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Overseas students: immigration policy changes 1997–May 2010

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Introduction

This paper provides a chronology that draws on ministerial press statements to trace changes in Australia's immigration policy in relation to overseas students between 1997 and May 2010. Immigration policies introduced under the Howard Coalition Government and the Rudd Labor Government in this 12 to 13 year period have fundamentally changed the nature of migration to Australia. Policy changes in this period were pivotal in facilitating the rapid growth of overseas student education in Australia by forging links between the overseas student program and permanent skilled migration. The paper begins its analysis in 1997 as this appears to be the point at which the Howard Government commenced making announcements about overseas students as an immigration issue.

The paper begins by briefly analysing the way in which the landscape of immigration policy in relation to overseas students has developed since 1997. This is followed by a summary charting key policy developments between 1997 and May 2010, and concluding observations on the consequences and possible impacts of the most recent immigration policy changes on overseas student education in Australia. Appendix A contains a detailed chronology of government media releases on immigration policy developments in relation to overseas students. As an aid to reading the paper, Appendix B identifies the visa classes referred to in the text of the paper, and Appendix C provides a glossary of acronyms and terms.¹

Overview

Australia's immigration system has undergone significant paradigm shifts in the past 12 to 13 years. Among the key changes are shifts in the focus of the Migration Program from family migration to skilled migration, and in the overall immigration program from permanent migration to long-term temporary migration.² In the context of these two changes, Australia's immigration program has also seen an exponential increase in overseas student entrants.³ Indeed, by 2007 Australia accounted for 11 per cent of the international student market and had seen a three-fold increase in student numbers over the previous ten years.⁴ Figures published by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) indicate that the number of student visa holders in Australia grew at the average annual rate of 13.9 per cent

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1. While people who enter Australia as temporary migrants under the overseas student program are often referred to as 'international students' in common parlance, this paper largely adopts government terminology used within the immigration portfolio to refer to such entrants as 'overseas students'.
 2. A Markus, J Jupp and P McDonald, *Australia's immigration revolution*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2009, p. 10; P Mares, 'The permanent shift to temporary migration', *Inside Story*, 1 June 2009, viewed 21 April 2010, <http://inside.org.au/the-permanent-shift-to-temporary-migration>
 3. For statistical information on overseas student enrolments and related data dating back to 2000 see the following website: Australian Government, 'International student data', Australian Education International website, viewed 28 May 2010, <http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/Default.htm>
 4. A Markus, J Jupp and P McDonald, *Australia's immigration revolution*, op. cit., p. 11.

every year after June 2001, rising to a total of 386 523 student visa holders in the 12 months to the end of June 2009.⁵

The strengthening of both the skilled migration program and overseas student program was seen by successive governments as instrumental in contributing to Australia's economic growth in the face of challenges such as skills shortages and an ageing population. The push to attract overseas students under the Howard Government was part of the Government's response to changing global economic conditions and migratory trends. The rapid growth of both the skilled and overseas student programs occurred in a climate of intense international competition for highly skilled young migrants and overseas students.⁶ The recruitment of overseas students was a core element of the Government's strategy to remain competitive in this international environment. Overseas students were seen as both injecting significant amounts of money into the Australian economy and having the potential to yield returns by helping to meet Australia's ongoing labour needs. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that the international education industry contributed \$15.8 billion to the Australian economy in 2008–09, and up to \$17.7 billion in the four quarters to December 2009.⁷ According to the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, international student

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5. DIAC, *Annual Report 2008–09*, Canberra, October 2009, p. 63, viewed 10 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/2008-09/html/outcome1/output1-1-4.htm>
 6. K Koser, *The global financial crisis and international migration: policy implications for Australia*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, July 2009, p. 3, viewed 10 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FMY8U6%22>
 7. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), *Population flows: immigration aspects 2008–09*, Canberra, May 2010, p. 60, viewed 27 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2008-09/pop-flows.pdf>; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *International trade in goods and services, Australia* (Cat no. 5368.0): Table 11a, credits (exports), ABS website, viewed 4 June 2010, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/5368.0Dec%202009?OpenDocument>; There is a great deal of debate surrounding this issue and estimates vary as to the value of the international education industry to the Australian economy. Estimates produced by the ABS have been queried by B Birrell in 'Export figures exaggerated', *The Australian*, 5 August 2009, p. 34 and defended by G Withers, in 'Sector's \$15bn-plus export figures really stack up', *The Australian*, 12 August 2009, p. 34. Further discussion of these and international estimates is provided by G Maslen, in 'Don't count on earnings', *The Australian*, 12 August 2009, p. 30. See also, B Birrell and T F Smith, 'Export earnings from the overseas student industry: how much?', *Australian Universities' Review*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2010, pp. 4–12, viewed 4 June 2010, http://www.aur.org.au/archive/52-01/aur_52-01.pdf and Access Economics' report for the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), *The Australian education sector and the economic contribution of international students: report by Access Economics for Australian Council for Private Education and Training*, 2009, viewed 4 June 2010, <http://globalhighered.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/theaustralianeducationsectorandtheeconomiccontributionofinternationalstudents-2461.pdf>; Estimates are highly dependent on the type of methodology used in calculations.

activity contributed an estimated 122 000 full-time equivalent employees to the economy between 2007 and 2008.⁸

Through government statements and key policy decisions from the late 1990s onwards the Federal Government expressed a commitment to retaining successful overseas students with skills that were in demand, thereby encouraging such individuals to make the transition from temporary to permanent settlement through the skilled migration program. Such movements contributed to the rapidly growing trend of people coming to Australia on temporary work or study visas and applying for permanent residence onshore. Indeed, by 2007–08, approximately 40 per cent of visas granted in the skilled migration program went to temporary migrants who were already in Australia, largely overseas students and Business (Long Stay) (subclass 457) visa holders.⁹

Demographers, Andrew Markus, James Jupp and Peter McDonald have observed that ‘Australian immigration policy has facilitated the growth of the educational industry by offering the option of permanent settlement to those successfully completing courses in areas of high demand’.¹⁰ In particular, academics, parliamentarians and other commentators have argued that the possibility of attaining permanent residency following study in Australia, combined with the priority attached to trade skills from 2005, induced the burgeoning of the vocational education and training (VET) sector and a dramatic increase in students applying to undertake VET courses.¹¹ The majority of the students driving this growth in the VET

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8. K Koser, *The global financial crisis and international migration: policy implications for Australia*, op. cit., p. 4; See also, ACPET, *The Australian education sector and the economic contribution of international students: report by Access Economics for Australian Council for Private Education and Training*, op. cit.
 9. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Migration program gives priority to those with skills most needed*, media release, Canberra, 17 December 2008, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08123.htm>; A Markus, J Jupp and P McDonald, *Australia’s immigration revolution*, op. cit., p. 64.
 10. A Markus, J Jupp and P McDonald, *Australia’s immigration revolution*, op. cit., p. 11.
 11. P Mares, ‘From queue to pool: skilled migration gets a makeover’, *Inside Story*, 10 February 2010, viewed 21 April 2010, <http://inside.org.au/skilled-migration-gets-a-makeover/>; See also B Birrell and E Healy, ‘The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry’, *People and Place*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2010, pp. 67–68, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FJXJW6%22>; B Birrell and B Perry, ‘Immigration policy change and the international student industry’, *People and Place*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2009 pp. 65–68, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FTN8U6%22>; K Thomson, ‘Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Registration of Providers and Other Measures) Bill 2009’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 October 2009, pp. 10121–10126, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/reps/dailys/dr191009.pdf> cited in P Mares, ‘A blockage in the skilled migration pipeline’, *Inside Story*, 3 November 2009, viewed 21 April 2010, <http://inside.org.au/a-blockage-in-the-skilled-migration-pipeline/>; B Baird, *Review of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000—final report*, Australian Government, Canberra, February 2009, p. vi, viewed 21 April 2010,

sector were from the Indian subcontinent.¹² In 2009 DIAC reported that ‘[t]he number of student visa holders from India increased by 44.6 per cent from 63 558 on 30 June 2008 to 91 887 on 30 June 2009, making it the top source country’ for overseas students coming to Australia in that year.¹³

The dawn of the global financial crisis in 2008 and the resultant economic downturn triggered changes to government policy on skilled migration. In March 2009 Australia’s skilled migration program was reduced for the first time in ten years, with the stated objective of protecting local jobs.¹⁴ A review of the Migration Program in 2008 also led to the Government announcing that it would move to a ‘demand driven’ model for permanent skilled migration, with a focus on delivering the skills most needed in the economy. This shift in policy focus was reflected in the introduction of a new Critical Skills List (CSL) and a revised order of preference for the processing of skilled visa applications, which gave chief priority to employer sponsored visas. The CSL was limited to professional fields in health, IT, engineering and accountancy, and abandoned most of the trade occupations behind the growth of the vocational education sector. It was hoped that these policy changes would result in increases in employer-sponsored visas and in the numbers of temporary migrants already working in Australia being granted permanent visas onshore. In the months following the introduction of these changes, there was an increase in visa grants to registered nurses, computing professionals, engineers and doctors, and a decline in primary visa grants to cooks, chefs and pastry cooks, accountants and hairdressers.¹⁵

Recent developments

The evolution of immigration policy over the past 13 years fostered the development of a complex nexus between the overseas student program and the skilled migration program.¹⁶ Indeed, a 2009 Senate Committee Inquiry into the Welfare of International students found that ‘[w]itnesses who appeared before the committee, including DIAC, gave evidence that

http://aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ESOS_Review_Final_Report_Feb_2010_pdf.pdf; Senate Standing Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) References Committee, *Welfare of International Students*, The Senate, Canberra, November 2009, pp. 18–19, 22, viewed 21 April 2010
http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eet_ctte/international_students/report/report.pdf

12. B Birrell and E Healy, ‘The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry’, op. cit., p. 68.
13. DIAC, *Annual Report 2008–09*, op. cit., p. 63.
14. C Evans, *Migration program gives priority to those with skills most needed*, op. cit.
15. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Skilled migration changes deliver more workers Australia needs*, media release, Canberra, 17 February 2010, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FRKZV6%22>
16. B Birrell and B Perry, ‘Immigration policy change and the international student industry’, op. cit., pp. 65–68; B Baird, *Review of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000- final report*, op. cit., pp. 6–8.

over time a perception has developed that a student visa can provide an automatic pathway to permanent residency'.¹⁷

However, from approximately 2005 onwards it became evident that the interaction between the overseas student program and the general skilled migration program was producing unintended and problematic outcomes. Issues that emerged as a result of this nexus included: a concentration of overseas students in the vocational education sector in the pursuit of permanent residency; the failure of some former overseas students to achieve employment outcomes that were commensurate with their qualifications; and failure to obtain skill levels that would meet Australia's skill needs.¹⁸ Many of these and other issues surrounding the operation of international education and the welfare of international students in Australia came to a head in May 2009 when reports of violence against Indian international students triggered protests in Melbourne and Sydney. These events attracted much public attention, both domestically and abroad.¹⁹

