]



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

20. The number of bridging visa holders (excluding Bridging E visas (subclasses 050 and 051)) increased between 2019 and 30 September 2022 as people unable to depart during COVID-19 applied for new substantive visas to remain in Australia. As increasing numbers of visa applications lodged from within Australia are finalised, the number of bridging visa applicants has decreased. On 31 December 2022, there were 55,106 bridging visa holders (excluding Bridging E visa holders) in Australia.

[3] Excludes Bridging Visa E (subclass 050 and 051) holders.
[4] Excludes Bridging Visa E (subclass 050 and 051) holders, includes applicants for permanent and temporary visas.

21. For more information on Bridging visas see paragraphs 96-100 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Migration Program

Skilled Migration Program

22. For more information on the Skilled Migration Program see paragraphs 112-132 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Regional Migration

Table 10: Number of applications lodged for Regional visas, 2021-22 and 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Visa	2021-22	2022-23 (to 31/12/2022)
Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491)	26,314	14,919
Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 494)	3165	1,781
Total	29,479	16,700

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Table 11: Number of applications finalised for Regional visas, 2021-22 and 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

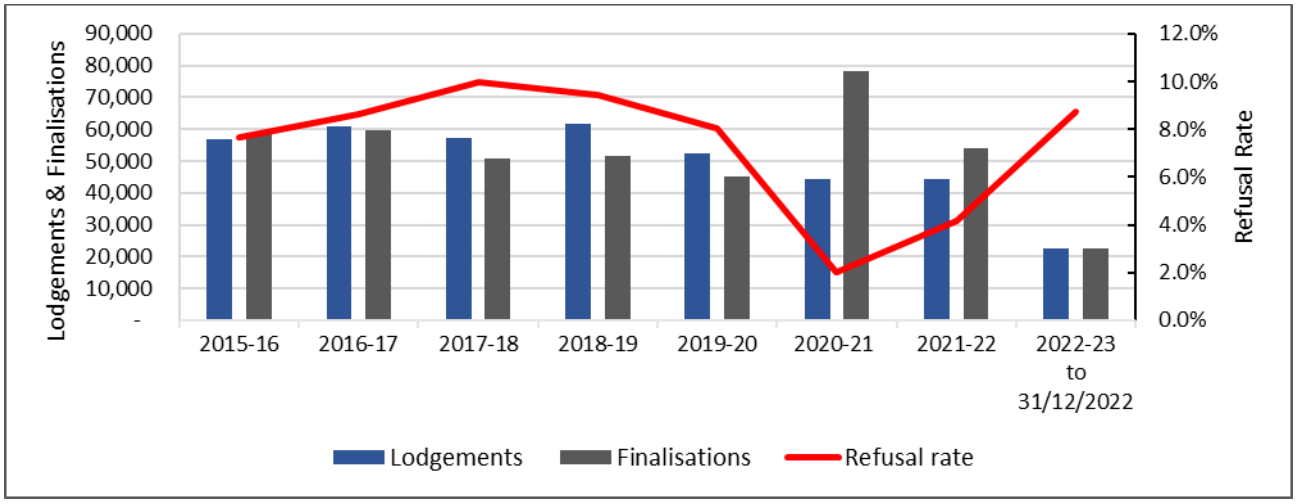
Visa	Outcome	2021-22	2022-23 (to 31/12/2022)
Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491)	Granted	13,898	8,477
	Refused and Withdrawn	912	2,235
Sub total		*14,810*	10,712
Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 494)	Granted	1,348	1,316
	Refused and Withdrawn	177	195
Sub total		*1,525*	*1,511*
Total		**16,335**	**12,223**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Family Program

