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**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**



# The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs

16<sup>th</sup> Edition (June 2026)

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# Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Administering the Immigration Program</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Broad visa trends .....	4
Visa processing times .....	5
<b>Net Overseas Migration</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Impacting Net Overseas Migration .....	7
<b>Temporary Visas</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Visitor visa .....	9
Student Visa .....	10
Temporary Graduate visa .....	12
Working Holiday Makers .....	12
Temporary Resident (Skilled) .....	14
Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme .....	15
Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme .....	16
Bridging visas .....	17
<b>Permanent Migration Program</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Skilled Migration Program .....	20
Skilled Visa Processing Priorities .....	21
Employer Sponsorship .....	21
Regional Migration .....	22
Designated Area Migration Agreements .....	23
Industry Labour Agreements .....	23
National Innovation Visa .....	24
Family Program .....	25
Family Migration: Capping and queuing and order of processing of applications .....	25
Partner visas .....	26
Parent visas .....	27
Sponsored Parent (Temporary) visa .....	28
Child visas .....	28
Processing times .....	28
Family Violence Provisions .....	28
Pacific Engagement visa .....	28
Pacific Engagement stream .....	29
Treaty stream .....	30
<b>Relationship between temporary and permanent migration</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Immigration outreach and engagement</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Humanitarian Program</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Humanitarian visas .....	33
Dedicated places for Afghan nationals .....	34
Protection visas .....	34
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMA) Legacy Caseload .....	35

<b>Australian Citizenship Program .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Citizenship by conferral .....	36
Citizenship by descent .....	37
Citizenship by adoption .....	38
Citizenship by resumption .....	38
Citizenship service delivery .....	38
Direct pathway to Australian citizenship for New Zealanders .....	38
<b>Managing risk and community protection .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Risk Environment .....	38
Reforms and policy implementation .....	39
Countering Irregular Migration.....	39
Maritime People Smuggling.....	39
Modern slavery and human trafficking .....	40
Ensuring immigration integrity and community protection.....	41
Migrant worker exploitation .....	41
Unlawful non-citizens.....	43
Cancellations .....	44
The Character Program.....	44
The General Visa Cancellation Program .....	46
Status resolution.....	46
Entering the Status Resolution program.....	46
Bridging E (subclass 050) visas (BVE).....	47
Status Resolution Support Services .....	48
Leaving the Status Resolution program .....	48
Return and Reintegration Assistance Program (RRAP).....	49
Management of transitory persons .....	49

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Total non-humanitarian visa programs trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	4
Figure 2 - Net Overseas Migration, Australia, quarterly, by direction (2010 to September 2025) .....	7
Figure 3 Change in the number of Temporary visa holders in Australia, 31 December 2020 to 31 December 2025 .....	9
Figure 4 Visitor visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	10
Figure 5 Student visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025).....	11
Figure 6 Working Holiday Maker visa trends, from 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025).....	13
Figure 7 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme including Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme from 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025).....	16
Figure 8 Number of bridging visa holders in Australia, from 30 June 2015 to 31 December 2025.....	17
Figure 9 Bridging A, B and C visa holders in Australia by visa category applied for as at 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2025 .....	18
Figure 10 Migration Program outcomes by stream, 1984–85 to 2024–25, with 2025–26 Planning Levels .....	18
Figure 11 Composition of Skilled Migration Program outcomes, 2018–19 to 2024-25, with 2025–26 planning levels.....	21
Figure 12 Partner (Provisional/Temporary) visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)..	26
Figure 13 Partner (Permanent) visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	27
Figure 14 Offshore Humanitarian program trends, 2016–17 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	34
Figure 15 Permanent Protection visa lodgements, decisions and on-hand applications, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	35
Figure 16 Citizenship by conferral lodgement trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025).....	37
Figure 17 Citizenship by decent applications lodged and finalised, 2020–21 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	37
Figure 18 Number of Bridging E visa holders in Australia (30 June 2018 to 31 December 2025).....	48

## List of Tables

Table 1 Change in the number of Temporary visa holders in Australia – comparison between 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025 .....	8
Table 2 Number of Student Visa holders in Australia, end of quarter (from 31 December 2017 to 31 December 2025) .....	10
Table 3 Change in Student visa applications by sector, 2023–24, 2024–25 and current program year (1 July to 31 December 2025) .....	11
Table 4 Onshore and Offshore Student visa grant rates by sector, 2019–20 to 2025–26 (up to 31 December 2025).....	12
Table 5 Number of registrations received in the WHM ballot, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025).....	14
Table 6 Number of Temporary Resident (Skilled) primary visa applications lodged .....	14
Table 7 Most frequently granted occupations for Temporary Skills Shortage and Skills in Demand visas, sorted on current year to date – top 15 comparison between 2023–2024 and 2024–25, plus 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	15
Table 8 Number of PALM scheme visa grants including Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme – comparison between 2023–24 to 2024–25, plus 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	16
Table 9 Permanent Migration Program planning levels and program outcomes, 2022–23 to 2024–25, including 2025–26 planning levels .....	19
Table 10 Permanent Migration Program - Top 10 countries of citizenship, 2019–20 to 2024–25 .....	20
Table 11 – Permanent Family and Skilled visa holders in Australia - 31 December 2021 to 31 December 2025.....	20
Table 12 Number of applications lodged for Regional visas, from 2021–22 to 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025).....	22
Table 13 Number of Regional visa applications granted, 2021–22 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	23
Table 14 – Comparison of National Innovation visa lodgement for 2024-25 and 2025–26 program years (up to 31 December 2025) .....	24
Table 15 – Comparison of National Innovation visa primary applications lodged by sector, for 2024-25 and 2025–26 program years (up to 31 December 2025).....	25
Table 16 Number of primary registrations received in the PEV ballot, 2025–26 (closed on 25 August 2025) .....	29
Table 17 Number of applications lodged in Pacific Engagement Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025) .....	30
Table 18 Number of applications finalised – Pacific Engagement Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025).....	30
Table 19 Number of applications lodged in Tuvalu Treaty Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025) .....	31
Table 20 Number of applications finalised in Tuvalu Treaty Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025).....	31
Table 21 2024–25 Migration Program Outcome by visa type and location of client at time of application .....	31
Table 22 Number of permanent primary visa applications lodged by client location, comparison 2022–23, 2023–24 and 2024–25 (to 30 June 2025).....	32
Table 23 Number of Australian citizenship by conferral applications finalised, by decision type and financial year, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	36
Table 24 Returns and transfers, 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	39
Table 25 Ventures and potential irregular immigrants (PII) disrupted, 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	40
Table 26 Migrant Worker Compliance activity and outcomes for 2024-25 and 2025-26 program year (up to 31 December 2025) .....	42
Table 27 Adverse section 501 (character) decisions, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	44
Table 28 Top five citizenships with adverse section 501 (character) outcomes, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	45
Table 29 General cancellation decisions, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	46
Table 30 People who entered the Status Resolution program, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025) .....	47
Table 31 Status Resolution population (as at 31 December 2025) .....	47
Table 32 Status Resolution Support Services recipients (as at 31 December 2025) .....	48
Table 33 Departures from Australia of Status Resolution clients, from 2022–23 to 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025).....	49
Table 34 RRAP returns, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025).....	49

## Acronyms

ABF	Australian Border Force
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWOTE	Average weekly ordinary time earnings
BIIP	Business Innovation and Investment Program
BNO	British National Overseas
BV	Bridging Visas
BV A, B, C	Bridging A, B and C Visa
BVE	Bridging E (subclass 050) Visa
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreement
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
ENS	Employer Nomination Scheme
FNQ	Far North Queensland
FVPs	Family Violence Provisions
FWO	Fair Work Ombudsman
HTVF	Human Trafficking Visa Framework
ILAs	Industry Labour Agreements
JSCFADT	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
MATES	Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme
MD	Ministerial Direction
MMPA	Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement
NAP	National Action Plan
NIV	National Innovation visa
PALM	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility
PEV	Pacific Engagement Visa
PII	Potential irregular immigrants
PV	Protection visa
RoS	Resolution of Status
RRAP	Return and Reintegration Assistance Program
SCV	Special Category (Subclass 444) Visa
SHEV	Safe Haven Enterprise Visa
SID	Skills in Demand
SRSS	Status Resolution Support Services
TGV	Temporary Graduate Visas
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
TRT	Temporary Residence Transition
TSMIT	Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold
TSS	Temporary Skills Shortage
UHM	Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor
UMA	Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals
VAC	Visa Application Charge
VEVO	Visa Entitlement Verification Online

# Purpose

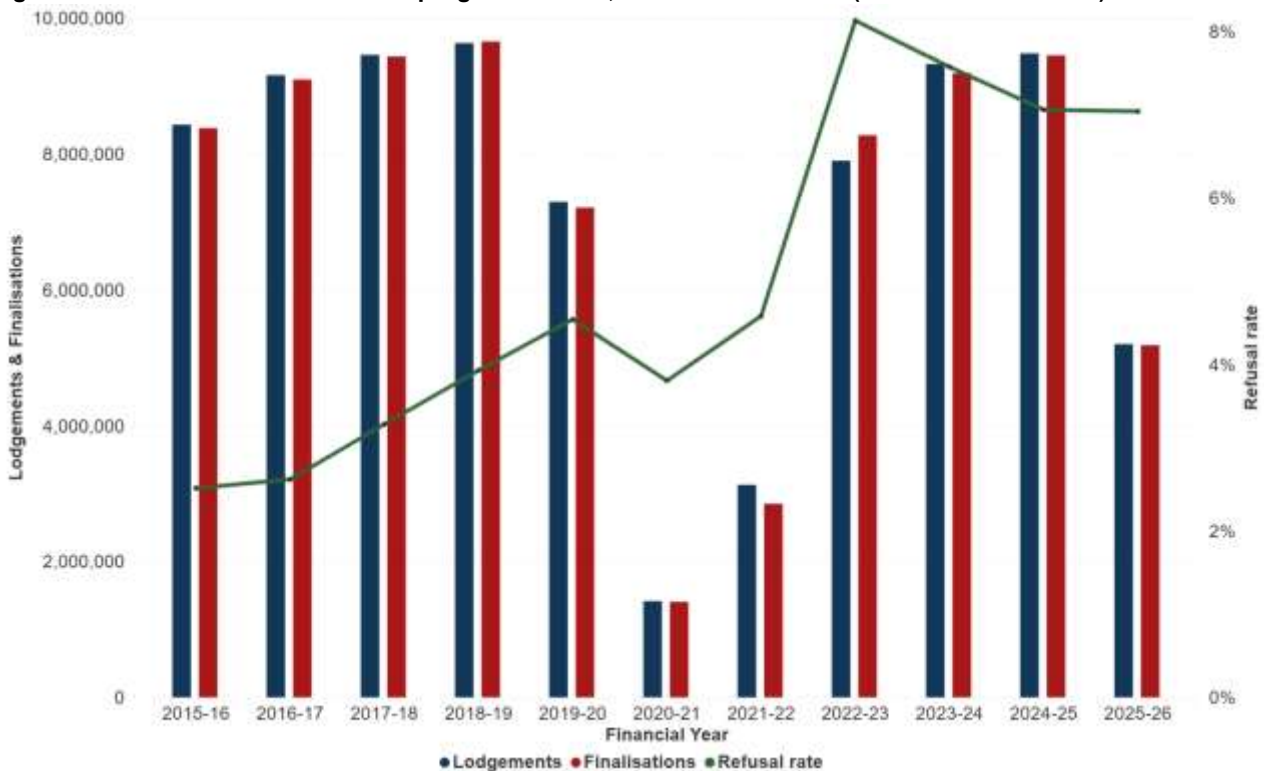
1. The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper is prepared by the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) and provides information about the composition and management of Australia’s immigration and citizenship programs. This paper provides an overview of the Department’s visa, citizenship, border and compliance programs and related developments and complements existing, publicly available resources.
2. Formal reporting on the Department’s performance targets and other announced commitments is provided through separate accountability and performance reporting processes, including the Department’s Annual Report.
3. The 16<sup>th</sup> edition includes updated data for the 2025–26 program year (up to 31 December 2025).

# Administering the Immigration Program

## Broad visa trends

4. Between 1 July 2025 and 31 December 2025, the Department received over 5,201,200 temporary and permanent visa applications and finalised nearly 5,184,800 applications. This represents a 6.7% increase in lodgements and a 6.1% increase in finalisations compared to the same period in the previous year (1 July to 31 December 2024).
5. The refusal rate for visa applications was around 7.0 per cent, consistent with the previous year, but much higher than historical averages, despite increases in application lodgements and finalisations (Figure 1). The refusal rate reflects the quality of visa applications and the Department’s visa risk and integrity capability which continues to identify applicants intending to exploit visa programs.

Figure 1 Total non-humanitarian visa programs trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Visa processing times

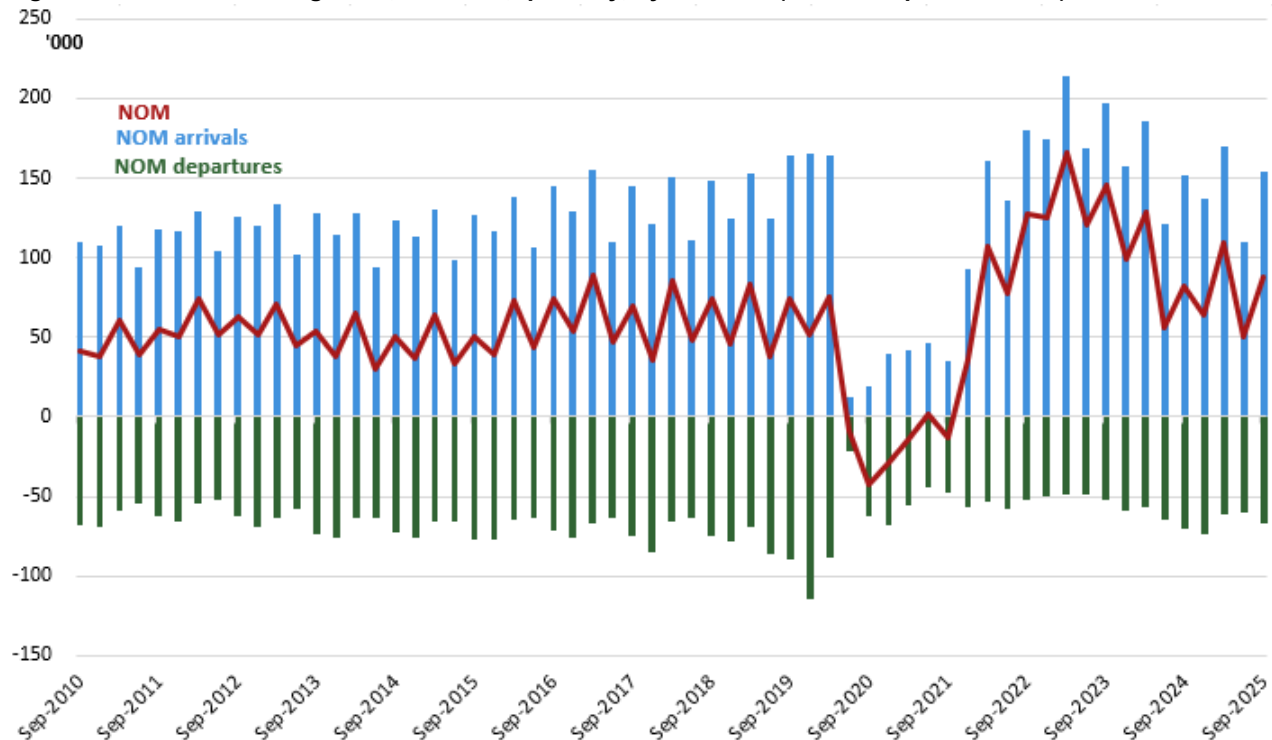
6. Global visa processing times are available on the [Department of Home Affairs' website](#) to help visa applicants understand how long applications usually take to process. Visa processing times can be influenced by the volume and quality of applications received, as the Department is able to process decision-ready applications more efficiently.
7. At 31 December 2025, the Department had finalised 97.1 per cent of temporary visa applications lodged in the prior 12 months.
8. At 31 December 2025, the Department had finalised 49.3 per cent of permanent visa applications lodged in the prior 12 months.
9. In 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025), median visa processing times improved or remained steady for applications in the following programs, compared with the same period in the previous program year:
  - Second Stage Skilled (Permanent) visa processing times reduced from 189 to 166 days.
  - Partner (Permanent) visa processing times reduced from 305 to 276 days.
  - Student visa processing times reduced from 40 to 31 days.
  - Visitor visas and Working Holiday Maker visas have remained steady, with median processing times of less than one (1) day.
10. In 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025), median visa processing times increased for applications in the following programs, compared with the same period in the previous program year:
  - Skilled Temporary visas: from 48 days to 109 days due to continued strong demand and a high proportion of incomplete applications driving requests for further information from applicants.
  - Family (Temporary) visas: from 85 days to 114 days due to the overall age composition of the on-hand caseload. As older applications are resolved this is reflected in an increase in the median processing time.

## Net Overseas Migration

11. Over the year to September 2025, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported Net Overseas Migration (NOM) was 311,000, down 15 per cent from the previous year and 44 per cent lower than the peak in 2023 (Figure 2).
  - NOM arrivals over the 12 months to 30 September 2025 were 572,000 – a decrease of 7 per cent compared to the previous year (616,000).
  - In the 12 months to 30 September 2025, NOM departures increased by 4 per cent, reaching 261,000 compared to 250,000 in the 12 months to 30 September 2024. The pre-pandemic average was 280,000 departures per year during the five years prior to COVID-19.
  - Temporary migrant departures in the 12 months to 30 September 2025 were 148,000, an increase of 11 per cent compared to the previous year (132,000).
12. NOM measures the population change in Australia as a result of people crossing the border and remaining in or outside Australia for at least 12 months within a 16-month period (referred to as the '12/16 month rule'). NOM is a demographic concept and is the net gain or loss of population through immigration to Australia and emigration from Australia.
13. NOM counts people regardless of nationality, citizenship or immigration status. NOM includes the arrivals and departures of Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens and both temporary and permanent visa holders if they satisfy the 12/16 month rule. NOM does not include temporary visa holders who depart within 12 months, such as tourists or short-term business travellers.

