



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs



The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs

Second addendum to the 11th edition (February 2024)

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Acronyms

AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ABF	Australian Border Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
BV	Bridging Visa
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreements
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
FVP	Family Violence Provision
OSB	Operation Sovereign Borders
PALM	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility
PEV	Pacific Engagement Visa
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPV	Permanent Protection Visa
RoS	Resolution of Status
RRAP	Return and Reintegration Assistance Program
SHEV	Safe Haven Enterprise Visa
TGV	Temporary Graduate Visa
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
UMA	Unauthorised Maritime Arrival
VEVO	Visa Entitlement Verification Online
WHM	Working Holiday Maker

Purpose

1. This paper is the second addendum to the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper (the Administration Paper). The second addendum is supplementary to and should be read in conjunction with the eleventh edition and first addendum publications.
2. The Department of Home Affairs (the Department) produces addendums to provide updated figures and information on the management of Australia's immigration program. The second addendum includes data updated to the end of Quarter 2 of the 2023-24 program year (31 December 2023).
3. The Administration Paper complements existing publicly available resources and provides a regular overview of the Immigration Program and its related border and compliance programs.

Introduction

4. Immigration is central to Australia's national story and identity. In times of change, immigration has played a significant role in helping Australia tackle national challenges and in supporting economic stability. Migrants are, and will always be, an essential part of our economic and social fabric.
5. On 26 January 1949, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* came into effect creating the new status of Australian citizen. Australia Day 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of Australian citizenship, signifying our success as a multicultural and diverse society. More than 22,000 people from over 150 countries were welcomed as new Australian Citizens, at more than 430 ceremonies held across the country.
6. The Department's management of Australia's immigration program anticipates and responds to changes in the international environment, in a way that advances our national interests and supports migrants and their families. This contributes to Australia's long-term economic needs, and helps sustain its growth and resilience against increasing global competition.
7. The Australian Government has taken significant steps forward in reforming Australia's migration system, to ensure it is better targeted to build Australia's economic prosperity and security. These reforms recognise that migration will play a critical role for Australia to seize future opportunities that will help address new and future challenges.

A Migration Strategy for Australia

8. The Australian Government released the *Migration Strategy* on 11 December 2023, which outlines a new vision for a migration system that delivers for workers, businesses and all Australians. The Strategy is informed by extensive consultation with business, union, international education and other stakeholders, and the 483 submissions received from the *Review of the Migration System*.
9. Five core objectives will underpin Australia's migration system, getting migration working for the nation and helping build a prosperous and secure Australia:
 - **Raising living standards** by boosting productivity, meeting skills shortages and supporting exports.
 - **Ensuring a fair go in the workplace** by complementing the jobs, wages and conditions of all workers and preventing migrant worker exploitation.
 - **Building stronger Australian communities** by better planning the migration intake, and giving migrants the opportunity to invest in their lives in Australia through permanent residence and citizenship.
 - **Strengthening international relationships** by building stronger economic and social connections with our region and international partners.
 - **Making the system work** by being fast, efficient and fair for migrants and employers.

10. In designing a system to achieve this vision and objectives, the Migration Strategy is focused on developing a flexible, measurable and responsive whole-of-government migration system. This will help deliver effective and clear outcomes for migrants while enhancing the benefits of migration for Australia.

Eight key actions in the Migration Strategy

11. The Australian Government has developed an ambitious policy roadmap with 8 key actions to realise the vision set out in the Strategy:
 1. Targeting temporary skilled migration to address skills needs and promote worker mobility.
 2. Reshaping permanent skilled migration to drive long-term prosperity.
 3. Strengthening the integrity and quality of international education.
 4. Tackling worker exploitation and the misuse of the visa system.
 5. Planning migration to get the right skills in the right places.
 6. Tailoring regional visas and the Working Holiday Maker Program to support regional Australia and its workers.
 7. Deepening our people-to-people ties in the Indo-Pacific.
 8. Simplifying the migration system to improve the experience for migrants and employers.
12. The policy roadmap will be delivered across three stages of reform:
 1. **Existing commitments to seize immediate opportunities** – these have already or are soon to be implemented.
 2. **New commitments to build a system for the future** – these commitments will be implemented by the end of 2024.
 3. **Areas for future reform requiring tripartite consultation** – these areas will be consulted on throughout 2024.
13. Further information on the *Migration Strategy* is available on the Department's website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/migration-strategy>

Highlights on Australia's Immigration and Citizenship Programs

Key developments

Migration Strategy



Released on
11 December 2023

Informed by extensive
consultation and over

450

public submissions



Over 25 new policy
commitments and
areas for future reform



A new vision
for Australia's
migration system

8

key actions



Policy roadmap
delivered across three
stages of reform

75 Years of Citizenship



Over 6 million people from
200 countries welcomed as
Australian citizens since 1949



22,000 new Australian Citizens
welcomed as part of Australia Day
2024 celebrations

Cyber Security Strategy



Released on
22 November 2023



Vision for Australia to be a world
leader in cyber security by 2030

Highlights on Australia's Immigration and Citizenship Programs

Data updates to the end of 2023

Visitor visas supporting tourism



13% increase in visitor visa holders



40% increase in visitor visa applications

Humanitarian Program



12,937 Subclass 851 Resolution of Status (RoS) visas granted

Addressing skill and labour shortages



Over 26,000 temporary skilled visa applications lodged



34 Aged Care Industry Labour Agreements



Over 13,000 PALM visas granted

Citizenship Program



Over 110,000 citizenship by conferral applications finalised (13% increase)

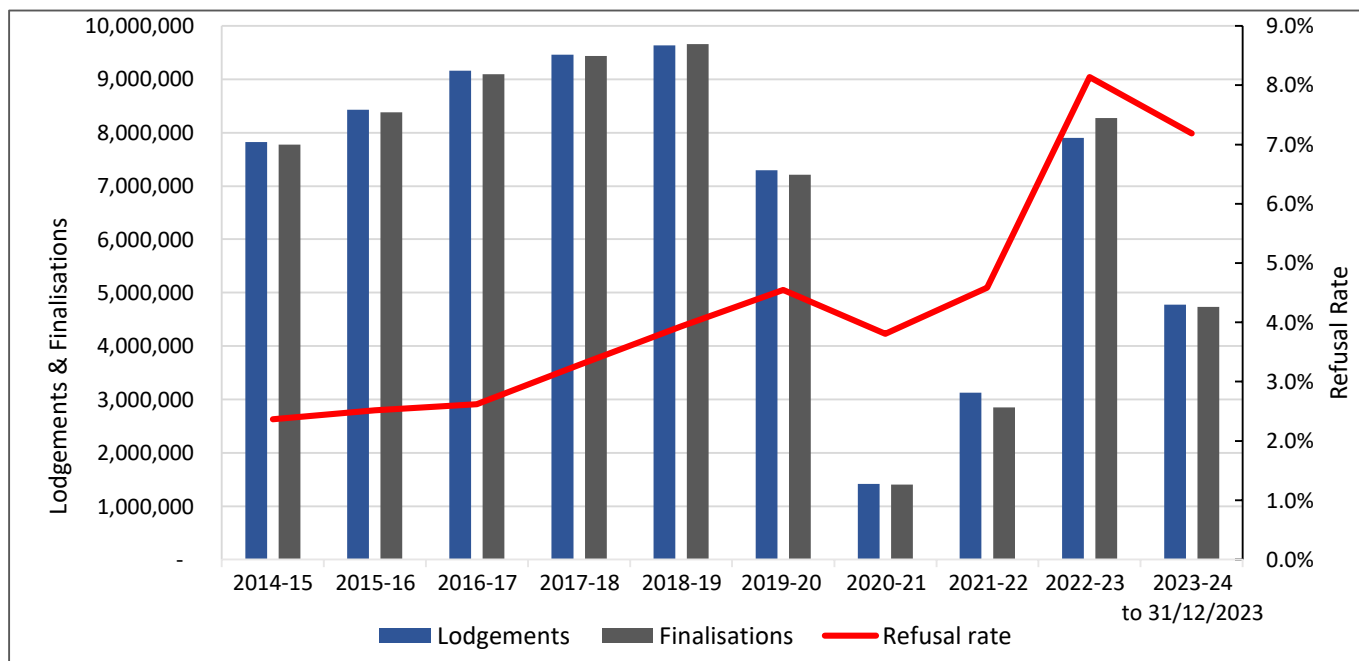


14% improvement in average processing time for application decisions

Administering the immigration program

Broad visa trends

Figure 1 Total non-humanitarian visa programs trends, 2014-15 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

14. Between 1 July 2023 and 31 December 2023, the Department received nearly 4.8 million temporary and migration visa applications. This represents a 29.4% increase in lodgements compared to the just under 3.7 million applications lodged during the same period in 2022.
15. The number of refusals has increased from 316,349 between 1 July and 31 December 2022 to 337,927 in the same period in 2023.
 - While refusal numbers have increased, the refusal rate has decreased slightly from 8.6 to 7.1 per cent over the same period, due to the increase in lodgements.
16. The increase in refusals can be attributed to:
 - the quality of applications lodged
 - more mature risk and integrity capabilities that have enabled visa decision makers to more efficiently identify visa applicants who are intending to exploit visa caseloads, which is reflected in refusal rates being higher than pre-COVID years.
17. For more information on broad visa trends see paragraphs 27-29 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 18-19 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

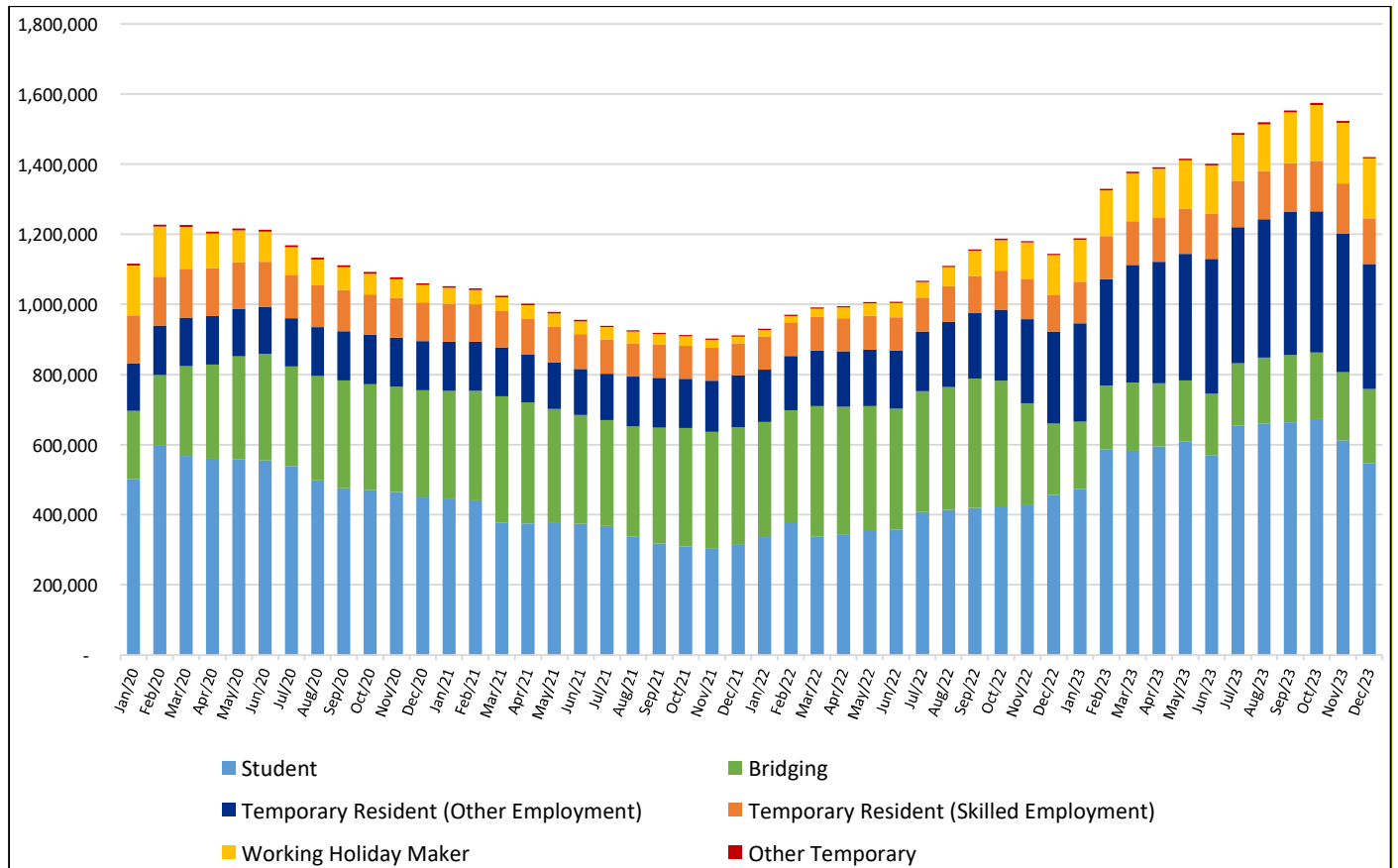
Temporary visas

Table 1 Change in the number of temporary visa holders in Australia as at 31 December 2022 and 31 December 2023

