

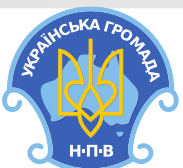


VISA ISSUES DISPLACED UKRAINIANS

CHALLENGES FACING DISPLACED UKRAINIANS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR INVESTIGATION

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UKRAINIAN COUNCIL
OF NSW

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1. Issue Summary, Recommendations and Areas for Investigation

1 Displaced Ukrainians in Australia

- Just under **5,000** displaced Ukrainians on Humanitarian 786 visas nationally (arrived **prior** to 31 July 2022)
- Estimate of **1,000** displaced Ukrainians on Emergency Bridging Visas (arrived **after** 31 July 2022)
- **70%** of the displaced Ukrainians are women and children, with many husbands/fathers remaining in Ukraine
- Cohort is older, with **~30% over 46 years of age**, with **~38% between 36-45 years of age**
- **60%** have found employment, however only **~50%** of those are working in a job related to their qualification

2 The Problem and Proposed Solution

- Pathways to Permanent Residency (PR) post 786/EBV visa expiry are a **major stressor** for Ukrainian families
- Challenges identified with applying for alternative visas (see *Section 6* at right) have given rise to various psychological challenges, including uncertainty, fear, depression, anxiety, insomnia and feelings of despair
- This is hindering the process of adaptation and multicultural transition
- **Granting permanent residency** to displaced Ukrainians would provide support, stability and confidence in their future

3 Immediate Recommendations and Areas for Investigation

- **Recommendation:** Auto-extend 786 Humanitarian Visa for a further 3 years to remove immediate stress
- **Recommendation:** Develop dedicated pathways for permanent residency for displaced Ukrainians
- **Investigate:** Increase in number of humanitarian visas for displaced Ukrainians
- **Investigate:** Expand list of relatives who can sponsor for family visas (e.g. siblings, cousins etc)
- **Investigate:** Accelerated family reunification pathways for split families

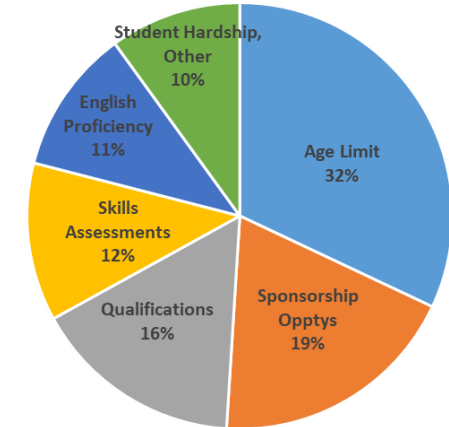
4 Benefits to Australia

- Cohort is **highly educated**, with **~34%** holding a Bachelor's Degree and **~46%** holding a Master's Degree
- Cohort is **highly experienced** in Top 20 Occupations in Demand (as per [report](#) from Minister for Skills and Training)
- It would contribute to the strength of our multicultural society, where people from diverse nationalities can build their future with a sense of security and stability

5 Domestic and International Precedents

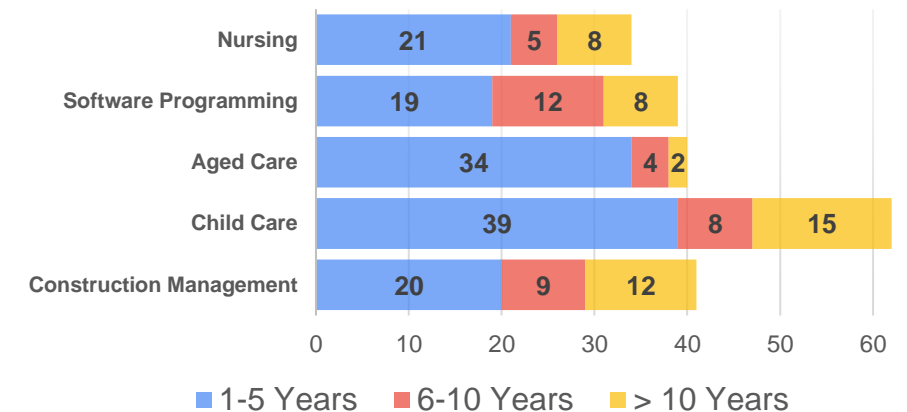
- **Australia** – Large scale migration program for [Afghans](#) and specific PR pathways for [Hong Kong](#) residents
- **New Zealand** – Dedicated residence pathway for [Special Ukraine Visa holders](#)
- **Canada** - Specific permanent residency [pathway](#) for Ukrainians

