



Submission No 19

Inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relationship with the economies of the Gulf States

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and Indigenous Affairs

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**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade –
Inquiry into Expanding Australia’s Trade and Investment Relationship
with the Economies of the Gulf States**

**Submission of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and
Indigenous Affairs**

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Summary

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) is committed to supporting Australia's trade and investment relationships with the Gulf States by facilitating the lawful and orderly entry and stay of people.

The number of people in Australia who were born in the Gulf States is relatively small in comparison to other regions and countries. In the 2001 census, 25,591 people indicated that they were born in one of the Gulf States.

The cultural diversity of Australia's population represents a competitive advantage for Australia in capturing opportunities that may emerge in overseas markets. Recent migrants with language, business and cultural skills who entered under Australia's migration program are also important for building business capacity.

The Government is seeking to work with the private sector to maximise the economic and social benefits of Australia's cultural diversity. In this context, the Productive Diversity Program of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has a key role to play in helping Australian businesses to extend into new overseas export markets.

Australia's temporary entry visa program provides streamlined entry for people coming to Australia for business, and supports all sectors of the economy, including the education and tourism sectors. While the number of visa grants to nationals of the Gulf countries is small by global standards, there have been signs of growth in some areas.

In administering Australia's visa program, DIMIA is required to strike a balance between facilitating Australia's trade and foreign policy interests and maintaining a strong focus on Australia's immigration integrity and security.

Consistent with this, DIMIA continues to extend e-visa services to Gulf States on a phased basis and in close consultation with relevant agencies and industry bodies.

DIMIA's Operations in the Gulf States

Australian visa services are provided to the Gulf States by DIMIA offices in Dubai (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman) and Tehran (Iran). Australian-based DIMIA staff have been located in Tehran since July 2001 and in Dubai since January 2003.

Currently, the Gulf States account for only a small proportion of DIMIA's global workload. In 2002-03, nationals of the Gulf States accounted for:

- 0.29% of the total number of visitor visas that Australia granted overseas;
- 1.58% of the total number of student visas granted overseas;
- 0.19% of the total number of long stay business visas granted overseas; and
- 0.28% of the total number of visas granted in the skilled migration, business skills and employer nominated migration categories.

Productive Diversity

Recent research shows that Australian companies regard language proficiency, cultural knowledge and awareness of overseas business practices as important skills for opening up new export markets overseas. Australia's diverse population has the potential to provide real economic benefits to businesses seeking to take hold of opportunities emerging in developing economies such as those of the Gulf States.

The number of people in Australia who were born in the Gulf States is relatively small in comparison to other regions and countries. In the 2001 census, 25,591 people indicated that they were born in one of the Gulf States.

The table below gives 2001 census data on the numbers of people in Australia who were born in the Gulf States. People who were born in Iran represent the majority of those coming to Australia from the Gulf States. Although the overall numbers of people from the Gulf States in Australia is relatively small, there has been significant growth in these numbers between 1996 and 2001. The number of Iranians in Australia increased by 15.9% between 1996 and 2001, compared to a 5% growth in numbers for all overseas born in Australia between those years.

Table 1 - Census – Birthplace

Country of Birth	Total	% Change 1996-2001
Bahrain	678	14.9
Iran	18 824	15.9
Kuwait	2 411	50.8
Oman	343	172.2
Qatar	239	41.4
Saudi Arabia	1 638	44.2
United Arab Emirates	1 458	61.3
Total	25 591	

According to 2001 census data:

- the number of Arabic speakers in Australia rose by 17.9% to 209,387, between 1996 and 2001; and
- the number of Muslims in Australia rose by 40.2% to 281,586, between 1996 and 2001. This number represented 1.5% of the total population.

Recent migration through the skilled stream of Australia's Migration Program benefits Australia by attracting experienced skilled and business people to either establish or join businesses in Australia, bringing with them investments, new ideas and the prospect of creating new jobs.

A small but growing number of skilled stream migration visas were granted to nationals from the countries of the Gulf States. In 2002-2003, 59 skilled stream migration visas were granted compared to 40 in 2001-2002. In both financial years the overwhelming majority of skilled stream migrants from the Gulf States came from Iran, 35 in 2001-2002 and 55 in 2002-2003.

Operating in the international arena means that Australian companies will face different languages, institutions, customs, beliefs, social systems and business practices. Companies must interact with people from a variety of cultural, economic, political and social backgrounds. These factors all contribute to the complexity of operating in an international business environment.