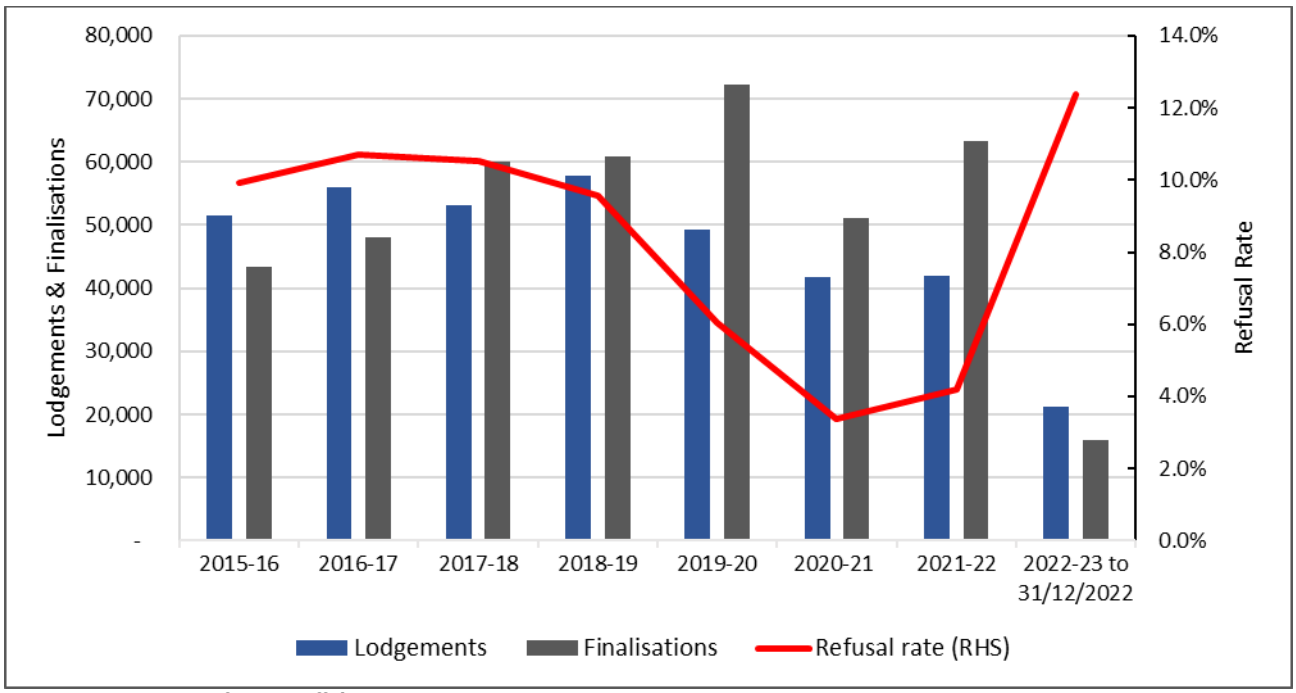
Partner visas

Figure 11: First Stage Partner visa program trends, 2015-16 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Figure 12: Second Stage Partner visa program trends, 2015-16 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

23. In the 2020/21 program year, the Department delivered the largest Partner visa program in over 25 years, focussing on granting visas to eligible partner visa applicants to support their reunification with their Australian sponsors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in refusal rate since 2021 is the result of the Department's focus on finalising complex cases lodged prior to and during the pandemic.