6 Obstacles to applying for alternative visas



730 NSW families surveyed in June 2023, with 394 responses received.
Further detail on following pages

7 Experience – Top 5 Occupations in Demand

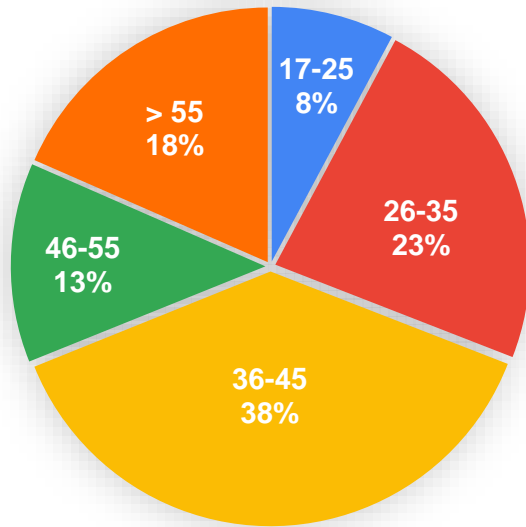


700 NSW individuals surveyed in Nov 2023, with 546 responses received.
Further detail on following pages

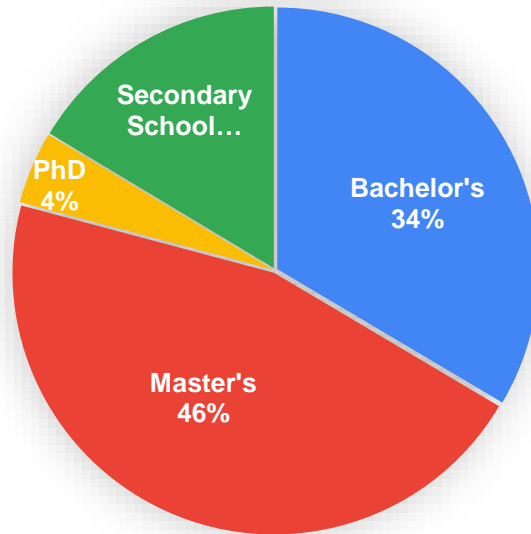
2. Qualifications/Age/Employment Analysis (1)

546 displaced Ukrainians responded to an employment, qualifications and age survey in Nov 2023. The survey confirmed displaced Ukrainians in Australia are motivated and highly educated and possess years of experience in the Top 20 Occupations in Demand as per the February 2023 [Labour Market Update](#). This cohort would be of great benefit to Australia if granted permanent residency.