14. Preliminary estimates of NOM are produced by the ABS less than six months after an international movement occurs. These are revised each quarter as more data on traveller history becomes available, and finalised when a full 16 months has elapsed. This allows for NOM to be published with better precision every three months as part of the ABS' quarterly report on *National, state and territory population*.
15. The latest NOM data, to the September quarter 2025, was published on 19 March 2026 on the ABS website: [National, state and territory population, September 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#).
16. Treasury is responsible for forecasting NOM through the Centre for Population. Treasury uses the Department's data, including visa grants and border movements, and considers the impact of policy changes to inform their NOM forecasts. In addition, when preparing the NOM forecasts, Treasury considers data from a range of other sources relating to economic, domestic, international and global factors. Treasury forecasts are forward-looking and are included in the Budget Papers, at The Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), and their annual *Population Statement*. The ABS reports preliminary estimates and final outcomes of NOM based on the Department's data.
17. Historically, around 3 to 4 per cent of people arriving in Australia and 1 to 2 per cent of departures contribute to NOM. Most travellers either come for short periods or leave for short periods. For example, most tourists and short-term business travellers arrive and then depart (or depart and then return) within a few weeks. This means they would not be counted in NOM because they would not meet the 12/16 month rule. The ABS monthly report on Overseas Arrivals and Departures Australia captures border crossings. Overseas arrivals and departures (OAD) data, including permanent and long-term movements, are not measures of overseas migration.
18. The Department grants approximately 9 million temporary visas each year. Many of these visa holders depart within 12 months of their arrival and do not count towards NOM. Others do not count towards NOM because they are extending existing stays, including approximately 60 per cent of permanent visas which are granted to onshore applicants under the permanent Migration Program.
19. Some groups of temporary visa holders, such as Students, Working Holiday Makers and those on a Skills in Demand visa, tend to stay for multiple years to complete study and work commitments. While some of these migrants go on to apply for subsequent temporary visas (such as the Temporary Graduate visa) or apply for permanent residence, many leave Australia once their studies and work contracts are complete. This results in a churn of temporary migrants in the country which had been reasonably stable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
20. The pandemic border restrictions broke this cycle. During the pandemic, NOM levels were negative for the first time since the Second World War, at minus 85,000 in 2020-21. Border restrictions led to a high degree of pent-up demand for travel and substantial domestic demand for skills, and in Australia's international education sector.
21. After the pandemic, temporary and permanent migrants returning to Australia in large numbers. However, the temporary visa holders who would normally have departed Australia after two or more years had already left at the start of the pandemic.
22. Accordingly, when demand for travel to Australia returned, arrivals re-started; but the cycle of departures had yet to return.
23. Australia's experience is similar to our international partners, including the United Kingdom and Canada, which have also seen increased demand from migrants seeking to work and study.
24. As the migrants who arrived in 2021-22 and 2022-23 increasingly reach the expiry of their visas, the pre-pandemic arrivals and departures trends are forecast to return. This normalisation of migration, alongside actions taken to date to place downward pressure on NOM, is expected to drive migration towards longer term averages.

Figure 2 - Net Overseas Migration, Australia, quarterly, by direction (2010 to September 2025)



Source: National, state and territory population, March 2026 | Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Impacting Net Overseas Migration

25. The Department continues to deliver Government policies to place downward pressure on NOM, including:

- Closing COVID concessions, including through ending the Pandemic Event visa and uncapped working hours for international students.
- Strengthening integrity and lifting standards in international education, including introducing a new genuine student requirement. This will ensure student visa applicants are genuine in their intention to successfully complete a course of study in Australia and increasing minimum English language requirements for student and graduate visas.
- Ministerial Direction 115 – *Order for considering and disposing of offshore Subclass 500 (Student) visa applications* (replacing MD111) to support the well-managed and orderly processing of visa applications that aligns with the national interest and supports the education sector equitably, while achieving the Government's wider international education objectives.
- Ending settings that drive long-term temporary stays (known as 'permanent temporariness'), including through shortening graduate visas and ending settings which allow graduates to prolong their stay in Australia when they have fewer prospects of becoming permanent residents.
- Tackling exploitation of the visa system, including through investing in immigration compliance officers and restoring integrity in the protection visa system to discourage unmeritorious protection visa claims.
- Targeting skilled migration to genuine shortages, including through increasing and annually indexing the minimum salary threshold for temporary skilled migrants, leveraging Jobs and Skills Australia's advice to focus on where genuine shortages exist and introducing the Skills in Demand visa on 7 December 2024.

## Temporary Visas

26. Australia's temporary visa programs allow people to come to Australia for specific purposes, including to visit, study and work. These temporary visa programs deliver substantial economic and cultural benefits for both visa holders and Australians. In particular, the student and visitor visa programs are key enablers to Australia's international education and tourism sectors.
27. A portion of temporary visa holders apply for an extension of temporary stay, while others seek a permanent stay through the Migration Program. Bridging visas allow the visa holders to stay lawfully in Australia while awaiting the outcome of their visa application or review of a visa decision.
28. The number of Temporary visa holders in Australia as at 31 December 2025 was 3,027,695, 4.2 per cent higher than at the same time in 2024 (see Table 1):

**Table 1 Change in the number of Temporary visa holders in Australia – comparison between 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025**

Visa Category	31 December 2024	31 December 2025	Difference	% Change
Bridging <sup>1</sup>	368,522	412,582	44,060	12.0%
Crew and Transit	25,127	21,777	-3,350	-13.3%
<b>Family (Temporary)<sup>2</sup></b>	16,967	19,203	2,236	13.2%
Other Temporary <sup>3</sup>	3,775	3,688	-87	-2.3%
Special Category	701,280	709,437	8,157	1.2%
Student	522,183	477,890	-44,293	-8.5%
Temporary Protection	4,481	1,726	-2,755	-61.5%
Temporary Resident (Other Employment)	260,763	279,328	18,565	7.1%
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	166,830	215,768	48,938	29.3%
Visitor	629,075	660,545	31,470	5.0%
Working Holiday Maker	206,187	225,751	19,564	9.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,905,190</b>	<b>3,027,695</b>	<b>122,505</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

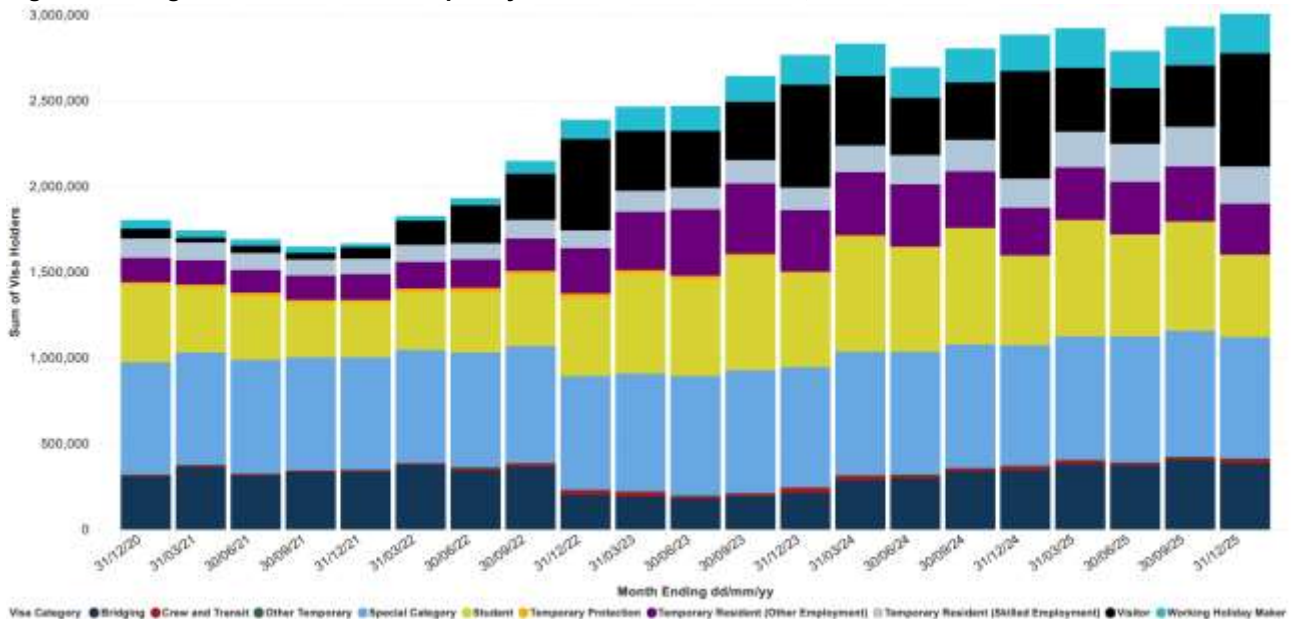
29. There has been a decline in international student numbers over the past 12 months from 31 December 2024 to 31 December 2025. This has been offset by growth in Temporary Skilled, Working Holiday visa holders and New Zealand Citizens (Special Category visa) reflecting Australia's low unemployment and tight labour market conditions (Figure 3).

<sup>1</sup> Bridging visa holders include Bridging Visas A, B, C, D, E, F and R.

<sup>2</sup> Family (Temporary) visas including Sponsored Parent and NZ Sponsored Family were previously counted in the Temporary Resident (Other Employment) visa category.

<sup>3</sup> Other Temporary visa category includes Border, Criminal Justice, Medical Treatment and Student Guardian visa holders.

**Figure 3 Change in the number of Temporary visa holders in Australia, 31 December 2020 to 31 December 2025**

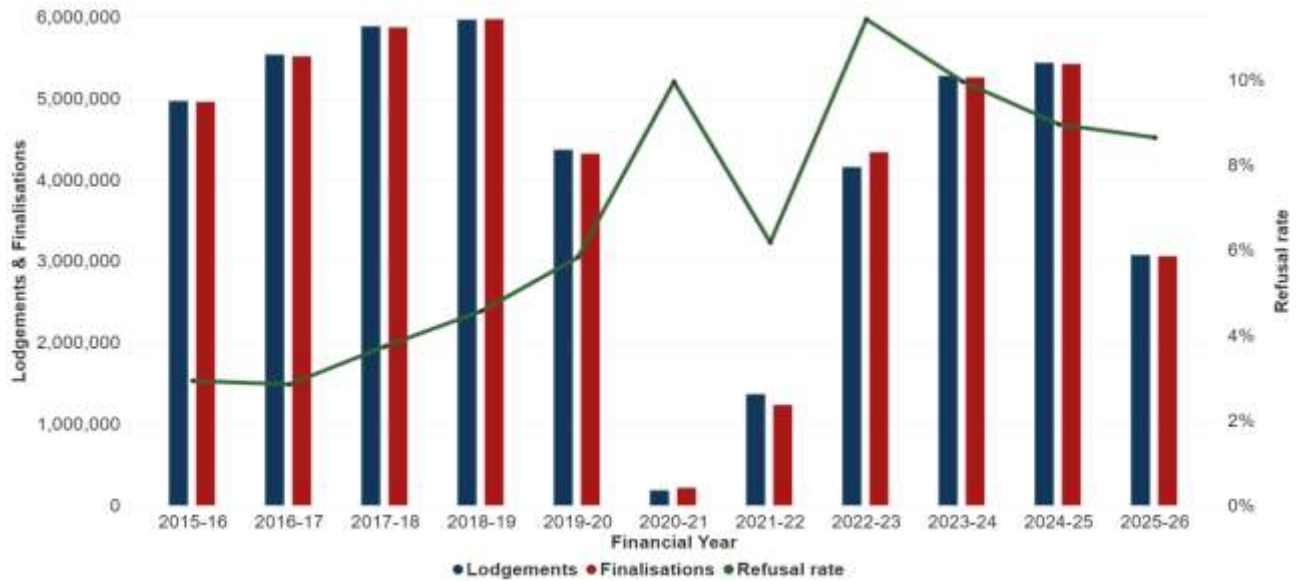


Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Visitor visa

30. The international tourism industry provides substantial economic benefits and generates jobs, investment and growth in communities throughout Australia.
31. The number of Visitor visa holders in Australia on 31 December increased by 5.0 per cent (Table 1):
  - 629,075 at 31 December 2024.
  - 660,545 at 31 December 2025.
32. In 2025–26 program year to 31 December 2025, Visitor visa applications and finalisations increased by 8.4 per cent compared with the same period in 2024–25.
33. Ongoing growth in the Visitor visa program is attributed to a strong resurgence in global demand for international travel, family visits and continued recovery of the tourism and business markets. Global demand for Visitor visas to travel to Australia has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels (Figure 4).
34. Visitor visa refusal rates remain high compared to pre-pandemic levels but have been steadily decreasing since peaking in 2022–23 (Figure 4). High refusal rates reflect:
  - an increased level of risk in global caseloads.
  - improved integrity measures implemented by the Department to detect and prevent fraud and prevent adverse outcomes, such as illegal work and visa non-compliance.
35. The gradual decrease over the last three years may reflect improvements in the proportion of genuine applicants applying for a Visitor visa to visit Australia for legitimate reasons.

Figure 4 Visitor visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Student Visa

36. Australia’s Student visa program activity has returned to pre-pandemic levels following the reopening of Australia’s international borders in 2021. On 31 December 2025 there were 477,878 Student visa holders in Australia, which is similar to the 31 December 2019 (Table 2)

37. Student visa holders in Australia may be impacted by:

- Course commencement and end dates, where many international students return home during semester breaks, or new students remain offshore prior to travelling to Australia to commence their studies.
- Student visa holders moving on to another visa type such as a bridging visa, or another substantive visa.

Table 2 Number of Student Visa holders in Australia, end of quarter (from 31 December 2017 to 31 December 2025)

Sector	31-Dec-17	31-Dec-18	31-Dec-19	31-Dec-20	31-Dec-21	31-Dec-22	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-25
Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	3,163	2,987	2,832	2,579	1,062	1,979	2,458	2,156	2,407
Higher Education Sector	223,325	248,507	267,555	250,346	162,658	234,380	301,825	322,665	317,831
Independent ELICOS Sector	23,844	23,194	24,950	6,436	1,931	35,370	38,525	18,778	13,589
Non-Award Sector	3,422	3,315	3,241	348	128	3,263	3,469	3,154	3,207
Postgraduate Research Sector	19,924	21,500	22,472	22,426	19,327	22,816	23,451	24,786	29,971
Schools Sector	6,432	6,572	6,808	14,726	9,400	7,104	7,777	8,225	8,066
Vocational Education and Training Sector	103,799	127,538	152,674	153,060	121,432	152,047	169,559	142,408	102,807
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>383,909</b>	<b>433,613</b>	<b>480,532</b>	<b>449,921</b>	<b>315,938</b>	<b>456,959</b>	<b>547,064</b>	<b>522,172</b>	<b>477,878</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

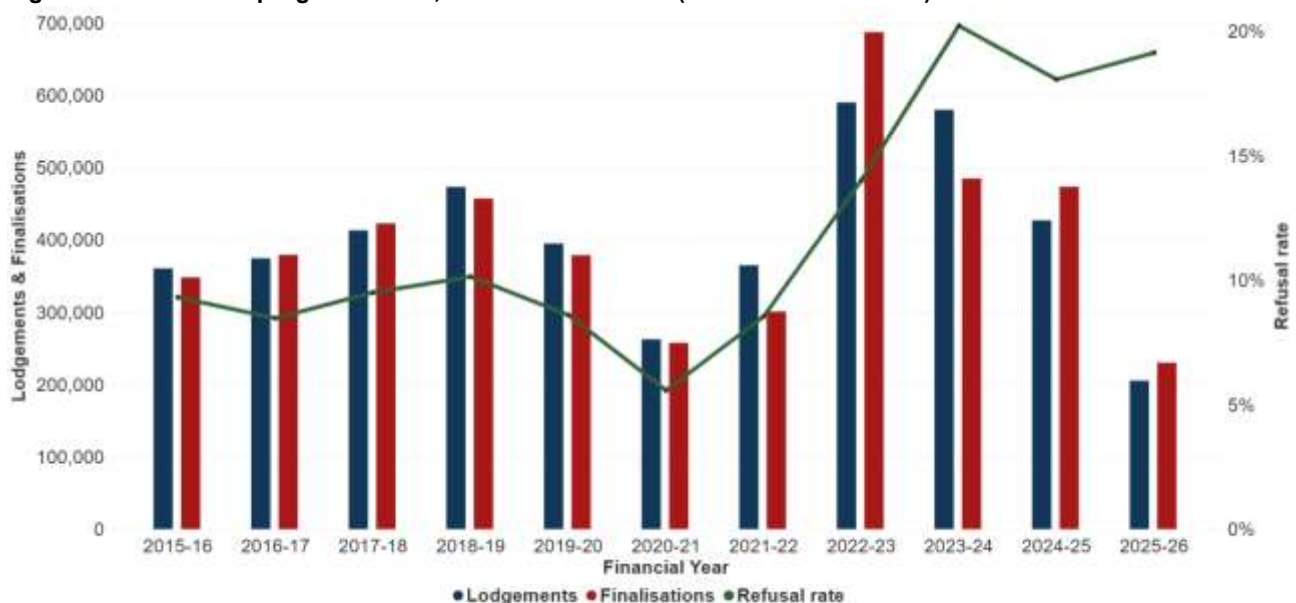
38. In the 2025–26 program year to 31 December 2025, 205,382 student visa applications were lodged (Table 3). This represents a 0.8 per cent increase compared to the same period in the 2024-25 program year (203,835).
39. In the 2025-26 program year to 31 December 2025, the distribution of lodgements by sector included (Table 3):
- 63.9 per cent were in the Higher Education sector (131,161 lodged)
  - 19.2 per cent were in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector (39,438 lodged)
  - 5.2 per cent were in the Independent English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector (10,672 lodged)
  - The remaining 11.7 per cent were in the Foreign Affairs or Defence sector, Non-Award sector, Postgraduate Research sector, and Schools sector.
40. The stabilisation in Student Visa applications can be attributed to measures aimed to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the International Education sector. These include policy changes and revised integrity settings, introduction of Genuine Student requirement, and measures to restrict onshore visa hopping.