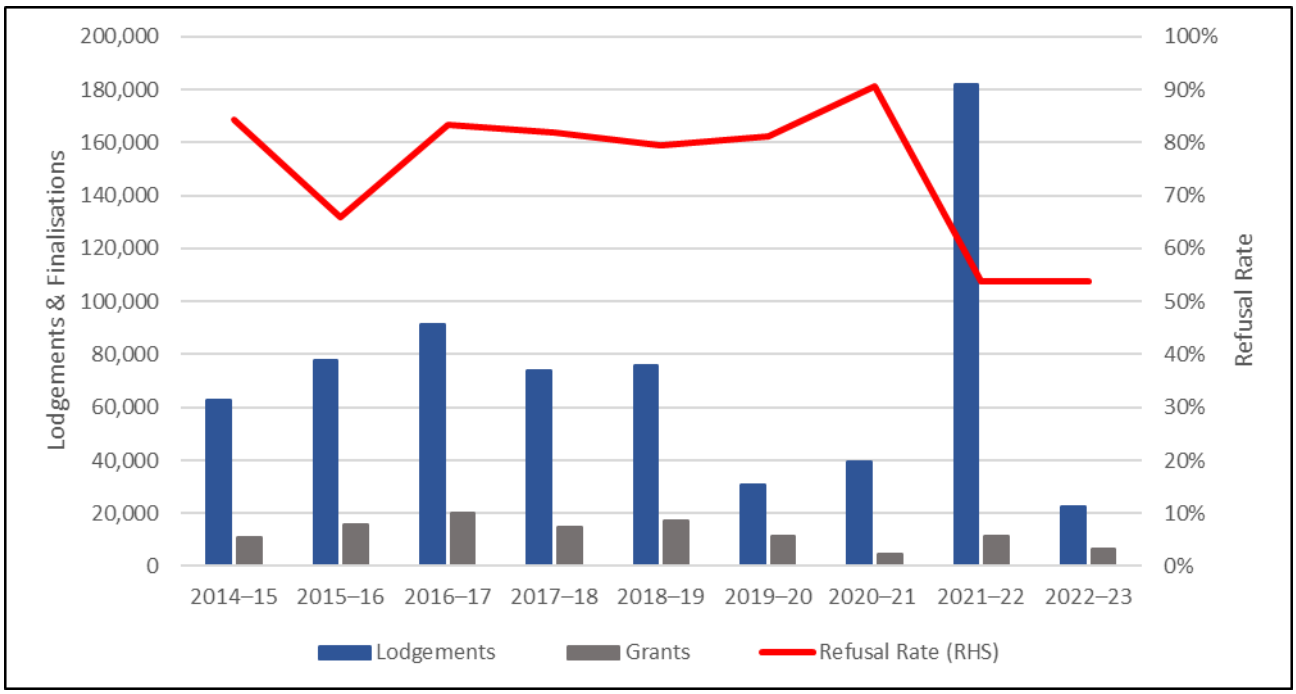
24. For more information on the Family Program see paragraphs 133-156 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Humanitarian Program

25. For more information on the Humanitarian Program see paragraphs 157-184 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Offshore Humanitarian visas

Figure 13: Offshore Humanitarian program trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