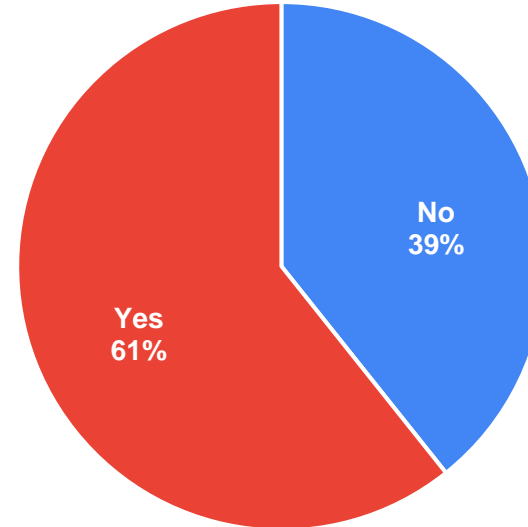
Age Group



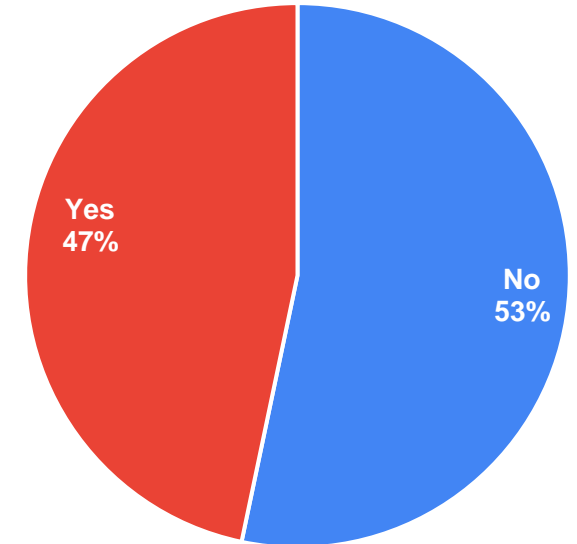
Highest Level of Education



Employed in Australia?

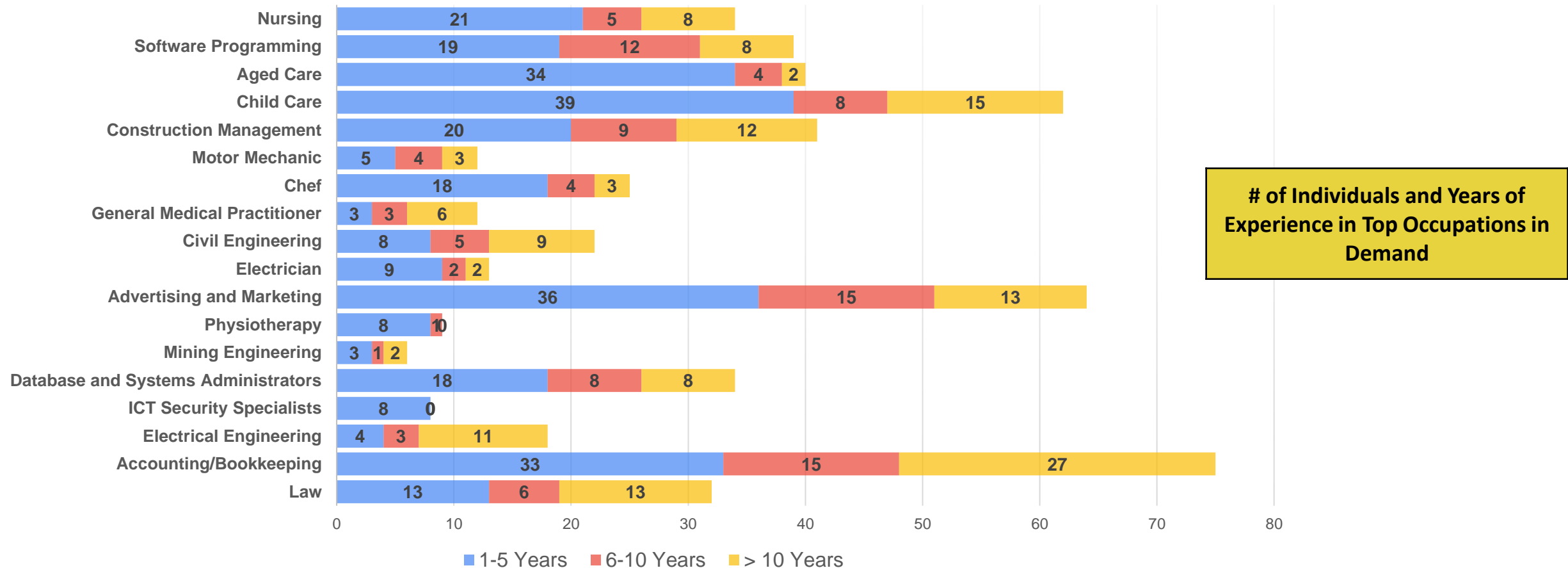


Employment related to Quals?