The Australian Government embarked on intense diplomatic efforts to salvage Australia's reputation as a destination for international students and to clarify the distinctions between the objectives of student visas and permanent residency.²⁰ The Government also established taskforces on international student safety and wellbeing and developed a National

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17. Senate Standing Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) References Committee, *Welfare of International Students*, op. cit., p. 17.
 18. P Mares, 'A blockage in the skilled migration pipeline', op. cit.; B Birrell and E Healy, 'Migrant accountants —high numbers, poor outcomes,' *People and Place*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2008, pp. 9–22, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2F01MS6%22>; B Birrell and E Healy, 'How are skilled migrants doing?', *People and Place*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2008, p. 16, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2F3ODQ6%22>; B Birrell, S Richardson and L Hawthorne, *Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration Categories* (report prepared for DIAC), Canberra, 2006, pp. 76–97, viewed 28 April 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/gsm-report/>; P Rodan, 'Remembrance of policies past', *Campus Review*, 16 March 2010, p. 12, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FZQ8W6%22>; B Birrell and B Perry, 'Immigration policy change and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 78.
 19. B D'Costa, 'Curry bashing? A racist Australian underbelly and the education industry', *South Asia Masala*, Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific, 6 February 2010, viewed 23 April 2010, <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/blogs/southasiamasala/2010/02/06/feature-article-curry-bashing-a-racist-australian-underbelly-and-the-education-industry/>; S Marginson, *International student security: globalisation, state, university*, (speech to the World Universities Forum), Davos, 9–11 January 2010, p. 4, viewed 3 May 2010, http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff_pages/Marginson/WUF_2010_keynote_Marginson_paper.pdf; B Birrell and B Perry, 'Immigration policy change and the international student industry' op. cit., pp 71–72.
 20. Senate Standing Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) References Committee, *Welfare of International Students*, op. cit., p. 18.

International Student Strategy through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Ultimately, these events served to catalyse the establishment of formal investigations into the operation of the international education sector in Australia.²¹ The links between international student education and Australia's Migration Program were among the issues that were scrutinised in the course of these reviews.

One of the Australian Government's key responses to the challenges emerging from international student education in Australia was to introduce significant reforms to the skilled migration program in February 2010.²² In making these changes the Government explicitly called for the attainment of overseas student visas to be decoupled from other migration outcomes, such as permanent residency, and sought to make access to permanent migration contingent upon the achievement of concrete employment outcomes.²³

Key policy developments

The following section traces the key immigration policy announcements and changes under the Howard and Rudd governments that facilitated the growth and development of the overseas student program within Australia's immigration system between 1997 and May 2010. A more detailed catalogue of relevant ministerial media releases is presented in Appendix A.

Howard Coalition Government

1997–2000

- In 1998 the Howard Government announced the provision of \$21 million over four years for a major international marketing campaign to promote Australia's education and training services industry overseas. The marketing campaign was focused on traditional Asian markets as well as relatively untapped student markets such as India, People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China), Europe and North and South America.

21. Namely: the Senate Standing Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) References Committee inquiry into the Welfare of International Students; and the review of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act*, undertaken by the Hon Bruce Baird.

22. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Migration reforms to deliver Australia's skills needs*, media release, Canberra, 8 February 2010, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FNKZV6%22>

23. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Options remain for overseas students*, media release, Canberra, 9 February 2010, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FDRYV6%22>; B Baird, *Review of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000—final report*, op. cit., p. 7.

The campaign was run by the Commonwealth-funded body, Australian Education International (AEI).²⁴

- The skilled stream of Australia's Migration Program was increased from 29 per cent in 1995–96 to over 50 per cent in 2000, and continued to grow in subsequent years. The increase in skilled migration was central to the Government's response to the challenges of skills shortages and an ageing population.²⁵
- In August 1998 the Government announced that from July 1999 the points test used to assess skilled migrants for the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program (applicable to skilled migrants who are not sponsored by an employer) was modified to grant five additional points where an applicant obtained their diploma, trade or degree from an Australian educational institution. This change enhanced the ability of eligible former overseas students to migrate to Australia on a permanent basis and was seen as increasing Australia's global competitiveness in attracting more overseas students and skilled migrants.²⁶
- In March 1999 the Government announced the introduction of the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL)—a list of occupations that were deemed to be in national shortage. From May 1999 skilled migration applicants with occupations on the MODL were able to receive bonus points in a new selection test, and were accorded processing priority. The placement of occupations on the MODL in coming years played a key role in spurring growth in overseas student numbers.²⁷
- Government statements in 2000 indicated that the Government recognised the globalisation of the labour market and the growing importance of temporary residents in the Australian economy. Long-term temporary migration, such as migration for work and study, was seen as a touchstone for the future of migration internationally. The

24. D Kemp (Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs), *\$1.2 billion growth in education export industry*, media release, Canberra, 11 May 1998, viewed 20 April 2010,

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F80205%22>

25. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *Australian immigration: grasping the new reality*, media release, Canberra, 23 November 2000, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FUY836%22>

26. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *Skilled migration changes to boost economy*, media release, Canberra, 27 August 1998, viewed 20 April, 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FP8905%22>; For general information on the points test, see DIAC, *What is the points test?*, DIAC website, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/points-test.htm>

27. B Birrell and E Healy, 'The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 66.

Government's skilled migration and overseas student programs were developed in the context of intense international competition for skilled migrants and for overseas students.²⁸

2001–2004

- From July 2001 overseas students with key skills that were needed in the economy who successfully completed their course of study at an Australian institution, and met other general eligibility requirements, were able to make an onshore application for permanent residency through the Skilled-Independent (and related) visa categories of the GSM program (previously they had to leave Australia and apply offshore). Students were required to make their applications within six months of completing their Australian course. Unlike skilled migrants who applied offshore, former overseas students who made applications onshore were exempted from the requirement of obtaining work experience in their nominated occupation.²⁹
- The drawing of a direct link between the overseas student program and skilled migration program attracted strong growth in overseas student numbers, leading to a 27 per cent increase in offshore student visa grants between 2001 and 2003. It also led to strong growth in demand for permanent migration from former overseas students who obtained qualifications in Australia, with former students comprising almost half of those granted independent skilled migration visas through the GSM. Due to the high demand for permanent migration from former students, the Government increased the pass mark for all skilled migration applications received after May 2002 from 110 to 115 points.³⁰

28. P Ruddock, *Australian immigration: grasping the new reality*, op. cit.

29. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *The Economic Impact of Immigration Seminar*, media release, Canberra, 1 March 2001, viewed 20 April, 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F48T36%22>; See also B Birrell and E Healy, 'The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 66.

30. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Student visa numbers increase to record high*, media release, Canberra, 19 September 2003, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FF7GA6%22> See also P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Migration: benefiting Australia conference, opening speech*, media release, Canberra, 7 May 2002, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FWMH66%22>; P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *Record temporary entrants contribute to economy*, media release, Canberra, 7 January 2002, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F5CT56%22>; P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Minister announces 2002–03 migration (non-humanitarian) program*, media release, Canberra, 7 May 2002, viewed 20 April 2010,

- From July 2003 former overseas students wishing to apply for the GSM program were required to complete a minimum of two years of study physically in Australia (rather than one year as previously required) in order to qualify for bonus points in the selection test, and to be exempt from requiring skilled work experience.³¹
- In December 2003 the Government introduced changes to the overseas student program to allow greater flexibility on financial requirements (such as the need to have sufficient funds to live and study in Australia) and English proficiency requirements for some student visa applicants. The changes allowed for a greater range of acceptable financial evidence for student visa applicants from some high-risk countries. English proficiency requirements were modified to accommodate students who had previously studied in certain English-speaking countries, and to allow some students to undertake foundation English language courses before undergraduate study. These changes were aimed at aiding Australia's growth as a world leader in international student education.³²

2005–2007

- The Government noted that there had been a recognisable shift in the way people migrate to Australia. Whereas in the past the majority of skilled migrants entered Australia after obtaining a permanent visa offshore, applicants for permanent skilled migration were now predominantly drawn from the ranks of those who were already in Australia under a temporary visa, largely skilled workers and overseas students.³³
- In recognition of an increase in student visa approvals and falling non-compliance levels among overseas students, from April 2005 the Government decided to lower student visa

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FQMH66%22>

31. P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *2003–04 migration program will increase benefits to Australia*, media release, Canberra, 31 March 2003, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F5P396%22>
32. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Student visa numbers continue to grow*, media release, Canberra, 29 November 2003, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FQK6B6%22>; For general information on student visa assessment levels see, DIAC, *Student visa assessment levels*, DIAC website, 31 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/student-visa-assessment-levels.htm>; For general information on English language assessment for student visas see, DIAC, *Student visa English language requirements*, DIAC website, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/english-requirements.htm#a>
33. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Thousands of temporary entrants chose to call Australia home*, media release, Canberra, 20 January 2005, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F2J1F6%22>

assessment levels, including, English language requirements and financial tests for student visa applicants from certain countries and education sectors.³⁴

- From April 2005 the pass mark for selection under the GSM was increased from 115 to 120 points. This increase in the overall mark required to qualify for skilled migration heightened the importance of obtaining bonus points from an occupation that was listed on the MODL. Under the previous pass mark of 115 only 9 per cent of skilled migration applicants nominated an occupation on the MODL, but a year after the increase of the pass mark 42 per cent of applicants nominated an occupation on the MODL in order to acquire bonus points.³⁵
- In May 2005 the Government increased the number of trades occupations listed on the MODL, including cooking and hospitality. This change was instrumental in accelerating the growth of the vocational education sector and in the number of overseas students enrolling in vocational education courses.³⁶
- In 2005 and 2006 studies revealed that while, generally, skilled migrants were achieving high levels of employment former overseas students may not have been achieving employment outcomes that were commensurate with their skills and qualifications. Evidence suggested that strong English language skills and relevant work experience were crucial to achieving good employment outcomes.³⁷

34. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Student visa reform success*, media release, Canberra, 12 January 2005, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FLHXE6%22>

35. B Birrell and E Healy, 'The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 66; A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *Australia's skills and migrants to increase*, media release, Canberra, 1 April 2004, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FEV6C6%22>; J Ross, 'High-end ELICOS winner in migration shake-up', *Campus Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, 16 February 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2F4BYV6%22>

36. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *2005–06 Migration (non-humanitarian) program*, media release, Canberra, 14 April 2005, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FOFRF6%22>; B Birrell and E Healy, 'The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 68.

37. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), *New migrants are entering the workforce faster*, media release, Canberra, 5 November 2005, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F4BYV6%22>

- In response to the findings of studies on the employment outcomes of skilled migrants the Government introduced changes to requirements for the GSM program, including an increase in the base level of English language proficiency and a greater emphasis on work experience in the points test. A temporary visa mechanism was introduced to enable overseas students, who were exempt from work experience requirements, but who may have needed some skilled work experience to qualify for skilled migration after the introduction of these changes, to gain the requisite experience.³⁸

Rudd Labor Government

2008–May 2010

- The Rudd Government increased the permanent skilled migration program by 6000 places in February 2008 and by a further 31 000 places in May 2008. This represented a 30 per cent increase of the skilled component in the 2007–08 Migration Program. Skilled migration comprised 68 per cent of the 2007–08 Migration Program.³⁹
- In April 2008 the Rudd Government reformed student visas to automatically grant overseas students the right to work for up to 20 hours a week while their course was in session. Previously, students were required to make a separate application for the right to work after being granted a student visa. The Government also introduced a streamlined visa process for student visa applicants from India, Indonesia, and Thailand to enable their visa information to be stored electronically, rather than requiring a visa label in their passports.⁴⁰
- In response to a significant downturn in the global economic outlook in the latter part of 2008 the Government announced the shift to a ‘demand driven’ model for permanent

[ssrel%2FGRZH6%22](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lisia3/); DIAC, *Sample Reports from LSIA 3*, DIAC website, viewed 17 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lisia3/>

38. A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), *Evaluation of general skilled migration categories*, media release, Canberra, 8 May 2006, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2F3N6%22>; B Birrell, L Hawthorne, S Richardson, *Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration categories*, DIAC, May 2006, viewed 17 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/gsm-report/>
39. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Budget 2008–09—record skilled migration program to boost economy*, media release, Canberra, 13 May 2008, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2FXIG6%22>
40. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Foreign students gain automatic work rights in Australia*, media release, Canberra, 25 April 2008, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2FVIG6%22>

skilled migration, with a focus on employer and government sponsored migration that would meet specific skills needs in the economy.⁴¹

- In 2009 the Government reduced the planned level of permanent skilled migration by 20 per cent. It also introduced increased English language requirements and a targeted skills testing regime for trades-related occupations to ensure migrants were ready to enter the labour market. The Government indicated that fewer trade-based visas would be granted in 2009–10.⁴²
- Reports of violence against Indian international students prompted intense diplomatic efforts to salvage Australia's reputation as a destination for international students. The Government's response included the launch of taskforces on international student safety and wellbeing, the development of a National International Student Strategy by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and reviews of international student education in Australia.⁴³
- DIAC data revealed that, since June 2001, the number of student visa holders in Australia had grown by an average rate of 13.9 per cent per annum. Student visa applications grew by 20 per cent in 2008–09, while the number of student visas granted grew by 15.2 per cent, resulting in a total of 320 368 student visa grants in that year. The number of visa grants in the VET sector (subclass 572 visas) increased by 52.2 per cent in 2008–09, while the share of VET sector visas in the broader overseas student program increased from 25 per cent in 2007–08 to 32 per cent in 2008–09. India replaced China as the top source country for overseas students in Australia, with the number of student visa holders from India increasing by 44.6 per cent between June 2008 and June 2009. There was also a significant increase in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and Postgraduate Research sectors. However, 28 000 student visas were refused—an increase of 68 per cent on the number of refusals in 2007–08.⁴⁴

41. C Evans, *Migration program gives priority to those with skills most needed*, op. cit.

42. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Budget 2009–10—Migration program: the size of the skilled and family programs*, media release, Canberra, 12 May 2009, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FBMVT6%22>

43. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Minister meets Indian community in Melbourne*, media release, Canberra, 19 June 2009, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FMNXT6%22>

44. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Student visa checks strengthened*, media release, Canberra, 20 August 2009, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FPJHU6%22> See also, DIAC, *Annual Report 2008–09*, Canberra, October 2009, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/2008-09/html/outcome1/output1-1-4.htm>

- In August 2009 the Government responded to the rising numbers of student visa applications being made, and the number being denied by DIAC, by strengthening integrity measures in certain parts of the student program caseload to counter fraud and ensure that students had sufficient funds to live and study in Australia. These measures were supplemented by an increase in the financial requirement attaching to student visas to ensure that students were not heavily reliant on income from part-time work to meet their expenses in Australia. The Government reported that there was an increase in the number of student visa applications being withdrawn, immediately following the introduction of enhanced integrity measures in August 2009.⁴⁵
- The Government introduced measures to assist around 4000 international students who were affected by the closure of 12 private education providers in late 2009.⁴⁶
- Major reforms were announced for the skilled migration program in February 2010, including the introduction of a new, more targeted, Skilled Occupations List (SOL), a review of the points test used to assess applicants, and the potential to cap visa grants to people in particular occupations. Through these changes the Government aimed to delink student visas from permanent migration status.⁴⁷
- The Hon. Bruce Baird's report on the review of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000)*, released in March 2010, found that migration outcomes had a significant impact on international student education in Australia. He welcomed the Government's reforms to the GSM program, announced in February 2010, as going some way to addressing the deleterious impact of the relationship between the skilled migration and international student education.⁴⁸

45. C Evans, *Student visa checks strengthened*, op. cit.; C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *New visa measures to assist international students*, media release, Canberra, 9 November 2009, viewed 20 April 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FRBPV6%22>

46. C Evans, *New visa measures to assist international students*, op. cit.

47. C Evans, *Migration reforms to deliver Australia's skills needs*, op. cit.

48. Bruce Baird was the former Federal Member for Cook in the House of Representatives from October 1998 to November 2007 and had previously held several ministerial positions in the NSW Legislative Assembly. He was appointed to head a review into international student education in Australia on 8 August 2009. See J Gillard (Minister for Education), *Bruce Baird to head up international students review*, media release, 8 August 2009, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FLFDU6%22>; J Gillard (Minister for Education), *Baird review into international students final report*, media release, Canberra, 9 March 2010, viewed 20 April, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FWQ4W6%22>; B Baird, *Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students*, op. cit.; C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Minister welcomes Baird review*, media release, Canberra, 9 March 2010, viewed 20 April 2010,

- The Migration Program planning figures for 2010–11 increased the skilled migration program by 5750 program places. There was an increase of 9150 places for employer sponsored skilled migrants and a decrease of 3600 places for the GSM program. These planning figures modified the composition of the Migration Program in favour of employer sponsored migration, consistent with the Government's focus on 'demand driven' migration. The change in the Migration Program planning figures reduced the number of places available to independent skilled migrants under the GSM program.⁴⁹
- The new SOL, released on 17 May 2010, contains 181 managerial, professional and trade occupations, but crucially removes occupations, such as hairdressing and cooking, which drove much of the growth in the VET sector in the previous five years. All applicants for independent skilled migration visas under the GSM must now have qualifications relevant to an occupation on the SOL. The new list is aimed at delivering a more targeted GSM program that is aligned with Australia's overall workforce development strategy and driven by labour market demand. It is proposed that the new SOL will come into effect on 1 July 2010, and transitional arrangements have been put in place for current and former overseas students who wish to apply under the GSM program.⁵⁰
- In releasing the new SOL, the Government again sought to explicitly disassociate student visas from permanent residency through the Migration Program. International students are cautioned against undertaking courses of study in the hope of achieving particular migration outcomes, as the new SOL will be reviewed annually and is subject to change in response to changing economic and labour market conditions.⁵¹

Concluding comments

While it may be too early to gauge the full effects of the most recent reforms to the skilled migration program, academic and media commentators have predicted some possible outcomes. While largely supportive of the Government's attempts to address some of the distortions created in the migration program as a result of its interaction with the overseas

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FDSEW6%22>

49. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Budget: Government sharpens focus of skilled migration program*, media release, 11 May 2010, viewed 12 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FQNOW6%22>
50. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *New Skilled Occupation List to meet Australia's needs*, media release, Canberra, 17 May 2010, viewed 17 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FCGQW6%22>; DIAC, *The new Skilled Occupation List (SOL)*, Fact sheet, DIAC website, May 2010, viewed 17 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/factsheet-new-sol.pdf>; DIAC, *Frequently asked questions*, Fact sheet, DIAC website, May 2010, viewed 17 May 2010, <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/faq-new-sol.pdf>
51. Ibid.

students program, migration policy researchers Bob Birrell and Ernest Healy caution that the emphasis on employer-nominated places may render former overseas students who do not have qualifications relevant to occupations on the SOL vulnerable to exploitation by employers whom they rely on for sponsorship in their permanent residency applications.⁵² Peter Mares notes that the reforms may lead to backlogs in visa processing as former overseas students and the growing ranks of other temporary migrants compete for permanent skilled migration places, particularly in the reduced GSM program.⁵³

There are indications that growth in overseas student enrolments has declined sharply and will continue to slow, with DIAC estimating that offshore student visa applications will decline by 30 per cent this year.⁵⁴ While the university sector appears relatively untroubled, the decline appears to have adversely impacted upon the English language, vocational education and training, and schools sectors.⁵⁵ A dramatic drop in overseas student numbers for March 2010 was attributed to ‘policy uncertainty, the strong Aussie dollar and adverse publicity over student safety’.⁵⁶ The release of the new SOL, initially due to be published in April 2010, was delayed until May 2010.⁵⁷ According to press reports, the initial uncertainty surrounding the SOL has been associated with a sharp decline in the rate of enrolments from Australia’s largest offshore student market, China, while, more broadly, this delay threatens ‘the loss of thousands of overseas students, who rely on the list to choose their courses ...’.⁵⁸

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52. B Birrell and E Healy, ‘The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry’, op. cit., p. 79; J Masanauskas, ‘Student wage squeeze: closed visa loophole gives bosses chance to exploit young’, *Herald Sun*, 21 April 2010, p. 22, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FZ7HW6%22>
 53. P Mares, ‘From queue to pool: skilled migration gets a makeover’, op.cit; and P Mares, ‘A blockage in the skilled migration pipeline’, op.cit; B Birrell and B Perry, ‘Immigration policy change and the international student industry’ op. cit., p. 75.
 54. M Sainsbury and G Healy, ‘Foreign students sweat on visas’, *The Australian*, 1 May 2010, viewed 3 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FE1KW6%22>; See also, J Ross, ‘International education could lose 21 per cent of its students’, *Campus Review*, 31 May 2010.
 55. G Healy, ‘Recognise skills or lose top students, UA boss says’, *The Australian*, 5 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FOPLW6%22>; J Ross, ‘Death by a thousand cuts’, *Campus Review*, vol. 20, no. 9, 11 May 2010, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FLLPW6%22>
 56. Ibid.
 57. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *Temporary suspension of certain offshore general skilled migration visas*, media release, Canberra, 7 May 2010, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FPCPW6%22>
 58. M Sainsbury and G Healy, ‘Foreign students sweat on visas’, op. cit.; G Healy, ‘Overseas students down 40 pc’, *The Australian*, 12 May 2010, viewed 12 May 2010,