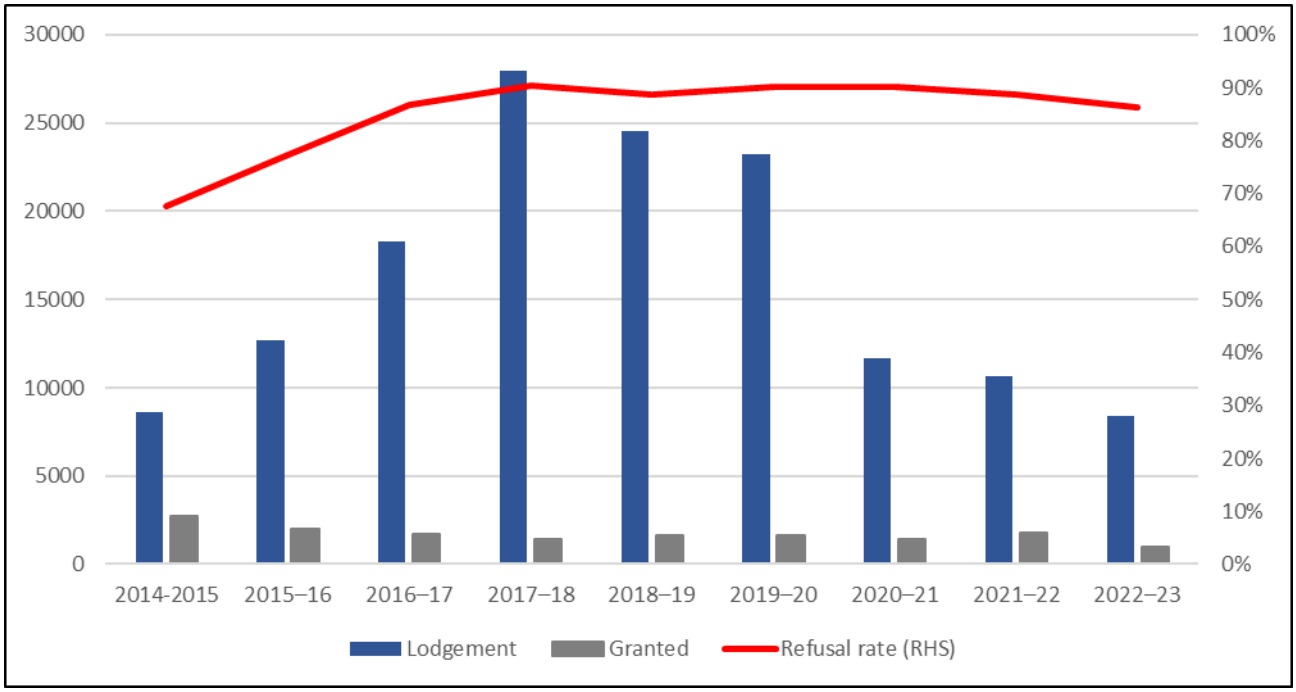


Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

26. In the wake of the fall of the government in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Department received an unprecedented number of applications for Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visas.
27. The focus since mid-August 2021 has been on registering and granting Class XB visas to Afghan nationals with an aim of delivering the program rather than on refusals.
28. To ensure that resettlement is provided in a timely manner to those most in need, and to reduce uncertainty for those awaiting the outcome of their application, applications that do not fall within the Humanitarian Program's priorities for the Afghan caseload, including from applicants who remain in Afghanistan, will begin to be refused over the coming weeks.

Onshore Protection

Figure 14: Onshore Protection program trends, 2014-15 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

Australian Citizenship Program

29. For more information on the Citizenship Program see paragraphs 185-200 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Citizenship by conferral

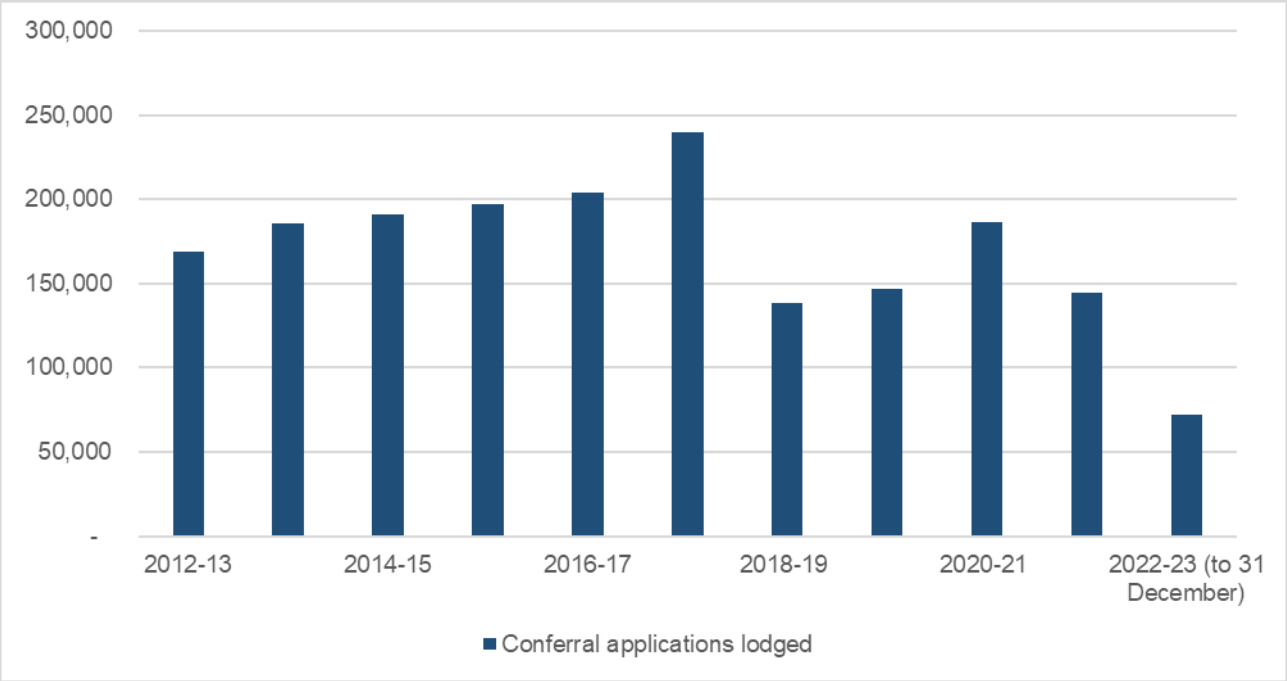
Table 12: Number of Australian citizenship by conferral applications finalised, by decision type and financial year, 2012-13 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)[5]