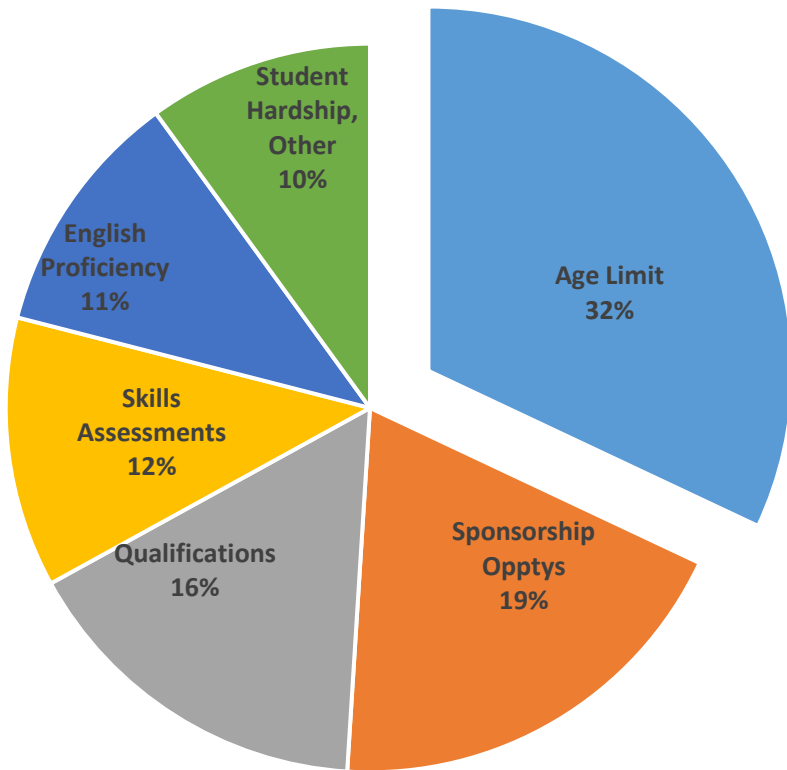
2. Qualifications/Age/Employment Analysis (2)

546 displaced Ukrainians responded to an employment, qualifications and age survey in Nov 2023. The survey confirmed displaced Ukrainians in Australia are motivated and highly educated and possess years of experience in the Top 20 Occupations in Demand as per the February 2023 [Labour Market Update](#). This cohort would be of great benefit to Australia if granted permanent residency.



3. Challenge 1: Age Limit

The age limit presents a major hindrance for displaced Ukrainians in Australia looking for potential skilled migration. 32% of respondents fall within the age range of 44 to 55, a critical period in their careers, making them ineligible to apply for certain visa categories that often lead to permanent residency (skilled visas, sponsorship visas through employers)



I have a Masters degree in Enterprise Economics, with 20 years experience in the Ukrainian banking industry. I'm studying English at TAFE and need extra time to prepare for the IELTS/PTE exams. My age (44) and English level do not allow me to apply for skilled or employer sponsored visas. People spend years and tens of thousands of dollars to prepare for their skilled/professional visa application - I don't have that time because I wasn't planning for professional migration but running away from war. The remaining time of 1 years of 786 visa (until I turn 45) isn't enough for me to prepare for application for skilled/work visas.