**Table 3 Change in Student visa applications by sector, 2023–24, 2024–25 and current program year (1 July to 31 December 2025)**

Sector	2023–24	2024–25	Difference	% Change	2025–26 to 31 December
Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	4,813	5,129	316	6.6%	2,782
Higher Education Sector	310,840	262,146	-48,694	-15.7%	131,161
Independent ELICOS Sector	55,417	30,347	-25,070	-45.2%	10,672
Non-Award Sector	18,006	17,407	-599	-3.3%	8,184
Postgraduate Research Sector	14,207	14,951	744	5.2%	8,733
Schools Sector	12,528	9,676	-2,852	-22.8%	4,412
Vocational Education and Training Sector	164,382	87,475	-76,907	-46.8%	39,438
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>580,193</b>	<b>427,131</b>	<b>-153,062</b>	<b>-26.4%</b>	<b>205,382</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

**Figure 5 Student visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

41. As at 31 December 2025, the overall Student Visa grant rate was 80.9 per cent, consistent with outcomes recorded over the same period in 2023–24 and 2024–25.
42. Grant rates vary across sectors with the Vocational Education and Training Sector having much lower grant rates than Higher Education and post graduate sectors.

**Table 4 Onshore and Offshore Student visa grant rates by sector, 2019–20 to 2025–26 (up to 31 December 2025)**

Sector	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025-26 to 31 December
Vocational Education and Training Sector	86.2%	93.6%	84.1%	78.3%	61.8%	57.4%	51.8%
Schools Sector	92.7%	97.7%	96.6%	94.1%	90.6%	86.3%	90.5%
Postgraduate Research Sector	97.9%	98.0%	97.1%	97.4%	97.3%	97.5%	97.0%
Non-Award Sector	99.6%	86.4%	99.2%	99.4%	99.3%	99.5%	99.4%
Independent ELICOS Sector	92.2%	95.0%	85.0%	91.2%	80.6%	78.6%	77.6%
Higher Education Sector	93.3%	94.6%	95.4%	87.5%	83.8%	90.9%	88.9%
Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	99.3%	95.1%	97.1%	97.4%	98.5%	99.2%	98.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>91.4%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>91.5%</b>	<b>86.0%</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>80.9%</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Temporary Graduate visa

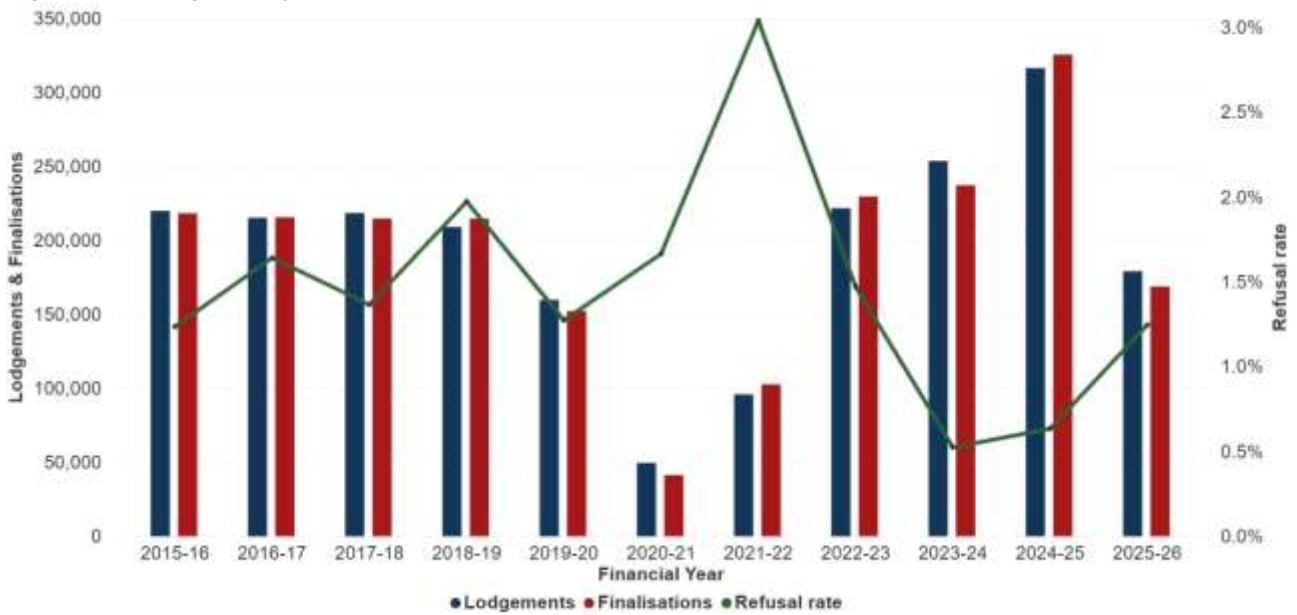
43. The Temporary Graduate visa enables early career professionals to gain relevant work experience in Australia, which can support progression to a Skilled visa or allow them to apply their Australian education in the global workforce.
44. Australia's revised post-study work rights provide graduates an opportunity to demonstrate their potential and ability to contribute to the Australian economy but provide clear boundaries, so former students do not become 'permanently temporary'.
45. With more Student visa holders coming to Australia once borders reopened following the COVID pandemic, Temporary Graduate visa lodgements have increased with 74,498 applications received in 2025-26 to 31 December 2025. This is an increase of 89 per cent compared to the number of lodgements (39,635) for the same period in the 2024-25 program year.
46. Lodgement volumes continue to align with historical Student visa grant patterns, as this cohort transitions from student to graduate visas.

## Working Holiday Makers

47. The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program promotes cultural exchange and boosts people-to-people connections between young adults from Australia and partner countries. WHM visa holders are not required to work but may do so for the entire duration of their stay in Australia. They can work in any location, industry or role they choose, usually for up to 6 months with the same employer.
48. As of 31 December 2025, Australia has WHM program arrangements with 50 partner countries and regions. This includes 19 Working Holiday (subclass 417) arrangements and 31 Work and Holiday (subclass 462) arrangements. This provides opportunities for visa holders to travel and undertake short-term work during their holiday.

49. The Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa has additional visa criteria that must be satisfied by visa applicants compared to the Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa. This includes a minimum level of English language ability and educational qualifications. These additional criteria may result in longer visa processing times for subclass 462 visa applicants.
50. The number of WHM visas holders in Australia increased by 9.5 per cent compared to the same point in the previous year (Table 2):
  - 206,187 at 31 December 2024.
  - 225,751 at 31 December 2025.

**Figure 6 Working Holiday Maker visa trends, from 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

51. The Australian Government introduced a pre-application process (visa ballot) for the Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa on 1 October 2024 for passport holders from China, India and Vietnam.
52. The introduction of the ballot system for these countries aims to provide an equitable, streamlined and transparent method for selecting applicants in cases where the demand is higher than the available visa places for a participating country.
53. On 24 June 2025, the Department opened a Work and Holiday ballot for China, India and Vietnam for the 2025–26 program year. A total of 319,963 valid registrations were received across the three countries before the ballot was closed on 15 July 2025.
  - The Department conducts random selections from the pool of registered participants until it fills all available places for China, India and Vietnam during the program year.
  - Those selected are notified to make an online application for a first Work and Holiday visa.
  - Applicants selected in a ballot must meet all the standard eligibility requirements to be granted a first Work and Holiday visa.

**Table 5 Number of registrations received in the WHM ballot, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

Country	Total Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa ballot registrations submitted for 2025–26 PY <sup>4</sup>
India	271,254
China	42,149
Vietnam	6,560
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>319,963</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Temporary Resident (Skilled)

54. The Skills in Demand (SID) visa program, implemented on 7 December 2024, is the primary mechanism to bring temporary skilled workers to Australia. It provides a streamlined pathway for skilled migrants, promoting worker mobility while offering a simple process for employers to access skilled workers to help their businesses to grow. SID visa holders have a clear pathway to permanent residence, providing certainty to both migrants and employers.
55. The SID visa has three streams:
- Specialist Skills stream for highly skilled migrants who will bring significant economic benefits to Australia and help drive innovation and job creation.
  - Core Skills stream to meet targeted workforce needs, including filling workforce gaps and providing vital services to the community. Most temporary skilled visa holders will come through this stream.
  - Labour Agreement stream for skilled workers nominated by employers who have a Labour Agreement with the Australian Government.
56. The number of Temporary Resident (Skilled) visa holders in Australia was 29.3 per cent higher than at the same point the previous year (Table 2):
- 166,830 at 31 December 2024
  - 215,768 at 31 December 2025.
57. In 2025-26 to 31 December 2025, 38,396 primary visa applications had been lodged which is 16.3 per cent lower than the same period in 2024-25 (45,877). Lodgements by primary visa applicants in the 2024–25 program year were 34.5 per cent higher than 2023-24 (Table 6). Overall, lodgements demonstrate a continued high level of demand for skilled overseas workers to fill vacancies where no Australian worker is available.

**Table 6 Number of Temporary Resident (Skilled) primary visa applications lodged**

Visa Category	2023–24	2024–25	Difference	% Change	2025–26 to 31 December
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	64,099	86,235	22,136	34.5%	38,396

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

58. The Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) was announced on 3 December 2024. It replaces previously complex and inflexible occupation lists. It provides access to temporary skilled migration for 456 occupations, informed by labour market analysis and stakeholder consultation by Jobs and Skills Australia.

<sup>4</sup> This total includes all registrations submitted to date, including those selected, withdrawn, and expired.

**Table 7 Most frequently granted occupations for Temporary Skills Shortage and Skills in Demand visas, sorted on current year to date – top 15 comparison between 2023–2024 and 2024–25, plus 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Nominated Occupation		2023–24	2024–25	% change from 2023–24	2024–25 as % of Total	2025–26 to 31 December
1	3513 Chefs	2,279	6,361	179.1%	9.3%	3,279
2	2531 General Practitioners and Resident Medical Officers	2,906	3,417	17.6%	5.0%	2,084
3	3212 Motor Mechanics	2,819	3,387	20.1%	5.0%	1,953
4	2613 Software and Applications Programmers	3,014	3,125	3.7%	4.6%	1,387
5	4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	457	1,339	193.0%	2.0%	852
6	2544 Registered Nurses	1,490	2,151	44.4%	3.2%	821
7	2251 Advertising and Marketing Professionals	1,048	1,421	35.6%	2.1%	719
8	2211 Accountants	1,101	1,364	23.9%	2.0%	711
9	3514 Cooks	670	1,554	131.9%	2.3%	711
10	3223 Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers	1,608	1,671	3.9%	2.5%	708
11	2611 ICT Business and Systems Analysts	1,304	1,532	17.5%	2.2%	650
12	3125 Mechanical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians	1,064	1,130	6.2%	1.7%	555
13	2247 Management and Organisation Analysts	826	926	12.1%	1.4%	545
14	4211 Child Carers	124	430	246.8%	0.6%	514
15	2632 ICT Support and Test Engineers	753	1,353	79.7%	2.0%	442
16	Other occupation	30,635	37,033	20.9%	54.3%	18,434
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>52,098</b>	<b>68,194</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>34,365</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme

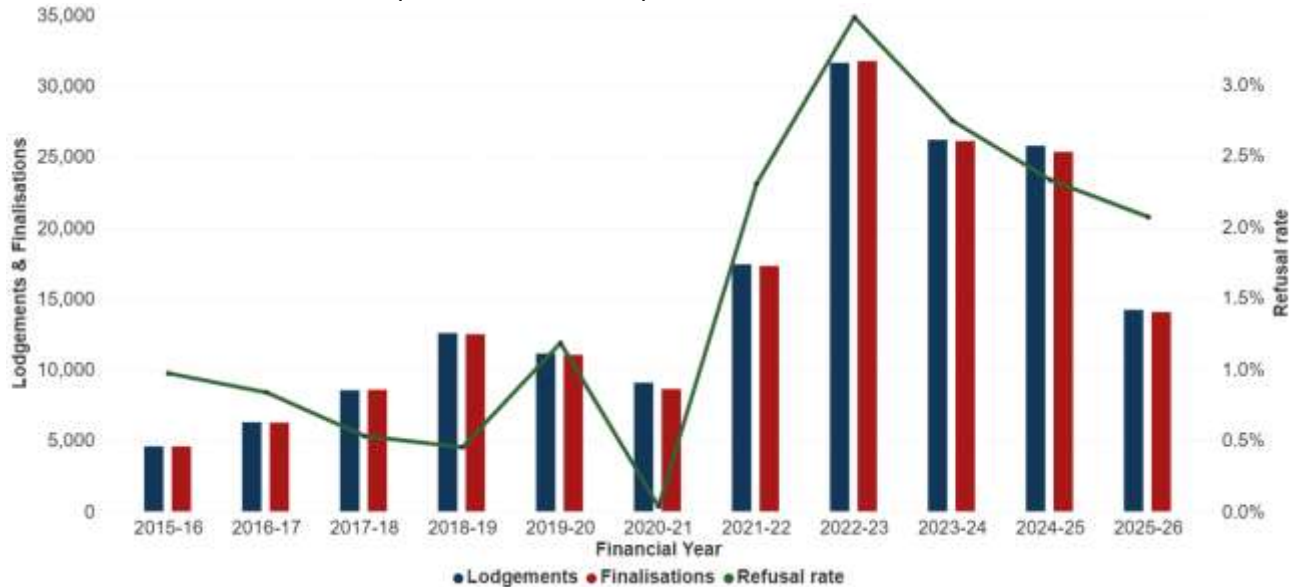
59. The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is a temporary migration program which allows eligible Australian businesses to hire workers from nine Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste. The scheme allows eligible workers from these countries to work short-term jobs in Australia for up to nine months or long-term roles for between one and four years in unskilled, low-skilled and semi-skilled positions.
60. PALM scheme employers can hire workers in all regional and rural postcodes and there are no postcode restrictions for agriculture and select agriculture-related food product manufacturing occupations.
61. The number of PALM (subclass 403) visa grants in the 2025–26 program year to 31 December 2025 (13,674) increased by 9.9 per cent from the same period in the 2024-25 program year (12,443).
62. Lodgements in the PALM program in the 2025–26 program year to 31 December 2025 (14,207) increased by 8.4 per cent from the same period in the 2024-25 program year (13,108).

**Table 8 Number of PALM scheme visa grants including Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme – comparison between 2023–24 to 2024–25, plus 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Citizenship Country	2023–24	2024–25	Difference	% Change	2025–26
Fiji	2,496	2,095	-401	-16.1%	783
Kiribati	976	718	-258	-26.4%	442
Nauru	34	29	-5	-14.7%	3
Papua New Guinea	1,131	1,107	-24	-2.1%	885
Samoa	2,016	2,014	-2	-0.1%	1,351
Solomon Islands	2,418	2,935	517	21.4%	1,490
Timor-Leste	3,702	3,623	-79	-2.1%	2,347
Tonga	3,526	3,448	-78	-2.2%	1,544
Tuvalu	229	86	-143	-62.4%	10
Vanuatu	8,720	8,552	-168	-1.9%	4,819
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25,248</b>	<b>24,607</b>	<b>-641</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>	<b>13,674</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

**Figure 7 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme including Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme from 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme

63. The Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES) is a temporary mobility pathway for Indian graduates and early career professionals with knowledge and skills in targeted fields of study now in its second year. It enables young Indian professionals with targeted qualifications to expand their skills and experience by living and working in Australia for up to two years. This presents an opportunity for the mutually beneficial skills and knowledge transfer between Australia and India in the sectors of identified demand.

64. Targeted fields of study include:

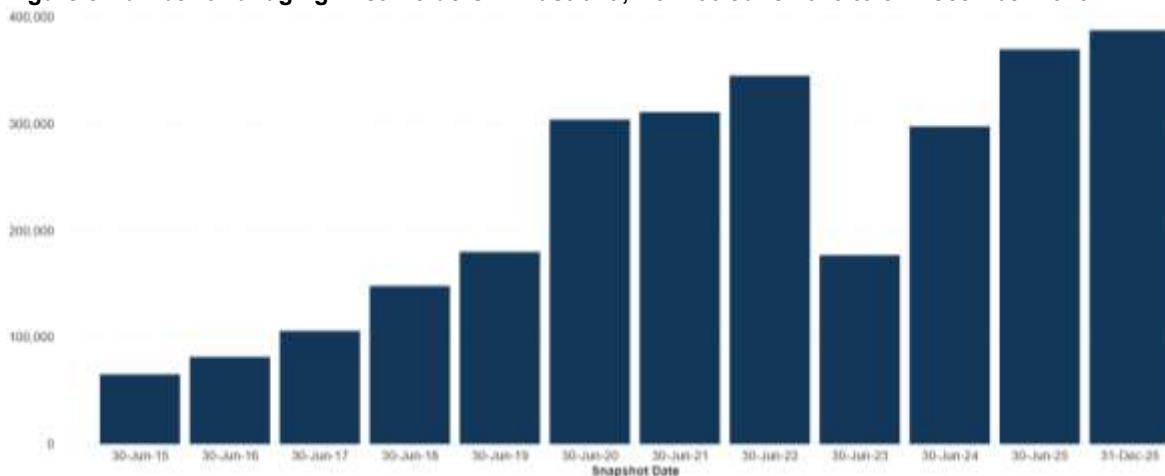
- Renewable energy
- Mining
- Engineering

- Information and communications technology
  - Artificial intelligence
  - Financial technology
  - Agricultural technology
65. On 23 May 2023, MATES was established under the Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA), a bilateral framework entered into between the governments of Australia and India. The MMPA will see both countries benefit from enhanced cooperation on migration issues.
  66. Up to 3,000 temporary visa places are available for primary applicants per program year which will be allocated through a visa pre-application (ballot) process. Primary applicants will be able to bring dependents who will not be counted towards the 3,000 places.
  67. The first MATES ballot opened on 9 December 2024 and closed on 7 January 2025, with 6,656 valid registrations received.
  68. Ballot selections took place on 8 January 2025 and closed on 11 February 2025. The second ballot opened on 1 November 2025 and closed on 14 December 2025. Successful candidates are eligible to apply for a Temporary Work (International Relations) (subclass 403) visa in the MATES stream.
    - 1,662 primary applicants applied for a MATES stream visa and 626 primary applicants have been granted a MATES stream visa as at 31 December 2025.