The Department has responsibility for implementing the Australian Government's 2003 *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity* policy document. Among other priorities this document commits government agencies to work with the private sector to maximise the economic and social benefits of Australia's cultural diversity. The Department is meeting this commitment through the Productive Diversity Program.

The Productive Diversity Program has a key role to play in helping Australian businesses to extend into new overseas export markets. The aim of this Program is to encourage and support businesses to make better use of the language skills, business networks, market knowledge and experience of Australia's culturally diverse population and to remove any impediments to their effective participation in the workforce.

The Productive Diversity Program operates throughout Australia and has established strong partnerships with a number of leading companies. The Program also works closely with various State and Territory Governments, as well as peak business/industry bodies such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Through these networks, the Department can play a significant role in supporting the development of business partnerships and consortia, especially those involving ethnic chambers of commerce and bilateral business associations, to enhance Australia's competitive advantage in the global marketplace through capitalising on the language and cultural diversity of the Australian population.

Long Stay Business visas

Australia's immigration laws and policies allow the streamlined entry of skilled workers for up to four years on a Temporary Business (long stay) visa (subclass 457). This visa is designed to enable Australian businesses to sponsor overseas staff with a minimum of inconvenience and delay, and to help foreign nationals wishing to conduct or establish business in Australia. Temporary residents make one application, which may be made electronically via the Internet, for entry and work. Spouses of temporary residents receive full work rights. The features of Australia's long-stay business visas are amongst the most competitive in the world in order to support Australian industry.

Long stay business visas granted to nationals of the Gulf States represent a very small component of the global total.

Table 2- Subclass 457 Visa Grants Offshore – Persons

Country of Citizenship	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
UAE	1	1	0
Bahrain	0	0	1
Qatar	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	1	2	4
Kuwait	1	0	0
Oman	1	1	0
Iran	37	70	71

Student visas

The Student Visa Program of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) enables overseas students to come to Australia to undertake full-time study in registered courses in Australia. According to the Department of Education Science and Training, overseas students contribute more than \$5 billion in export earnings annually. Education is Australia's third largest service export after tourism and transportation. It directly and indirectly contributes about 43,000 jobs for Australians.

Student visa requirements are provided for in the *Migration Regulations 1994* and are the main point of reference for Student visa decision-makers in determining an applicant's eligibility.

The majority of Australia's overseas students come from Asia and this is the area where Australian education providers have traditionally been most active in their marketing campaigns. The quality of Australian education is better known in the Asia-Pacific region and Australian providers also promote the comparative advantages of geographic proximity, lifestyle and cheaper overall costs as reasons for studying in Australia. The promotion of Australian education has paid off with increasing numbers of students from the Asia-Pacific region choosing Australia as a study destination. New markets in the Gulf States are now emerging and with careful management to ensure quality and integrity, offer the potential for further development.

Growth of the Student Visa Program

Table 3, below, shows the numbers and growth rates of student visas granted by citizenship for students applying from overseas, that is, not including students already in Australia seeking a further visa. During the 2002-03 program year, most students from the Gulf States came from Oman (330), followed by Iran (283), Saudi Arabia (249), and the United Arab Emirates (242).

Table 3 – Offshore student visa grants

Country of Citizenship	Total 2000-01 Program Year	Total 2001-02 Program Year	% Variation 01-02 over 00-01	Total 2002-03 Program Year	% Variation 02-03 over 01-02	2002-03 (Jul-Dec)	2003-04 (Jul to Dec)	% Variation July-Dec 03-04 over July-Dec 02-03
Bahrain	20	33	65.00	73	121.21	34	40	17.65
Iran	133	199	49.62	283	42.21	93	152	63.44
Kuwait	16	73	356.25	35	-52.05	28	22	-21.43
Oman	140	215	53.57	330	53.49	119	165	38.66
Quatar	10	22	120.00	96	336.36	71	100	40.85
Saudi Arabia	38	83	118.42	249	200.00	55	181	229.09
UAE	84	166	97.62	242	45.78	117	117	0.00
Global	86,299	97,650	13.15	109,610	12.25	43,528	49,020	12.62

The student visa program continued to report strong growth in grants to students from the Gulf States during the 2002-03 program year. Students from Oman increased 53.5% in offshore grants, Iran increased 42.2%, Saudi Arabia increased 200.0% and the UAE by 45.7%.