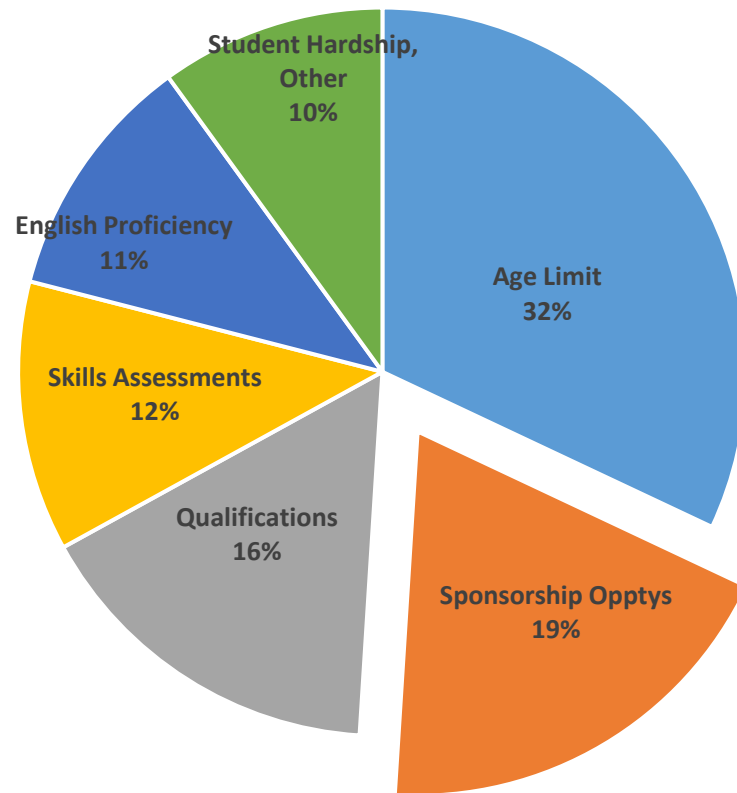
My current 786 visa doesn't let me apply for 866 Asylum Seeker Visa or 851 Resolution of status Visa. I'm in a state of uncertainty and cannot plan my future and future of my daughter.



Tatiana K, 44 years old

3. Challenge 2: Sponsorship Opportunities

Another prominent challenge identified in the survey is the scarcity of sponsorship opportunities from employers. Many employers are hesitant to sponsor visas due to the associated financial and administrative burdens, leading to the rejection of job applications from individuals on humanitarian visas. This lack of sponsorship possibilities significantly limits the avenues available for displaced Ukrainians to continue their residency in Australia and moreover it limits their possibility to obtain employment while on a 786 visa.



Finding a new employer to sponsor me for a working visa in Australia is proving to be a challenging task. Considering the available visa options, pursuing a Student visa is not feasible for me in the near future. I don't have immediate plans to study, and financial constraints make it unlikely for me to gather the necessary funds. My partner is also on a 786 visa and shares the same concerns. It would be a great relief if we could extend our stay in Australia after our current visa expires



Kateryna K

I have been considering the Professional Migration visa, however a main challenge is lacking local work experience in my specialised field of civil engineering. It is either impossible or extremely difficult for me to verify my work experience in Ukraine. I am constrained by the limited time on my current visa to demonstrate local experience. I have found that many companies are hesitant to hire individuals who may need to leave the country within a timeframe of less than two years. They often prefer candidates with permanent resident status



Hanna B

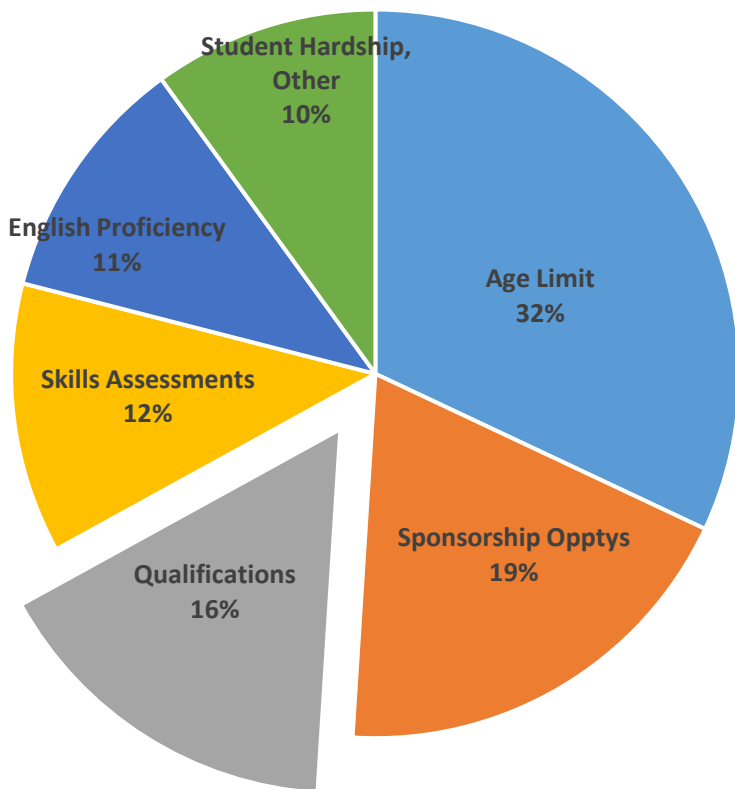
Due to my current visa, I am unable to apply for more permanent roles with employers as they see my visa status and reject me as my visa is temporary