Program year	Approved	Refused	Invalid	Other[6]	Total
2012-13	137,079	3,270	16,561	643	157,553
2013-14	158,907	5,728	26,611	783	192,029
2014-15	148,862	5,197	34,987	795	189,841
2015-16	129,515	4,749	32,612	792	167,668
2016-17	127,013	4,089	22,035	742	153,879
2017-18	80,776	4,956	14,998	692	101,422
2018-19	145,587	7,590	5,713	1,227	160,117
2019-20	215,394	8,762	2,179	1,988	228,323
2020-21	170,645	7,957	1,782	2,831	183,215
2021-22	149,514	6,798	3,246	1,789	161,347
2022-23 (to 31/12/2022)	**90,812**	**4,478**	**1,901**	**563**	**97,754**

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

[5] Data may differ from previous or other reports due to the use of a dynamic database in the current financial year.
[6] 'Other' includes applications withdrawn by the client and minor numbers of administrative finalisations.

Figure 15: Citizenship by conferral lodgement trends, 2012-13 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

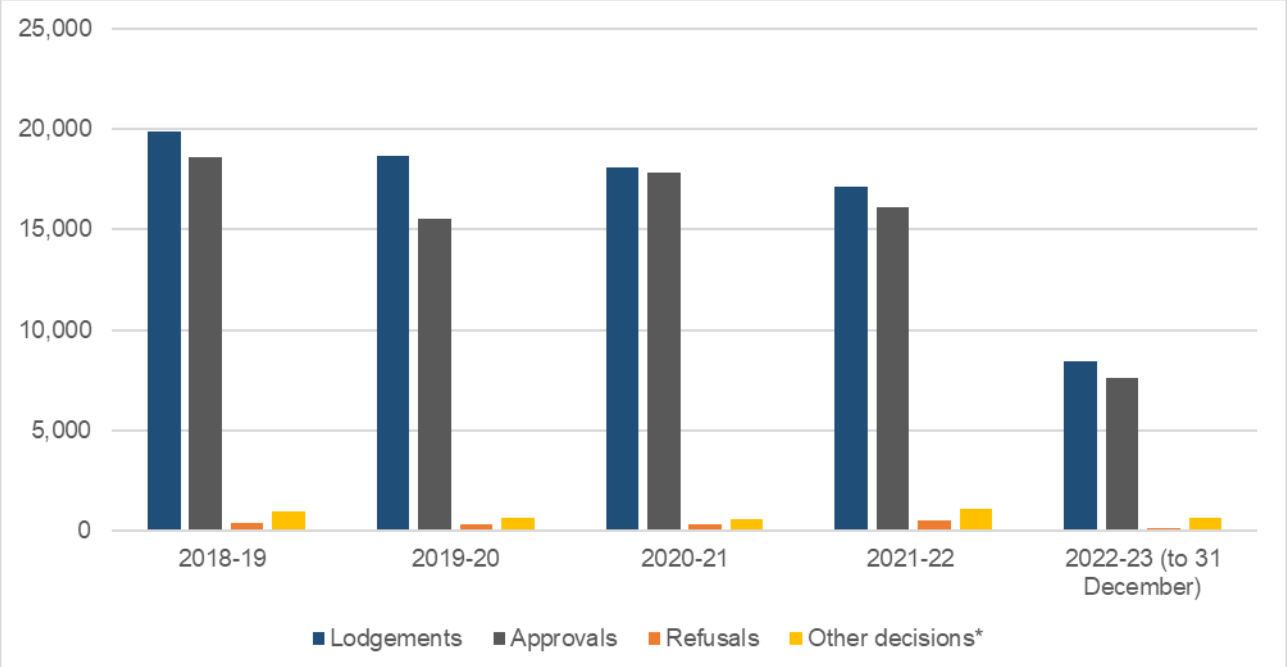


Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

30. There continues to be strong interest from migrants applying to become Australian citizens, with 144,763 applications for citizenship by conferral lodged in 2021-22. In 2022-23 to 31 December 2022, a total of 71,783 applications for citizenship by conferral were lodged.