Visa Category	31/12/2022	31/12/2023	Difference	% Change
Bridging	203,494	211,570	8,076	4.0%
Crew and Transit	23,120	29,212	6,092	26.3%
Other Temporary	3,646	3,711	65	1.8%
Special Category	666,172	701,868	35,696	5.4%
Student	456,970	547,075	90,105	19.7%
Temporary Protection	23,447	10,554	-12,893	-55.0%
Temporary Resident (Other Employment)	262,112	356,825	94,713	36.1%
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	105,319	130,451	25,132	23.9%
Visitor	530,283	601,051	70,768	13.3%
Working Holiday Maker	112,335	170,437	58,102	51.7%
Grand Total	2,386,898	2,762,754	375,856	15.7%

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

Figure 2 Number of temporary visa holders in Australia, January 2020 to December 2023



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

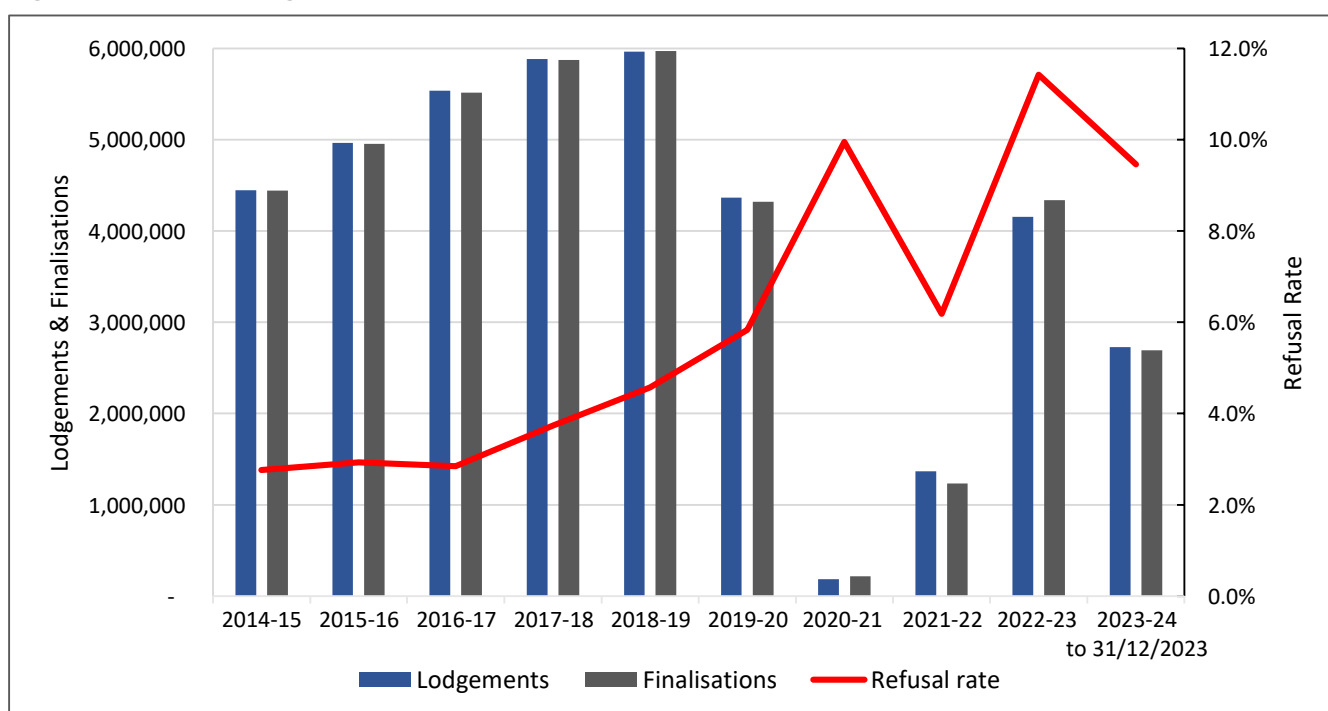
18. Temporary visa holders in Australia have continued to recover strongly since the re-opening of the border. This has been driven by the return of international students, continuing growth in Australia's tourism market and working holiday makers. Following the return of international students, the focus has

shifted to ensure Australia's reputation for providing a high quality education experience is maintained and that pathways to skilled employment opportunities are supported where appropriate, in line with Australia's workforce needs.

19. The increase in the number of Bridging Visa (BV) holders is driven by an increases in Onshore Protection, Family and Student visa applicants.
20. The increase in the number of Crew and Transit visa holders is attributed in part to the increase in the number of cruise ships operating in Australia in 2023.
21. For more information on Temporary visas see paragraphs 47-52 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 27 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Visitor visa

Figure 3 Visitor visa program trends, 2014-15 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



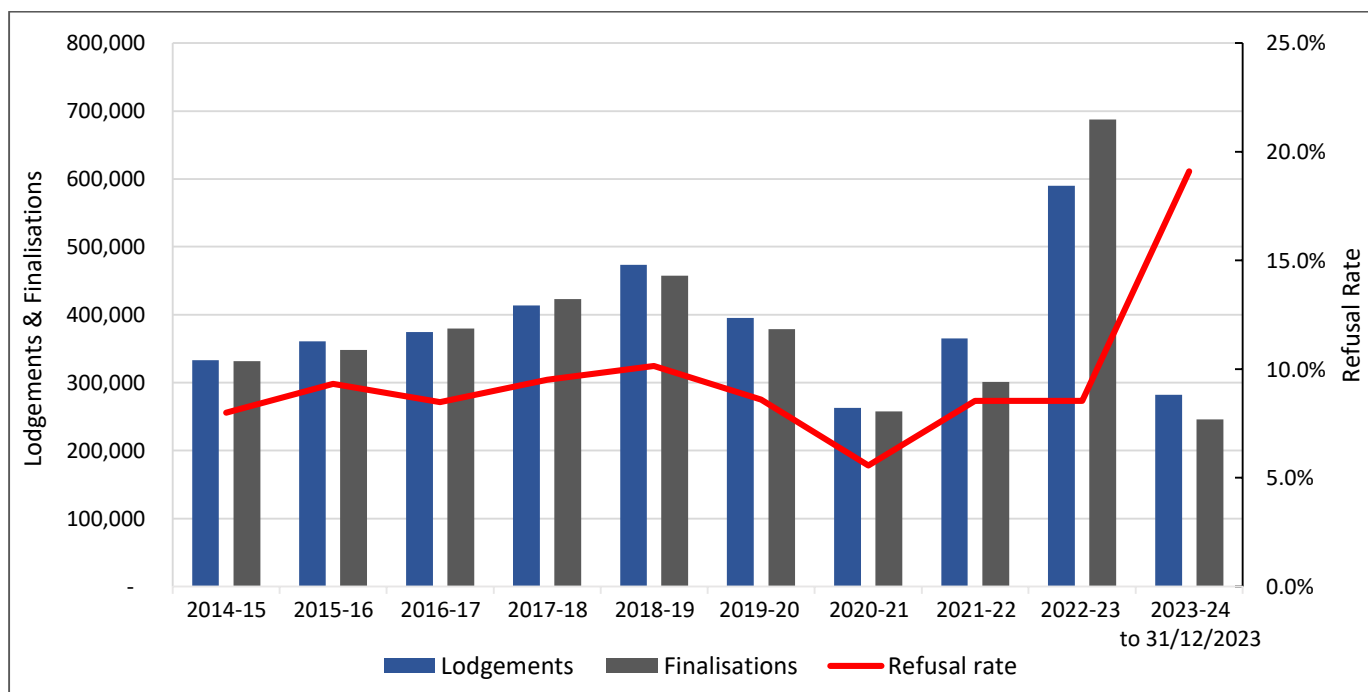
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

22. As of 31 December 2023, there were 601,051 Visitor visa holders in Australia, compared to 530,283 as of 31 December 2022, an increase of 13.3 per cent (see Table 1).
23. In 2023-2024 to 31 December 2023, Visitor visa application lodgements increased by 40 per cent and finalisations increased by 28 per cent compared with the same period in 2022. This indicates strong growth in the Visitor visa program and is attributed to the global increase in demand for international travel, family reunion and continued recovery of the tourism and business markets.
24. For more information on Visitor visas see paragraphs 55-57 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 28-29 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Student visa

25. The Government is recalibrating student visa settings to support both the education sector and Australia's migration needs.

Figure 4 Student visa program trends, 2014-15 to 2023-23 (to 31 December 2023)¹



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

26. Student visa lodgements and visa holders in Australia continued to grow, before decreasing towards end of 2023 (see Tables 2 and 3).

27. The Student visa grant rate decreased, reflecting a reduction in the quality of student visa applications. Nixon Review and *Migration Strategy* measures were implemented to strengthen the integrity of the program and address an increase in non-genuine and fraudulent visa applications (see Table 4).

Table 2 Change in the number of Student visa applications lodged by sector comparison between 2021-22 and 2022-23, plus year to date 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Sector	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	% Change	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
Foreign Affairs or Defence	3,552	4,465	913	25.7%	2,728
Higher Education	194,176	312,766	118,590	61.1%	151,080
Independent ELICOS ²	32,444	70,970	38,526	118.7%	29,460
Non-Award	8,368	17,123	8,755	104.6%	7,988
Postgraduate Research	12,444	14,433	1,989	16.0%	7,182
Schools	5,466	11,087	5,621	102.8%	6,667
Vocational Education and Training	108,554	159,460	50,906	46.9%	77,197
Total	365,004	590,304	225,300	61.7%	282,302

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

¹ Includes primary and secondary Student visa applications.

² ELICOS – English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students.

Table 3 Number of Student visa holders in Australia, quarterly to 31 December 2023

Sector	30-Jun-22	30-Sep-22	31-Dec-22	31-Mar-23	30-Jun-23	30-Sep-23	31-Dec-23
Foreign Affairs or Defence	2,123	2,442	1,979	3,375	3,348	3,641	2,458
Higher Education	196,048	236,674	234,380	331,431	310,389	389,846	301,825
Independent ELICOS	12,065	24,922	35,370	41,629	40,069	39,890	38,525
Non-Award	993	7792	3263	9075	4174	8530	3469
Postgraduate Research	22,460	23,138	22,816	26,397	26,738	27,735	23,451
Schools	8,006	10,689	7,104	11,291	10,130	14,114	7,777
Vocational Education and Training	116,213	113,657	152,047	159,549	173,894	180,411	169,559
Total*	357,908	419,314	456,959	582,747	568,742	664,167	547,064

* excludes visa subclass 560

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

Table 4 Offshore student visa grant rate by sector from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Sector	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 to 31 Dec 2023
Foreign Affairs or Defence	99.5%	96.3%	99.0%	99.2%	99.0%
Higher Education	89.6%	89.6%	94.4%	83.8%	78.9%
Independent ELICOS	91.7%	81.3%	85.0%	90.4%	83.5%
Non-Award	99.6%	78.7%	99.4%	99.4%	99.3%
Postgraduate Research	97.1%	96.7%	96.7%	96.3%	96.1%
Schools	91.4%	96.2%	96.6%	93.5%	93.9%
Vocational Education and Training	63.9%	54.9%	68.9%	53.4%	53.0%
Total	87.6%	85.5%	89.5%	80.4%	77.5%

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

28. The Government has zero tolerance for the international education and student visa program being manipulated to exploit vulnerable international students. The reputation of Australia's international education industry depends on a student visa program with high integrity.
29. On 1 October 2023, an updated financial capacity requirement for student visa applications took effect.
30. Policy and processing concessions provided to student visa applications due to COVID-19 are being rolled back with an increased focus on strengthening program integrity.
31. The *Migration Strategy* includes integrity-focused measures to implement a new Genuine Student requirement, bolster the Department's student visa integrity capability, restrict visa hopping, and raise English language proficiency requirements.
 - These measures will be implemented gradually commencing early 2024, as outlined in the *Migration Strategy Action Plan*.
32. On 15 December 2023, Ministerial Direction No. 107 commenced, prioritising offshore student and student guardian visa applications to support faster processing for genuine, high quality students enrolled with low risk providers.
33. The Temporary relaxation of student visa working hours for those working in the aged care sector ended on 31 December 2023.
34. For more information on Student visas see paragraphs 58-66 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 31-32 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Temporary Graduate Visas

35. The *Migration Strategy* repositions the Temporary Graduate Visa program as a product for early career professionals who can contribute to the Australian economy over a longer period.
36. The duration of an initial TGV will be shorter, the extension of post-study work rights will no longer be available, and only applicants who studied in a regional area will be eligible for an extension.
37. Other changes include:
 - reducing the maximum age limit to 35 years old inclusive (previously 50 years old), repositioning the visa as a product for early career professionals who can contribute to the Australian economy over a longer period
 - More specific details on implementation of temporary graduate visa arrangements, including in relation to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and British National (Overseas) passport holders will be communicated ahead of implementation in mid-2024.
 - Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and British National (Overseas) passport holders will continue to be eligible for a 5 year grant period.
 - increasing the English level requirements
 - simplification of available visa streams by removing of the Post Study Work extension (including the Nil Fee options to extend existing visas) and the Replacement Stream.
38. Simplification is also underway and involves replacing the remaining streams to clearly define the visa holder:
 - Graduate Work Stream will become Post Vocational Education Work visa
 - Post Study Work Stream will become Post Higher Education Work visa
 - Second Post Study Work will become Post Higher Education Work – Regional visa.
39. The Recognised-Skilled Graduate subclass 476 visa has been capped, and the visa will be abolished by 1 July 2024.
 - The cap, implemented on 22 December 2023, was reached mid-January 2024. The Department is in the process of resolving current applications and providing instructions to applicants on how to access visa application charge repayments.