Table 4, below, details the numbers of persons granted a student visa by education sector for the period July to December 2003. Most students from the Gulf States applied against the Postgraduate Research Sector followed by the Higher Education Sector.

Table 4 – Offshore student visa grants by education sector 1 July to 31 December 2003

Country of Citizenship	ELICOS	Schools	VET	Higher Education	Postgrad Research	Non-award	Secondary Exchange	Total
Bahrain			8	27	3	2		40
Iran		7	1	14	129	1		152
Kuwait	4		1	7	9	1		22
Oman	13	3	18	53	74	2	2	165
Quatar	15		52	32			1	100
Saudi Arabia	47			53	79	1	1	181
UAE	7		26	41	23	13	7	117

Stock data provides a quarterly “snap shot” of overseas students in Australia at a particular date. Stock data is subject to strong seasonal fluctuations, particularly in relation to students returning home during school holidays. As the stock data only counts those students in Australia at a specific point in time, those students not in the country are excluded from the count.

The latest quarterly stock data (as at 31 December 2003) indicates that there were an estimated 120,602 overseas students in Australia. This is an increase of 10.6% on the same time the previous year (31 December 2002). The stock of students taken on 31 December 2003 was significantly less than the data taken as of 30 September 2003 which was 193,546 (a 9.7% increase on the same time the previous year). This is due to many students returning home during the December vacation. Stock data of students in Australia by citizenship is shown on Table 5, below.

Table 5 – Students in Australia by citizenship as at 30 September and 31 December

Citizenship	Stock as at: 30 Sept 02	Stock as at: 30 Sept 03	% Variation 03/02	Stock as at: 31 Dec 02	Stock as at: 31 Dec 03	% Variation 03/02
Bahrain	61	109	78.69	38	54	42.11
Iran	421	614	45.84	430	655	52.33
Kuwait	73	70	-4.11	29	24	-17.24
Oman	271	480	77.12	124	164	32.26
Qatar	73	118	61.64	23	22	-4.35
Saudi Arabia	135	359	165.93	76	236	210.53
UAE	137	255	86.13	62	86	38.71

Assessment Levels and methodology

Prospective students apply for a student visa that is specific to their intended education sector. For each student visa subclass there are criteria to be satisfied in respect of financial capacity, English proficiency, potential to breach visa conditions and other relevant matters. The evidentiary standards for these criteria differ according to the Assessment Level or risk rating assigned to each sector and country.

Assessment Levels are prescribed according to the calculated risk presented by students from different countries and education sectors. Assessment Level 1 represents the lowest immigration risk and Assessment Level 5 the highest. The higher the Assessment Level, the greater the minimum evidentiary standards a student visa applicant has to satisfy.

Country sector Assessment Levels and the determination of immigration risk are reviewed periodically. The last major review was implemented in November 2002. It is envisioned that a further examination may be undertaken in early 2005.

Table 6, below, details the Assessment Levels for the Gulf States. All States of the Gulf are Assessment Level 2 (moderate risk) in all education sectors, apart from Iran, which is Assessment Level 3 (high risk) in all education sectors.

Table 6 – Student Visa Assessment Levels for the Gulf States

Country of Citizenship	ELICOS	Schools	VET	Higher Education	Postgrad Research	Non-award	Secondary Exchange
Bahrain	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Iran	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Kuwait	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Oman	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Qatar	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Saudi Arabia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
UAE	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Review of the 2001 Student Visa Reforms

The Government initiated a review of the 2001 Student Visa Reforms in August 2002 with the public release of a discussion paper. The Department invited submissions from stakeholders in the international education industry, government agencies and other interested parties for consideration of the extent to which the objectives of the program had been met up to that point, and to identify aspects of the program requiring further attention. The Department then worked closely with the Affiliation of International Education Peak Bodies (AIEPB), the Department of Education, Science and Training and other key government agencies to develop a set of recommendations to enhance the flexibility of the student visa requirements, while maintaining the integrity of the program generally.

The Government agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the review commencing from 1 December 2003. In broad terms, the changes have introduced greater consistency to the financial requirements across all student visa subclasses. The changes have also introduced more flexibility to the evidentiary requirements for higher risk student visa applicants, while ensuring that key integrity measures are maintained.

For students subject to Assessment Level 2, the most significant amendment on 1 December 2003 was the removal of most limitations on the sources of funds that are acceptable to demonstrate financial capacity. Although non-cash assets such as shares or real estate are no longer directly acceptable, there are no other limitations on the types of evidence an Assessment Level 2 student may provide. To ensure that assets will be genuinely used to fund the applicant's study in Australia, non-cash assets are now acceptable only if liquidated and held as a money deposit or used as collateral against a loan.