Citizenship by descent

Figure 16: Citizenship by descent applications lodged and finalised, 2018-19 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)[6]



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

[7] Other decisions include invalidated applications, applications withdrawn by the client and administrative finalisations.

Managing risk and community protection

Ensuring immigration integrity and community protection

Table 13: Visa applications decided by program year (non-humanitarian visas)

Decision Type	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 to 31 Dec 22
Granted or Refused	8,339,513	9,052,095	9,386,838	9,607,025	7,169,298	1,338,656	2,775,376	3,950,617
Refused only	209,657	237,153	308,150	377,469	325,637	50,956	127,210	316,893
Refusal Rate	2.5%	2.6%	3.3%	3.9%	4.5%	3.8%	4.6%	8.0%

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

31. The increase in visa refusal rates since 2015-16 reflects:

    - policy settings designed to strike a balance between the efficiency and integrity of Australia's visa programs;
    - use of more sophisticated risk analysis and systems to assist in the assessment of applications.

Cancellations

32. For more information on Cancellations see paragraphs 236-239 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Table 14: General Cancellation decisions, 2020-21 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)[7]

General Cancellation decisions	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Incorrect information (s109)	275	539	87
General power (s116)	1,198	927	862
Holder overseas (s128)	19,374	20,082	4,556
Business visa (s134)	83	68	61
All other powers[8]	4,846	2,796	1,117
Total	**25,776**	**24,412**	**6,683**

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

[8] A visa may be recorded as cancelled more than once. For example when a visa is cancelled, the cancellation is subsequently revoked or set aside, and then the visa is cancelled again. A cancellation may be revoked or set aside for a number of reasons, including further legal proceedings, and administrative or jurisdictional errors. Duplicates may exist. As data has been drawn from a live systems environment, the figures provided may differ slightly in previous or future reporting.
[9] Does not include any s501 character statistics, only s501Fs are included.
[10] This refers to where a non-citizen's request for reinstatement of a visa (revocation of the character cancellation) is not successful.

Table 15: Adverse section 501 (character) cancellations, 2020-21 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Character Cancellation	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mandatory Cancellation (s501(3A))	914	616	276
Natural Justice – (s501(2))	7	30	<5
Cancellation without Natural Justice – National Interest (s501(3)(b))	13	<5	<5
Minister's personal power – without notice (s501A(3)(b))	<5	<5	0
Minister's personal power – with notice (s501B(2))	<5	<5	0
Character refusal	799	209	83
Character revocations (not revoked)[10]	438	434	219
Total	**2,176**	**1,296**	**583**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Table 16: Top five Citizenships with adverse section 501 (character) outcomes, 2020-21 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Character Cancellation	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
New Zealand	402	247	119	768
United Kingdom	99	71	15	185
Vietnam	60	43	17	120
China	37	17	8	62
Malaysia	15	17	14	46
Other	326	258	108	692
Total	**939**	**653**	**281**	**1,873**
Character refusal	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**Total**
United Kingdom	354	44	12	410
United States Of America	115	20	5	140
New Zealand	85	17	17	119
China	15	<15	<5	30
Ireland, Republic Of	19	<10	<5	29
Other	211	106	46	363
Total	**799**	**209**	**83**	**1,091**
Character revocations (not revoked)	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**Total**
New Zealand	196	180	78	454
United Kingdom	38	36	12	86
Vietnam	29	<25	<10	57
Sudan	22	15	12	49
Fiji	11	<15	<5	26
Other	142	170	107	419
Total	**438**	**434**	**219**	**1,091**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Status resolution

33. For more information on the Status Resolution program see paragraphs 240-246 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Entering the Status Resolution program

Table 17: People who entered the Status Resolution program, 2020-21 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Persons who voluntarily approached the Department	16,168	12,453	5,348
Persons located by the Australian Border Force or police	1,825	1,611	872
Total	**17,993**	**14,064**	**6,220**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