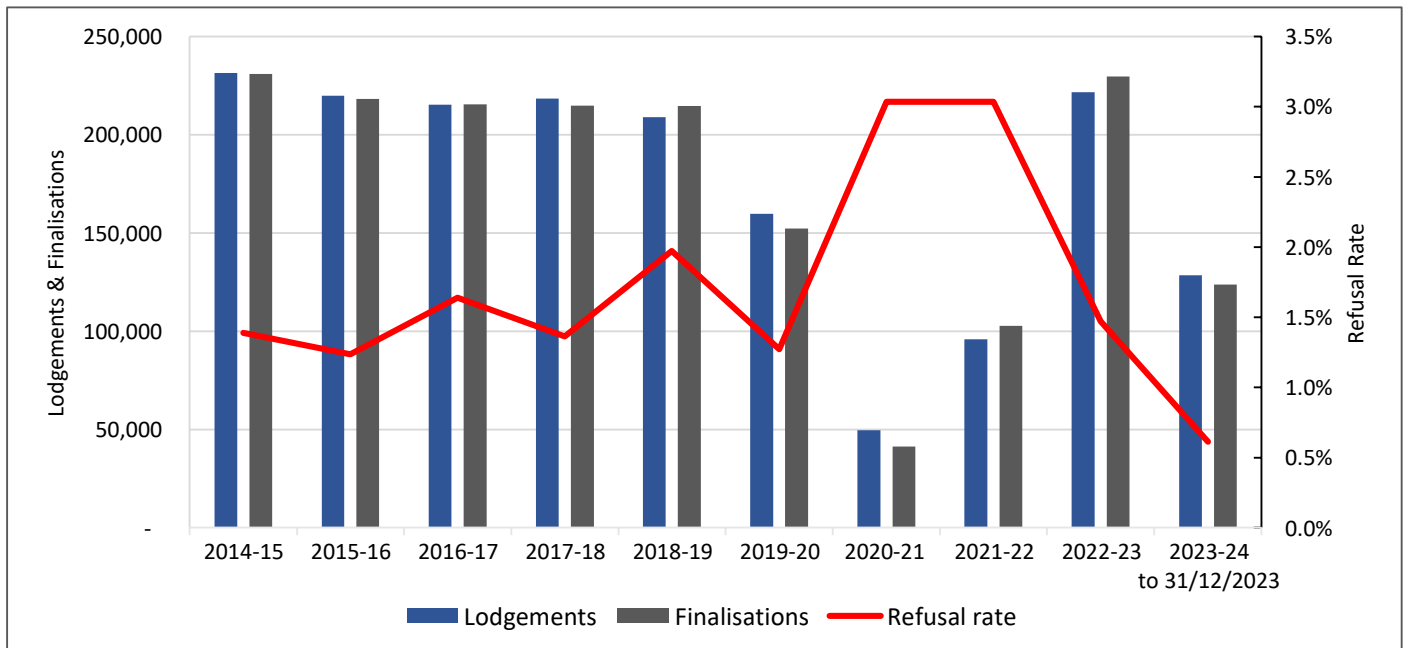
Working Holiday Makers

40. As at 31 December 2023, Australia has Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program arrangements with 49 partner countries and regions. This includes 19 Working Holiday (subclass 417) arrangements and 30 Work and Holiday (subclass 462) arrangements. This provides opportunities to travel and undertake short-term work during their holiday.
41. The number of WHMs in Australia have recovered from the impacts of COVID-19 border closures.
42. As at the end of the 2022-23 program year, there were 137,391 WHMs (subclass 417 and 462 visa holders) in Australia compared with 135,263 at the end of 2018-19. The period of October to January is generally the annual peak with the highest number of onshore WHM holders, with the low point being June, July and August. As at 31 December 2023, there were 170,437 WHM visa holders in Australia.
43. As at 31 December 2023, there were 107,065 WHM visa holders offshore who can travel to Australia (an increase from 73,824 as at December 2022).
44. WHM applications are being finalised quickly. In the program year to 31 December 2023, 75 per cent of applications lodged were finalised in 5 days for the Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa (it currently

takes less than one day to process an offshore application), and 24 days for the Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa.

45. In the program year to 31 December 2023, 122,388 WHM visas have been granted.
46. Condition 8547, which limits WHM to six months' work per employer, was suspended under policy from 19 January 2022 to 30 June 2023, but is now active again.
47. From 1 January 2024 until further government decisions are made as part of the WHM reform work, WHMs can work for the same employer in Australia for more than 6 months without asking permission if the work is:
 - in different locations and work in any one location does not exceed 6 months
 - in plant and animal cultivation anywhere in Australia
 - in certain industries, including aged care and disability services, fishing and pearling, tree farming and felling, construction and mining, in northern Australia only (see website for a definition of Northern Australia)
 - natural disaster recovery work
 - in critical sectors, including agriculture, food processing, health, aged and disability care and childcare, anywhere in Australia
 - in the critical sector of tourism and hospitality anywhere in Australia.
48. For any other situations not covered above, WHMs must ask for our permission to work longer than 6 months with one employer.

Figure 5 Working Holiday Maker visa trends, 2014-15 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

49. WHM lodgements and finalisation numbers for the 2023-24 to 31 December 2023 remains strong, with refusal rates continuing to decline since the peak experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic border closures.
50. The decline in refusal rates follows a period of elevated refusals rates during the COVID Pandemic. During this period there were fewer grants and other finalisations, which increased refusals to reflect a higher percentage of the overall caseload.
51. For more information see paragraphs 67-74 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 34 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Temporary Skilled Work

52. A number of changes have been made to the temporary skilled visa program including initiatives as part of the *Migration Strategy*:
- On 25 November 2023, government expanded pathways to permanent residence and provided a pathway for all streams of the Temporary Skills Shortage visa. The amount of work experience required to access the Temporary Residence Transition stream of the permanent Employer Nomination Scheme was reduced from three years to two years, streamlining access to permanent residence.
 - On 11 December 2023, Labour Market Testing requirements were streamlined to remove the requirement for employers to advertise on the Workforce Australia website. This means employers now only have to advertise the nominated position in two advertisements instead of three.
 - On 15 December 2023, [Ministerial Direction No. 105](#) for prioritising skilled visa applications came into effect. The new Ministerial Direction recognises the need to support regional Australia by streamlining visa processing for business located in regional Australia who are sponsoring skilled workers. The new Ministerial Direction elevates applications for employer sponsored visas in relation to occupations to be carried out in regional Australia to the highest priority.
53. On 25 November 2023, the COVID-19 concession period also ended. The former Government implemented temporary measures related to an initial concession period. This was to provide concessions for applicants of certain visa subclasses affected by travel restrictions and which made it difficult for them to meet visa requirements. This included where the applicant must be located at time of application.
- The concession period is no longer relevant as all COVID-19 international travel restrictions have been lifted.

Table 5 Most frequently nominated occupations for Temporary Skill Shortage visa, sorted on current year to date top 15 - comparison between 2021-22 and 2022-23, plus year to date 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

	Nominated Occupation	2021-22	2022-23	% change from 2021-22	2022-23 as % of total	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
1	253112 Resident Medical Officer	1,500	1,889	25.9%	3.7%	1,399
2	351311 Chef	1,988	2,409	21.2%	4.7%	1,017
3	261313 Software Engineer	2,969	2,967	-0.1%	5.7%	970
4	Specified in LA	354	953	169.2%	1.8%	877
5	321211 Motor Mechanic (General)	444	1,335	200.7%	2.6%	646
6	261111 ICT Business Analyst	1,117	1,928	72.6%	3.7%	521
7	321212 Diesel Motor Mechanic	292	750	156.8%	1.5%	502
8	141111 Cafe or Restaurant Manager	401	848	111.5%	1.6%	419
9	312512 Mechanical Engineering Technician	322	543	68.6%	1.1%	412
10	323211 Fitter (General)	209	616	194.7%	1.2%	397
11	225113 Marketing Specialist	483	758	56.9%	1.5%	366
12	322313 Welder (First Class) (Aus) / Welder (NZ)	195	560	187.2%	1.1%	365
13	221111 Accountant (General)	940	888	-5.5%	1.7%	351
14	224711 Management Consultant	529	994	87.9%	1.9%	343
15	261312 Developer Programmer	1,245	1,378	10.7%	2.7%	324
	Other occupation	19,074	32,789	71.9%	63.5%	14,833
	Total	32,062	51,605	61.0%	100.0%	23,742

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

Table 6 Number of Temporary Resident (skilled) primary visa applications lodged comparison between 2021-22 and 2022-23, plus year to date 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Visa Category	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	% Change	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	35,850	47,116	11,266	31%	26,173

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

54. Table 6 shows a 31 per cent increase in lodgements from 2021-22 to 2022-23, which reflects economic and labour market conditions given the Temporary Skilled program is demand driven and can be used to fill skill shortages where no suitably qualified Australian is available. Returning skilled migrants post the COVID-19 pandemic and associated border closures have likely contributed to this increase.
55. For more information on Temporary Skilled Work see paragraphs 75-83 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 36 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement

56. As at 5 January 2024, there were 34 Aged Care Industry Labour Agreements in effect, which provides for more than 14,000 direct care workers over five years.
57. As at 5 January 2024, there were 279 visa applications lodged and the Department has granted 155 visas under the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement.
58. Aged care providers with an agreement under the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement are published on the Department of Home Affairs website. This list is updated monthly.
59. For more information see paragraphs 84-86 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 38-41 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme

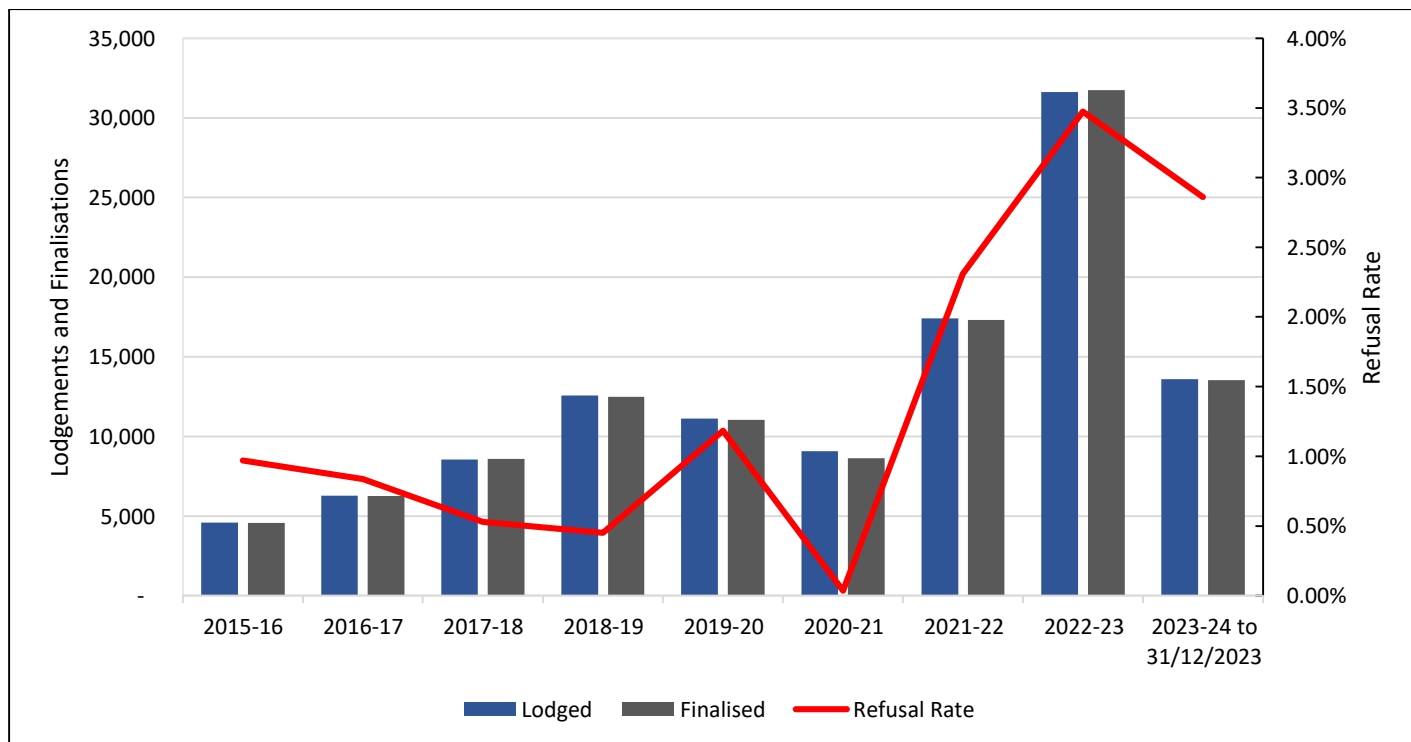
Table 7 Number of PALM scheme visa grants comparison between 2021-22 and 2022-23, plus year to date 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Citizenship Country	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	% Change	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
Fiji	2,152	3,984	1,832	85.1%	1,088
Kiribati	296	1,037	741	250.3%	543
Nauru		5			10
Papua New Guinea	647	1,220	573	88.6%	522
Samoa	3,378	2,586	-792	-23.4%	1,013
Solomon Islands	2,619	2,766	147	5.6%	1,266
Timor-Leste	1,211	4,746	3,535	291.9%	2,090
Tonga	2,032	4,532	2,500	123.0%	1,520
Tuvalu	8	77	69	862.5%	163
Vanuatu	4,371	9,471	5,100	116.7%	4,854
Total	16,714	30,424	13,705	82.0%	13,069

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

60. Demand from employers seeking to join the scheme continues to grow each year. As at 31 December 2023, there were 13,073 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM) visas granted to workers in the PALM scheme.

Figure 6 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme including Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme, 2015-16 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

61. The Department is processing PALM visa applications quickly to support industry and employer needs, especially in regional areas. For the program year to 31 December 2023, 75 per cent of PALM visa applications were finalised in 7 days.

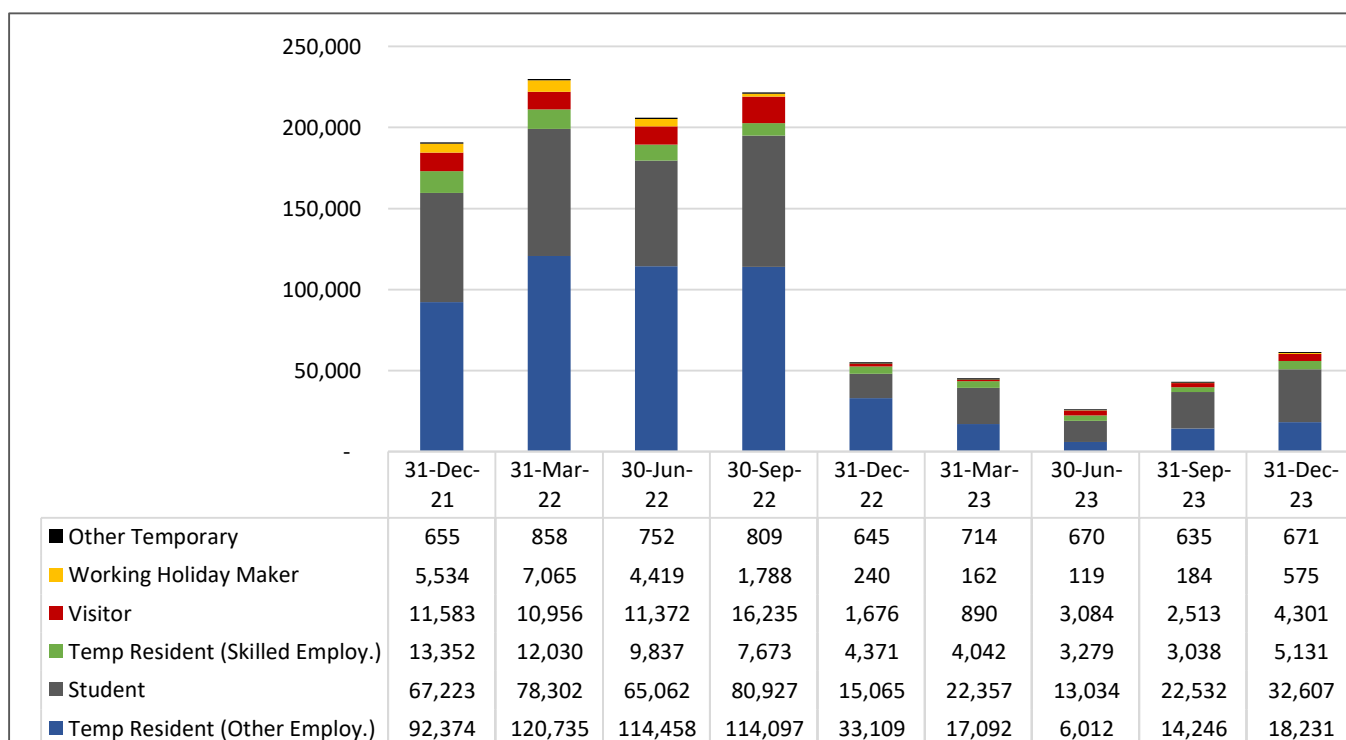
62. The declining refusal rate since 2022-23 is likely attributed to the increased percentage of repeat PALM applicants in the last program year who are more likely to be granted a further visa, as well as the increased understanding of immigration requirements by the sponsors and improved vetting of applicants. There has also been an increase in withdrawals following Requests for Information, particularly instigated by PALM sponsors once they receive further information about their proposed workers.

63. For more information see paragraphs 87-93 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 43-45 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Bridging visas

64. A Bridging Visa (BV) is not a substantive visa. Most people granted BVs have applied for a substantive visa while they are in Australia as the holder of a substantive visa. Applicants must be in Australia to be granted a BV, in accordance with Australia's migration legislation.
65. The number of people holding a BV in Australia is affected by seasonal variations and changes in substantive visa policy and processing times.

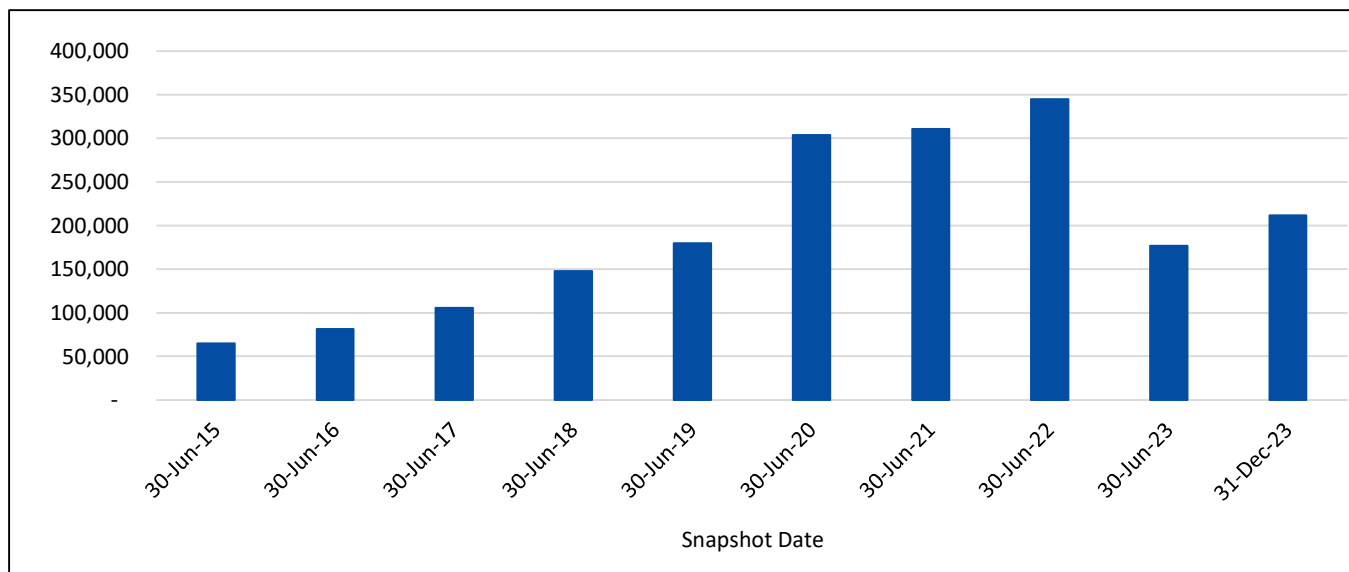
Figure 7 Bridging Visa A, B and C holders in Australia by selected temporary visa category applied for, as at 31 December 2021 to 31 December 2023



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

66. The number of BV holders has returned to pre-COVID levels, following a peak on 31 March 2022 that was mainly driven by an increase in the number of applicants for the Temp Activity (subclass 408) AGEE COVID 19 Pandemic event visa.

Figure 8 Number of bridging visa holders in Australia, snapshot dates as at 30 June 2015 to 31 December 2023*



* Excludes Bridging Visa E (subclass 050 and 051) holders, includes applicants for permanent and temporary visas where bridging visa has been granted.

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

67. The number of BV holders (excluding Bridging E visas (subclasses 050 and 051)) decreased by 39 per cent between 30 June 2022 and 31 December 2023 due to increased numbers of onshore visa applications being finalised. On 31 December 2023, there were 211,570 Bridging visa holders (excluding Bridging E visa holders) in Australia. The increase from 30 June 2023 reflects a standard peak period, mainly driven by student applications.
68. For more information see paragraphs 94-98 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 47-49 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Applications for merits review

69. On 5 October 2023, the Hon Clare O'Neil MP, Minister for Home Affairs announced a \$160 million package of reforms to restore integrity to Australia's refugee protection system. This includes:
- An investment of \$54 million to establish real-time priority processing of Protection visa applications to help break the business model of those who abuse the system and ensure a faster, fairer and more efficient protection system for those genuinely in need of Australia's protection.
 - An investment of over \$58 million in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to increase the capacity of those bodies to deal with significant Protection visa and other migration-related caseloads.
 - A commitment of over \$48 million to boost essential legal assistance services to support applicants through the application process.
70. The number of active matters in the Migration and Refugee Division of the AAT caseload remains high, particularly for applications undergoing review of Protection visa related decisions. As at 31 December 2023, 53,379 Bridging visa holders were awaiting a review of a migration and refugee visa-related decision. This is a small increase from the 52,212 seeking review as at 31 August 2023.
71. From about 58 million temporary visas granted between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2023, about 169,000 Protection visa applications were subsequently lodged. This equates to about 0.29 per cent of total temporary visa grants.