Such reports suggest that the link between the overseas student program and the skilled migration program, while considerably weakened by recent policy changes, is unlikely to be severed. Indeed, commentators, particularly from the education sector, have warned that the nexus between the skilled migration program and the overseas student program cannot simply be severed, as this could have devastating consequences for Australia's international student education industry; rather, attempts to decouple the two programs need to be carefully managed.⁵⁹ The Government's own affirmation of the importance of skilled migration in meeting labour shortages suggests that it is in Australia's interests to develop immigration policies that ensure that former overseas students who wish to become permanent migrants are able to constructively meet Australia's skill needs.⁶⁰

Commentators have predicted that the omission of cooking and hairdressing occupations on the new SOL, announced on 17 May 2010, will have a direct impact on the VET sector, as these two occupations dominated the provision of VET courses for overseas students.⁶¹ Some private educators have predicted 'more college closures, thousands of job losses and a flight of international students to other countries'.⁶²

The full consequences of the overhaul of the skilled migration program and measures to tighten the operation of the overseas student program are yet to unfold. It remains to be seen whether the latest reforms in migration policy will allow the Government to better manage the outcomes of the links that have been forged between Australia's overseas student program and the skilled migration program between 1997 and 2010.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/overseas-students-down-40pc/story-e6frg6nf-1225865219176>

59. G Healy and S Thomsett, 'Painful wait for the priority list of skills', *The Australian*, 12 May 2010, viewed 12 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2FQAOW6%22> and J Ross, 'New migration list doesn't resolve uncertainty', *Campus Review*, vol. 20, no. 10, 25 May 2010, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrn%2FQDVW6%22>
60. C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), *New Skilled Occupations List to meet Australia's economic needs*, media release, op. cit.
61. B Birrell and E Healy, 'The February 2010 reforms and the international student industry', op. cit., p. 73; P Maley, 'Hairdressers out as migrant skills get a trim', *The Australian*, 17 May 2010, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2FR0QW6%22>
62. Y Narushima, 'New migrant list will hit business', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 May 2010, viewed 19 May 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2FOIQW6%22>; A Trounson, 'Steep slump in English spooks sector', *The Australian*, 2 June 2010, viewed 2 June 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre%2F89WW6%22>

Appendix A: chronology of government media releases 1997–May 2010

(Please note: text which appears in bold in the ‘Details’ column below is intended to highlight a key point in précis form and does not necessarily replicate the text of the original source document.)

1997–2000

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
5 August 1997	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces that visa grants for overseas students coming to Australia rose by 9 per cent in 1996. This included a 21 per cent increase in students from China and Indonesia, 17 per cent increase in students from Korea, 15 per cent increase in students from India and 10 per cent increase in students from Hong Kong.</p> <p>However, Taiwan and Singapore recorded full year declines after several years of strong growth. The Minister notes that one of the reasons for declined growth in international student numbers from some countries could be attributable to the fact that other countries, including the US, Canada and UK have been heavily promoting their own education systems in Asia and there is strong competition for international students. Australia is still seen as a desirable destination for overseas students.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Student visa numbers continue to grow</p>
18 March 1998	<p>The Immigration Minister announces that as part of a review of the points test used in selecting skilled migrants, the Government is looking to provide bonus points for people who have studied in Australia. The Minister also states:</p> <p>We are also looking closely at the Student visa program to ensure the controlled, sustainable growth of Australia's international education and training industry.</p> <p>Among options I am considering is visa assessment streamlining for students from emerging markets such as China and India by introducing an effective partnership with education institutions to ensure that we receive bona-fide students, and not those wanting to jump the queue and achieve a migration outcome.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration), Media release, Immigration reform: the unfinished agenda: speech presented at the National Press Club, Canberra</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
11 May 1998	<p>Launch of major international marketing campaign to promote Australian education</p> <p>The Minister for Education announces the provision of \$21 million over the next four years for a major international marketing campaign to promote Australia’s education and training services industry overseas.</p> <p>The Government estimates that the total number of overseas students studying in Australia is expected to rise by 19.55 per cent from 151 464 in 1997 to 181 000 in 2001. There is expected to be a 39 per cent, or \$1.27 million, increase in revenue from the export of Australia’s education and training industry.</p>	<p>D Kemp (Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs), Media release, \$1.2 billion growth in education export industry</p>
27 August 1998	<p>Former overseas students granted additional points</p> <p>Effective 1 July 1999, the points test used to select skilled migrants is modified to grant five additional points where an applicant has obtained their diploma, trade certificate or degree from an Australian educational institution.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Skilled migration changes to boost economy</p>
1 December 1998	<p>Changes to the overseas students program to support the overseas educational services sector in attracting more overseas fee-paying students to Australia, and measures to ensure compliance with the system are to take effect from 1 December 1998. The changes are designed to ensure that there is a balance between the need to attract genuine students and to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the program.</p> <p>In 1997–98 the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), supported by an External Reference Group, undertook a review of the overseas student program’s legislation, policy and perspective. Following the review the Minister for Immigration and the Minister for Education announced the introduction of changes to the overseas students program. Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary visa holders from gazetted countries will be able to apply for their first student visa in Australia • Students will no longer be automatically granted work rights, but will be required to make a separate application to obtain work rights in Australia. Students are required to produce evidence that they have commenced studying at their institution and pay a \$50 charge. 	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) and D Kemp (Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs), Media release, Changes to overseas student visas</p> <p>See also, P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) and D Kemp (Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs), Media release, New measures to attract more overseas fee-paying students and improve immigration controls</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must remain enrolled with the education provider that they originally enrolled with for at least the first 12 months of the course (or the duration of their course if less than 12 months), unless they obtain permission to transfer from DIMA. Transfers will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and students must pay a fee of \$120 to apply for a transfer. • Students must notify DIMA of a change of address. • Student visas must be cancelled where the visa holder has not satisfied course requirements. • Prospective students from non-gazetted countries are required to undergo a ‘genuineness assessment’ before confirming their enrolment or paying any tuition fees to education providers. 	
<p>9 March 1999</p>	<p>Introduction of Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL)</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration comments on the release of the <i>Report on the review of Australia’s independent and skilled-Australia linked categories</i>, the first thorough review of the skilled migration categories in ten years.</p> <p>A new points test will incorporate a number of changes recommended by the review, including, the introduction of minimum requirements, namely, the core criteria of skill, age and English language ability. The new points test also takes account of other attributes, such as relevant work experience, occupations in demand in Australia, spouse skills, Australian qualifications, work experience in Australia, and fluency in certain languages other than English.</p> <p>The new points test includes the introduction of the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) of occupations which are deemed to be in national shortage. Applicants with occupations on the MODL receive extra points in the new selection test from May 1999.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Skilled migration changes contribute \$2.4 billion boost</p> <p>Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIMA), Annual Report 1998-99</p> <p>DIMA, <i>Review of Australia’s independent and skilled-Australian linked categories</i>, (1999)</p>
<p>29 April 1999</p>	<p>The Minister announces that skilled migration will comprise 50 per cent (35 000 places) of the migration program for 1999–2000. The Government also introduced a new ‘contingency reserve’ of 5000 further places in the skilled stream of the migration program, in light of the excellent performance of skilled migrants, and calls from industry and</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, 1999-2000 Migration (non-humanitarian) program</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>some State and Territory governments for an expansion in the intake.</p>	
<p>3 April 2000</p>	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces a 5000 place increase in the Skilled Migration Stream, made possible by the success of a new points test in attracting young migrants with strong English skills and qualifications in high demand occupations such as IT and accounting.</p> <p>About 50 per cent of the of the people assessed under the new points test are former overseas students to Australia, who are seen as having the advantage of having qualifications easily recognised in Australia and having prior experience of life and work in Australia.</p> <p>The Minister also notes that the introduction of the Migrant Occupations in Demand list (MODL) to target migrants in occupations that are in demand nationally has been a success.</p> <p>Applicants for migration under one of the skilled migration points-tested categories, whose occupation is on the MODL, obtain up to an additional 10 points in their migration application. The MODL is reviewed annually to take into consideration existing and emerging skills shortages, identified by the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media releases, 2000-2001 Migration (non-Humanitarian) program to further increase focus on skills Migration Occupations in Demand List</p>
<p>4 July 2000 3 August 2000</p>	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces a review of temporary residence visas and highlights the growing importance of temporary residents in the Australian economy, with the globalisation of the labour market and the increasing movement of people for short-term business, work and personal purposes. The Minister notes that there has been an increase in highly skilled temporary migration: 28 per cent increase in visas to people from India; 22 per cent increase to people from the Netherlands; 18 per cent increase from Ireland. In the face of rapid changes in internationally competitive industries it is essential that temporary residence visas mechanisms keep up.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media releases, Review of temporary residence visas Skilled temporary residents visas increase for 1999-2000</p>
<p>23 November 2000</p>	<p>The Minister for Immigration notes key developments in the international migration context and changes to immigration policy under the Howard Government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skilled stream has increased from 29 per cent of the migration program in 1995–1996 to over 50 per cent in 	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Australian immigration: grasping the new reality</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>2000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long temporary migration is set to become the touchstone for migration’s international future as increasing numbers of young, highly skilled people move temporarily around the world in pursuit of opportunities presented by increased international trade and investment. • The Government is expanding Australia’s ability to attract ‘a highly mobile and lucrative workforce’ of skilled migrants through long-term temporary entry provisions. The number of skilled temporary entrants has been steadily rising over recent years and long-term temporary movements now make up around 50 per cent of net overseas migration. These individuals are seen as making a major contribution to Australia’s international competitiveness. • The Government has effected a ‘critical shift’ in the way greater numbers of successful overseas students are able to migrate to Australia after completing their studies. This gives Australia a significant advantage over competing countries in terms of Australia’s ability to attract more overseas students and more skilled migrants. 	