## Bridging visas

69. The combined number of people in Australia holding an in-effect Bridging A, B and C visa (BV ABC) increased 13.2 per cent compared to the same time in 2024:
  - 342,077 at 31 December 2024.
  - 387,097 at 31 December 2025.
70. The number of people holding an in-effect BV ABC in Australia varies throughout the year with annual seasonal peaks and troughs, in line with variances in other visa programs. Increases can be attributed to growth in application volumes for Student visas, Skills in Demand visas, Partner visas and Employer Nomination Scheme visas.
71. The majority of BV ABC visas granted are associated with a substantive visa applications, with most applicants having applied for a new visa while they were holding a substantive visa.

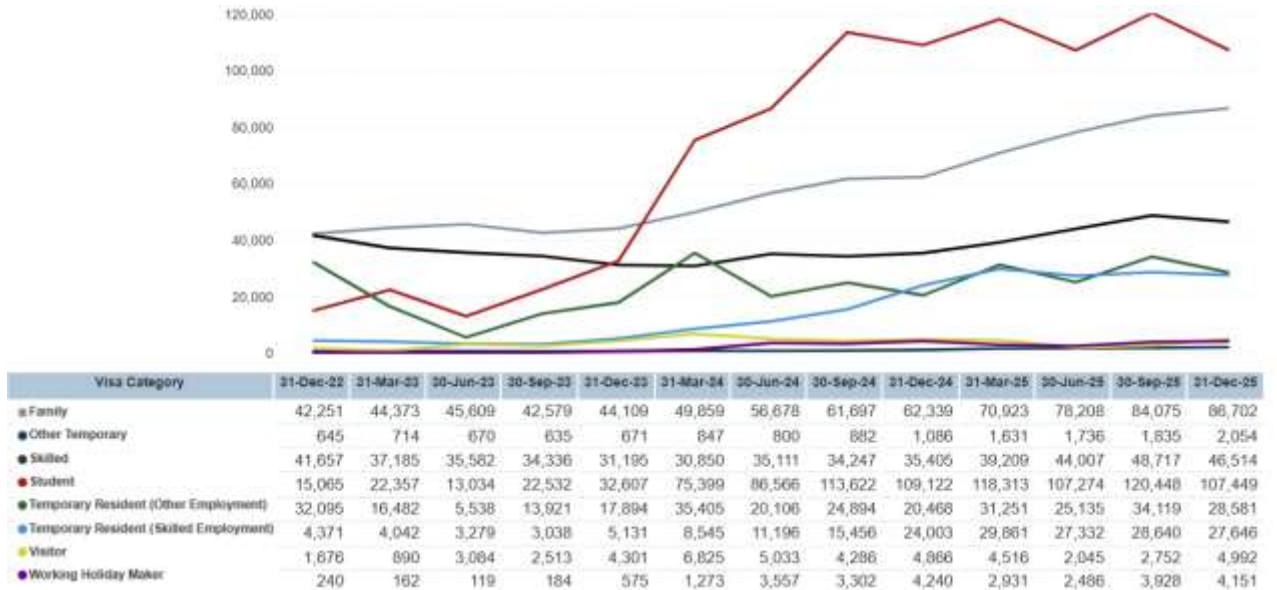
**Figure 8 Number of bridging<sup>5</sup> visa holders in Australia, from 30 June 2015 to 31 December 2025**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

<sup>5</sup> Excludes Bridging visa E (subclass 050 and 051) holders, includes applicants for permanent and temporary visas where bridging visas have been granted.

Figure 9 Bridging A, B and C visa holders in Australia by visa category applied for as at 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2025<sup>6</sup>



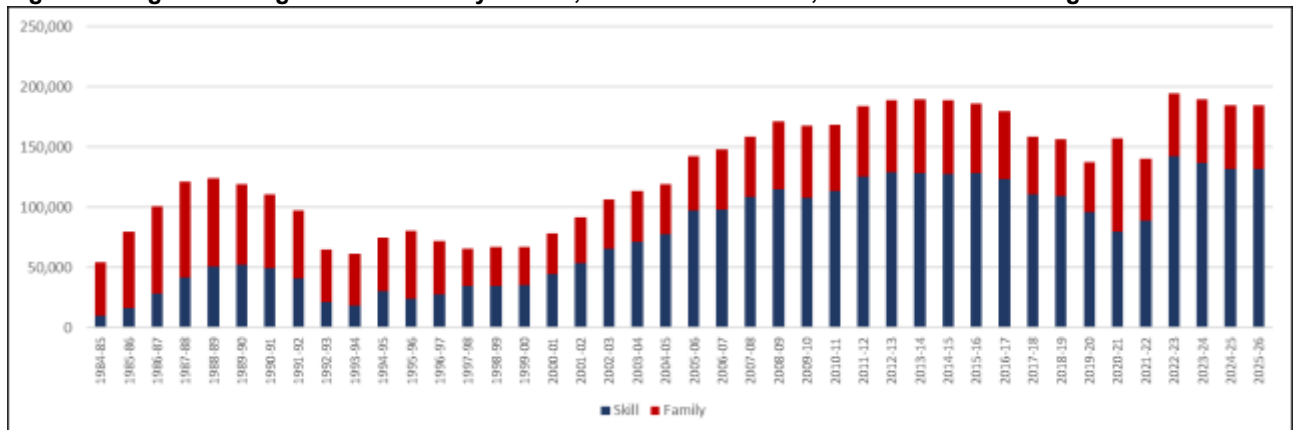
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Permanent Migration Program

72. Australia’s permanent Migration Program (Migration Program) is designed to meet Australia’s ongoing economic, demographic and community needs. It supplements Australia’s working age population and helps to address critical skill shortages, including in construction and essential services like healthcare, childcare and education. The Migration Program also supports Australian families to reunite with their loved ones which strengthens our social cohesion.

73. The Migration Program is comprised of three streams: Skilled, Family and Special Eligibility.

Figure 10 Migration Program outcomes by stream, 1984–85 to 2024–25, with 2025–26 Planning Levels



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

74. The 2025–26 Migration Program was set at 185,000 places, with the following composition:

- Skilled stream (132,200 places, approximately 71.0 per cent of the program) – this stream has been designed to improve the productive capacity of the economy and fill skill shortages in the labour market.

<sup>6</sup> Temporary Resident (Other Employment) includes Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visas and Temporary Activity (subclass 408) COVID-19 Pandemic Event visas

- Family stream (52,500 places, approximately 28.0 per cent of the program) – this stream is predominantly made up of Partner visas, enabling Australians to reunite with family members from overseas and provide them with pathways to citizenship.
- Special Eligibility stream (300 places) – this stream covers visas for those in special circumstances, including permanent residents returning to Australia after a period overseas.

**Table 9 Permanent Migration Program planning levels and program outcomes, 2022–23 to 2024–25, including 2025–26 planning levels**

Program year	2022–23		2023–24		2024–25		2025–26
Category	Planning Levels	Program Outcomes	Planning levels	Program Outcomes	Planning levels	Program Outcomes	Planning levels
Employer Sponsored	35,000	35,000	36,825	36,825	44,000	44,000	44,000
Skilled Independent	32,100	32,100	30,375	30,375	16,900	16,900	16,900
Skilled Regional	34,000	33,944	32,300	32,300	33,000	32,948	33,000
State/Territory Nominated	31,000	31,000	30,400	30,400	33,000	33,000	33,000
Business Innovation and Investment Program	5,000	5,000	1,900	1,900	1,000	1,000	1,000
Talent and Innovation <sup>7</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4,300
Global Talent <sup>†</sup> <small>Error! Bookmark not defined.</small>	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	4,000	4,000	0
Distinguished Talent <sup>Error!</sup> <small>Bookmark not defined.</small>	300	300	300	300	300	300	0
<b>Skill total</b>	<b>142,400</b>	<b>142,344</b>	<b>137,100</b>	<b>137,100</b>	<b>132,200</b>	<b>132,148</b>	<b>132,200</b>
Partner <sup>8</sup>	40,500	40,500	40,500	40,720	40,500	40,500	40,500
Parent	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500
Other Family	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
Child <sup>9,10</sup>	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
<b>Family total</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,720</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>
Special Eligibility	100	160	400	180	300	353	300
<b>Total Migration Program</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>195,004</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>185,000</b>	<b>185,001</b>	<b>185,000</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

75. The Department delivered the 2024–25 Migration Program against the overall planning level of 185,000 places. The breakdown for each of the streams within the Migration Program are:

- 132,148 places were delivered in the Skilled stream.
- 52,500 places were delivered in the Family stream.
- 353 places were delivered in the Special Eligibility stream.

<sup>7</sup> This category includes on hand applications for the Global Talent and Distinguished Talent visas, which are closed to new applications, and the new National Innovation visa.

<sup>8</sup> Delivery of the Partner category is demand driven, with indicative planning levels only.

<sup>9</sup> Delivery of the Child category is demand driven, with indicative planning levels only.

<sup>10</sup> From 2022–23, the Child category became part of the Family stream.

**Table 10 Permanent Migration Program - Top 10 countries of citizenship, 2019–20 to 2024–25**

Outcome <sup>11,12</sup>	Program Year						
	Citizenship Country	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
India		25,698	21,791	24,324	41,145	49,848	48,326
China, Peoples Republic of (excl SARs)		18,587	22,207	18,240	23,936	21,806	20,405
Philippines		8,965	11,058	8,591	13,085	11,942	10,972
United Kingdom		10,681	12,703	9,584	11,439	9,916	10,205
Pakistan		4,136	4,121	3,734	4,927	6,877	9,557
Sri Lanka		2,609	2,237	2,801	4,482	5,672	9,444
Nepal		5,048	4,714	6,628	12,041	11,506	8,319
Vietnam		5,398	8,120	6,492	6,571	6,698	5,665
South Africa		3,743	3,523	3,305	5,434	4,620	4,137
Afghanistan		2,279	1,412	1,773	2,543	5,556	3,474
Other		53,222	68,166	58,084	69,401	55,559	54,497
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>140,366</b>	<b>160,052</b>	<b>143,556</b>	<b>195,004</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>185,001</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

76. The number of Permanent Family and Skilled visa holders in Australia as at 31 December 2025 was 1,580,414. This is 0.4 per cent higher than at the same time in 2024 (see Table 11):

**Table 11 – Permanent Family and Skilled visa holders in Australia - 31 December 2021 to 31 December 2025<sup>13</sup>**

Visa Category	31 December 2021	31 December 2022	31 December 2023	31 December 2024	31 December 2025
Family	370,833	344,311	320,068	313,906	294,962
Other Permanent	25,564	25,437	25,332	25,218	26,287
Skilled	413,849	364,361	394,795	427,007	438,464
Special Eligibility	1,636	1,532	1,423	1,485	1,674
Resident Return/ADV	710,557	770,034	776,669	807,235	819,027
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,522,439</b>	<b>1,505,675</b>	<b>1,518,287</b>	<b>1,574,851</b>	<b>1,580,414</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

77. Further Information about the delivery of Migration Program is available on the Department's website at: [Migration program statistics](#)

## Skilled Migration Program

78. The Skilled stream of the Migration Program is designed to select migrants who make a significant contribution to the Australian economy and fill positions where no Australian workers are available.

79. The Skilled stream plays an important role across Australia through providing skills and labour which can't be sourced locally, as well as encouraging investment and promoting local spending in across Australia.

80. The Skilled stream includes the following visa categories:

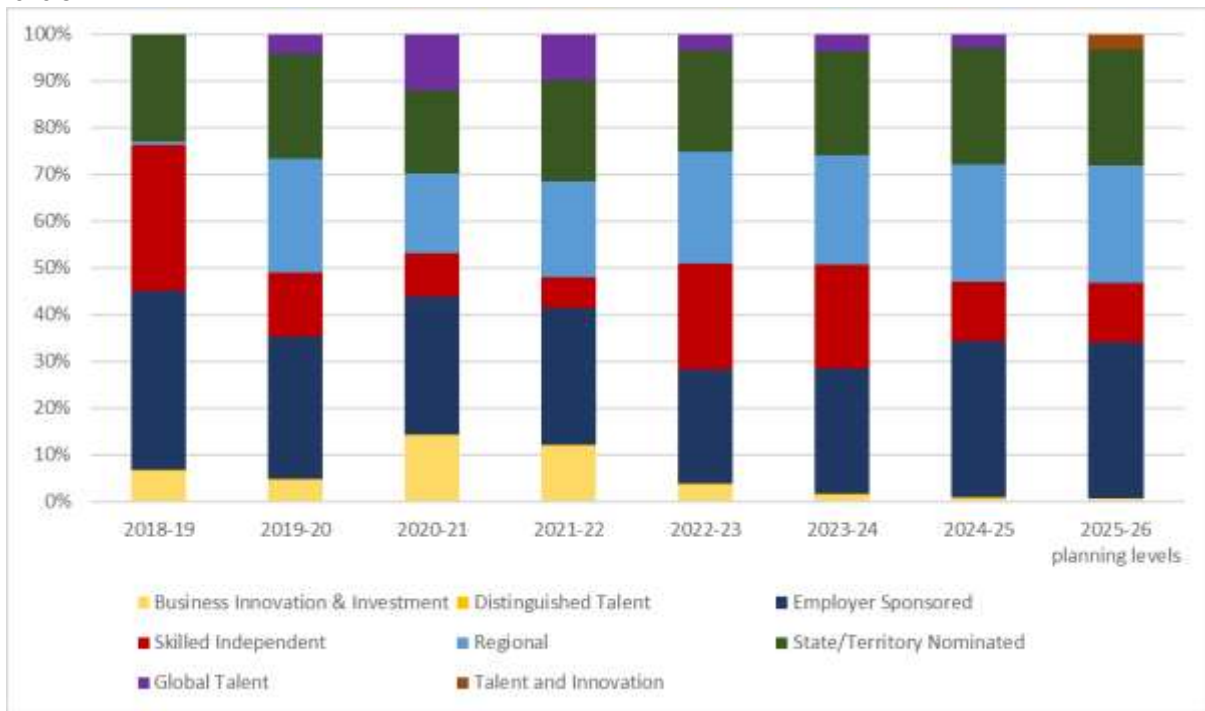
<sup>11</sup> Top 10 based on 2023–24 outcomes.

<sup>12</sup> Includes primary and secondary applicants.

<sup>13</sup> The Department is unable to provide a complete count of the number of permanent visa holders in Australia. Departmental systems can only report on visa holders who have come to the attention of Home Affairs since 1 September 1994, either through the grant of a visa or by an arrival. A person who became a permanent resident before that date and has not subsequently been granted a resident return visa, or travelled overseas, will not be counted. In addition, there may be permanent visa holders who should no longer be counted, as they are deceased and the Department hasn't been notified.

81. **General skilled migration** – for skilled workers who are not sponsored by an employer but have desirable skills, attributes and human capital, and who are able to pass the points test. This includes the Skilled Independent and State and Territory Nominated visas. Applicants must first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) through SkillSelect.
82. **Employer sponsored migration** – for skilled applicants sponsored by an employer. This category includes regional employer-sponsored visas and those granted under a Labour Agreement.
83. **National innovation visa** – targeted at exceptionally talented migrants who can make a significant contribution to sectors of national strategic importance.
84. **Business innovation and investment migration** – for entrepreneurs and business people. This category has closed to new applications.
85. The 2024–25 Skilled stream outcome was 132,148 places, which accounted for 71.4 per cent of the total 2024–25 Migration Program outcome. The Government has set the 2025–26 planning level for the Skilled stream at 132,200 places.

**Figure 11 Composition of Skilled Migration Program outcomes, 2018–19 to 2024-25, with 2025–26 planning levels**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

### Skilled Visa Processing Priorities

86. Ministerial Direction No. 105, which came into effect on 15 December 2023, sets the priority for processing visa applications for certain Skilled visa programs. The ministerial direction recognises the need to support regional Australia, elevating applications for employer sponsored visas in relation to positions to be carried out in regional Australia to the highest priority. Ministerial Direction No. 105 also prioritises applications for occupations in the healthcare and teaching sectors, as well as employer sponsored visa applicants who have been nominated by an accredited sponsor.

### Employer Sponsorship

87. The employer sponsored migration category is designed to address skill gaps within the Australian labour market by allowing businesses to sponsor overseas workers with specialised skills. This category includes:
  - Temporary Resident (Skilled) visas
  - Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visas

- Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) visas
  - Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visas
  - Visas granted under a Labour Agreement
88. On 7 December 2024, changes were made to the Temporary Residence Transition (TRT) stream of the ENS visa. These changes deliver on the Government's commitment to offer clearer pathways to permanent residence for temporary skilled visa holders, as outlined in the Migration Strategy. Key reforms include:
- Reduced work experience requirements in the TRT stream.
  - Greater worker mobility by allowing all eligible sponsored, full-time employment to be counted towards the work experience requirement, regardless of occupation.
89. Income thresholds in both the Temporary and Permanent Employer Sponsored visa programs are indexed annually on 1 July in line with Average Weekly Ordinary Times Earnings (AWOTE). This ensures migrant wages keep pace with wage increases of Australians and that migrant wages do not undercut wages of Australian workers.
90. The 2025–26 Income Thresholds of the SID streams are set, as at 1 July 2025, at:
- Core Skills stream: \$76,515
  - Specialist Skills stream: \$141,210

## Regional Migration

91. Migration to regional Australia assists in building stronger communities, meeting critical workforce and skills needs and supports economic prosperity in regional Australia:
92. The Regional visa category of the 2025–26 Migration Program Skilled stream retained the planning level from 2024–25, at 33,000 places. In 2024–25, more than 43,500 regional visa applications were lodged and the regional migration program delivered 32,948 places.
93. For the 2025–26 program year, as at 31 December 2025:
- 22,593 regional visa applications had been lodged (Table 12)
  - 33,662 regional visa applications had been finalised (Table 13)

**Table 12 Number of applications lodged for Regional visas, from 2021–22 to 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

Visa Subclass	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December
187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	1,634	514	172	136	44
191 Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional)	131	1,168	10,594	16,462	12,572
489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional)	372	333	174	75	28
491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional)	26,314	47,814	17,685	19,598	5,843
494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional)	3,165	3,752	4,357	5,240	2,575
887 Skilled – Regional	10,886	2,076	2,755	2,033	1,531
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>42,502</b>	<b>55,657</b>	<b>35,737</b>	<b>43,544</b>	<b>22,593</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

94. The Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) subclass 191 visa in the Regional Provisional Stream commenced on 16 November 2022. This visa provides an independent permanent residence pathway for subclass 491 and subclass 494 visa holders.
95. The number of lodgements for subclass 191 visas in the 2025–26 program year to 31 December 2025 has continued to increase as compared to 2024–25, (Table 13), reflecting a greater number of eligible subclass 491 and 494 visa holders meeting the three-year regional residence and other requirements to apply for permanent residence.