72. For more information see paragraphs 99-100 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 50-51 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

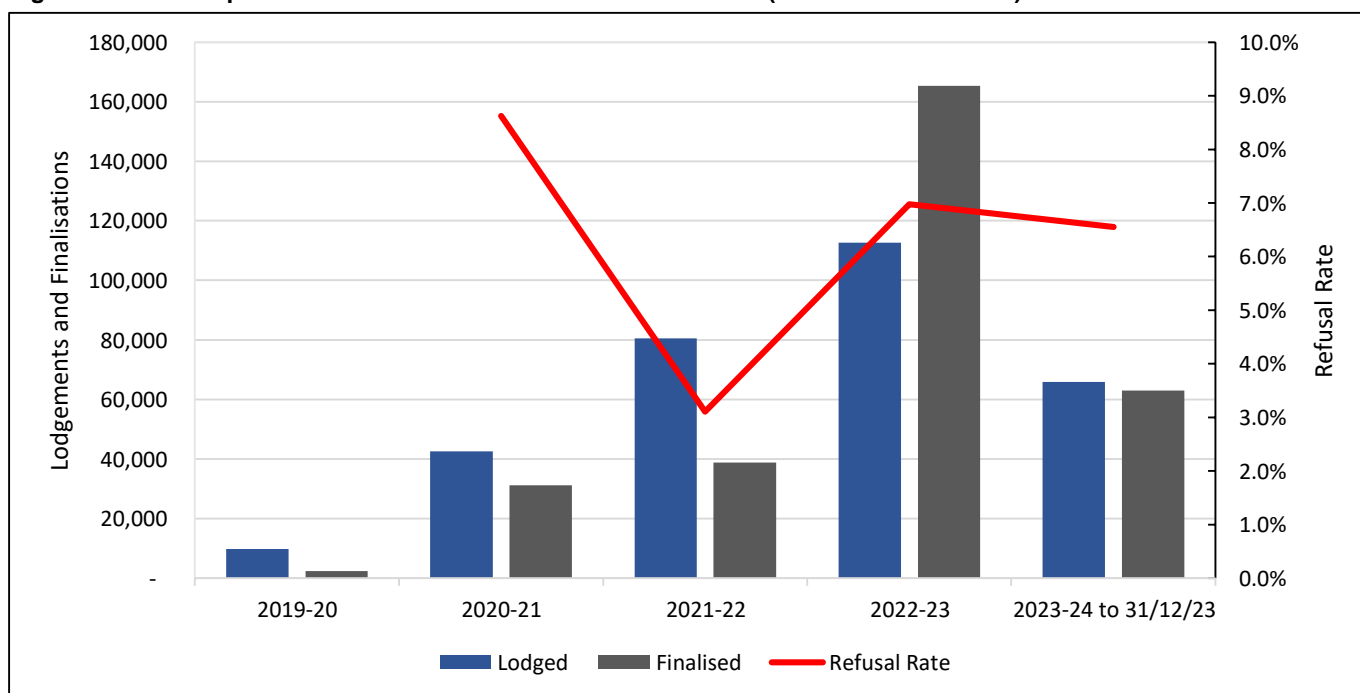
COVID-19 Pandemic Event visa

73. The Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) Australian Government endorsed events (COVID-19 Pandemic event) visa closed to new applicants from 2 September 2023, with the final closure of the visa occurring on 1 February 2024.

74. Final closure of the Pandemic Event visa will contribute to a well-managed migration system that better regulates visa pathways and normalises the flow of temporary migrants in-and-out of Australia. It will help to reduce complexity in the visa system and remove a COVID related product that is no longer fit for purpose.

75. Extending the time before fully closing the visa has allowed existing Pandemic Event visa holders to remain working in Australia and consider their options. During this period many have made arrangements to apply for other visas or depart Australia before their current visa expires.

Figure 9 COVID-19 pandemic event visa trends 2019-20 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

76. As at 31 December 2023, there were 104,467 Pandemic Event visa holders in Australia.

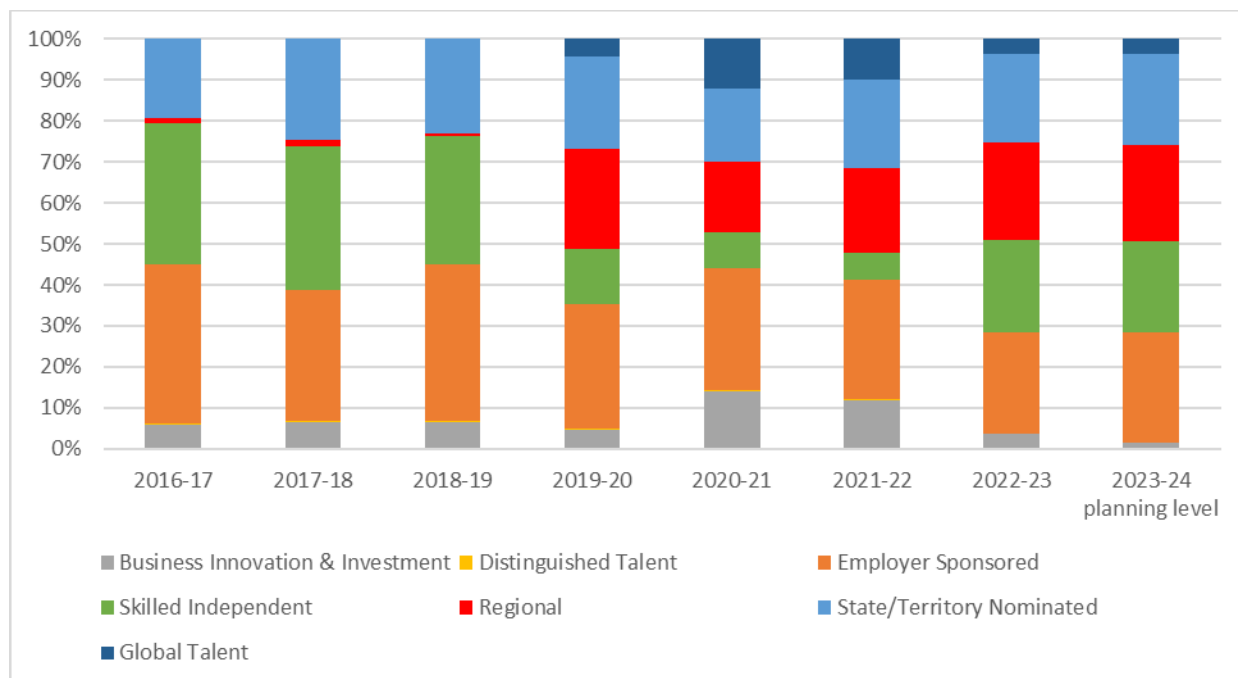
77. For more information see paragraphs 53-54 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 52-54 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Migration Program

78. Planning levels for the 2024-25 permanent Migration Program will be announced as part of the federal Budget 2024-25.
79. The Migration Strategy sets a new commitment to plan migration over a longer-term horizon to better manage the migration intake, with greater state and territory collaboration. This includes government consideration of options for a principles, based, multi-year planning model for permanent migration, for possible implementation from 2025–26.
80. On 19 December 2023, state and territory ministers from across Australia met at the inaugural Ministerial Migration Roundtable to advance cooperation on Australia’s migration planning. At the roundtable, state and territory ministers:
 - agreed that extending the outlook of the Migration Program through a multi-year planning model will better align migration planning with skills priorities, population, infrastructure, housing and services planning, across all levels of government
 - endorsed key principles to guide the development of the multi-year planning model and supported a model which would provide greater certainty and transparency around state and territory nomination allocations.
81. For more information on the Migration Program see paragraphs 103-107 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 59-61 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Skilled Migration Program

Figure 10 Skilled Migration Program Composition of the Skilled Migration Program outcomes, 2016-17 to 2022-23 with 2023-24 planning levels



Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

82. Ministerial Direction 105, introduced on 15 December 2023, continues to prioritise healthcare and teaching occupations in the Skill Stream, as well as regional applications in employer sponsored programs.

Table 8 Number of applications lodged for provisional/permanent Skilled visas, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Visa category	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
Employer Sponsored	34,980	41,992	19,820
Skilled Independent	7,512	49,109	3,528
State/Territory Nominated	25,578	61,186	10,575
Business Innovation & Investment	14,156	8,384	2,057
Global Talent	8,698	7,159	3,120
Distinguished Talent	336	400	207
Grand Total	91,260	168,230	39,307

Note – the above data includes first and second stage visas

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

83. The number of Skilled visa lodgements increased by 84.3 per cent from 91,260 in 2021-22 to 168,230 in 2022-23. In 2023-24 to 31 December 2023, there was a decrease by 52.7 per cent when compared to the same period in 2022-23. This decrease is mostly in visa categories where lodgements are controlled by the Department, through nomination allocations (State and Territory Nominated and Regional categories) and invitation rounds (Skilled Independent Category). The Department has invited fewer new Skilled Independent applicants and allocated fewer state nominations this year because there are already sufficient pipelines of applicants to meet the planning levels in these categories.

Regional Migration

84. Migration to regional Australia assists in revitalising regional communities, meeting critical workforce and skills needs and supports population growth and economic prosperity through investment and personal spending in regional Australia.

85. The initial COVID-19 concession period, which provided certain concessions for applicants for certain visas including the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (subclass 187) visa and Skilled Regional (subclass 887) visa commenced on 1 February 2023, ended on 25 November 2023 contributing to a more suitable migration system amidst current global economic and labour market conditions.

86. For more information on Regional Migration see paragraphs 121-123 of the [eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs*](#) paper and paragraphs 66-68 in the [addendum to the eleventh edition](#).

Table 9 Number of applications lodged for Regional visas, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Visa Subclass	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	1,634	514	68
191 Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional)	131	1,168	5,047
489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional)	372	333	99
491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional)	26,314	47,814	8,627
494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional)	3,165	3,752	1,784
887 Skilled - Regional	10,886	2,076	898
Grand Total	42,502	55,657	16,523

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2023**

87. The Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) subclass 191 visa in the Regional Provisional Stream commenced on 16 November 2022. More than 5,000 visa applications have been lodged in the period 1 July 2023 to 30 December 2023 as a greater number of eligible visa applicants meet the three year regional residency and other requirements to apply.

Table 10 Number of applications finalised for Regional visas, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Visa Subclass	Outcome	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 to 31/12/2023
187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme	Granted	1,797	3,275	746
	Refused and withdrawn	240	391	76
187 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme Total		2,037	3,666	822
489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional)	Granted	1,156	3,487	904
	Refused and withdrawn	112	423	160
489 Skilled - Regional (Provisional) Total		1,268	3,910	1,064
491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional)	Granted	13,898	23,129	16,512
	Refused and withdrawn	912	5,061	726
491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) Total		14,810	28,190	17,238
494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional)	Granted	1,348	3,793	2,229
	Refused and withdrawn	177	578	281
494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) Total		1,525	4,371	2,510
887 Skilled - Regional	Granted	2,070	19,655	1,821
	Refused and withdrawn	118	219	33
887 Skilled - Regional Total		2,188	19,874	1,854
191 Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional)	Granted	<50	<235	4,554
	Refused and withdrawn	<5	<5	13
191 Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) Total		47	235	4,567
Grand Total		21,875	60,246	28,055

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

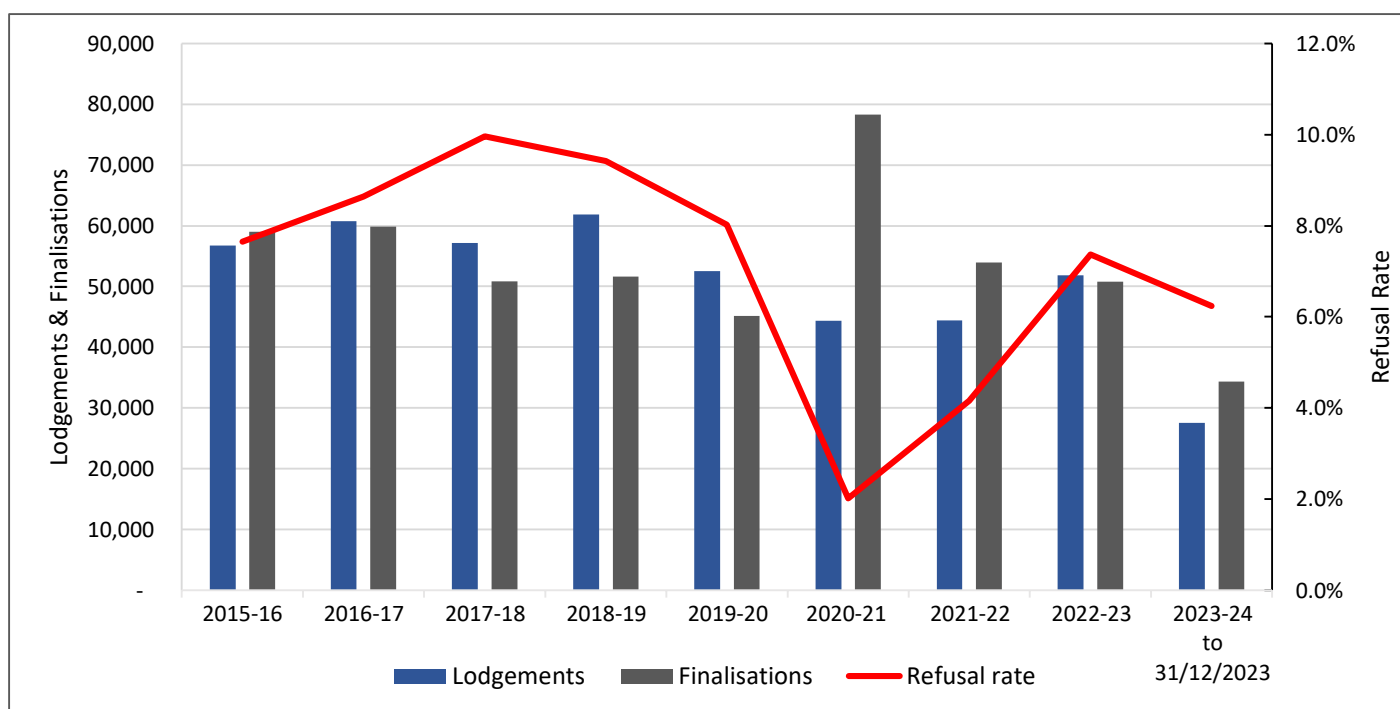
Designated Area Migration Agreements

88. As at 31 December 2023, there were twelve Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) in place.
89. The number of employers utilising DAMA labour agreements continues to grow. As of 31 December 2023, there were 1,066 DAMA Labour Agreements in effect, a more than 90 per cent increase on the same period in 2022 (559 DAMAs in effect as of 31 December 2022).
90. In the 2023-24 program year to 31 December 2023, demand for DAMA labour agreements has remained steady with 221 agreement requests lodged compared to 235 during the same period in the 2022-23 program year. As at 31 December 2023 a total of 3,118 visas have been granted under a DAMA (this is made up of 1,504 primary and 1,614 dependents).
91. For more information on DAMAs see paragraphs 124-129 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 70-73 in addendum to the eleventh edition.