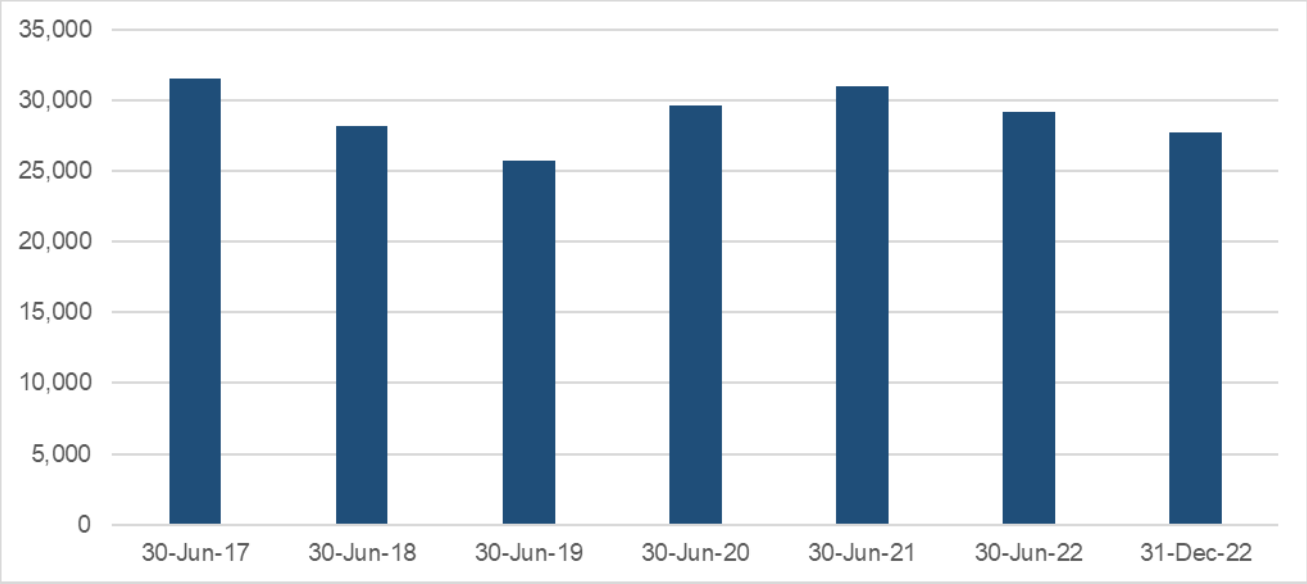
Table 18: Status Resolution population as at 31 December 2022

Status Resolution population	Bridging E visa	Residence Determination	Held detention	Total
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMA)	8,209	520	162	8,891
Non-UMA	19,536	18	927	20,481
Total	**27,745**	**538**	**1,089**	**29,372**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Bridging E (subclass 050) visas (BVE)

Figure 17: Number of Bridging E visa holders in Australia, 30 June 2017 to 31 December 2022[8]



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2022**

[11] Includes Bridging E visa (subclasses 050 and 051).

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

Table 19: Status Resolution Support Services recipients, as at 31 December 2022

	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	31 Dec 2022
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMAs)	2,769	1,311	895	849
Non-UMAs	1,509	1,018	711	731
Total	**4,278**	**2,329**	**1,606**	**1,580**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Leaving the Status Resolution program

Table 20: Departures from Australia of Status Resolution clients, 2018-19 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Departures from Australia	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Returns from community	7,444	7,363	9,809	7,128	3,090
Removals from immigration detention	5,551	3,287	1,039	1,253	1,015
Total	**12,995**	**10,650**	**10,848**	**8,381**	**4,105**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Return and Reintegration Assistance Program (RRAP)

Table 21: RRAP referrals and returns 2018-19 to 2022-23 (to 31 December 2022)

Returns and Reintegration Assistance	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Referrals	1,345	1,484	1117	590	271
Returns	840	798	542	309	148

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022

Management of transitory persons

34. For more information on management of transitory persons see paragraphs 247-250 of the tenth edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Table 22: Transitory persons onshore, as at 31 December 2022

	Bridging E visa[12]	Residence Determination[13]	Held detention	Total
All transitory persons	612	502	8	**1,122**

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2022