2001–2004

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
31 March 2001	<p>Overseas students who are successful in key skill areas are seen as the ‘ideal migrants’ and since 1998 the Government has been pursuing a policy of encouraging such students to migrate to Australia.</p> <p>Key reform—ability to make permanent residence visa applications onshore</p> <p>From 1 July 2001 certain groups of successful Australian-educated overseas students with key skills, particularly ICT qualifications, will be able to apply and be granted permanent residence visas under the Skilled-Independent and related categories without leaving Australia. Australia will aim to maintain a competitive edge over other countries to attract overseas ICT workers through streamlined</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Speech, The Economic Impact of Immigration Seminar</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>procedures and priority processing.</p> <p>The policy is helping to attract more overseas students and an increasing portion of overseas students are undertaking courses in areas that are experiencing a skills shortage such as accountancy, engineering and nursing.</p> <p>Around 50 per cent of principal applications in the Skilled Independent category are successful overseas students, with the number expected to rise in coming years.</p>	
1 July 2001	<p>Measures announced to make the application process for student visas more transparent. Information for overseas students will be more precisely targeted based on an applicant's country of origin and the education sector in which they want to study. This would allow potential students to more easily determine their likelihood of success before applying and 'place Australia at the forefront of student visa processing arrangements in this highly competitive and growing industry'.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, New Visa Processes to help business, overseas students and skilled migration from 1 July 2001</p>
18 July 2001	<p>Record numbers of student visas were granted to citizens of China for 2000–01— the largest source of overseas students in Australia. The number of visas granted to students from China went up from 1934 in 1996–97 to 8886 in 2000–2001, representing an increase of 360 per cent.</p> <p>The Minister acknowledged that processing times remain lengthy due to high levels of fraud amongst student applications from China, but the Government is looking for ways to address this.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Record tourists and students from China</p>
22 October 2001	<p>The Minister notes that there are employment gains to be made from temporary migration, and the Coalition's temporary entry, visitor and student policies resulted in a record number of temporary visas (more than 160 000) being delivered in 2000–01.</p> <p>The increased global mobility of goods, people and services is acknowledged as playing an important role in government decisions. As at June 2000 440 000 people across all categories in Australia were on temporary visas.</p> <p>One hundred and forty-six thousand five hundred and seventy-seven student visas were granted in 2000–01—this accounts for a 23 per cent increase on the 1999–2000 figure of 119 103. The major source countries for offshore student applications were: China (8886—up 46 per cent); USA</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Immigration – playing its role in Australia's future</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>(7426—up 16 per cent); Malaysia (6236—up 6 per cent); Indonesia (6070—up 12 per cent); and, Hong Kong (5740—up 26 per cent).</p> <p>The undergraduate sector showed particularly strong growth with an increase in offshore visa grants of 47 per cent from 26 233 to 38 555. Part of the reforms introduced in July 2001 included seven new visa subclasses for overseas students, including a vocational education and training sector subclass.</p> <p>The Government states that it is committed to encouraging sustainable growth in the international education sector by facilitating entry arrangements where there is a low risk that students will overstay or otherwise abuse their visa conditions.</p>	
7 January 2002	<p>The Minister for Immigration states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the record number of temporary entrants to Australia in 2000–2001 have contributed significantly to Australia’s economy Offshore student visas reached 86 000 compared with 55 000 in 1994–95, and • the direct links now made between the overseas student program and skilled permanent entry have attracted strong growth in demand from young, English-speaking, skilled migrants trained to Australian standards. 	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Record temporary entrants contribute to economy</p>
7 May 2002	<p>GSM pass mark increased</p> <p>The Migration Program for 2002–03 will be increased, with the skilled stream comprising 60 700 places, or 58 per cent of the total program.</p> <p>The Minister notes that there is continuing growth in overseas student numbers. Overseas students will remain an important source of long-term and permanent movement to Australia.</p> <p>Due to the high demand for migration, particularly from overseas students who have completed tertiary education in Australia, the Government has decided to increase the pass mark from 110 to 115 points for all independent skilled applications received from 8 May 2002.</p> <p>As part of the Government’s state-specific and regional migration strategies the Government is looking to attract</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media releases, Migration benefiting Australia conference, opening speech Minister announces 2002-03 migration (non-humanitarian) program</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>more overseas students, who are considered a ‘very important skill stream feeder group’, to regional universities and TAFEs. Adjustments to the bonus points regime for successful overseas students applying to remain permanently could encourage a greater proportion of them to consider studying and eventually settling in regional Australia.</p>	
24 July 2002	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces that the 2001–02 Migration Program was the largest and most highly skilled in a decade—the outcome was a total of 93 080 and contained the largest skill stream on record at 53 520, constituting 58 per cent of the program.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Migration program highly skilled and largest in decade</p>
11 November 2002	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces the launch of eVisa—an initiative that allows people to apply and pay for commonly sought Australian visas via the Internet. Online lodgement of eVisa applications and permission to work applications covers prospective overseas students from low immigration-risk countries applying to enter Australia for the first time, and overseas students who are already in Australia intending to continue their studies, including permission to work applications.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Australian visa applications online</p>
13 March 2003	<p>The MODL is updated to reduce the numbers of ICT specialisations listed, remove accountants and include health professionals.</p>	<p>T Abbot (Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations) and P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Government responds to changing ICT labour market</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
31 March 2003	<p>Two-year in-country study requirement for GSM applicants</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration announces that Australia is continuing to achieve a ‘brain gain’ from skilled migrants quickly establishing themselves in the labour market and applying their skills and qualifications.</p> <p>Given the successful labour market performance of migrants with Australian qualifications, a number of measures will target the upper end of the overseas student market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduating overseas students applying for general skilled migration on or after 1 July will be required to have completed a minimum of two years study physically in Australia before they qualify for bonus points or the work experience exemption (currently only one year is required). • The points awarded for completion of an Australian upper second Class Honours (or higher) or Masters qualification following completion of an Australian bachelor level qualification, both obtained while studying in Australia, will increase from five to ten. • The points awarded for completion of an Australian PhD with a minimum of two consecutive years of full time study physically in Australia will increase from 10 to 15. 	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, 2003-04 migration program will increase benefits to Australia</p>
14 May 2003	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces transitional arrangements for overseas students wanting to remain in Australia after completing their studies. Overseas students studying in Australia on or before 31 March 2003 can have their application to remain in Australia considered under the current one year study requirement. They have until 1 April 2004 to lodge an application to remain in Australia under the General Skilled Migration category.</p> <p>In future the period of Australian study required to take advantage of the work experience exemption for the General Skilled Migration category will increase from one to two years. The main aim of this increase is to ensure that overseas students have the right level of skills to obtain skilled employment in Australia. These changes are scheduled to commence on 1 July 2003.</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Transitional arrangements for skilled migration study requirements</p>
10 July 2003	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces that a record number of 66 050 skill stream visas were issued in 2002–03, forming 61 per cent of the total Migration Program outcome</p>	<p>P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	of 108 070.	Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Record numbers of migrants to boost economy
19 September 2003	<p>Since the introduction of student visa reforms on 1 July 2001 there has been an overall increase in offshore student visa grants of 27 per cent. In the first year of reforms (2001–02) there was a 13 per cent increase to 97 650 offshore visas, and in 2002–03 there was a 12 per cent increase to 109 610 offshore student visa grants.</p> <p>The major source countries for offshore visa grants were China (14 215), USA (10 477), Malaysia (8 032), Republic of Korea (7 323), Hong Kong (6 576) and Japan (6 319).</p> <p>Protection visa applications from students declined by 46 per cent and the total number of students unlawfully in Australia decreased by 19 per cent. Increasing and more effective compliance measures resulted in increases in the identification and location of students not complying with visa conditions, most notably due to non-attendance and failure to meet course requirements.</p>	P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Student visa numbers increase to record high
29 November 2003	<p>Greater flexibility on financial and English language requirements</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration announces that Australia is a world leader in international education and international student numbers will continue to grow due to changes to come into effect on 1 December 2003. Changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a new student guardian visa on 1 December 2003 to allow parents and other relatives to care for young students in Australia. • Greater flexibility on financial requirements for student visa applicants from higher risk countries, which will allow for the range of acceptable financial evidence to be extended and made more transparent across education sectors. • Changes to the English language proficiency requirements, including provisions to accommodate students who have previously studied outside Australia in certain English-speaking countries, and allowing some students to undertake foundation courses before commencing undergraduate studies. 	A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Student visa numbers continue to grow

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
1 April 2004	<p>GSM pass mark increased</p> <p>A number of changes are made to the skilled migration stream of the Migration Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills of migrants coming to Australia will be increased by increasing the pass mark for those applying for permanent residence under general skilled independent visa categories from 115 points to 120 points. However, the new pass mark will not apply to international students studying in Australia who apply before April 2005. • 5000 additional places on the new 2 stage skilled independent visa, available to those who can't meet the new pass mark but do meet the 2002 standard, provided they commit to living and working in regional Australia. • 1000 extra places for doctors. <p>The Minister announces that the Government expects to deliver the largest skill stream in Australia's history at around 77 000 people.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Australia's skills and migrants to increase</p>
1 September 2004	<p>Changes are made to the skilled migration program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled migration applicants must have an occupation on the Skilled Occupations List (SOL), which now includes a list of agricultural occupations. • The more specific MODL has been extended to include accountants and a number of traditional trade occupations which have been in short supply. The MODL now contains 28 occupations, compared with 14 occupations in February 2003, 15 occupations in February 2002, and 22 in February 2001. 	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Changes to skilled migration program boost range of skilled workers in Australia</p>