Family Program

Partner visas

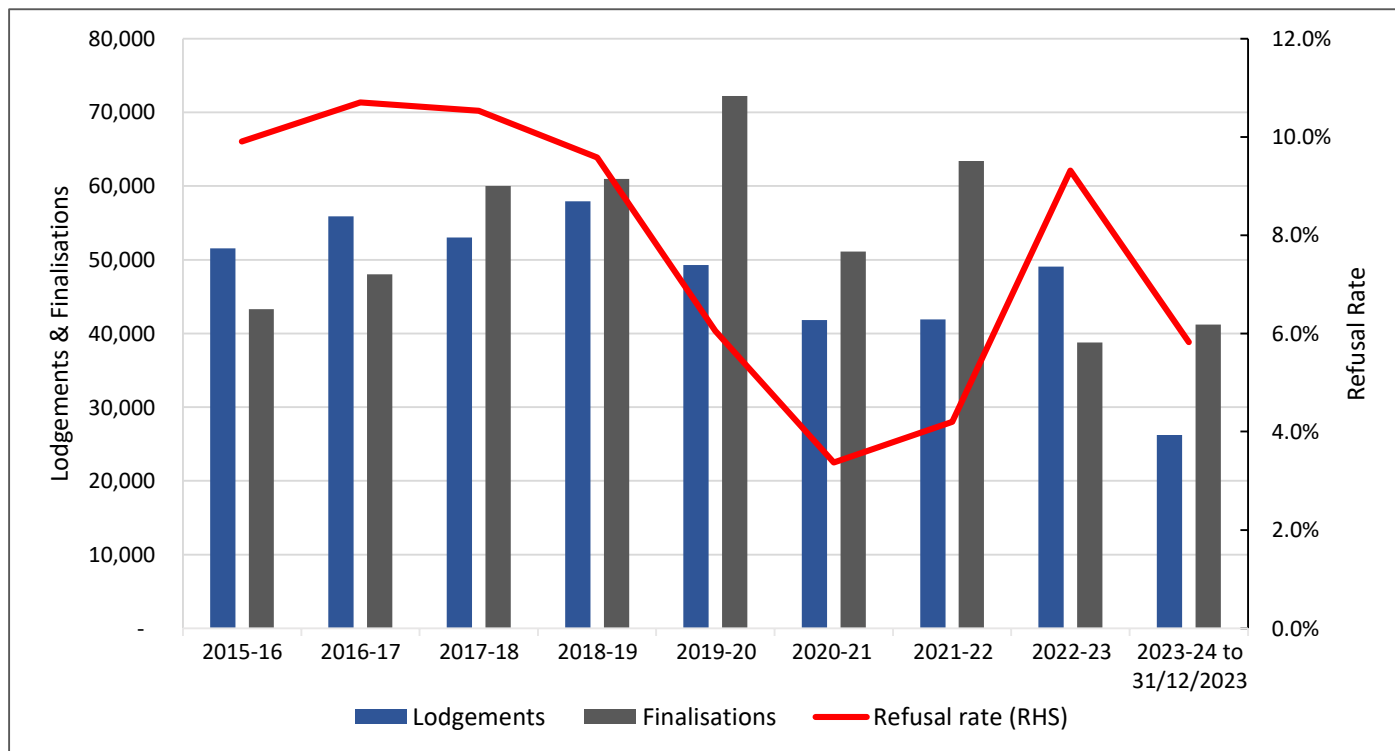
Figure 11 First Stage Partner visa program trends, 2015-16 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

92. The Partner category continues to make up the majority of Australia's Family Migration Program.
93. In 2023-24, as at 31 December 2023, the Department granted 31,291 first stage Partner visas, up 61.6 per cent compared to the same time last program year. There are 52,780 applications remaining on-hand, down 9.8 per cent compared to 30 June 2023. This is despite a 22.6 per cent increase in application lodgements during the first half of the program year compared to the same period in the previous year.
94. New processing staff have been recruited and trained across the Department's global network of offices in response to the demand.
95. In 2023-24, as at 31 December 2023, 37,764 second stage Partner visas were granted, up 188.7 per cent compared to the same time in 2022-23. The number of eligible second stage Partner visa applications onhand has fallen to 29,335 as at 31 December 2023, down 38.4 per cent compared to 30 June 2023.
96. For more information on Partner Visas see paragraphs 137-141 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 75 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Figure 12 Second Stage Partner visa program trends, 2015-16 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2023

Family Violence Provisions

97. In the 2023-24 program year (as at 31 December 2023), 461 primary Partner visa applicants sought access to the FVPs (up 43.6 percent compared to the same time in 2022-23) and 440 permanent Partner visas were granted based on claims of family violence (up 49.2 per cent compared to the same time in 2022-23).
98. For more information on Family Violence Provisions see paragraphs 149-153 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Pacific Engagement Visa

99. The Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) is a new permanent visa for eligible nationals of Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste. The PEV will boost permanent migration from the Pacific, grow Australia's Pacific and Timor-Leste diaspora and encourage greater cultural, business, investment, and educational exchange between Pacific Island countries, Timor-Leste and Australia.
100. The PEV program commences in 2024, with up to 3,000 visa places available each year through a ballot process.

Immigration outreach and engagement

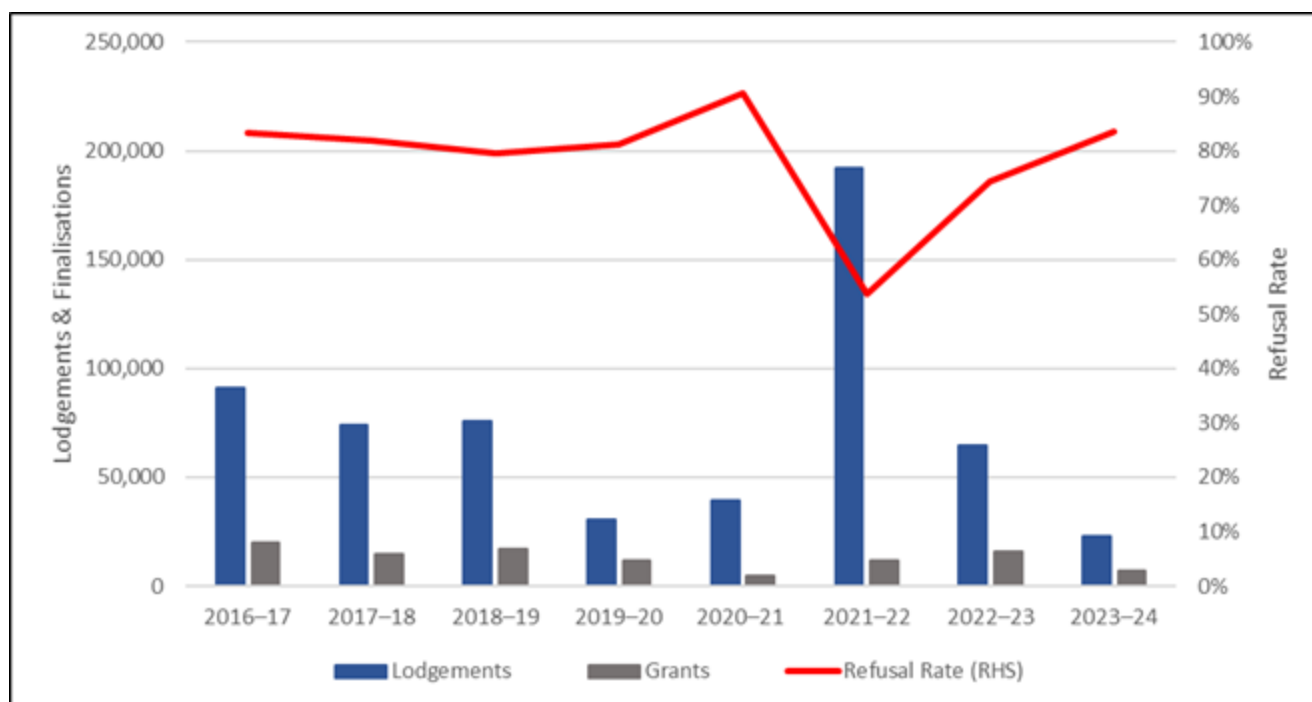
101. The Department delivers a range of communication and engagement activities to support the immigration program, including through onshore and offshore outreach teams, marketing campaigns, and development of communication products.
102. Engaging social media content is also developed to assist immigration program objectives, including promoting the submission of complete visa applications, which improves both client and Departmental outcomes.
103. In line with commitments in the Migration Strategy, the Department will further enhance its immigration outreach capability in 2024 through a reformed program to improve access to the migration system, providing a single point of contact for key stakeholder groups such as business, small business, regional bodies and unions, ensuring migration is best targeted to areas where it is most needed.
104. For more information see paragraphs 37-40 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 21-25 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Humanitarian Program

105. Since the end of World War II, Australia has successfully settled more than 950,000 refugees and others in humanitarian need, recognising the valuable contribution that refugees have provided, and continue to provide, to Australian society, culture and prosperity.
106. The Government is committed to generous and flexible Humanitarian and Settlement Programs that meet Australia's international protection obligations, and position Australia as a global leader in international resettlement efforts.
 - A generous Humanitarian Program delivers on Australia's global resettlement commitments and allows us to benefit from the significant contributions of humanitarian entrants, who enrich Australian society and boost the economy with their skills, talent and diverse cultural vibrancy.
 - It also places Australia in a strong position to shape global responses to humanitarian crises, and influence approaches to protection and resettlement in other countries within the region.
107. Australia's 2023-24 Humanitarian Program has been set to increase to 20,000 places, the highest intake since 2012-13. As of 31 December 2023, 8,690 visas were granted under the 2023-24 Humanitarian Program.
108. As of 31 December 2023, there were approximately 1,700 Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visa holders who were granted visas 1 July 2019 and 15 December 2021 and are yet to travel to Australia. Work continues with state and territory governments and settlement service providers to plan and facilitate a staggered increase in humanitarian arrivals of those visa holders who are offshore.
109. For more information on the Humanitarian Program see paragraphs 157-160 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 80-84 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Offshore Humanitarian visas

Figure 13 Offshore Humanitarian program trends, 2014-15 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Settlement services and reforms

110. The Department is working to build on Australia's already world class settlement services, informed by feedback received from extensive consultation processes undertaken by the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Andrew Giles MP and the Department in late 2022.

- The Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework (Outcomes Framework), announced by Minister Giles on 16 October 2023 and available on the Department's website at Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework (homeaffairs.gov.au), articulates a vision of successful settlement and good settlement practices, including economic participation, health and wellbeing, language and digital literacy, education, housing and transport, and understanding host culture.
- The Department is undertaking a settlement program re-design process which will form the basis of new contractual arrangements and reporting, based on the Outcomes Framework.