Student visa applicants subject to Assessment Levels 3 and 4 now have a broader range of options to demonstrate their financial capacity. This increased flexibility has been achieved by:

- introducing personal loans as an acceptable source across all visa subclasses;
- requiring Assessment Level 3 and 4 students to demonstrate access to funds for at most the first 24 and 36 months of their stay, respectively, rather than the full period of their stay;
- including Australian-resident aunts and uncles as acceptable individuals to provide funding to Assessment Level 4 students.

A number of changes were also made to the English language proficiency and other evidentiary requirements for Assessment Level 3 and 4 students. These changes include provisions to accommodate students who have previously studied outside Australia in some English-speaking countries, and to support alternative pathways to university by reducing the minimum English proficiency test score for students undertaking preliminary foundation studies.

The Department continues to monitor the changes and their impact on the program closely, and remains committed to the sustained growth of the overseas student program. The aim of the 2003 amendments is to ensure a balanced approach that allows for the continued growth of the international education industry, while also ensuring that the integrity of the student visa program is maintained.

Introduction of the Student Guardian visa

The Student Guardian visa was introduced on 1 January 2004. The Student Guardian visa is intended to

- ensure that overseas students under 18 years of age have appropriate care and welfare arrangements in place during their stay in Australia; and
- allow, in very limited circumstances, for a student guardian to accompany and reside in Australia with a student aged 18 years or over.

The Student Guardian visa allows an overseas student's parent, custodian or relative to accompany the student to Australia to provide for their welfare. For students less than 18 years of age, the student guardian's period of stay is generally linked with the year of the student's 18th birthday. When a student turns 18, they are no longer subject to immigration requirements in respect of their accommodation and welfare.

This is of particular relevance to Gulf countries as it allows female students to be accompanied by an appropriate relative as guardian. Without such an arrangement these women may not be able to undertake studies in Australia.

The Student Guardian visa replaces the existing practice of coming to Australia on a long-stay visitor visa, which usually required the person to leave Australia every 11 months. The student guardian is expected to live with the student while in Australia, and must not leave without the student unless appropriate alternative arrangements are first put in place. All initial Student Guardian visa applications must be made outside Australia.

Incentives to study in Australia

Australia offers many attractions to overseas students including climate, relatively low living costs, friendly and safe society and quality education. Australia also offers overseas students generous work rights of up to 20 hours a week and longer during vacation periods.

Overseas students bring significant benefits to Australia. DIMIA is committed to supporting the overseas student program while ensuring that desired migration outcomes are achieved. Changes to the student visa program following the 2001 student visa reforms have contributed to an increasingly streamlined and transparent student visa process. In addition, Australia has taken steps to link successful overseas students to skilled migration opportunities. As a result, an increasing number of successful overseas students are going on to permanent residence visas from student visas without leaving Australia. These changes have placed Australia in a unique position within the international student market.

It should be noted that some traditional competitors markets are introducing more stringent requirements and forecasting declines in student numbers. In contrast to this, Australia is taking a robust and facilitative approach in regard to expansion, particularly through initiatives such as e-Visa.

E-visas for Students

The introduction of electronic lodgement of student visa applications has provided improved access to departmental services for many student visa applicants. In 2002-03 eligibility for offshore students to access the e-Visa facility was expanded to all offshore Assessment Level 1 (low immigration risk) students. A pilot of expanded Internet lodgement is to commence on 1 July 2004. The pilot will be limited to students from China, India, Indonesia and Thailand who apply through participating student agents. Should the pilot be successful, it is anticipated that broader access would be progressively extended to other countries from 1 July 2005.

Professional Development visas

The Professional Development visa (PDV) caters for groups of professionals, managers and government officials from overseas who wish to come to Australia to enhance their professional or managerial skills by undertaking professional development training. The ability to offer such tailored training will support Australia's bilateral, economic and political relations with the Gulf States.

By becoming sponsors (approved by DIMIA), Australian organisations and education providers can assume responsibility for potentially large numbers of visa holders from markets that traditionally exhibit high immigration risk.

Sponsors must assess the genuineness of their nominated visa applicants and enter into enforceable undertakings in relation to their own behaviour and the conduct of their sponsored visa holders. The undertakings are supported by a regime of sanctions that will ensure the ongoing integrity of the visa program and the participation of high quality businesses.