2005–2007

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
12 January 2005	<p>Student visa assessment levels lowered</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration announces that changes to the student visa program since 2001 have been a success. Visa</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release,</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>approval rates continued to rise—with a record number of 171 616 student visas being granted in 2003–04, while at the same time non-compliance levels have fallen.</p> <p>As a result student visa assessment levels, English language requirements and financial tests for student visa applications from certain countries and education sectors will be lowered from April 2005.</p>	<p>Student visa reform success</p>
<p>20 January 2005</p>	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces that there has been a ‘profound shift in the way people migrate to Australia’, with almost one third (36 000 permanent visas) of the places in the skilled migration program going to people who were already in Australia on a temporary visa.</p> <p>The change is being driven by skilled workers and students. The majority of these permanent visa recipients are coming from the UK, China and India.</p> <p>In 2003–04 over 13 000 permanent skilled migration visas were granted to students in Australia, a 50 per cent increase on 2002–03.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Thousands of temporary entrants chose to call Australia home</p>
<p>14 April 2005</p>	<p>The skilled migration program for 2005–06 will be increased for the fifth successive year providing up to 20 000 additional places. The increase will target employer sponsored migration, state/regional sponsored migration, or migrants who have an occupation on an expanded and more responsive MODL.</p> <p>Addition of more trades to MODL</p> <p>Changes to be made to the skilled migration program to make Australia more competitive internationally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The addition of more trades and engineering related occupations to MODL. • Occupational trainee visa holders will be allowed to obtain a Skilled Independent Regional (SIR) visa without having to leave Australia—like overseas students. • A pilot program will be introduced to allow overseas students to undertake traditional trade apprenticeships in regional Australia on a full time fee paying basis and on completion of these to be able apply for migration under one of the regional migration visas. 	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, 2005-06 Migration (non-humanitarian) program</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
27 July 2005	<p>The overall Migration Program for 2004–05 was the largest since the late 1980s, at 120 060 places. The 77 880 skilled stream migrants accounted for about 65 per cent of the total program. Improved targeting in the skilled stream has resulted in increases over the previous year’s numbers of doctors (294 per cent), nurses (40 per cent), accountants (48 per cent) and tradespersons, such as mechanical, electrical, construction and automotive tradespersons (38 per cent).</p> <p>The number of overseas students migrating to Australia directly after completing their studies was also the largest ever, with some 16 490 visas granted to former overseas students in 2004–05.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, Record number of skilled stream migrants in 2004-05</p>
31 October 2005	<p>Changes to the Migration Regulations introduce a range of new options for overseas students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Trade Skills Training Visa will give employers the opportunity to recruit young people from overseas to undertake an apprenticeship that combines both on-the-job training and classroom-based learning in regional areas of Australia • From 1 November, overseas students will also be able to apply, on completion of their studies in Australia, for an Occupational Trainee Visa to undertake up to 12 months of supervised on-the-job training in their area of expertise. Employers will also be able to offer overseas students practical employment experience on an occupational trainee visa where this leads to registration in their chosen profession in Australia. • Professional Development Visa—provides tailored training to overseas professionals and executives. <p>Student visa assessment levels lowered</p> <p>As a result of rising numbers of student visa approvals and declining levels of non-compliance with student visa conditions the student visa assessment levels (including the English language and financial tests) for a number of countries and education sectors will be reduced from 1 November 2005, providing for more streamlined visa processing.</p> <p>Overseas education is one of Australia’s largest export industries, estimated to provide revenue in the vicinity of \$7.5 billion. These changes are seen as encouraging the growth of the industry and its diversification into new</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media releases, Employers and students to gain from changes to visas</p> <p>Student visa reforms an outstanding success</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	regions.	
5 November 2005	<p>The initial findings of the Third Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia reveal that 93 per cent of business and employer-sponsored migrants and 82 per cent of skilled independent migrants are working within six months of migrating to Australia.</p> <p>Employment outcomes of former overseas students</p> <p>However, the Minister notes that while former overseas students are also achieving good employment rates, there are signs that they may not all be finding jobs commensurate to their skills and training.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), Media release, New migrants are entering the workforce faster</p> <p>DIAC, Sample Reports from LSIA 3</p>
6 March 2006	<p>Announcement that skilled migrants and overseas students will be able to list same sex partners on their visa applications, as people have been able to do with their heterosexual partners. The Minister said that this change would keep Australia competitive in an increasingly intense global market for skilled migrants.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Recognition of same sex partners of skilled migrants and students</p>
1 May 2006	<p>The total Migration Program for 2006–2007 will be in the range of 134 000 to 144 000 places, including 97 500 places in the Skilled Stream.</p> <p>Employer-sponsored migration is up 22 per cent from the same period in the previous year, putting it at record levels in 2005–06. Growth in state-sponsored and regional migration visas was also up 50 per cent over the same period.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Budget 2006: Government successfully matching skilled workers to employers</p>
8 May 2006	<p>The Minister for Immigration and the Minister for Education comment on an independent evaluation of GSM categories conducted by Dr Bob Birrell, Associate Professor Leslyanne Hawthorne and Professor Sue Richardson. The study reveals that good English and relevant work experience are essential to achieving good employment outcomes.</p> <p>Changes to GSM eligibility criteria (including skilled work experience)</p> <p>The Government will introduce a number of changes to maximise migrant success in the workplace, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the base level of English language proficiency 	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Evaluation of general skilled migration categories</p> <p>B Birrell, L Hawthorne, S Richardson, Evaluation of the General Skilled Migration categories, report prepared for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), Canberra,</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>which must be demonstrated by applicants for GSM visas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the allocation of bonus points to applicants who achieve English language scores at above the base level • placing greater emphasis on skilled work experience as a factor in the points test. <p>Many former overseas students, who are currently exempt from work experience requirements when applying for general skilled migration, will require some skilled work experience in order to qualify for skilled migration. The Australian Government will provide temporary visa mechanisms which will enable such students to gain work experience in Australia.</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration reiterates that former overseas students are a very welcome part of Australia’s skilled migration program.</p> <p>The Minister for Education welcomes the new initiatives to enable international students to succeed in the Australian labour market.</p>	2006
25 July 2006	<p>More than 68 per cent of visas under the 2005–06 migration program were issued to people in the skilled stream. Employer-sponsored migration was up 17 per cent and State and Territory sponsored visas were up 94 per cent. Eight thousand three hundred and eighty tradespeople were also admitted under the 2005–06 Migration Program.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), Media release, Migration program attracts needed skills</p>
20 September 2006	<p>The MODL has been revised to include 35 managerial and professional occupations, one associate professional occupation, nine computing specialisations and 41 trade occupations.</p>	<p>A Vanstone, (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) and K Andrews (Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations), Media release, Government revises MODL to reflect the labour market</p>
8 May 2007	<p>The 2007–2008 skilled migration stream is to include a modest increase of 5000 places with a total of 102 500 places for those with workforce and English-language skills that will enable them to enter Australia and immediately contribute to the economy.</p>	<p>K Andrews (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Budget 2007: A prosperous cohesive nation</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
9 August 2007	The MODL has been revised to include 38 managerial and professional occupations, one associate professional occupation, 10 computing specialisations, and 46 trade occupations.	K Andrews (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) and J Hockey (Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations), Media release, Migration Occupations in Demand List
16 August 2007	<p>Skilled migration comprised 66 per cent of the 2006–07 Migration Program.</p> <p>The top occupation for skilled stream entrants is accountancy (10 688), followed by computing professionals (4 044) and registered nurses (2 088). Other top professions included mechanical engineers, civil engineers, marketing specialists and general managers.</p> <p>The top five countries of origin for skilled stream entrants were: United Kingdom (24 800), India (15 865), China (14 688), Republic of South Africa (4 293) and Malaysia (3 838).</p>	K Andrews, (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, A prosperous and cohesive nation – migration program outcomes 2006-07

2008–May 2010

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
17 February 2008	<p>Increase of skilled migration places</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration announces a package of migration measures designed to address Australia’s skills and labour shortages including an increase of 6000 places in Australia’s skilled migration program, taking the skilled migration program to a total of 108 500 places in 2007–8. The increase will consist mainly of permanent employer sponsored visas and General Skilled Migration visas.</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Immigration package to ease skills shortage
25 April 2008	<p>Student visa reforms (including work rights and streamlined processing)</p> <p>A number of reforms to student visas announced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 26 April, overseas students will automatically be granted the right to work up to 20 hours a week under 	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Foreign students gain automatic work rights in Australia

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>their student visas, while their course is in session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New processing arrangements for international student visas, including cuts to all overseas visa fees by \$40 to \$450 and students no longer require a visa label in their passports – information will be stored electronically in the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system. • A streamlined process is introduced for people applying for student visas from India, Indonesia and Thailand. <p>The Department of Immigration and Citizenship granted 228 592 student visas to people from 191 countries in the year to June 2007.</p>	
13 May 2008	<p>Additional increase in skilled migration places</p> <p>Further to the increase of 6000 places in the skilled migration program announced by the Minister for Immigration in February 2008, an additional 31 000 permanent skilled migration places will be added to the 2008–09 Migration Program. This represents a 30 per cent increase on the previous Government’s increase in the 2007–08 Migration Program.</p> <p>Permanent skilled migrants will make up 135 500 of the total 190 300 places in the 2008–09 migration program. The increase in the intake of permanent skilled migrants is intended to ensure a better balance between temporary and permanent migrants in the overall skilled migration program.</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Budget 2008-09 – record skilled migration program to boost economy
22 July 2008	<p>There was a 27 per cent increase in the temporary skilled migration (subclass 457 visa) program for 2007–08, highlighting the importance of these visas in meeting labour needs.</p> <p>Eighty one per cent of 457 visa holders were employed in professional occupations and highly skilled jobs. Nearly a quarter of the workers came from the United Kingdom, followed by India (14 per cent), the Philippines (9 per cent), South Africa (6 per cent) China (6 per cent) and the USA (6 per cent).</p> <p>There was a 30 per cent increase in 457 visa holders who became permanent residents in 2007–08.</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Skilled foreign workers meeting shortage
22 August 2008	The Skilled Migration stream comprised 68 per cent (108	C Evans (Minister for

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>540 places) of the 2007–08 migration program. The Australian migration program has increased annually over the past ten years and with an increase of 7 per cent on the previous year, the 2007–09 was Australia’s largest migration program since the 1960s.</p>	<p>Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Migration program boosts economy and eases skills shortage</p>
<p>17 December 2008</p>	<p>Review of Migration Program</p> <p>The Migration Program for 2008–09 was reviewed in light of a significant shift in the global economic outlook, concerns about the outcomes of the skilled migration program in past years, and the changing nature of skilled migration. The review identified the need for a shift in the focus of the program towards ‘demand driven’ outcomes, in the form of employer and government-sponsored skilled migration, to ensure that the program is better targeted on the skills needed in the economy.</p> <p>Reforms to the Migration Program</p> <p>In response to the concerns raised the following reforms will be introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a ‘demand driven’ model for permanent skilled migration; that is, focus on delivering the skills needed in the economy, with the existing 133 500 places in 2008–09 remaining as a ceiling. The Government will keep the program under review in light of economic circumstances. • Increase the numbers of employer–sponsored visas. These workers bring the strongest and most immediate economic benefit and are directly driven by the skills demands of the business community. They are skilled migrants who are directly sponsored into a job that cannot be filled locally. 80 per cent of employer sponsored visas are granted to people who are living and working in Australia on temporary visas. • Improve the ability of state and territory governments to sponsor in the skilled migrants to meet skill shortages specific to their jurisdiction. This measure recognises that there are now a number of regional economies operating across the country and that the skill demands vary across states, territories and regions within states. • Where applicants do not have either an employer or government sponsor, those in occupations deemed to be 	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Migration program gives priority to those with skills most needed</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>in critical need will receive higher priority and those in other occupations will receive lower priority. The Government has developed a Critical Skills List (CSL) to apply to independent skilled visa applicants which is focused on medical and key IT professionals, engineers and construction trades.</p> <p>Under these measures the skilled migration program will see more skilled migrants going straight into jobs and increased numbers of people already in Australia granted visas onshore.</p> <p>From 1 January 2009, the following order of preference will apply in processing skilled visa applications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employer sponsored visas 2. State or territory Government sponsored visas 3. Occupations on the CSL 4. Occupations on the MODL 5. All other valid applications <p>International students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister for Immigration states that international students who have studied here are an excellent source of skilled applicants. There is a need to ensure a system that is not giving perverse incentives to students to study a small number of vocational courses, when they may have no intention of actually working in those occupations. • International students who are enrolled in courses that are not on the CSL will still be able to apply for a permanent visa without a sponsor. However, if they want their application considered as a priority they will need to focus on finding an employer to sponsor them. • International students graduating from courses will have access to the 485 visa. The 485 visa was introduced by the previous Government and provides students with a period of 18 months to find work in their occupation and improve their English language skills. They can also use that time to find an employer sponsor. • These measures will provide an incentive for training 	