111. For more information on settlement services see paragraphs 165-170 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

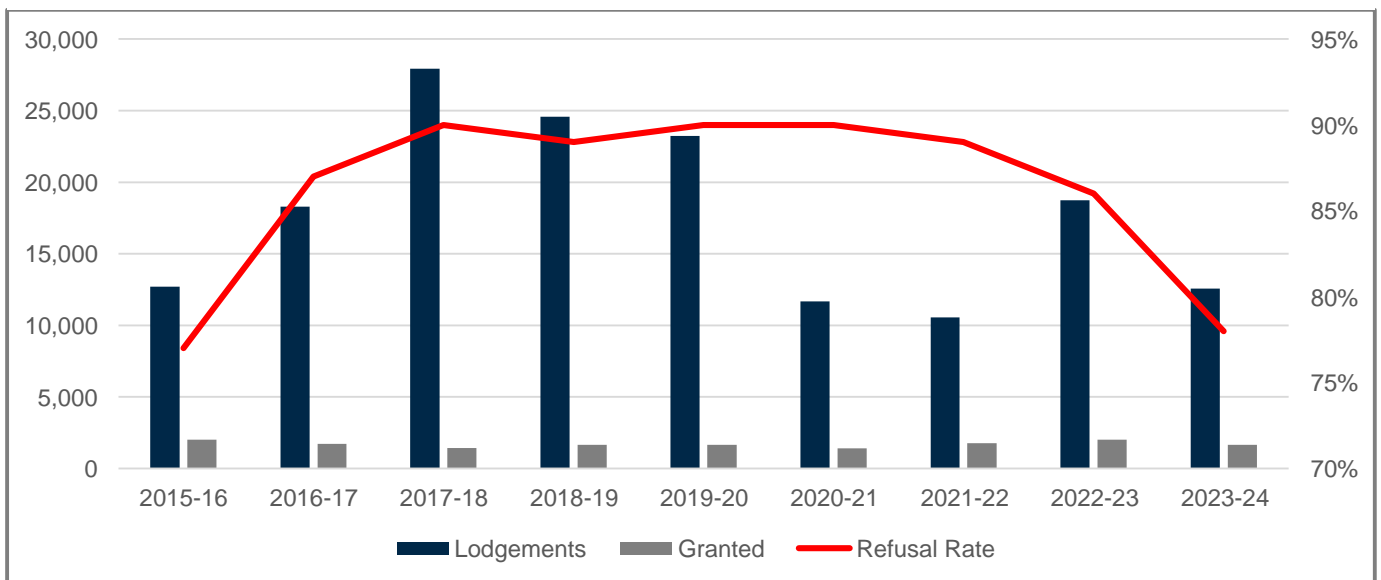
112. There were 76 offshore Humanitarian visa grants to unaccompanied minors in 2018-19, 40 grants in 2019-20, 7 grants in 2020-21, 106 grants in 2021-22, 89 grants in 2022-2023 and less than 5 grants in 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023).

113. For more information on Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors see paragraphs 171-172 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 89 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Onshore protection

114. More than 92 per cent of the individuals who applied for protection in the same period have either departed Australia, been granted a visa, or remain lawfully here while they have ongoing matters before the Department or under a merits review or judicial review. Individuals who do not have a valid visa and have no matters ongoing are expected to either voluntarily return home or be removed from Australia by the ABF.
115. While a proportion of applicants claim protection because they genuinely fear they will face serious or significant harm if returned to their home country, others apply for another purpose, including to prolong their stay to access the Australian labour market or because of the comparatively better life opportunities Australia offers.
116. The Department has consistently refused between 80 to 90 per cent of applications for a Protection visa (PPV) since 2015-16 (see Table 11).
117. Reforms to Australia's Protection visa system announced by the Australian Government on 5 October 2023 will significantly reduce the time taken to finalise a permanent Protection (subclass 866) application at both the visa application and review stages. To remove incentives for non-genuine applicants to apply for protection, and reduce legacy backlogs, the Australian Government has committed:
- \$54 million to increase visa processing resources within the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) to significantly reduce permanent Protection (subclass 866) visa processing times.
 - Over \$58 million to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to hear more Protection visa applications at merits and judicial review.
 - Over \$48 million to boost free legal assistance for Protection visa applicants.

Figure 14 Protection program trends, 2015-16 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



Source: The Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Table 11 Permanent Protection visa grants and grant rates, 2020-21 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Citizenships (Top 10)*	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Granted	Grant rate	Granted	Grant rate	Granted	Grant rate	Granted	Grant rate
Myanmar	7	23%	33	69%	427	91%	519	99%
China (Exc. Sar)	90	2%	149	4%	255	8%	127	10%
Pakistan	151	42%	140	53%	171	60%	116	59%
Papua New Guinea	24	65%	84	51%	94	63%	53	55%
Iran	202	68%	218	81%	89	93%	48	84%
Afghanistan	79	84%	110	94%	83	94%	41	89%
Iraq	81	76%	37	62%	80	82%	58	84%
Ethiopia	13	68%	71	69%	78	84%	38	97%
Venezuela	51	60%	76	67%	51	98%	28	100%
Malaysia	57	2%	58	2%	46	2%	106	20%
Other	634	...	786	...	626	...	503	...
Grand Total	1,389	10%	1762	11%	2,000	14%	1,637	22%

*Top 10 citizenship is based on the 2022-23 program year
Source: The Department of Home Affairs, 2024

118. For more information on onshore protection see paragraphs 173-78 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 91 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals Legacy Caseload

119. As at 31 December 2023, there have been 12,937 Subclass 851 Resolution of Status (RoS) visa grants and there are 8,023 people with a RoS visa application on hand. This includes:

- 6,680 persons who had applied for who whose applications have been converted to a RoS visa
- 1,343 undecided initial Temporary Protection Visa (TPV)/Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) applications.

120. There are also:

- 257 persons at merits review, and 4,748 at judicial review, following a TPV/SHEV refusal. Applications remitted to the Department and who are found to meet grant criteria for their TPV/SHEV visa, may be subsequently granted their RoS visa
- 164 former TPV/SHEV holders whose visas have expired or have been cancelled
- 2,556 people who do not engage Australia's protection obligations as their TPV or SHEV has been refused, and they who have no ongoing matters. These persons are not eligible for a RoS visa
- 7,725 UMA's whose status has been resolved and are either ineligible under this measure, or unlikely to require a RoS visa. This includes Australian citizens, those who have departed Australia, are deceased, or have resolved their status via another visa grant.

121. For more information on Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals Legacy Caseload see paragraphs 179-83 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 93 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Adult Migrant English Program

122. The high level of participation of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) continues into 2023-24, with over 51,000 enrolments as of 31 December 2023. This figure represents approximately 11% more enrolments than at the same point in the 2022-23 year.

123. The AMEP is delivered by 13 service providers at around 300 locations across Australia in major cities as well as regional and remote areas.

124. AMEPOnline is a freely available departmental resource for anyone wanting to study English. It offers a range of engaging, interactive, audio and video activities across five English levels and is available at <https://ameponline.homeaffairs.gov.au>. Almost 200,000 users have accessed AMEPOnline since its launch on 1 July 2023.

125. Further information about the AMEP is available on the Department's website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program>

Australian Citizenship Program

126. In the 2022-23 program year, 192,947 people acquired Australian citizenship by conferral. This is an increase from 167,232 in 2021-22. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 102,336 people acquired Australian citizenship by conferral.
127. For more information on the Australian Citizenship Program, see paragraphs 184-185 of the [eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs*](#) paper and paragraphs 101-02 of the [addendum to the eleventh edition](#).

Citizenship by conferral

128. More than 198,000 citizenship by conferral applications were finalised in 2022-23. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), more than 110,000 citizenship by conferral applications were finalised, representing an increase of 13 per cent in comparison to the same period in the 2022-23 program year.

Table 12 Number of Australian citizenship by conferral applications finalised, by decision type and financial year, 2013-14 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)³

Program year	Approved	Refused	Invalid	Other ⁴	Total
2013-14	158,907	5,728	26,611	783	192,029
2014-15	148,862	5,197	34,987	795	189,841
2015-16	129,515	4,749	32,612	792	167,668
2016-17	127,013	4,089	22,035	742	153,879
2017-18	80,776	4,956	14,998	692	101,422
2018-19	145,587	7,590	5,713	1,227	160,117
2019-20	215,394	8,762	2,179	1,988	228,323
2020-21	170,645	7,957	1,782	2,831	183,215
2021-22	149,514	6,798	3,246	1,789	161,347
2022-23	185,419	8,705	3,629	1,055	198,808
2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)	100,886	6,003	2,868	652	110,409

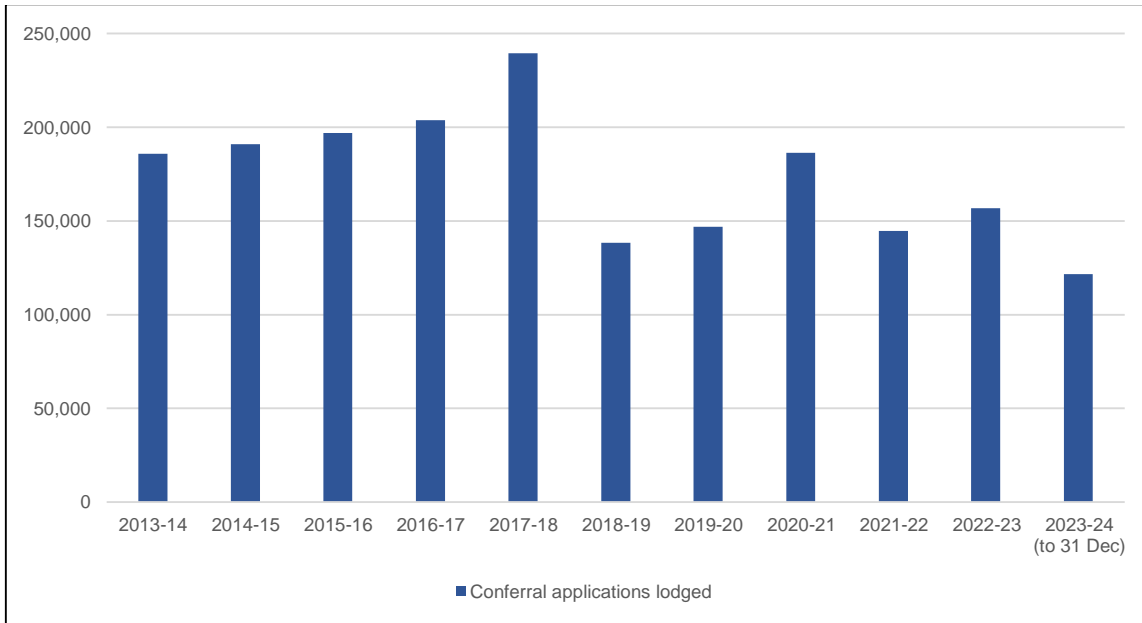
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

129. Since 2021-22, citizenship finalisations have continued to increase from previous years due to the reopening of all citizenship testing sites after COVID-19 lockdowns and the Department's effort to reduce on-hand citizenship applications.
130. From July 2014 to 31 December 2023, 54 individuals had their Australian citizenship revoked for criminal conduct, including for citizenship or migration fraud.
131. There continues to be strong interest from migrants applying to become Australian citizens. In 2022-23, 156,831 applications for citizenship by conferral were lodged. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 121,602 applications for citizenship by conferral were lodged.

³ Data may differ from previous or other reports due to the use of dynamic database in the current financial year.

⁴ Other includes applications withdrawn by the client and minor numbers of administrative finalisations.

Figure 15 Citizenship by conferral lodgement trends, 2013-14 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)



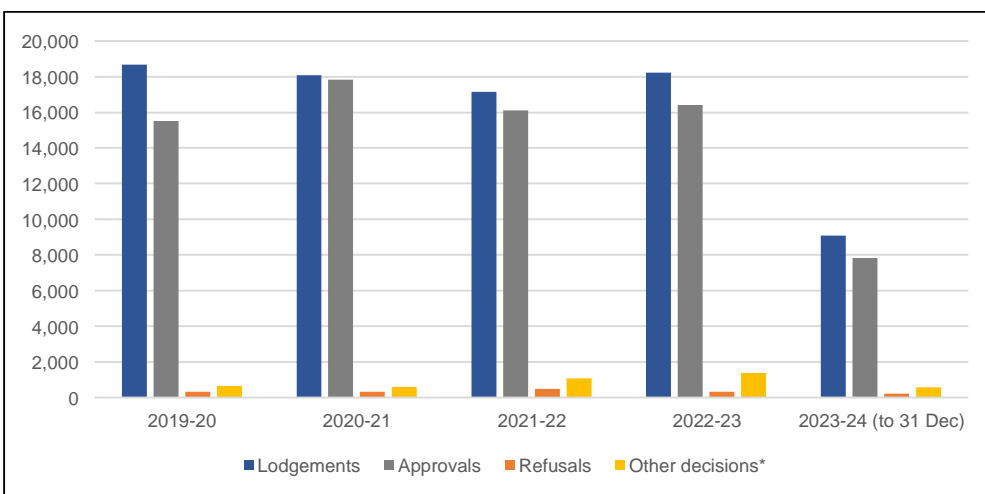
Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

132. For more information on citizenship by conferral see paragraphs 186-189 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 104-108 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Citizenship by descent

133. In 2022-23, 16,424 people acquired Australian citizenship by descent (see Figure 16). This represents a two per cent decrease over the 2021-22 program year. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 7,818 people acquired Australian citizenship by descent.