Sponsors must have an agreement (such as a memorandum of understanding) with an overseas employer or government agency that wishes to send professionals, managers or government officials to Australia to undertake professional development. The agreement should require the overseas employer or foreign government agency to meet all costs relating to the PDV holders.

The market for the PDV in the Gulf States is likely to be significant, in particular in relation to government sponsored trainees. One sponsorship has already been lodged for Saudi Arabian government employees to undertake professional development training in auditing. The Saudi Arabian government has also expressed an interest in sending medical professionals to Australia under the PDV program.

Visitor visas

The international security situation, including the war in Iraq, has placed downward pressure on the level of visitor visa applications from the Gulf States. As can be seen in table 7 below, during 2001-02 following the events of September 2001, visitor visa grants to nationals of most of the Gulf States declined. This downward trend continued in 2002-03, with much of this further fall attributable to the war in Iraq and the impact of SARS on international travel.

Visa grants for 2003-04 to the end of February show slight growth above the level for the same period in 2002-03 in most of the Gulf markets. Grants to Kuwaiti nationals have, however, fallen by 40% this year.

Table 7 – Visitor visa grants 2000/01 to date

Country of Citizenship	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04 YTD – as at 29 February 2004
Bahrain	625	595	542	438
Iran	1,873	1,603	1,574	1,214
Kuwait	3,903	3,697	2,394	1,273
Oman	803	767	706	434
Qatar	410	387	234	171
Saudi Arabia	1,721	1,737	1,552	1,228
United Arab Emirates	4,687	3,563	2,238	1,585
Global Total	3,540,178	3,332,858	3,233,066	2,431,226

DIMIA regularly consults with the tourism industry concerning visa services. The Tourism and Visa Advisory Group was established by DIMIA as a forum for industry bodies to provide feedback on DIMIA services. DIMIA remains committed to working with industry to develop new markets, including the Gulf States.

Over recent years, DIMIA has introduced a number of initiatives to improve visa processing arrangements for those wishing to travel to Australia to visit family members. The Sponsored Family Visitor (Short Stay) visa came into effect on 1 July 2002. The aim of this visa is to reduce the non-return rates for applicants from high-risk countries and to assist those people who may not otherwise have been able to obtain a visitor visa due to some doubt that they intend a genuine visit to Australia.

Only a very small number of Sponsored Family Visitor visas have been granted to nationals of the Gulf States. This is a reflection of the small size of the Gulf communities in Australia. Of 307 applications for Sponsored Visitor visas received from Gulf State nationals in 2002-03, 306 were from Iranians. The grant rate for these was 48%.

The Family Visitor Network was also established on 1 July 2002. The objectives of the Network are to:

- ensure clients in Australia (family members, community and religious leaders and Members of Parliament) understand visitor visa policy, procedures and the decision-making process through the provision of an information kit and telephone advice; and
- provide DIMIA's overseas posts with information about the client in Australia and the type of support the client is prepared to offer the applicant during their stay in Australia.

In recent years the Government has implemented many changes to improve visa application processing in the Middle East, including from Gulf States nationals.

Initiatives have included:

- expansion of agency arrangements in the Gulf States including in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, increasing significantly the total number of agency arrangements and providing an alternative application process for Gulf residents. Where applicants use an approved agent, they do not have to submit their passport or supporting documentation to the Visa Office in Dubai;
- location of an additional senior officer (in July 2000) in Dubai;
- since 2000, the Australian Consulate General in Dubai has been issuing both short stay and long stay tourist visit visas with validity for multiple travel for five years, subject to the validity of the visa applicant's passport. Previously the maximum visit visa validity period had been four years;
- the availability of e-visas to nationals of the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Individuals, generally domestic workers, accompanying Saudi families on holiday to Australia can be issued with visit visas of appropriate validity by the Embassy in Riyadh at the same time, providing they meet the normal visa eligibility criteria.

DIMIA's office in Dubai is currently investigating the possibility of establishing a 'reliable business partner' arrangement to facilitate the lodgement of visa applications. The reliable business partner would act as a collection point for visa applications from most of the Gulf States by receiving applications, ensuring they are complete, collecting visa application charges, scheduling interviews and couriering information to DIMIA's office on a daily basis. It is hoped that this arrangement will be in place before this year's summer peak of applications from Gulf States' nationals which occurs between June and August. Similar arrangements have been introduced in India and the Philippines and are operating successfully. They allow DIMIA staff to focus on assessing and deciding applications.