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>providers to better link international students with employers and give students an incentive to study courses that will lead to employment outcomes in that field.</p> <p>Migration patterns in Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increasing trend of people coming to Australia on a temporary work or study visa and then applying for permanent residence on shore. Approximately 40 per cent or more than 40 000 of the visas granted in the skilled migration program in 2007–08 were to people already here, largely Subclass 457 Visa holders and international students. • The largest numbers of visas are granted in the ‘independent skilled’ stream where the person applying does not have a sponsor or a job offer before migrating. Almost half of these visas are granted to international students already in Australia. • In 2007–08 for the first time the number of temporary skilled visa grants exceeded the number of permanent skilled visas granted. The Government’s decision to increase the skilled migration program in 2008–09 was in part aimed at restoring the balance between the permanent and temporary skilled programs. 	
16 March 2009	<p>Migration Program cut by 14 per cent</p> <p>Announcement that the 2008–09 GSM program will be cut by 14 per cent to protect local jobs. In addition, building and manufacturing trades will be removed from the CSL. The list comprises mainly health and medical, engineering and IT professionals.</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Government cuts migration program
24 March 2009	<p>DIAC officers, AFP and other agencies raided a migration agency in Melbourne where three migration agents were allegedly providing fake documentation to support permanent residency applications for foreign students. Students had applied for permanent residency based on their claimed skills in a range of occupations including cooking, hairdressing, horticultural work and car mechanics.</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Migration agency fraud racket uncovered
12 May 2009	<p>Further cut to Migration Program</p> <p>A further cut is made to the permanent skilled migration intake, from 115 000 places to 108 100 places for 2009–10, representing an overall drop of almost 20 per cent on previous planning levels. The reductions apply to the GSM category rather than the high-demand employer-sponsored</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Budget 2009-10 – Migration program: the size of the skilled and family

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>category.</p> <p>The non-sponsored independent skilled pathway for trades occupations will also be tightened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The English language threshold will be increased to ensure that applicants can demonstrate a competent level of English. This change will apply from 1 July 2009 for people applying offshore and from 1 January 2010 for people applying onshore. • A job readiness test will be introduced to complement the testing arrangements already in place for offshore applicants in some trades. This will ensure that applicants have the skills claimed. This change will apply from 1 January 2010. <p>The Government states that under the priority arrangements, fewer trades-level occupations will be granted a visa in 2009–10.</p> <p>The objective of Government reforms is to shift the balance of the skilled migration program in favour of employer and state sponsored migration rather than non-sponsored visas.</p>	<p>programs</p>
<p>19 June 2009</p>	<p>Government responds to violence against Indian international students</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration meets with the Indian community in Melbourne to reassure the community that the Australian Government welcomes students from India and takes seriously Australia’s reputation as a safe destination for international students.</p> <p>The Prime Minister established a Taskforce on Crimes Against International Students under the leadership of the National Security Adviser to coordinate action across all levels of government.</p> <p>The Minister also notes a number of initiatives announced by the Deputy Prime Minister, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an International Student taskforce within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to develop strategies to support the wellbeing of international students • a student hotline through which students can raise 	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Minister meets Indian community in Melbourne</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>concerns anonymously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast tracking a review of the legal framework for the provision of education services to international students, as set out in the <i>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2002</i> • updating the Guide to Studying and Living in Australia to help new students to settle into their Australian life and study. 	
1 July 2009	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces changes to immigration processing and fees, which will come into effect from 1 July 2009. The cost of some visa application charges and citizenship fees will increase to offset wider costs associated with the operation of the migration and temporary entry programs. Student visas will increase from \$450 to \$540.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media releases, Migration changes from 1 July ‘Assessment changes for skilled migrants from July 1’</p>
23 July 2009	<p>The Minister for Immigration announces he will be the first Australian Minister to travel to India since concerns about the welfare of Indian students in Australia were raised domestically and abroad. The aim of the visit is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assure Indian people that the Australian Government is committed to providing a safe environment for international students in Australia, and • outline changes in Australia’s migration program, which reflect fluctuations in demand across occupations, in particular in the information and communication technology sectors. <p>The Minister notes the rapid growth in the number of Indian nationals coming to Australia to settle, study, business and tourism: India ranks as the second largest source of general skilled migrants to Australia; the second largest source, after China, of students; and the second largest source, after the UK, of temporary business migrants.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Immigration Minister to visit India and Sri Lanka</p>
20 August 2009	<p>Applications for student visas grew by 20 per cent to 362 193 in 2008–09, with almost 28 000 student visas refused, an increase of 68 per cent on the number of refusals in 2007–08.</p> <p>Strengthened integrity measures for student visas</p> <p>DIAC will strengthen checks on student visa applications to</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Student visa checks strengthened DIAC, Annual Report 2008-09, Canberra, October 2009</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>stamp out fraud and ensure students have the financial capacity to live and study in Australia. The measures to be implemented with immediate effect include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upgrading the interview program to build a strong evidence base around fraud • removing or restricting eVisa access for some agents where there is evidence of fraud or inactivity, and • restricting access to eVisa for some segments of the caseload if analysis demonstrates restricted access would allow for better control of fraud. <p>The measures will target parts of the student visa caseload in India, Mauritius, Nepal, Brazil, Zimbabwe and Pakistan.</p> <p>The next formal review of student visa risk framework is scheduled for 2010. The data obtained from the enhanced checking of student visa applications will help inform future reviews.</p>	
9 November 2009	<p>Closure of education providers</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration announces measures to assist 4 700 international students who are affected by the closure of 12 education providers in 2009.</p> <p>From 1 January 2010, overseas students affected by the closure who require a new visa to complete their studies at another school or college will be exempt from paying the \$540 student visa application charge.</p> <p>Students will be able to apply to DIAC for a refund of their visa application fee if they've been affected by the closure of an education provider in 2009 and have had to apply for a new student visa.</p> <p>Strengthened student visa requirements</p> <p>From 1 January 2010, prospective overseas students will need to demonstrate that they have access to at least \$18 000 a year to fund their living costs in Australia, instead of the current \$12 000.</p> <p>The new figure is consistent with information published for international students in Australian Education International's (the international arm of DEEWR) 'Study in Australia'</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, New visa measures to assist international students</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>guide. Financial requirements include living costs, funds for tuition fees, travel costs and costs of any dependents. DIAC will also make an assessment of whether the funds demonstrated by students will be available to them while they are in Australia. The Minister notes that while international students can supplement their income with part-time work, they should not rely on part-time work to meet their expenses.</p> <p>The measures target parts of the student visa caseload in India, Mauritius, Nepal, Brazil, Zimbabwe and Pakistan. Since the introduction of enhanced integrity measures, there has been an increase in the number of applications being withdrawn, from five per cent in July to 17 per cent in September.</p> <p>To date, more than 150 agents have had their eVisa access suspended due to evidence of fraud or inactivity.</p>	
8 February 2010	<p>Reforms to skilled migration program</p> <p>The Government announces major reforms to the permanent skilled migration program to ensure it is more responsive to the needs of industry and employers, and to ensure that the skilled migration program is driven by demand for skills from Australian industry, rather than supply. The reforms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The tightening of the list of occupations in high demand so only highly skilled migrants will be eligible to apply for independent skilled migration visas.</i> <p>The MODL will be revoked immediately as it is outdated and contains 106 occupations, many of which are less-skilled and no longer in demand. A new and more targeted Skilled Occupations List (SOL) will be developed by the independent body, Skills Australia, and reviewed annually. The Critical Skills List introduced at the beginning of 2009 which identified occupations in critical demand at the height of the global financial crisis will also be phased out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A review of the points test used to assess migrants.</i> <p>A review of the points test used to assess skilled migration applicants will consider issues, including: whether some occupations should warrant more points than others; whether sufficient points are awarded for work experience and excellence in English; and whether there should be points for</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Migration reforms to deliver Australia's skills needs

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>qualifications obtained from overseas universities. The review will report to Government later in 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The possible capping of certain occupations to ensure skill needs are met across the board.</i> <p>Amendments to the Migration Act will be introduced to give the Minister the power to set the maximum number of visas that may be granted to applicants in any one occupation if need be. This will ensure that the skilled migration program is not dominated by a handful of occupations.</p>	
9 February 2010	<p>The Minister for Immigration assures international students currently studying in Australia who hold a vocational, higher education or postgraduate student visa that, under the recently announced changes, they will still be able to apply for permanent residence if their occupation is on the new SOL.</p> <p>Students currently studying a course in an occupation that is not on the new SOL will have until the end of 2012 to apply for a temporary skilled graduate visa which will enable them to spend up to 18 months in Australia to acquire work experience and find an Australian employer willing to sponsor them on completion of their course.</p> <p>The Minister states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It must be remembered that a student visa is just that: a visa to study. It does not give someone an automatic entitlement to permanent residence.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">International students should be focused on obtaining a good qualification from a quality education provider in a field in which they want to work.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Similarly, Australia's migration program is not and should not be determined by the courses studied by international students.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Rudd Government's view is that quality education providers will continue to prosper if they focus on their core business of delivering high quality courses to both Australian and overseas students.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Australia will continue to welcome international students and provide an opportunity for those</p>	C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Options remain for overseas students