**Table 13 Number of Regional visa applications granted, 2021–22 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Visa Subclass	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	1,797	3,275	979	217	86
489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional)	1,156	3,487	1,067	203	51
491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional)	13,898	23,129	26,312	28,177	12,518
494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional)	1,348	3,793	3,683	4,265	2,069
887 Skilled – Regional	2,070	19,655	2,320	1,656	2,753
191 Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional)	45	233	6,024	6,500	16,185
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,314</b>	<b>53,572</b>	<b>40,385</b>	<b>41,018</b>	<b>33,662</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Designated Area Migration Agreements

96. Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) provide employers with access to skilled and semi-skilled workers in occupations not available in the standard skilled migration program. They contain a range of concessions to the standard program, so they can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific area they serve.
97. As at 31 December 2025, there were thirteen DAMAs in effect across Australia including:
  - Four state and territory-led DAMAs (two in SA, one in WA and one in the NT)
  - Nine DAMAs administered by regional authorities: Far North Queensland (QLD), Townsville (QLD), Pilbara (WA), Kimberley (WA), The South West (WA), Goldfields (WA), Great South Coast (VIC), Goulburn Valley (VIC) and Orana (NSW) regions.
98. DAMAs continue to make up the highest percentage of labour agreements, with over 60 per cent of labour agreements being governed by a DAMA head agreement.
99. The Government is committed to a state and territory-led approach to DAMAs which will better align migration with state and territory policies and programs that seek to the attraction of migrants, and their long-term retention, including in regional Australia. These state and territory policies and programs include the planning for and provision of adequate infrastructure, housing, services, settlement and integration support, as well as education and training opportunities.
100. The Government is currently working with jurisdictions to establish state and territory-led DAMAs to replace existing regional DAMAs when these expire.
101. The Department of Home Affairs is working with these jurisdictions to ensure adequate transition arrangements will provide certainty and continuity for both regional employers and overseas workers in the move to state and territory-led DAMAs.

### Industry Labour Agreements

102. Industry Labour Agreements (ILAs) are formal agreements negotiated between the Government and a specific industry that have fixed terms and conditions with in-built concessions specific to an industry sector.
103. ILAs help to ensure a level playing field across an industry by establishing a set of unique terms, conditions and concessions for certain occupations that will apply to all future labour agreements in that sector.
104. As at 31 December 2025, there were 10 head ILAs in place, including:
  - Advertising, Aged Care, Dairy, Fishing, Horticulture, Meat, Minister of Religion, On-hire, Pork and Restaurant (premium dining)

- As at 31 December 2025, 1,600 ILAs have been approved under these arrangements and are now in effect for eligible employers, which is an increase of 41 per cent compared to the same time last year.
105. The Government has committed to a review of ILAs in consultation with relevant unions, peak bodies and government stakeholders.
106. As foreshadowed in the Migration Strategy, the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement (Aged Care ILA) will provide strong lessons for any future design of more regulated pathways for lower paid workers with essential skills, ensuring a more efficient process.
107. The uptake of the Aged Care ILA continues to increase among providers and overseas direct care workers. As at 31 December 2025, there were:
- 161 Aged Care ILAs in effect
  - 3,279 primary visas granted under the Aged Care ILA
  - 2,520 primary temporary visa holders in Australia under the Aged Care ILA

**National Innovation Visa**

108. The National Innovation (subclass 858) visa was introduced in December 2024 and replaced the former Global Talent (subclass 858) visa. It is an exclusive, invitation-only visa for highly talented migrants who can make significant contributions in sectors of national importance.
109. Consideration of invitations and visa applications is supported by a priority framework reflected in Ministerial Direction 112.
110. In the 2025-26 program year, to 31 December 2025, the Department received 767 applications for the National Innovation visa.

**Table 14 – Comparison of National Innovation visa lodgement for 2024-25 and 2025–26 program years (up to 31 December 2025)**

Lodgement	2024-25 <sup>14</sup>	2025-26 (to 31 December 2025)
<b>Primary</b>	93	278
<b>Secondary</b>	188	489
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>767</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

<sup>14</sup> As the NIV began on 6 December 2024, the data for 2024-25 does not reflect a full twelve months of activity in 2024–25.

**Table 15 – Comparison of National Innovation visa primary applications lodged by sector, for 2024-25 and 2025–26 program years (up to 31 December 2025)**

Sector	2024-25 <sup>15</sup>	2025-26 (to 31 December 2025)
Critical Technologies	31	107
Renewables and Low Emission Technologies	10	40
Health industries	27	62
Agri-food and AgTech	7	10
Defence Capabilities and Space	<5	10
Education	0	9
Financial Services and FinTech	6	16
Infrastructure and Transport	<5	<5
Resources	0	<10
Sports, Arts and Others	9	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>278</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Family Program

111. Australia's Family Migration Program facilitates the reunification of family members of settled Australian citizens, permanent residents and eligible New Zealand citizens (Sponsors). Family migration contributes to social cohesion by strengthening family and community bonds in Australia.

112. The permanent Family Migration Program is comprised of four categories, including:

- The Partner category, which allows Sponsors to sponsor their spouse, de facto partner or prospective partner to live in Australia;
- The Parent category, which is comprised of Non-Contributory and Contributory Parent visas; allowing for parents to stay in Australia with their Australian sponsor children;
- The Other Family category, which allows family members to sponsor carers, remaining relatives and aged dependent relatives to live with them in Australia; and
- The Child category, which includes Child, Adoption and Orphan Relative visas, enabling children to be sponsored by a parent (or an eligible relative in the case of orphaned relatives).

### Family Migration: Capping and queuing and order of processing of applications

113. Parent and Other Family programs are capped by a legislative instrument. Section 85 of the *Migration Act 1958* (the Migration Act) allows the Minister to determine the maximum number of visas which may be granted in each program year. If a visa class has been 'capped', this means that if the number of visas granted within that year reaches the maximum number determined by the Minister, no more visas of that class may be granted in that year. Those visa applications will be 'queued' for further processing in the next program year.

114. The 'cap and queue' power allows the annual Migration Program to be managed by:

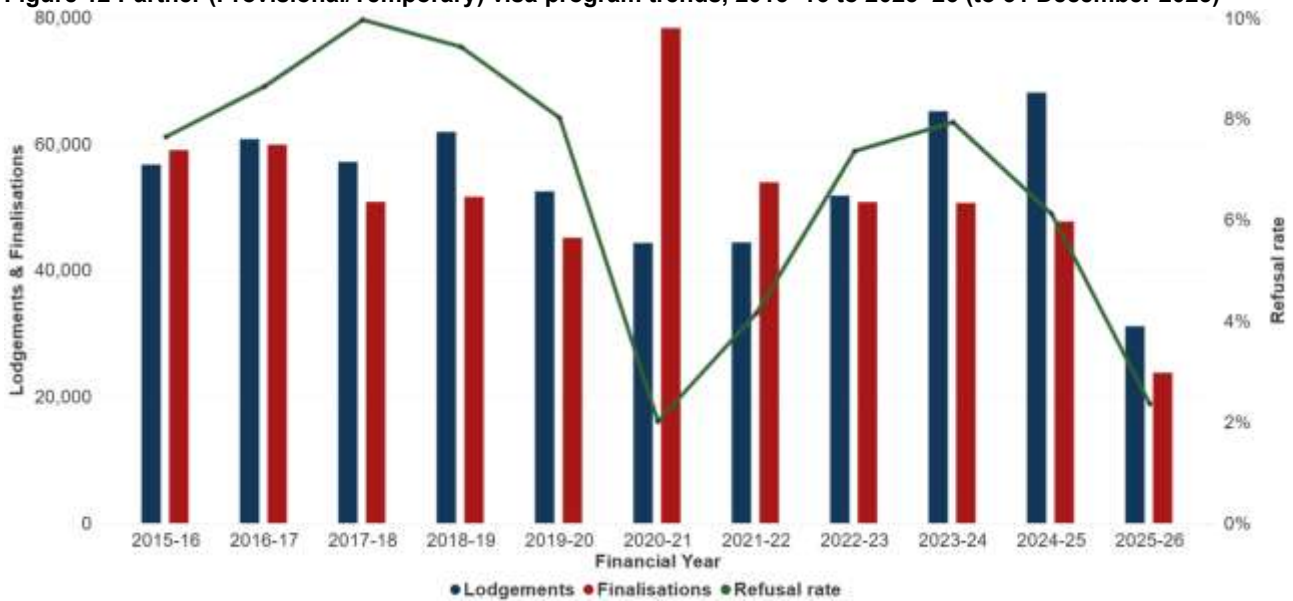
- Limiting the number of visas that may be granted under a specific class, while queuing additional applications which meet the core criteria for possible visa grant in a later year.

<sup>15</sup> As the NIV began on 6 December 2024, the data for 2024-25 does not reflect a full twelve months of activity in 2024–25.

- Ensuring that applications which do not meet the core criteria for a visa can be refused and do not remain in the queue for years before a decision is made on their application.
115. Section 87 of the Migration Act prevents capping of the Partner or Child visa categories. In administering the program, the Department considers planning levels and prioritises processing resources accordingly.
116. Ministerial Direction 102 provides the order for considering and disposing of family visa applications. It reflects the Government’s policy intentions in relation to the size, composition and integrity of the Migration Program, and the management of Australia’s borders.
117. The Direction sets out the family program processing priorities from highest to lowest as follows:
- Applications where the Minister has exercised powers of intervention under sections 351 and 417 of the Migration Act.
  - Partner, Prospective Marriage and Child visa applications.
  - Orphan Relative visa applicants.
  - Contributory Parent and Contributory Aged Parent visa applications.
  - Carer visa applications.
  - Parent, Aged Parent, Remaining Relative and Aged Dependent Relative visa applications.

**Partner visas**

**Figure 12 Partner (Provisional/Temporary) visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



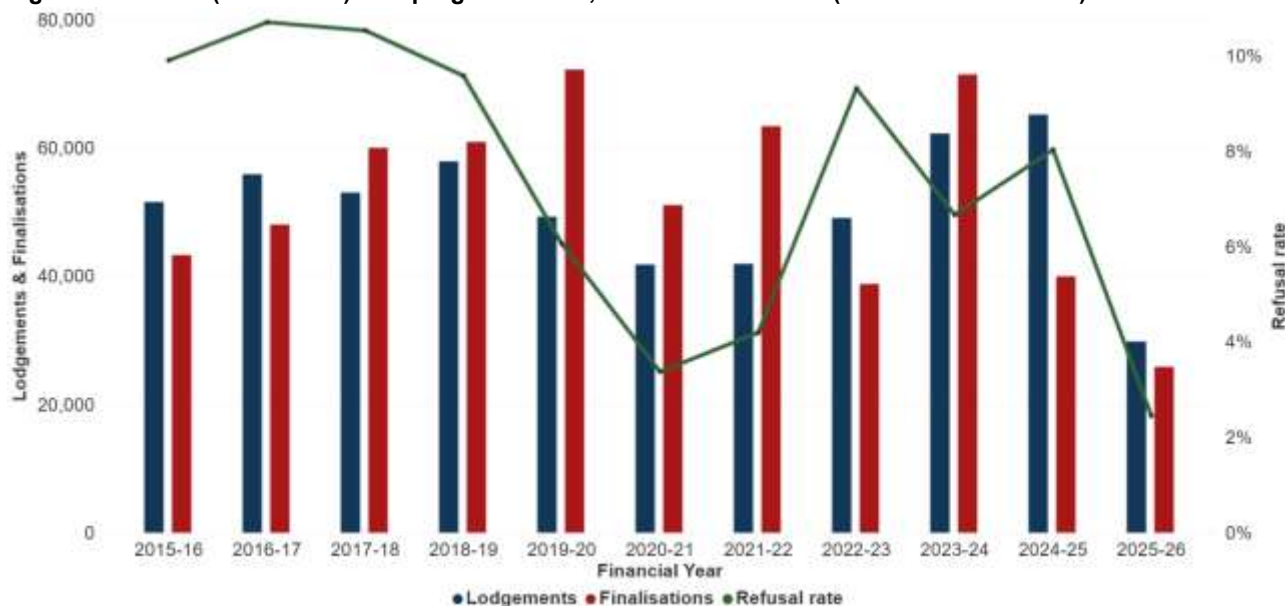
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

118. The Partner visa category continues to make up the majority of Australia’s Family Migration Program.
119. The Partner visa program includes a two-stage processing arrangement, with applicants lodging an application for a temporary or provisional and a permanent Partner visa on the same form at the same time. The two-stage model ensures that only applicants in genuine and ongoing relationships are eligible for the benefits of permanent residence.
120. As part of the two-stage process, most applicants become eligible to be considered for the permanent visa two years after lodgement of the applications.
121. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025, there have been 31,150 Partner visa applications lodged, down 3.9 per cent compared the same period in 2024–25.

### Temporary or Provisional Visas

- 122. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025, 22,499 Partner<sup>16</sup> (Temporary/Provisional) visas have been granted. This follows the delivery of 43,386 Partner (Temporary/Provisional) visa grants in 2024–25.
- 123. As at 31 December 2025, 5.1 per cent of the Partner (Temporary/Provisional) visa applications on hand were older than 24 months, down from over 30 per cent of applications on 30 June 2021.
- 124. The median Partner (Temporary/Provisional) visa processing time in 2025–26 (up to 31 December 2025) was 15 months. For the full 2024–25 program year, the median processing time was 11 months.

**Figure 13 Partner (Permanent) visa program trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

### Permanent Partner Visas

- 125. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025, 24,499 Partner (Permanent) visas have been granted, up 40.2 per cent compared to the same time last program year.
- 126. As at 31 December 2025, there were 24,816 Partner (Permanent) applications on hand that are eligible for assessment (in general, this means 2 years had elapsed since application lodgement). This is down 6.5 per cent from 26,535 Partner (Permanent) applications on hand as at 30 June 2025.
- 127. The median Partner (Permanent) visa processing time in 2025–26 up to 31 December 2025 is 9 months. The median processing time for 2024–25 was also 9 months.

### Parent visas

- 128. In 2022–23, the planning level for Parent visas was increased from 4,500 places in 2021–22 to 8,500. It has been maintained at this level for each program year since, including for 2025–26.
- 129. The Parent program is subject to capping and queueing arrangements. Parent visa applications progress to a queue assessment in the order they are received. However, where an existing applicant for a Parent or Aged Parent visa applies for a Contributory Parent or Contributory Aged Parent visa, the date of lodgement will be considered to be the date of lodgement of the new visa application.
- 130. The Parent queue establishes an order of precedence that can stretch many years into the future. When a visa place becomes available under the Migration Program, applications are released for final processing in order of the queue date allocated to an application.

<sup>16</sup> Some visas granted in a program year may not count towards the migration program outcome.

131. The Department releases more applications from the queue than there are places available under the Migration Program to account for the fact that some applicants may not be able to satisfy the outstanding visa requirements and will no longer be eligible to be granted a visa. Consequently, there is no guarantee that the visa will be granted within the same program year that an application is released from the queue.

### **Sponsored Parent (Temporary) visa**

132. The Sponsored Parent (Temporary) visa is a temporary family visa that allows parents of Australian citizens, permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens to reunite with their adult children in Australia for periods of up to three or five years at time, for a maximum cumulative stay of ten years.

### **Child visas**

133. The Child category in the Migration Program allows children to be sponsored to live permanently in Australia. Generally, children are sponsored by their biological or adoptive parents. Some orphaned children are sponsored by other relatives, and a small cohort are also processed under provisions for vulnerable children.

### **Processing times**

134. Processing times for the Family Stream are impacted by a range of factors, including the number of places the Government allocates to a program each year and the level of demand for each visa category.

### **Family Violence Provisions**

135. In May 2023, as part of the *First Action Plan to implement The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032*, the Government announced that it will expand the Family Violence Provisions (FVPs) to secondary applicants of most permanent visas and additional cohorts of Partner visa applicants.

136. FVPs enable certain visa applicants to remain eligible for the grant of a permanent visa even if their relationship with the sponsoring partner or the primary applicant ends due to family violence. They aim to ensure that visa applicants do not feel compelled to stay in a violent relationship to be granted a permanent visa.

137. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025:

- 699 primary Partner visa applicants sought access to the FVPs and 395 permanent Partner visas were granted based on claims of family violence.
- 12 secondary Skilled visa applicants sought access to the FVPs and 7 permanent Skilled visas were granted based on claims of family violence.
- A list of the visa subclasses is available at the Department of Home website: [Family Violence Provisions](#)

### **Pacific Engagement visa**

138. The Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) is a new permanent visa that commenced in mid-2024 for eligible nationals of Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste.

139. On 1 May 2025, the PEV became two streams:

- Pacific Engagement stream – encompasses the original PEV criteria
- Treaty stream – only for Tuvalu residents from 2025–26.

## Pacific Engagement stream

140. The Pacific Engagement stream provides new opportunities for nationals from eligible countries to live, work and study in Australia. As at 31 December 2025, countries participating in the second year of the program include Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
141. There are up to 3,000 visa places available each year through a ballot process. Country participation and visa allocations will be reviewed annually and in consultation with partner governments.
142. The Pacific Engagement stream aims to:
- Boost permanent migration from the Pacific.
  - Grow Australia's Pacific and Timor-Leste diaspora.
  - Encourage greater cultural, business, investment, and educational exchange between Pacific Island countries, Timor-Leste and Australia.
143. The 2025–26 PEV ballot closed for online registrations on 25 August 2025 and selections occurred on 1 September 2025. There was a high level of interest in the ballot, with 61,028 valid primary registrations submitted across all 11 participating countries (Table 16).