Electronic Travel Authority/Electronic visas

All travellers to Australia are required by law to have an authority to enter and stay in Australia. For short-term tourist and business travellers, that authority can be obtained through either a traditional visa label placed in a passport or an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA). The ETA is an electronically stored authority, removing the need for a visa label and application forms.

The ETA is currently available to nationals of 34 countries and locations. The ETA is not available to nationals of any of the Gulf States. Rather than increasing the number of ETA-eligible countries, DIMIA has been moving towards electronic visitor visa lodgement. The UAE was the first country with access to the e-676 facility which has since been extended to Kuwait and the EU accession countries. This facility, which allows applicants to make their visa application through the Internet, provides an efficient alternative method for lodging and processing visitor visa applications, with most applications able to be processed within 7–10 days. Applicants are advised of the visa decision by e-mail. Persons granted a visa in this way are able to travel to Australia without needing to obtain a visa label in their passport.

From 1 July 2004, selected travel agents will have access to the e676 facility via a logon screen and applicants will be able to lodge their e676 application through the travel agent.

The electronic lodgment facility may be extended to other Gulf nationals, subject to further evaluation of operation of the facility.

Visitor visa Non-Return Rate/ Number of Protection visa applications lodged

Table 8 below indicates that visitor visa non-return rates are generally below the global average for all Gulf States other than Iran. There has, however, been significant improvement in Iran's non-return rate since 2000-01.

Table 8 – Visitor visa Non-Return Rate (NRR)

Country of Citizenship	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04 YTD – as at 29 February 2004
Bahrain	0.30	0.53	1.37	1.84
Iran	13.89	7.57	6.02	3.83
Kuwait	0.42	0.56	0.67	0.22
Oman	1.19	1.70	1.00	1.28
Qatar	0.65	0.33	0.00	0.00
Saudi Arabia	3.12	2.06	1.44	0.89
United Arab Emirates	0.29	0.70	0.33	0.40
Global Average	2.16	1.83	1.60	1.55

While the number of protection visa applications lodged by Iranians has fallen significantly, the rate of applications is still above the global average. Protection visa lodgement rates for nationals of other Gulf States are negligible.

Table 9 – Number of Protection Visa (PV) applications lodged

Country of Citizenship	2000/01		2001/02		2002/03		2003/04 YTD – as at 29 February 2004	
	PVs Lodged	PV rate (%)	PVs Lodged	PV rate (%)	PVs Lodged	PV rate (%)	PVs Lodged	PV rate (%)
Bahrain	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	0.186	3	0.738
Iran	133	7.385	51	3.500	28	2.032	9	0.865
Kuwait	3	0.078	0	0.000	2	0.081	0	0.000
Oman	0	0.000	2	0.216	0	0.000	0	0.000
Qatar	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
Saudi Arabia	0	0.000	2	0.107	0	0.000	0	0.000
United Arab Emirates	0	0.000	1	0.025	0	0.000	0	0.000
Global	6,532	0.179	5,192	0.146	3,607	0.103	1,553	0.074

Work and Holiday visas

On 1 November 2002, Migration Regulations (the regulations) commenced for a new temporary visa, the Work and Holiday visa (Class US) (Subclass 462). This is a visa for nationals of countries with which a special bilateral arrangement has been signed. This visa provides for young professionals (aged 18-30 years) from arrangement countries to holiday with work or study being incidental to the visit. The regulations apply to nationals of countries that have been included by Gazette Notice.

The Work and Holiday program is different from the traditional Working Holiday program, insofar as it requires an applicant to have the support of their government, have diploma or degree level qualifications, and functional English. Furthermore, visa holders must also depart Australia at the end of stay under the Work and Holiday program.

Iran is the first country to sign a Work and Holiday Visa arrangement with Australia. Iran was gazetted as an arrangement country on 3 September 2003.

The Work and Holiday visa program provides for the flexible management of up to 2,000 visas to be granted to Iranian nationals over 4 years. The visa provides for a 12 month stay in Australia with a multiple travel facility from the date of first arrival in Australia. Applicants can participate in the program once only.

One of the key characteristics of this visa class is a mandatory “No Further Stay” condition, preventing visa holders from being granted another substantive visa, other than a further Work and Holiday visa or a Protection visa while they remain in Australia. Applicants may hold a maximum of three consecutive Work and Holiday visas but can participate in the program once only.