Figure 16 Citizenship by descent applications lodged and finalised, 2019-20 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)⁵



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

⁵ Other decisions include invalidated applications, applications withdrawn by the client and administrative finalisations.

134. In 2022-23, 222 children born through surrogacy arrangements acquired Australian citizenship by descent. The main countries of birth of these children were, in numerical order, the United States of America, Ukraine, Georgia, Canada, Mexico and Columbia. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 139 children born through surrogacy arrangements acquired Australian citizenship by descent.
135. For more information citizenship by descent see paragraphs 190-192 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 109-111 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Citizenship by adoption

136. 14 children acquired Australian citizenship by adoption in 2022-23, a decrease from 28 in the previous program year. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 10 children acquired Australian citizenship by adoption.
137. For more information on citizenship by adoption see paragraph 193 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 112 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Citizenship by resumption

138. In 2022-23, 96 people resumed Australian citizenship, compared to 60 in the previous program year. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 42 people resumed Australian citizenship.
139. For more information, see paragraph 194 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraph 115 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Citizenship service delivery

140. As at 31 December 2023, the number of on-hand conferral applications was 89,832, a 7 per cent decrease since 31 December 2022 (96,526 on-hand).
141. The average processing time from lodgement to decision for applications decided in December 2023 decreased by 14 per cent from December 2022 (from 9 months (277 days) to 8 months (238 days)).
142. In 2022-23, 190,694 people acquired citizenship at a ceremony. Of these 187,673 attended in-person and 3,021 online. In 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023), 99,173 people acquired citizenship at a ceremony (98,944 in-person, 229 online).
143. For more information on citizenship service delivery, see paragraphs 195-201 the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 116-118 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

New Zealand Direct Pathway

144. In the period 1 July to 31 December 2023, the Department received 42,447 citizenship by conferral applications from New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa (SCV). These represent 35 per cent of all citizenship by conferral applications received in this period.
145. As at 31 December 2023, of the 42,447 Australian citizenship by conferral applications received since 1 July 2023 from New Zealand citizens holding an SCV, 15,937 applications had been approved.
146. For more information on citizenship service delivery, see paragraphs 120-122 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Managing risk and community protection

Modern slavery and human trafficking

147. Between 1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023, the Department, including the Australian Border Force (ABF), referred 10 suspected cases of human trafficking and modern slavery to the AFP for investigation under the established Reporting Protocol.
148. For more information on modern slavery and human trafficking see paragraphs 211-214 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 124-127 in the addendum to the eleventh edition.

Maritime People Smuggling

149. Between 18 September 2013 and 31 December 2023, Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB) intercepted and safely returned 1,121 potential irregular immigrants (PIIs) from 47 maritime people smuggling ventures to their country of departure or their country of origin. During this period, 987 unauthorised maritime arrivals (UMA) from 23 ventures were transferred to a regional processing country.
150. Over the same period, close cooperation with regional partners has resulted in foreign law enforcement disruptions of an additional 112 maritime people smuggling ventures and 3,651 PIIs⁶ that are believed to have been targeting Australian territorial waters.
151. It has been more than 10 years since the last known death at sea from maritime people smuggling ventures en-route to Australia, and over 10 years since the arrival of the last successful people smuggling venture to Australia.⁷
152. For more information on maritime people smuggling see paragraphs 216-220 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs 131-132 of the addendum to the eleventh edition.

⁶ Disruption statistics are provided by AFP posts, based on advice provided 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.

- From 1 March 2019, only ventures targeting Australia are included in statistics. Previous statistics also included ventures destined for NZ given the high likelihood of them ending up as unintentional arrivals to Australia.
- From 1 January 2023 statistics include offshore disruptions of human trafficking ventures with a suspected maritime nexus.

⁷ 'Successful' maritime people smuggling ventures are defined in this context as those not disrupted, turned back, returned, or transferred to a regional processing country (RPC).

Migrant worker exploitation

153. As at 31 December 2023, 94 migrant workers have been referred under the Assurance Protocol (since its commencement in February 2017) and no referrals have resulted in visa cancellation.

Table 13 ABF Migrant Worker Enforcement Activities

Enforcement Activity	2022-23	2023-24 (to 31 Dec 2023)
Employer awareness activities	294	432
Illegal Worker Warning Notices issued	60	56
Infringement notices issued	8	19
Sponsors sanctioned	309	149
Total organisation registered with VEVO (as at 30 June)	153,159	159,829

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2024**

154. For more information see paragraphs 221-230 of the [eleventh edition](#) of [The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs](#) paper and paragraphs 134-146 in the [addendum to the eleventh edition](#).

Cancellations

Table 14 Adverse section 501 (character) cancellations, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Character cancellation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Mandatory Cancellation (s501(3A))	615	615	230
Natural Justice – (s501(2))	34	<5	<5
Cancellation without Natural Justice – National Interest (s501(3)(b))	<5	<10	<5
Minister's personal power – without notice (s501A(3)(b))	<5	0	0
Minister's personal power – with notice (s501B(2))	<5	0	0
Character refusal	209	143	93
Character revocations (not revoked) ⁸	432	369	227
Total	1,297	1,136	563

Source: **Department of Home Affairs, 2024**

⁸ This refers to where a non-citizen's request for reinstatement of a visa (revocation of the character cancellation) is not successful.

Table 15 Top five citizenships with adverse section 501 (character) outcomes, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Character cancellation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
New Zealand	248	261	98	607
United Kingdom	71	36	17	124
Vietnam	43	35	12	90
Malaysia	17	26	11	54
China	17	21	11	49
Other	260	245	94	599
Total	656	624	243	1,523
Character refusal	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
United Kingdom	44	23	22	89
New Zealand	17	20	17	54
United States Of America	20	7	<5	<35
Iran	10	7	5	22
India	7	11	<5	<25
Other	111	75	43	229
Total	209	143	93	445
Character revocations (not revoked)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
New Zealand	180	134	82	396
United Kingdom	35	18	17	70
Vietnam	22	13	12	47
Sudan	15	19	11	45
Iraq	7	18	7	32
Other	173	167	98	438
Total	432	369	227	1,028

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Table 16 General cancellation decisions, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)⁹

General cancellation decisions	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Incorrect information (s109)	539	145	55
General power (s116)	924	1,884	1,726
Holder overseas (s128)	20,080	10,934	12,105
Business visa (s134)	72	112	6
All other powers ¹⁰	2,802	2,016	1,125
Total	24,417	15,091	15,017

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

155. For more information see paragraphs 237-40 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Does not include any s501 character statistics, only s501Fs are included.

Status resolution

Entering the Status Resolution program

Table 17 People who entered the Status Resolution program, 2021-22 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at 31 December 2023)
Persons who voluntarily approached the Department	12,455	10,007	4,902
Persons located by the Australian Border Force or police	1,639	1,755	862
Total	14,094	11,762	5,764

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

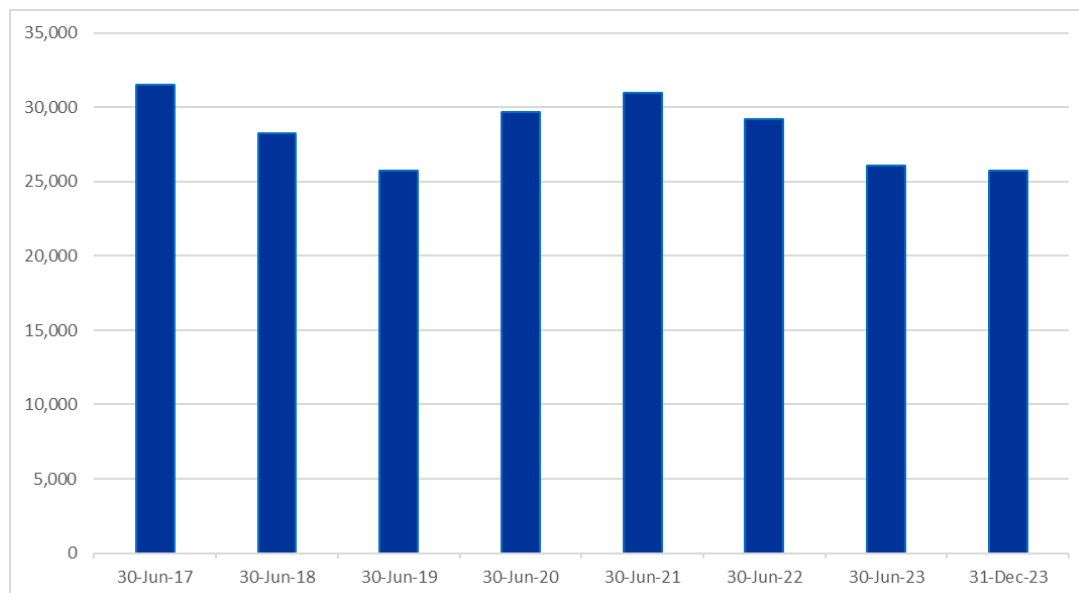
Table 18 Status Resolution population as at 31 December 2023

Status Resolution population	Bridging E visa in effect	Residence Determination	Held detention	Total
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMA)	7,941	220	115	8,276
Non-UMA	17,808	32	757	18,597
Total	25,749	252	872	26,873

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Bridging E (subclass 050) visas (BE)

Figure 17 Number of Bridging E visa holders in Australia, 30 June 2017 to 31 December 2023¹¹



Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

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

Status Resolution Support Services

Table 19 Status Resolution Support Services recipients, as at 31 December 2023

	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	31 December 2023
Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals (UMAs)	1,311	895	803	684
Non-UMAs	1,018	711	738	848
Total	2,329	1,606	1,541	1,532

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Leaving the Status Resolution program

Table 20 Departures from Australia of Status Resolution clients, as at 2019-20 to 2023-24 (31 December 2023)

Departures from Australia	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at 31 December 2023)
Returns from community	7,352	9,804	7,215	6,012	2,259
Removals from immigration detention	3,286	1,040	1,263	2,274	1,214
Total	10,638	10,844	8,478	8,286	3,473

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

Return and Reintegration Assistance Program (RRAP)

Table 21 RRAP referrals and returns 2019-20 to 2023-24 (to 31 December 2023)

Returns and Reintegration Assistance	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at 31 December 2023)
Referrals	1,484	1,117	590	602	317
Returns	798	541	309	317	171

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

156. For information on status resolution see paragraphs 241-247 of the [eleventh edition of The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs](#) paper and paragraphs 149-161 of the [addendum to the eleventh edition](#).

Management of transitory persons

157. As at 31 December 2023, there were 1,046 transitory persons in the regional processing cohort residing temporarily in Australia (Table 21).

Table 22 Transitory persons onshore as at 31 December 2023¹²

	Bridging E visa	Residence Determination	Held detention	Total
All transitory persons	835	<210	<5	1,046

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2024

¹² Babies born onshore figures include less than 5 babies who had not yet been granted a visa who were born to transitory persons holding a BVE and less than 5 babies not yet subject to residence determination who were born to transitory persons under a residence determination.

158. Transitory persons do not have a settlement pathway in Australia. They are encouraged to engage in available third country migration options (including resettlement in the United States or New Zealand) or to voluntarily return home or to another country to which they have right of entry. As at 31 December 2023, 1,304 (452 Nauru, 472 PNG, 380 Australia) resettlement outcomes have been achieved for transitory persons, including 1,101 to the United States and 109 to New Zealand.
159. For more information on the management of transitory persons see paragraphs 248-250 of the eleventh edition of *The Administration of the Immigration and Citizenship Programs* paper and paragraphs of 162-164 of the addendum to the eleventh edition

Cyber security and risk

160. On the 22nd November 2023, the Hon Clare O'Neil MP, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Cyber Security announced the *2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy* (Cyber Security Strategy), which outlines Australia's vision of positioning Australia as a world leader in cyber security by 2030.
161. To realise the Government's vision and objectives under the Cyber Security Strategy, initiatives will be explored to attract highly skilled global cyber talent through the migration system to enhance Australia's competitiveness and expand the domestic cyber security workforce.

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