**Table 16 Number of primary registrations received in the PEV ballot, 2025–26 (closed on 25 August 2025)**

Country	Total PEV Ballots Received to 31/12/2024	Total PEV Ballots Received from 01/07/2025 to 25/08/2025
Fiji	30,513	17,666
Federated States of Micronesia	8	<5
Kiribati	NA	2,518
Nauru	429	257
Palau	6	<5
Papua New Guinea	8,097	10,039
Samoa	NA	5,192
Solomon Islands	2,570	2,037
Timor-Leste	7,019	16,789
Tonga	5,611	5,820
Tuvalu	926	TBC <sup>17</sup>
Vanuatu	954	706
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>56,133</b>	<b>61,028</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

144. For the 2025–26 program year, as at 31 December 2025:
- 1,750 primary visa applications (4,371 visa applicants inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) were lodged (Table 17)
  - 330 primary visa applications (773 applicants including primary and secondary applicants) have been granted (Table 18)
  - 0 visa applications have been refused (Table 18)
  - 7 visa primary and/or secondary applicants have withdrawn (Table 18)

<sup>17</sup> Tuvalu's participation in the 2025–26 PEV is yet to be confirmed by DFAT.

**Table 17 Number of applications lodged in Pacific Engagement Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

PEV participating country	2024–25 Program Year		2025–26 Program Year	
	Number of primary visa applications lodged to 30/06/2025	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) to 30/06/2025	Number of primary visa applications lodged from 01/07/2025 to 31/12/2025	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) from 01/07/2025 to 31/12/2025
Federated States of Micronesia	<5	<10	<5	<5
Fiji	134	298	161	407
Kiribati	NA	NA	38	116
Nauru	37	164	26	<95
Palau	<5	<5	<5	<5
Papua New Guinea	590	1,456	829	1,954
Samoa	NA	NA	78	240
Solomon Islands	71	149	138	260
Timor-Leste	163	328	287	669
Tonga	110	299	90	208
Tuvalu	33	110	0	0
Vanuatu	52	136	90	235
Other citizenships <sup>18</sup>	NA	50	<15	190
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>4,371</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

**Table 18 Number of applications finalised – Pacific Engagement Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

Outcome	Number of primary visa applications to 30/06/2025	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) to 30/06/2025	Number of primary visa applications from 1/07/2025 to 31/12/2025	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) from 1/07/2025 to 31/12/2025
Granted	437	1,006	330	773
Refused	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	<5	13	0	7
<b>Total PEV finalisations</b>	<b>&lt;450</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>780</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Treaty stream

145. The Treaty stream implements Australia's commitment under the Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union treaty to provide Tuvalu with a special visa pathway. 280 places (including partners and dependent children) are allocated to the Treaty stream in the 2025–26 program year.

146. The Treaty stream ballot for Tuvalu nationals opened on 16 June 2025 and closed on 18 July 2025.

147. There has been a high level of interest in the visa from Tuvalu nationals. For the 2025–26 program year, as at 31 December 2025:

- 99 primary visa applications (320 visa applicants inclusive of primary and secondary applicants) have been lodged (Table 19)
- 62 primary visa applications (180 applicants including family members) have been granted (Table 20)
- No visa applications have been refused or withdrawn (Table 20)

<sup>18</sup> As at 30 June 2025, 1,006 visas have been granted to primary applicants and their family member secondary applicants.

**Table 19 Number of applications lodged in Tuvalu Treaty Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

Number of primary visa applications lodged	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants)
99	320

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

**Table 20 Number of applications finalised in Tuvalu Treaty Stream, 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)**

Outcome	Number of primary visa applications	Number of visa applicants (inclusive of primary and secondary applicants)
Granted	62	180
Refused	0	0
Withdrawn	0	0
<b>Total PEV finalisations</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>180</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

## Relationship between temporary and permanent migration

148. Temporary migrants are a major source of permanent Skilled stream visa applications, with a number of visas providing a pathway to permanent residence for those who have demonstrated their ability to contribute to the Australian economy. Many permanent family visa applicants are also already living in Australia on temporary family visas.

149. Around 55 per cent of people granted visas under the permanent Migration Program are already living in Australia on temporary visas, residing in established households and already counted as part of the population.

**Table 21 2024–25 Migration Program Outcome by visa type and location of client at time of application**

Outcome	Client Location			
	Visa Category	In Australia	Outside Australia	Total
<b>Skilled</b>	Employer Sponsored	31,392	12,608	44,000
	Skilled Independent	12,599	4,301	16,900
	Regional	13,654	19,294	32,948
	State/Territory Nominated	21,265	11,735	33,000
	Business Innovation & Investment	193	807	1,000
	Global Talent	834	3,166	4,000
	Distinguished Talent	158	142	300
<b>Skilled Total</b>		<b>80,095</b>	<b>52,053</b>	<b>132,148</b>
<b>Family</b>	Partner	18,942	21,558	40,500
	Parent	424	8,076	8,500
	Other Family	167	333	500
	Child	1,054	1,946	3,000
<b>Family Total</b>		<b>20,587</b>	<b>31,913</b>	<b>52,500</b>
<b>Special Eligibility Total</b>		<b>340</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>Migration Program Total</b>		<b>101,022</b>	<b>83,979</b>	<b>185,001</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

**Table 22 Number of permanent primary visa applications lodged by client location, comparison 2022–23, 2023–24 and 2024–25 (to 30 June 2025)**

Financial Year	2022–23			2023–24			2024–25		
Visa category	In Australia	Outside Australia	Total	In Australia	Outside Australia	Total	In Australia	Outside Australia	Total
Family	67,838	45,115	112,953	77,872	49,303	127,175	90,112	45,991	136,103
Other Permanent	5	134	139	<5	92	95	351	940	1,291
Resident Return/ADV	179,639	48,517	228,156	163,483	50,217	213,700	140,897	47,852	188,749
Skilled	83,577	29,180	112,757	42,496	13,475	55,971	65,372	12,842	78,214
Special Eligibility	64	8	72	<110	5	106	164	9	173
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>331,123</b>	<b>122,954</b>	<b>454,077</b>	<b>283,955</b>	<b>113,092</b>	<b>397,047</b>	<b>296,896</b>	<b>107,634</b>	<b>404,530</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

150. The number of lodgements under the permanent skilled program for applicants residing outside of Australia was 26.1 per cent of total lodgements between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 compared to 35.6 per cent of total lodgements between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

## Immigration outreach and engagement

151. The Department delivers a range of communication and engagement activities to support immigration programs through outreach, marketing campaigns and the development of information products.
152. The Department's Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (BIRO) network assists stakeholders with information and support on workforce visas in the Skilled Migration program. From 1 July to 31 December 2025, the BIRO network facilitated and participated in more than 2,305 engagements.
153. The BIRO network has increased business and industry engagement for Pacific visas. They support employers with information on relevant Pacific programs, including the Pacific Engagement visa (PEV) and Pacific Australia Labour Mobility visa (PALM) to fill critical shortages.
154. The Department continues to deliver a range of targeted communication products and engagement activities to help strengthen the integrity of the Protection visa (PV) program, including continuing to:
- Raising awareness of the misuse of the PV program
  - Correcting misinformation about the PV system to influence the behaviour of non-genuine PV applicants.
  - educate PV applicants on the adverse consequences if their PV application is refused
  - motivate temporary visa holders who may be thinking about applying for a PV to seek professional advice from a free legal provider, registered migration agent, or Australian legal practitioner.
155. In the 2025–26 program year, as at 31 December 2025, the Department has achieved high levels of engagement and outreach, including:
- 82 social media posts on Department channels, viewed by 3.5 million people and shared more than 12,400 times
  - Engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse community ambassadors to deter non-genuine PV applications through 480 social media posts that reached approximately 3 million people
  - Development of materials promoting the PEV and Treaty stream visas, including social media posts that reached more than 1.5 million people and included the Department's most-shared Facebook post

- A large-scale research project involving 2,219 participants to inform future education and communication initiatives to reduce temporary migrant worker exploitation
- Delivery of 18 promotional products and a targeted digital advertising campaign for the NIV
- A communications kit distributed to 2,815 industry, peak body and government stakeholders to support employer uptake of the Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot
- A digital advertising campaign to promote the PV reform webpage resulted in 85,292 clicks to the page between the campaign's launch on 29 October and 31 December
- Promotional materials for the Check Twice Submit Once campaign, including social posts, flyers, postcards and a revamped webpage that was viewed 575,236 times
- Communication products for the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh, highlighting a visa scam targeting Australia's biometrics collection program.

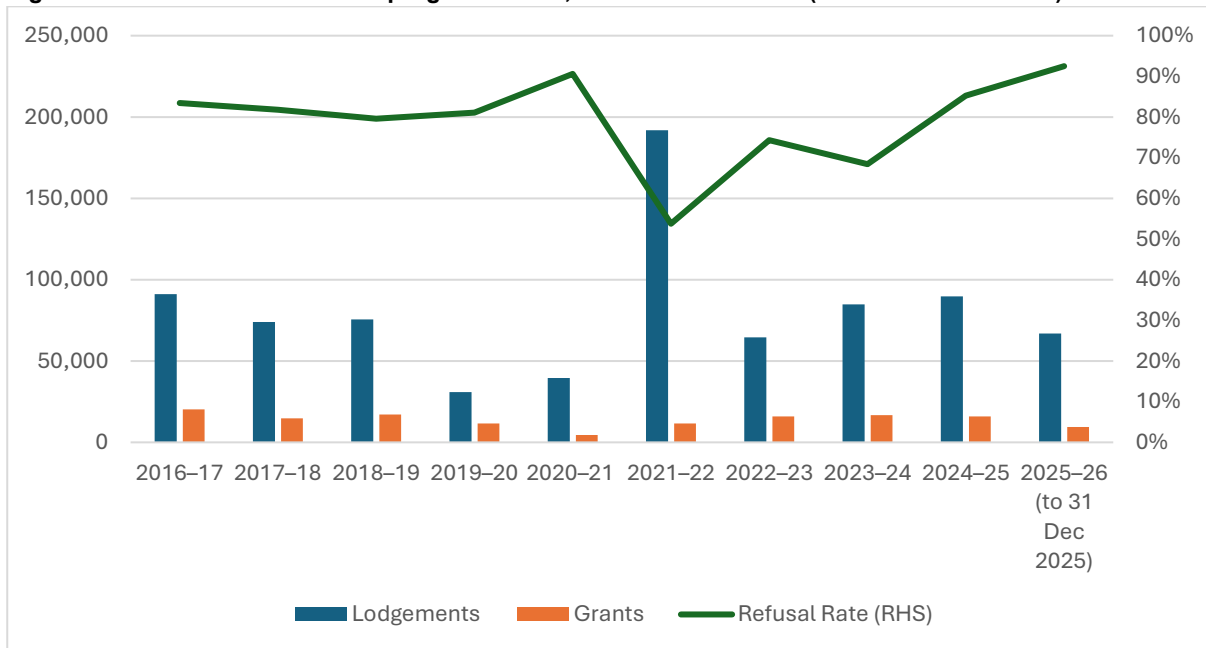
## Humanitarian Program

156. In November 2025, Australia granted the one millionth refugee and humanitarian visa since the end of World War II. This achievement reflects Australia's proud, and generous tradition of welcoming people in need of protection and offering them the chance to rebuild their lives in safety.
157. This milestone is an opportunity to acknowledge, reflect and celebrate Australia's international humanitarian efforts and the many positive contributions to Australia's prosperity made by those who came to Australia as refugees.
158. Australia continues to be a world leader in settling refugees and others in humanitarian need, even as global resettlement places decrease. Australia's 2025–26 Humanitarian Program is set at 20,000 places.
159. There are two components within Australia's Humanitarian Program:
- The offshore component (Humanitarian visas) provide permanent resettlement in Australia to refugees and people in humanitarian need overseas; and
  - The onshore component (Protection visas) provide protection to people who arrive lawfully in Australia and engage Australia's non-refoulement (non-return) obligations.

## Humanitarian visas

160. Notwithstanding Australia's generous resettlement intake, global demand for resettlement is unprecedented, and the Department receives more applications for humanitarian visas than there are available places under the Humanitarian Program. As such, the Australian Government has established policy to guide decisions on which humanitarian visa applications we should generally give priority. This includes those outside their home country who are:
- Assessed as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and referred to Australia for resettlement; or
  - Proposed by an immediate family member (for example, spouses and minor aged children) who has a Refugee category visa (subclasses 200, 201, 203 or 204).
  - Applicants who do not fall within Program priorities are likely to be refused, and even priority applicants may wait up to 10 years for a visa outcome.

**Figure 14 Offshore Humanitarian program trends, 2016–17 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

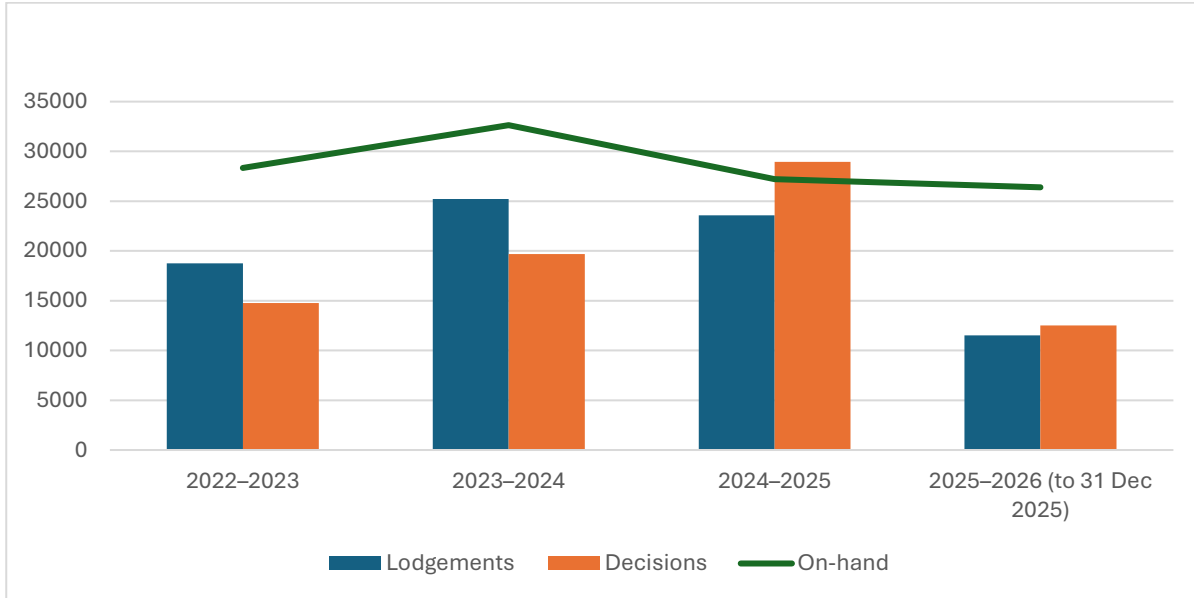
### Dedicated places for Afghan nationals

- 161. The Australian Government allocated 26,500 dedicated visa places for Afghans to migrate to Australia under the offshore Humanitarian Program, through to 2025–26.
- 162. In 2024–25, 6,700 visas were granted to Afghan nationals under the offshore Humanitarian Program. Grants to Afghans represented almost 42.0 per cent of the total offshore humanitarian visa program grants in 2024–25.

### Protection visas

- 163. In line with Australia’s international non-refoulement (non-return) obligations, non-citizens who enter Australia lawfully may seek Australia’s protection by lodging a Protection visa (subclass 866) application. While a proportion of applicants claim protection because they genuinely fear they will face serious or significant harm if returned to their home country, the Protection visa system faces exploitation by individuals seeking to prolong their stay in Australia for labour market or other opportunities. The vast majority of applications are refused.
- 164. Reforms to the Protection visa system announced by the Australian Government on 5 October 2023 to remove incentives for non-genuine applicants to apply for protection, and reduce legacy backlogs, have significantly reduced the time taken to finalise a permanent Protection visa application.
- 165. While processing times are subject to fluctuations over time, implementation of ‘real time processing’ (RTP) for most high-volume caseloads has resulted in faster processing of new applications. As at 31 December 2025, 56.8 per cent of refused Protection visa applications finalised under the RTP model were finalised within 90 days. The on-hand caseload has stabilised and begun reducing following consistent prior growth.
- 166. Protection visa finalisations have been consistently outstripping lodgements since the reforms, with 28,960 grant and refusal decisions made in Program Year 2024–25, the highest number made in a single program year over the past decade.
  - New applications remain steady at around 2,000 a month.

**Figure 15 Permanent Protection visa lodgements, decisions and on-hand applications<sup>19</sup>, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

167. In 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025), the grant rate for permanent Protection visa applications is 20 per cent.

### Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMA) Legacy Caseload

168. In February 2023, the Australian Government provided a permanent visa pathway to existing Temporary Protection visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise visa (SHEV) holders through the permanent Resolution of Status (RoS) visa

169. This policy provides the opportunity for those people who have been found to engage Australia’s protection obligations an opportunity for permanent residence.

170. Persons who do not engage protection obligations, who are not awaiting a merits or judicial review outcome, and who have exhausted all avenues to remain in Australia, are expected to depart Australia voluntarily and may be provided assistance to depart.

171. As of 31 December 2025:

- 21,884 permanent RoS visas have been granted.
- 3,023 initial TPV, SHEV and RoS visa applications remain on hand for processing.

## Australian Citizenship Program

172. Migrants who become Australian citizens make an ongoing commitment to Australia and its values. Citizenship entails additional responsibilities to the Australian community as well as individual privileges.

173. Applications for Australian citizenship generally fall within four categories: conferral (the most common way of acquiring citizenship through application, representing 90 per cent of all applications in 2025–26 as at 31 December 2025), descent, adoption and resumption.

<sup>19</sup> On hand includes any application that has not been finalised, invalidated, withdrawn, refused or granted since lodgement. It does not include applications that have been refused by the Department and subsequently remitted to the Department from merits review or judicial review.

## Citizenship by conferral

174. Australian citizenship by conferral is available to permanent residents (including permanent visa holders and New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa (SCV), who meet relevant eligibility requirements, including residency, knowledge of Australia, English language, identity, character and an intention to reside in Australia.
175. In the 2025–26 program year (to 31 December 2025), 145,507 citizenship by conferral applications were finalised, representing an increase of 59 per cent in comparison to the same period in the 2024–25 program year.