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>who have the necessary qualifications and skills to find an Australian employer willing to sponsor them for a permanent visa.</p>	
<p>17 February 2010</p>	<p>Changes made to the permanent skilled migration program in 2009 resulted in an increase in visa grants to registered nurses (increase of 1156), computing professionals (increase of 844), engineers (total increase of 2067) and doctors (increase of 551).</p> <p>At the same time the occupations recording the biggest falls in primary visa grants were cooks, chefs and pastry cooks (decrease of 2102), accountants (decrease of 1851) and hairdressers (decrease of 767).</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Skilled migration changes deliver more workers Australia needs</p>
<p>9 March 2010</p>	<p>Release of Baird Review</p> <p>The Hon. Bruce Baird’s report on the review of <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000)</i> is released.</p> <p>The review includes consideration of the link between the growth in overseas student numbers and Australia’s migration program. The report states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Migration-skewed demand has undoubtedly impacted on the reputation of our international education sector but the recent changes to general skilled migration will go some way to address this.</p> <p>Response to Baird Review</p> <p>The Minister for Immigration welcomes the release of the final report of the Baird Review, and Mr Baird’s support for the Rudd Government’s changes to the Skilled Migration Program announced on 8 February 2010.</p> <p>The Minister states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The skilled migration program changes will encourage overseas students to focus on obtaining a quality education from a high quality provider by removing incentives for students to apply for a course simply in the hope of being granted permanent residence.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The changes will in no way impact on international students coming to Australia to gain</p>	<p>J Gillard (Minister for Education), Media release, Baird review into international students final report</p> <p>B Baird, Final Report, Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students (vii)</p> <p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Minister welcomes Baird review</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	<p>a legitimate qualification and then return home.</p>	
<p>27 April 2010</p>	<p>Student visa integrity measures</p> <p>New measures are introduced to improve the integrity of the student visa program. These measures include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the assessment levels of those studying more than one course, (they will now be required to meet the highest level of risk assessment within their package of courses). • Changes to the migration regulations to strengthen visa cancellation guidelines where a student is found to have deferred or suspended their studies for non-genuine reasons. • Visa requirements for postgraduate students have been streamlined to support growth in the sector, which has proven to have low levels of fraud and high levels of compliance. <p>These latest measures add to previous measures that have been introduced to strengthen the integrity of the student visa program since August 2009.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Government closes student visa loopholes</p>
<p>7 May 2010</p>	<p>The Government temporarily suspends lodgement of three classes of offshore GSM visas from 8 May 2010:</p> <p>This measure is necessary to facilitate the transition from the current SOL to the new SOL and to ensure the occupational profile of applicants for GSM clearly reflects the needs of the Australian labour market.</p> <p>The Government will announce the new SOL later this month.</p> <p>These changes do not affect international students applying for onshore GSM visas.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Temporary suspension of certain offshore general skilled migration visas</p>
<p>11 May 2010</p>	<p>Migration Program planning figures: 2010–11</p> <p>The overall size of the Migration Program remains unchanged from the previous year. However, the skilled migration program has been increased by 5750 program places. This includes an additional 9150 places for employer-sponsored skilled migration and a decrease of 3600 places for the GSM program.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Budget: Government sharpens focus of skilled migration program</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
17 May 2010	<p>New SOL released</p> <p>The new SOL lists a total of 181 managerial, professional and trade occupations—a reduction of 219 occupations from the 400 occupations previously included on the list. Crucially, the list omits cooking and hairdressing occupations. The new SOL will apply to all new GSM applications lodged on or after the date of implementation.</p> <p>The SOL is intended to deliver a more targeted GSM program, as part of the Government’s larger package of reforms to move to a ‘demand-driven’ skilled migration program. The Government states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The new list is intended to align the GSM program with Australia’s overall workforce development strategy, also developed by Skills Australia. The new list is focused on targeting specialised occupations that require a long lead time of formal education and training ... The list of occupations will be reviewed annually but it is expected that it will be relatively stable over time.</p> <p>The Government affirms that international students will be valued as permanent migrants where they have the skills that are needed by the economy. The Government advises students:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It is strongly advised that you do not undertake studies with the sole purpose of obtaining a migration outcome. The student visa process is an entirely separate process to skilled migration and there is no guarantee that a student will be eligible for skilled migration purely on the basis of having undertaken a course related to an occupation on the SOL.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Migration rules can and do change. All applicants seeking to be granted a GSM visa must meet the relevant criteria set out in the migration legislation, regardless of whether or not they have previously been in Australia.</p> <p>The new SOL is proposed to come into effect on 1 July 2010. The Government has put in place transitional arrangements for current or former overseas students who</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, New Skilled Occupation List to meet Australia’s needs</p> <p>DIAC, The new Skilled Occupation List (SOL), Fact sheet</p> <p>DIAC, Frequently asked questions, Fact Sheet</p>

Milestone	Details	Source Documents
	wish to apply for a visa under the GSM program.	
26 May 2010	<p>Release of <i>Population Flows—Immigration Aspects 2008–09</i></p> <p>Australia’s net overseas migration rate (NOM) peaked in the 12 months to 31 March 2009 at 305 900. The Minister attributes this figure to the rapid growth of temporary migration.</p> <p>The Government anticipates that the NOM will fall by approximately 20 per cent as a result of reforms to permanent and temporary migration visas.</p> <p>The Minister states that the Government is ‘committed to ongoing reform to ensure immigration levels are guided by Australia’s needs and not by the desire of prospective migrants to come to Australia’.</p> <p><i>Population Flows—Immigration Aspects 2008-09</i></p> <p>There was a 60 per cent increase in onshore employer-sponsored visa grants as compared with 2007–08. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the uptake of employer-sponsored places, especially among international students who have recently graduated from an Australian institution.</p>	<p>C Evans (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship), Media release, Reforms result in 20 per cent drop in net overseas migration</p> <p>DIAC, Population Flows—Immigration Aspects 2008-09, Canberra, May 2010</p>

Appendix B: table of relevant immigration visa classes

Visa type	Subclass	Subclass Number	Eligibility
Student (Temporary)	Independent ELICOS	570	For ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students)
	Schools	571	For primary school; secondary school; and approved secondary exchange programs
	Vocational education and training	572	For Certificate I, II, III, and IV; diploma; advanced diploma
	Higher education	573	Bachelor degree; associate degree; graduate certificate; graduate diploma; and Masters by coursework
	Postgraduate research	574	For Masters by research degree and Doctoral degrees
	Non-award	575	For enabling courses; non-award foundation studies; other full-time courses or components of courses not leading to an Australian award
	AusAID or Defence	576	For full-time courses of all types undertaken by AusAID or Defence students sponsored by the Australian Government
	Student guardian	580	Provides for certain persons to reside with a student in Australia, where that student requires a guardian
Graduate Skilled (temporary)	Skilled graduate (onshore)	485	This temporary visa enables former overseas students to complete a post-graduate professional year, gain skilled work experience or improve their English skills. To be eligible, you need to have recently completed an Australian degree, diploma or trade qualification as a result of at least 2 years study.
	Skilled recognised graduate (offshore)	476	A temporary visa for people who have graduated in the last 24 months from a course in a specified discipline at a recognised educational institution
Skilled Independent (permanent)	Residence (onshore)	885	For eligible overseas students who have obtained an Australian qualification in Australia as a result of at least two (2) years study and for holders of certain temporary visas with skills in demand in Australia. Applicants are not sponsored and must pass a points test.
Skilled Independent (permanent)	Migrant (offshore)	175	A permanent visa for people with skills in demand in the Australian labour market. Applicants are not sponsored and must pass a points test.
Skilled Sponsored (permanent)	Residence (onshore)	886	For eligible overseas students who have obtained an Australian qualification in Australia as a result of at least two (2) years study and for holders of certain temporary visas with skills in demand in Australia. For applicants not able to meet the Skilled – Independent pass mark, who have either a relative in Australia to sponsor them or a nomination from a State or Territory government.
Skilled Sponsored (permanent)	Migrant (offshore)	176	For people unable to meet the Skilled – Independent pass mark. Applicants must be either sponsored by an eligible relative living in Australia or nominated by a participating State or Territory government. Applicants must pass a points test lower than that for the Skilled –

			Independent visa.
Training (temporary)	Occupational trainee	442	This visa is for people from outside Australia who want to improve their occupational skills through work-based training with a sponsoring Australian organisation or government agency. The training must provide people with additional or enhanced skills in the nominated occupations, tertiary studies or fields of expertise.
	Trade skills training (cancelled)	471	Formerly for people wanting to apply for trade skills training sponsorship—visa repealed in September 2007
Employer sponsored (temporary)	Temporary business (long stay)	457	The most commonly used program for employers to sponsor overseas workers to work in Australia on a temporary basis
	Medical Practitioner (temporary)	422	This visa allows foreign medical practitioners to work in Australia for a sponsoring employer for a period between 3 months and 4 years
	Labour Agreements		Labour Agreements are formal arrangements to recruit a number of overseas skilled workers. Both temporary and permanent visas can be granted under the agreement. Agreements are generally effective for two to three years.
Employer sponsored (permanent)	Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) (onshore)	856	For visa applicants who are currently living and/or working in Australia on a qualifying visa
	Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) (offshore)	121	For applicants who are outside Australia
	Labour Agreements		Labour Agreements are formal arrangements to recruit a number of overseas skilled workers. Both temporary and permanent visas can be granted under the agreement. Agreements are generally effective for two to three years.
State/Territory nominated (permanent)	Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) (onshore)	857	For visa applicants who are currently living and/or working in Australia on a qualifying visa
	Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) (offshore)	119	For applicants outside Australia
State/Territory sponsored (temporary)	Regional Sponsored (Provisional) (onshore)	487	For eligible overseas students and holders of certain temporary visas who can meet the lower pass mark for this visa. Applicants must be either sponsored by an eligible relative living in a designated area of Australia or nominated by a participating state/territory government. After living for two (2) years and working for at least one (1) year in a Specified Regional Area, applicants can apply for a permanent visa.

Appendix C: glossary of acronyms and terms

CSL	Critical Skills List
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DIMIA	Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
GSM	The General Skilled Migration program is a component of the skilled migration stream of the annual Migration Program. The GSM program is open to skilled migrants who are not sponsored by an employer. The options open to applicants under the GSM include, applying as independent applicants, sponsorship by a relative or nomination by a State or Territory government.
Immigration program	In this paper refers to the entirety of Australia's annual migrant intake in both permanent and temporary categories. The reference to the immigration program in this paper is distinct from the official Migration Program, announced annually by DIAC. In addition to the entry of permanent migrants under the Migration Program, Australia also accepts various categories of temporary migrants, whose numbers are not fixed by the Government.
Migration Program	Refers to the Government's official, non-humanitarian, permanent migration program, comprising mainly of the skilled and family migration categories. The Migration Program operates within planning levels that are set by the Government every financial year. Some visa categories within the Migration Program are not capped, such as the Business Skills, Employer Sponsored, State-specific and Regional visas. Where uncapped visa categories exceed original planning levels in any one year, the increase is accommodated by decreasing other categories in the Migration Program, such as the Skilled Independent category.
MODL	Migration Occupations in Demand List
Overseas student program	Comprises visa categories that enable foreign nationals to enter Australia on a temporary basis in order to undertake full time study.
Skilled migrant intake	Includes reference to both permanent and temporary skilled migrants entering Australia as part of the overall migrant intake.
Skilled migration program	Refers to permanent skilled migration under both the employer-sponsored and GSM categories of the annual Migration Program.
SOL	Skilled Occupations List
Temporary migration	Refers to migrants who enter Australia on a temporary visa, such as business or student visa. Unlike the Migration Program, which is capped annually, the number of visas granted under temporary entry visa categories is not pre-determined by the government, but are rather driven by the supply of applicants under these categories.
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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