**Table 23 Number of Australian citizenship by conferral applications finalised, by decision type and financial year, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**

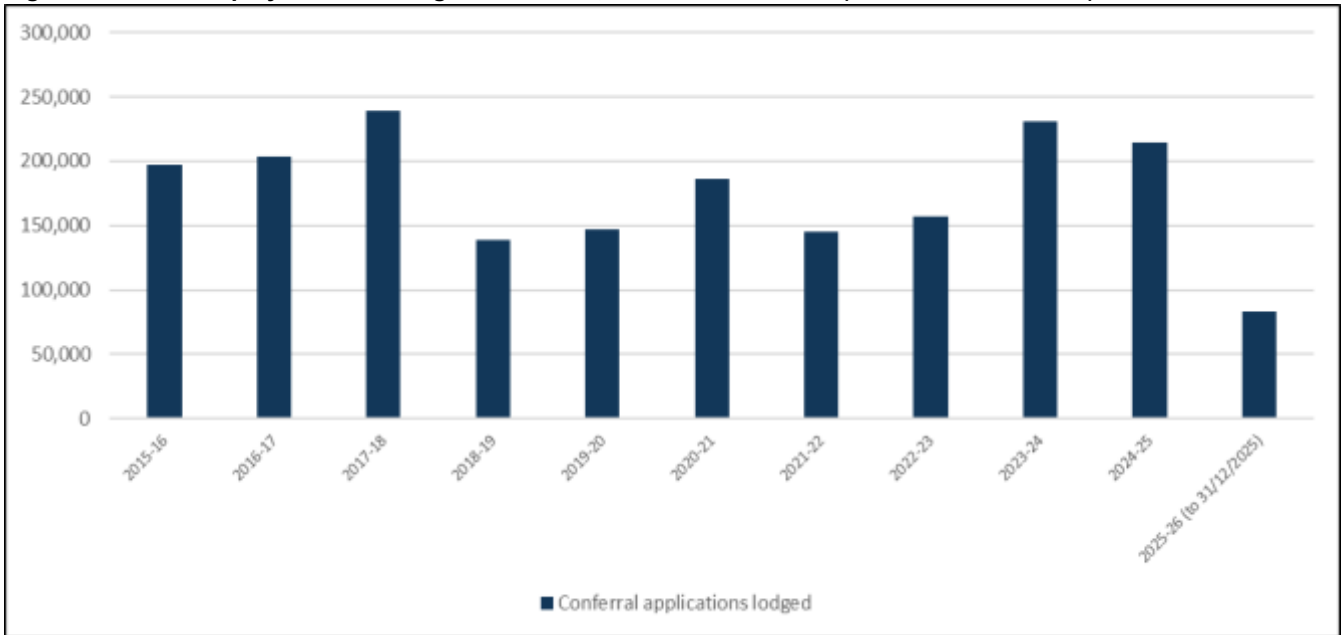
Program year	Approved	Refused	Invalid	Other <sup>20</sup>	Grand Total
2015–16	129,515	4,749	32,612	792	<b>167,668</b>
2016–17	127,013	4,089	22,035	742	<b>153,879</b>
2017–18	80,776	4,956	14,998	692	<b>101,422</b>
2018–19	145,587	7,590	5,713	1,227	<b>160,117</b>
2019–20	215,394	8,762	2,179	1,988	<b>228,323</b>
2020–21	170,645	7,957	1,782	2,831	<b>183,215</b>
2021–22	149,514	6,798	3,246	1,789	<b>161,347</b>
2022–23	185,419	8,705	3,629	1,055	<b>198,808</b>
2023–24	174,880	11,781	5,116	1,217	<b>192,994</b>
2024–25	165,326	8,399	4,908	1,183	<b>179,816</b>
2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)	137,231	4,040	3,568	668	<b>145,507</b>

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2026**

176. Once citizenship is conferred, it can be revoked only in extremely limited circumstances. From 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2025, 50 individuals had their Australian citizenship revoked for criminal conduct, including for citizenship or migration fraud.
177. There continues to be strong interest from migrants applying to become Australian citizens. In 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025), 83,487 applications for citizenship by conferral were lodged.

<sup>20</sup> Other includes applications withdrawn by the client and minor numbers of administrative finalisations.

Figure 16 Citizenship by conferral lodgement trends, 2015–16 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)



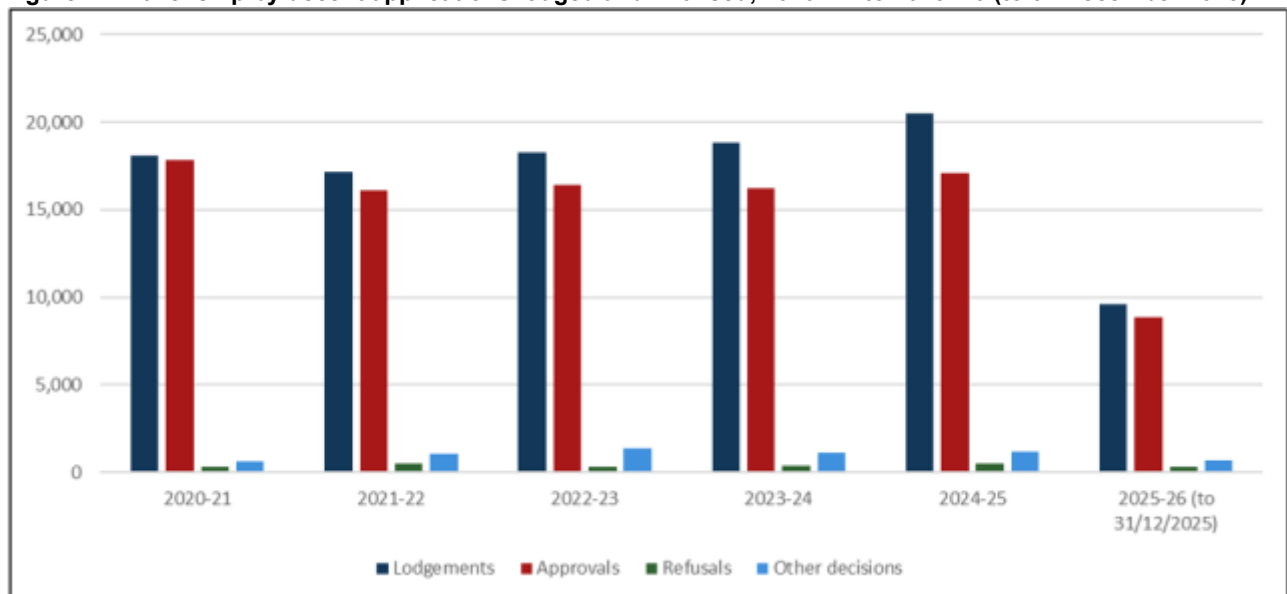
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Citizenship by descent

178. People born outside of Australia, who at the time of their birth had a parent who was an Australian citizen (or the parent later became an Australian citizen on 26 January 1949), can apply for Australian citizenship by descent; regardless of their age.

179. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025, 8,876 people acquired Australian citizenship by descent (Figure 17). This represents a less than 1 per cent increase compared to the same period in the 2024–25 program year.

Figure 17 Citizenship by decent applications lodged and finalised, 2020–21 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)<sup>21</sup>



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

<sup>21</sup> Other decisions include invalidated applications, applications withdrawn by the client and administrative finalisations.

180. In 2025–26 to 31 December 2025, 170 children born through surrogacy arrangements acquired Australian citizenship by descent. The 5 main countries of birth of these children were, in numerical order, United States of America, Colombia, Georgia, Mexico and Ukraine.

### **Citizenship by adoption**

181. Children adopted outside of Australia by an Australian citizen under the Hague Convention or a bilateral arrangement, can apply for Australian citizenship. 17 children acquired Australian citizenship by adoption in 2024–25, a decrease from 21 in 2023–24. In 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025), 8 people have acquired Australian citizenship by adoption.

### **Citizenship by resumption**

182. People who previously renounced their Australian citizenship, or who lost it automatically under historical provisions, may apply to resume Australian citizenship if they are of good character. In 2024–25, 158 people resumed Australian citizenship, compared to 121 in 2023–24. In 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025), 74 people have acquired Australian citizenship by resumption.

### **Citizenship service delivery**

183. As at 31 December 2025, the number of on hand conferral applications was 90,880, a 31 per cent decrease from 31 December 2024 (131,352 on hand).

184. The average processing time from lodgement to decision for applications decided in December 2025 decreased by 18 per cent from December 2024 (from 8 months [245 days] to 7 months [200 days]).

185. In 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025), 93,703 people acquired citizenship at a ceremony (93,413 in-person and 290 online).

186. This represents a 28.1 per cent (20,540) increase compared to the same period in the 2024-25 program year.

### **Direct pathway to Australian citizenship for New Zealanders**

187. On 1 July 2023, the department implemented the Government's priority of providing a direct pathway to Australian citizenship for New Zealand citizens.

188. In the period from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2025, 102,393 citizenship by conferral applications were received from New Zealand citizens holding an SCV. These represent 19 per cent of all citizenship by conferral applications received in this period.

## **Managing risk and community protection**

### **Risk Environment**

189. The majority of non-citizens entering Australia are genuine entrants who comply with their visa conditions. However, there are individuals and groups that seek to exploit visa and citizenship programs.

190. Non-citizens will continue to seek opportunities in prosperous countries, such as Australia. Heightened awareness will be required for non-citizens who cannot meet visa criteria and may seek to misuse visa processes to achieve migration goals.

191. Some non-citizens who are strongly motivated to work in Australia may be manipulated and exploited by unscrupulous employers and labour hire intermediaries.

192. Political and economic instability and ongoing conflict will continue to impact migrant flows, increasing the number of people who seek to relocate both legally and illegally to safe countries, such as Australia. Some individuals may have little to no reliable documentation, making it difficult to verify their identity.

- 193. In response, the Department has bolstered its ability to accurately identify both non-genuine visa applicants and facilitators who exploit them, thereby supporting faster processing for the majority of genuine visa applicants. This has been made possible by investing in specialist teams, innovative use of data and technology as well as improved cooperation and information flows.
- 194. Since 2020, the Department’s risk and integrity capability has been expanded through a multi-layered approach to risk across the immigration continuum, and improved partnerships between visa and citizenship program delivery teams and risk and integrity teams.
- 195. In addition, data holdings and system analysis enables the Department to identify, assess and mitigate risk in visa applications and border-related transactions. This also allows the Department to better monitor a visa holder’s compliance with visa conditions.
- 196. Risk identification and mitigation is enhanced by collaboration with partner agencies in Australia and overseas. This cooperation provides a deeper understanding of immigration fraud and non-compliance, which informs the management of risk in Australia’s visa and citizenship programs.

## Reforms and policy implementation

### Countering Irregular Migration

197. The Australian Government remains committed to Operation Sovereign Borders, working with its regional partners to counter maritime people smuggling and prevent avoidable deaths at sea. People who travel to Australia irregularly by boat will not settle in Australia.

#### Maritime People Smuggling

- 198. As at 31 December 2025, there were 28 UMAs initially transferred to Nauru for the 2025–26 financial year.
- 199. The following table highlights returns and transfers across the 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025-26 financial years.

**Table 24 Returns and transfers, 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Financial Year	Returned to country of origin or departure		Transferred to a regional processing country	
	People	Ventures <sup>22</sup>	People	Ventures <sup>7</sup>
2023–24	30	7	109	6
2024–25	163	9	41	8
2025-26	118	13	28	4

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

200. Close cooperation with regional partners has resulted in the disruption of maritime people smuggling ventures targeting Australia by foreign law enforcement agencies<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Ventures may be resolved by any combination of a return to country of origin or departure and a transfer to regional processing and may therefore be counted across both columns.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics are provided by AFP posts, based on advice received by foreign law enforcement, and are indicative only as they are subject to a range of factors that may affect accuracy and quality. Post experience is that results are typically under-reported because arrests in regional locations are occasionally not reported.

**Table 25 Ventures and potential irregular immigrants (PII) disrupted, 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025-26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Financial Year	Ventures disrupted	PII disrupted
2023–24	8	55
2024–25	10	158
2025-26	15	166

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2025

201. It has been over 12 years since the last known death at sea from maritime people smuggling ventures en-route to Australia, and almost 12 years since the arrival of the last successful<sup>24</sup> people smuggling venture to Australia.

## Modern slavery and human trafficking

202. In Australia, modern slavery crimes including human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery are criminalised under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) Divisions 270 and 271. Australia's human trafficking offences cover trafficking in all its forms, including trafficking for harvesting human organs and trafficking in children. Slavery and slavery-like offences include forced marriage, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage and deceptive recruitment for labour or services.

203. The Australian Government finalised delivery of the *National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–25* (NAP) in 2025. The NAP provided the strategic framework for Australia's response to modern slavery and articulated Australia's vision where *no one is subjected to modern slavery and the human rights of all people are valued equally*. The NAP was delivered through a coordinated, whole of government approach led by the Attorney-General's Department. The Australian Government is considering options for the next strategic response, which will be informed by an evaluation of the NAP being finalised by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

204. The ABF has a National Human Trafficking Coordination function whose role is to refer all suspected cases of human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like-practices to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in accordance with a joint agency Human Trafficking, Slavery, and Slavery-like Practices Referral Protocol (Referral Protocol).

205. Between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025, the Department, including the ABF, referred 78 suspected cases of human trafficking and modern slavery to the AFP for investigation under the established Referral Protocol.

206. The Department supports unlawful non-citizen victims of human trafficking by regularising their immigration status under the Human Trafficking Visa Framework (HTVF). The HTVF includes both a temporary and permanent visa:

207. A Bridging F visa (WF060) regularises a person's stay for:

- An initial 45-day period for recovery and reflection.
- An additional 45-day period for further recovery and reflection.
- Longer-term stay to assist in a human trafficking investigation (supported by an assistance notice issued by the AFP).
- Re-entry to Australia (for offshore trafficking victims) to support a human trafficking investigation.
- Lawful status to support a victim's departure from Australia (for onshore trafficking victims).

<sup>24</sup> 'Successful' maritime people smuggling ventures are defined in this context as those not disrupted, turned back, returned, or transferred to a regional processing country.

208. A Referred Stay (Permanent) visa (Subclass 852) (RSV), allows a victim survivor to stay in Australia if they have contributed to, and closely cooperated with, a police investigation into human trafficking or a slavery-like offence, and they would be in danger if they return to their home country because of their participation in a criminal justice process.
- The Attorney General's Department must identify the victim survivor as having made a contribution to, and cooperated closely with, an investigation in relation to another person who was alleged to have engaged in human trafficking, slavery or slavery-like practices.
  - Following an assessment of claims and eligibility, the victim survivor may be invited to apply for the RSV.
  - The Referred Stay visa is **not** a protection visa. It is designed specifically to support victims of human trafficking who have contributed to a criminal justice process and who have well founded fears of returning home as a result of that contribution.
209. Under the HTVF, a victim's immediate family members may also be eligible for a visa to support family reunion and foster social cohesion. In some circumstances, witnesses to trafficking offences may qualify for a permanent visa, even if they are not themselves a victim of human trafficking, slavery or slavery-like practices.

## Ensuring immigration integrity and community protection

210. In the 2023–24 Budget, the Australian Government provided \$50 million over four years to support an uplift in immigration compliance and the implementation of reforms to support the integrity of Australia's migration system.
211. This funding has supported the development of a dedicated Immigration Compliance Group within the Department, bringing together immigration compliance policy, intelligence and enforcement. The Department and ABF also work collaboratively with Commonwealth, state and territory partners to strengthen Australia's border against serious organised crime networks seeking to exploit Australia's migration system. Where exploitation is identified outside of its legislative remit, the Department and ABF work closely with partner agencies to facilitate suitable treatment options and investigations under appropriate and relevant legislation.

## Migrant worker exploitation

212. Exploitation, as defined in Divisions 270 and 271 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth), involves slavery and slavery-like practices and human trafficking. However, a range of other behaviours can also be considered exploitative, including the underpayment of wages and entitlements, working conditions that are unsafe, unfair dismissal, threats and coercion. For the purpose of this section, exploitation is not confined by the definitions outlined in the Criminal Code.
213. The Government has zero tolerance for the exploitation of workers, regardless of their visa status.
214. The Government takes a whole-of-government approach to addressing migrant worker exploitation. This involves collaboration between a range of agencies including the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Attorney-General's Department, the FWO, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Taxation Office and the AFP.
215. The national workplace relations system has been established for workers in Australia. It includes:
- The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) (Fair Work Act) and the Fair Work Regulations 2009, which establish a safety net of minimum entitlements and conditions of employment;
  - The Fair Work Commission, which is the independent agency responsible for setting minimum standards under modern awards; and
  - The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), which is the lead agency for advice, education, compliance and enforcement activities under the Fair Work Act.

216. Under workplace laws, employers and third party providers (such as labour hire intermediaries) have obligations to workers regardless of their immigration status. Under the Migration Act, employers and third-party providers have additional obligations designed to support the integrity of Australia's visa programs.
217. The Department is committed to ensuring that Australia's visa programs are not misused to exploit migrant workers. Informed by the findings of the Migrant Workers' Taskforce (2019), the Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System (2023) and the Migration Strategy (2023), sustained efforts to address migrant worker exploitation include the proactive provision of information about migration-related workplace rights and obligations, and the administration of three legislative frameworks:
218. The 'Employer' framework seeks to ensure employers only employ visa holders with appropriate work rights, recognising that visa programs are designed for specific purposes. This scheme is supported by the Department's Visa Entitlement Verification Online system which enables migrant workers and potential employers to verify a visa holder's immigration status, and the conditions attached to their visa. Since 1 July 2024, this framework also includes criminal offences for using a person's visa status to exploit them in the workplace.
219. 'Paying for Visa Sponsorship' legislation outlines offences for asking for, or receiving a benefit in return for a sponsorship related event. The offences seek to protect migrant workers from exploitation or extortion, encourage fair recruitment practices and protect employment opportunities for Australian workers.
220. The 'Sponsorship Obligations' framework seeks to ensure sponsored visa holders are not exploited by their sponsors. A breach may involve a sponsor not providing their sponsored worker the same terms and conditions of employment that are offered to other workers, not ensuring the visa holder is working in the occupation for which they were nominated (the gap they were sponsored to address) or unlawfully recovering costs from the visa holder.
221. Under these legislative frameworks, enforcement officers are supported by a range of tools to respond proportionately to cases of visa non-compliance. This includes education activities and warnings, compliance notices, enforceable undertakings, infringements, civil penalties, an ability to cancel or bar employer sponsors from using the program, a power to prohibit employers from allowing any additional non-citizens (other than permanent residents) to work for a period of time, and criminal offences.

**Table 26 Migrant Worker Compliance activity and outcomes for 2024-25 and 2025-26 program year (up to 31 December 2025)**

Outcome	2024-25	2025-26 to 31 December 2025
Site visits conducted	1051	487
Education	544	188
IWWN (Illegal Workers Warning Notice)	32	24
Employer Sponsorship Cancellation	48	41
Employer Sponsor Bar	30	27
Compliance Notice	48	45
Infringements	17	8
Infringement value	\$2,603,298	\$589,080

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2026**

222. The implementation of these frameworks, has been reinforced by recent investment in an integrated immigration compliance capability, including immigration compliance policy, intelligence and operations, which also supports centralised engagement with regulatory and law enforcement authorities.
223. Recent reforms also include a range of safeguards to help address fears that may have deterred temporary visa holders from asserting their workplace rights. These include:

- Repeal of section 235 of the Migration Act, under which it was a criminal offence to work in breach of a visa condition, or to work as an unlawful non-citizen, and which deterred some temporary migrants from reporting workplace issues (repealed on 1 July 2024).
- Enhanced mobility provisions for temporary migrants under certain 'employer sponsored' programs (subclass 482, 494, and 457 visas), which make it easier for sponsored workers to leave an exploitative employer (the change commenced 1 July 2024).
- A Strengthening Reporting Protections pilot, which provides protection from visa cancellation in prescribed circumstances. This pilot responds to feedback that dishonest employers threaten temporary visa holders with visa cancellation if they seek to assert their workplace rights. The prescribed circumstance balances the Government's commitment to address migrant worker exploitation alongside its commitment to uphold the integrity of the migration program (the pilot commenced 24 July 2024).
- A Workplace Justice visa pilot, to enable migrant workers who have been exploited while working in Australia to extend their stay for a short period to effectively pursue workplace claims (the pilot commenced 24 July 2024).
  - The two pilots rely on effective cooperation with experts in workplace relations to certify the workplace exploitation matter and appropriately support the visa holder to pursue an outcome. The pilots are scheduled to run to 30 June 2028 and will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Communication and engagement activities about migration related workplace rights and obligations include:
  - Web content, social media posts and a comic strip translated in key languages.
  - Engagement supported by the Business Industry Regional Outreach and Community Liaison Officer networks.
  - Education site visits by compliance officers to help employers understand their obligations under the Migration Act.

224. These activities will be enhanced by commissioned behavioural insights research and analysis of current attitudes towards reporting exploitation among temporary migrant workers and the broader community. The research provided insights into the most effective communication approaches, key messages, preferred channels and delivery methods to educate migrant workers and employers about workplace rights and obligations.

225. The activities are supported by a dedicated grants program to enable selected non-government entities to proactively educate temporary visa holders and their employers about migration-related workplace rights and obligations (commenced in July 2025).

## Unlawful non-citizens

226. An unlawful non-citizen (UNC) is defined in the Migration Act as a non-citizen in the migration zone who is not a lawful non-citizen, meaning that they do not hold a visa that is in effect.

227. As at 30 June 2025, there were an estimated 77,700 UNCs in Australia. This estimate excludes persons in held and community detention, and is derived by matching visa grants, arrivals and departures across many departmental systems and Fact of Death data collated by individual state and territory jurisdictions, to ascertain those that may have arrived in Australia and not departed before their visa expired or was cancelled.

228. Matching traveller data across different systems is inherently difficult and prone to error as people can arrive and leave on different travel documents and under different names. There is also a significant amount of change within the cohort of UNCs in Australia at any one time as most non-citizens are only unlawful for a short period and either engage with the Department's Status Resolution Service to resolve their immigration status or depart voluntarily.

229. The ABF's operational activity is focused towards UNC's who pose a significant risk to the Australian community (for example those involved in organised and criminal exploitation of Australia's visa program and foreign worker exploitation).

## Cancellations<sup>25</sup>

230. All non-citizens who apply for, and are granted a visa, are expected to obey Australian laws and meet and continue to meet, character, health, identity, security and other eligibility requirements set out in migration legislation. These requirements ensure the health, safety and security of the Australian community.

231. The character test in section 501 of the Migration Act, together with the general visa cancellation provisions in the Migration Act, ensures that non-citizens who are of character concern, commit crimes in Australia, pose a risk to the Australian community or represent an integrity concern are appropriately considered for visa refusal or cancellation. These two programs directly support the Department's core objective of protecting the Australian community and the integrity of Australia's borders and visa programs.

## The Character Program

232. A person may fail the 'character test' under section 501 of the Act for a number of reasons, including if they have a substantial criminal record or have been convicted of certain offences, such as those involving sexual offences against children. The test also considers whether a person's past or present conduct indicates they would be a danger to the Australian community; this includes engaging in criminal conduct, harassment, intimidation, or inciting discord. A person who is assessed as presenting a security risk will also fail the character test.

233. When making character-related decisions, departmental delegates are guided by a Ministerial Direction that provides the framework within which decisions makers should approach their task. The current Ministerial Direction 110 came into effect on 21 June 2024 and reflects the government's commitment to protecting the Australian community.

234. Portfolio ministers may also personally consider cancelling or refusing the visa of a non-citizen who does not meet the character test. Additionally, the Minister has personal, non-compellable powers under the Migration Act to set aside decisions made by a departmental delegate or the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) and cancel or refuse a person's visa if they are satisfied that the person does not pass the character test and that it is in the 'national interest' to cancel or refuse the visa.

**Table 27 Adverse section 501 (character) decisions<sup>26</sup>, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)<sup>27</sup>**

Character Decisions	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
<b>Minister Decisions</b>				
Cancelled by Minister	6	7	12	7
Refused by Minister	<5	6	10	6
AAT or Delegate decision set aside by the Minister	0	76	77	19
<b>Delegate Decisions</b>				
Mandatory Cancellation	615	500	830	296
Discretionary Cancellation by Delegate	<5	28	42	26
Refused by Delegate	140	189	850	301

<sup>25</sup> All data in the 'Cancellations' section has been drawn from a live systems environment, the figures provided may differ slightly in previous or future reporting.

<sup>26</sup> Does not include s501F decisions, these are counted in the General Cancellations table.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

Character Decisions	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
Mandatory Cancellations not revoked	356	329	421	262
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>917</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

235. In May 2024, the former Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security and former Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs directed the Department to urgently review a number of character related decisions, including all section 501 character decisions set aside by the review tribunal, and submit cases for consideration of their personal, non-delegable powers to cancel or refuse the visa in the national interest. The increase in cases escalated for the Ministers' consideration led to an increase in cancellation and refusal decisions made under the Ministers' personal powers in 2023–24 and 2024–25.

**Table 28 Top five citizenships with adverse section 501 (character) outcomes, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)<sup>28 29</sup>**

Character cancellation	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
New Zealand	277	243	407	140
United Kingdom	36	37	79	31
China	20	28	38	11
Vietnam	35	27	19	7
India	15	22	35	12
All Other	242	246	383	147
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>348</b>
Character refusal	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
United Kingdom	23	52	323	104
New Zealand	20	39	120	42
United States of America	<10	7	125	34
Ireland	<5	8	18	7
Vietnam	8	7	13	5
All Other	81	90	261	115
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>307</b>
Character revocations (not revoked)	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
New Zealand	139	122	170	105
United Kingdom	18	26	31	21
Sudan	17	14	13	12
Vietnam	13	17	15	5
China	5	15	18	9
All Other	176	140	178	113
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>265</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

236. The character test is country agnostic. The number of New Zealand and United Kingdom citizens whose visas have been cancelled or refused under the character provisions should be viewed in the context of the size of their populations in Australia.

<sup>28</sup> All data in the 'Cancellations' section has been drawn from a live systems environment, the figures provided may differ slightly in previous or future reporting.

<sup>29</sup> Categories may include decisions made by a Minister to set aside an AAT/ART decision and to substitute that decision with a decision to cancel a visa, refuse a visa application or to not revoke a mandatory cancellation.

## The General Visa Cancellation Program

237. A person's visa may be cancelled on one of the general visa cancellation grounds in the Migration Act. General cancellation grounds include non-compliance with visa conditions, provision of false or misleading information, or changes in circumstances that mean the visa criteria are no longer met. Additionally, a non-citizen's visa may be cancelled if their presence in Australia is a risk to the health, safety or good order of the Australian community or an individual.

**Table 29 General cancellation decisions, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)<sup>30</sup>**

General cancellation decisions	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
Incorrect Information (s109)	144	129	258	196
General Power (s116)	1,884	3,186	4,474	1,809
Holder Overseas (s128)	10,934	22,834	28,784	13,448
All Other Powers <sup>31</sup>	2,126	2,120	3,517	1,217
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15,088</b>	<b>28,269</b>	<b>37,033</b>	<b>16,670</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

238. The increased number of general visa cancellations in 2024–25 is the result of a number of initiatives in the Department including the introduction of a dedicated Student Visa Cancellation Section established in January 2024. This reflects the Government's focus on integrity in the Student visa program, and complements a suite of measures introduced in 2024 to strengthen integrity within the international education sector.

239. This has resulted in a higher number of cancellations of Student visa holders who have provided fraudulent, false or misleading information in their application, or who did not genuinely come to Australia for the purpose of their visa, or who have not complied with the conditions of their visa.

240. Other focus areas in 2024–25 included streamlining efforts relating to offshore general visa cancellations. This included focused effort on integrity cancellations and targeted cancellation activity in the subclass 400 series caseload (including the Temporary Skill Shortage (Short-term) visa (subclass 482) and the Temporary Work (International Relations) visa (subclass 403) caseload, for example where the worker has ceased employment with a sponsor or has withdrawn from the program.

241. The Department has also undertaken a number of high-profile cancellations, including the cancellation of visas held by unlawful providers of immigration assistance, controversial social media content creators, visitors and public figures. The Department has also cancelled visas in support of initiatives targeting individuals who exploit our visa programs and/or who exploit temporary visa holders. These trends are expected to continue into 2025–26.

## Status resolution

242. The Department's Status Resolution program assists non-citizens who require assistance to resolve their immigration status. Officers working in the Status Resolution program engage with non-citizens to promote self-agency, assisting individuals to self-resolve their immigration status in a timely and appropriate manner.

### Entering the Status Resolution program

243. Individuals may enter the Status Resolution program by voluntarily approaching the Department seeking assistance to resolve their immigration status or through location and enforcement activities conducted by the ABF and/or police. The Status Resolution Program also conducts regional outreach visits to engage with individuals whose immigration status may need to be resolved.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> Does not include any s501 character statistics, only s501F decision are included.

**Table 30 People who entered the Status Resolution program, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)<sup>32</sup>**

	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
Persons who voluntarily approached the Department	10,027	10,359	5,042	1,739
Persons located by the Australian Border Force or police	1,751	1,971	2,288	1,075
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11,778</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>7,330</b>	<b>2,814</b>

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2026**

244. The reduction in the number of persons who voluntarily approached the Department in 2024–25 and 2025–26 can be attributed to changed data collection and recording procedures within the Status Resolution program. Reporting is being developed to more accurately reflect the number of first time voluntary or involuntary approaches by unlawful non-citizens to the department.

245. The Status Resolution population consists of non-citizens who reside:

- In the community as the holder of a Bridging E (subclass 050) visa.
- In either held immigration detention or in the community subject to a residence determination (also known as community detention).

**Table 31 Status Resolution population (as at 31 December 2025)**

Status Resolution population	Bridging E visa in effect	Residence Determination	Held Detention	Total
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMA)	5,923	83	123	6,129
Non-UMA	19,087	6	913	20,006
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25,010</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>26,135</b>

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2026**

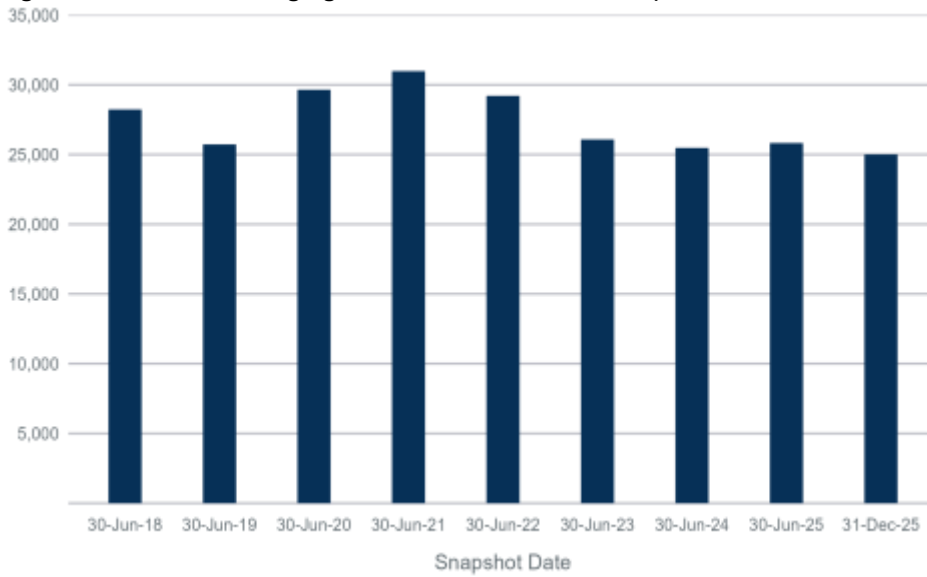
### **Bridging E (subclass 050) visas (BVE)**

246. A BVE is a short-term bridging visa that allows eligible individuals to stay in Australia lawfully while they progress to a status resolution outcome. A BVE may be granted while the non-citizen:

- Has a substantive visa application with the Department.
- Seeks merits or judicial review of a visa refusal or cancellation decision.
- Makes arrangements for their departure from Australia.
- Seeks Ministerial Intervention to substitute a decision of a review tribunal.

<sup>32</sup> Note: As data has been drawn from a dynamic system environment, the information is correct at the time of publication and figures may differ slightly from previous or future reporting.

**Figure 18 Number of Bridging E visa holders in Australia (30 June 2018 to 31 December 2025)<sup>33</sup>**



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Status Resolution Support Services

247. The Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program provides targeted, needs based support to eligible non-citizens while they engage with the Department to resolve their immigration status, either through the grant of a substantive visa or departure from Australia. Types of support services provided depend on an individual’s circumstances and may include financial assistance (income support), assistance to identify accommodation, access to health care, caseworker and case management support, and access to education for school-aged children.

**Table 32 Status Resolution Support Services recipients (as at 31 December 2025)**

	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	30 June 2024	30 June 2025	31 December 2025
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMAs)	895	803	632	492	398
Non-UMAs	711	738	1,063	1,424	1,529
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>1,541</b>	<b>1,695</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>1,927</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Leaving the Status Resolution program

248. Non-citizens exit the Status Resolution program after their immigration status is resolved. A non-citizen’s status is resolved through departure from Australia, grant of a substantive visa, or acquisition of Australian citizenship.

<sup>33</sup> Includes Bridging E visa (subclasses 050 and 051). As data has been drawn from a dynamic system environment, the information is correct at the time of publication and figures may differ slightly from previous or future reporting.

**Table 33 Departures from Australia of Status Resolution clients, from 2022–23 to 2025–26 (as at 31 December 2025)<sup>34</sup>**

Departures from Australia	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25 <sup>35</sup>	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
Returns from community	6,265	5,494	3,189	588
Removals from immigration detention	2,344	2,817	3,457	1,971
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,609</b>	<b>8,311</b>	<b>6,646</b>	<b>2,559</b>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

249. The reduction in the number of returns from the community in 2024–25 and 2025–26 can be attributed to changed data collection and recording procedures within the Status Resolution program. Future reports will provide a breakdown of departures by non-citizens holding a BVE and a breakdown of persons who exited the Status Resolution program by way of a resolved immigration status. Increased removals from immigration detention can be attributed to enhanced eligibility criteria for, and use of, the Return and Reintegration Assistance Program.

### Return and Reintegration Assistance Program (RRAP)

250. The RRAP assists eligible non-citizens to voluntarily leave Australia or a regional processing country, but who require assistance to do so. By facilitating voluntary departure, the RRAP assists individuals finalise their immigration status.

251. The RRAP provides two streams of support:

- Returns assistance facilitates the departure process for eligible non-citizens. Returns Assistance includes (but is not limited to) returns counselling, purchasing air tickets, assistance to obtain travel documents, accommodation assistance, small cash allowances during transit and reception assistance in the country of return.
- Reintegration assistance delivers support enabling eligible non-citizens to rebuild their lives in the return country and aims to reduce the risk of further irregular migration. Reintegration assistance is available to non-citizens departing voluntarily from the community and non-citizens voluntarily removed from immigration detention.

**Table 34 RRAP returns, 2022–23 to 2025–26 (to 31 December 2025)**

Returns and Reintegration Assistance	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26 to 31 December 2025
All RRAP supported departures	317	340	967	782

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2026

### Management of transitory persons

252. As at 31 December 2025, there were 788 transitory persons in the regional processing cohort residing temporarily in Australia.

253. The Migration Act provides for the bringing of transitory persons (defined in section 5 of the Migration Act as a person who was taken to a regional processing country) to Australia from a regional processing country for a temporary purpose (generally medical treatment, as accompanying family or to support more effective engagement with third country migration options). Transitory persons are administratively detained on arrival in Australia under section 189 of the Migration Act as unlawful non-citizens.

254. Transitory persons remain in detention until they are released under residence determination or on a bridging visa through ministerial intervention, or otherwise depart Australia.

<sup>34</sup> Note: As data has been drawn from a dynamic system environment, the information is correct at the time of publication and figures may differ slightly from previous or future reporting.

<sup>35</sup> Since November 2024, Returns figures represent only those departures where individuals were intensively managed through the Status Resolution program.

255. Transitory persons do not have a settlement pathway in Australia. They are encouraged to remain engaged in third country migration options (including resettlement in the United States or New Zealand) or voluntary return home or another country to which they have right of entry.
256. As at 31 December 2025, 1,559 resettlement outcomes have been achieved for transitory persons, including 1,115 to the United States and 336 to New Zealand<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Note: United States resettlement figure includes family members whom are not part of the regional processing caseload and individuals who departed PNG from 1 January 2022 under the US resettlement arrangement.