Yulia K

3. Challenge 3: Qualification

Respondents reported the challenge of incompatibility of their profession with the list of in demand occupations in NSW. Many respondents expressed their intent to acquire new qualifications in Australia, especially through TAFE, but emphasised that obtaining the necessary certification and gaining relevant experience is a time-consuming process. As a result, the misalignment of their current profession with the state's demand further complicates their prospects of securing an alternative visa pathway in a timely manner



Unfortunately, my education and work experience are not relevant in Australia. I've enrolled in Diploma of Community Services and this will take 1 year. My visa will expire in May 2025 so there is no possibility to get 2 or 3 years of experience. I'm 40 and don't have enough time to pass IELTS Level 8 and apply for a working visa. I can't apply for regional visa because it will be too hard for my children to move to another region. It was too stressful for my kids to leave Ukraine and I still can see after-effects. My eldest has just calmed down and settled, found new friends, and used to new place and school. Moving to another place will be too stressful for her and will lead to new issues for her state of mind



Julia M

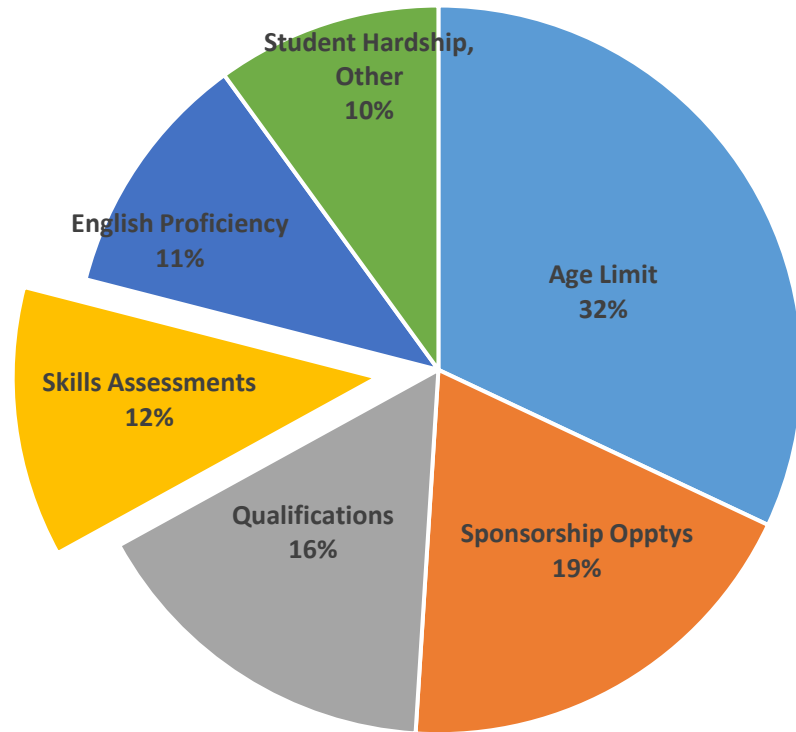
I don't have qualification or experience to fit any profession in occupation list to get work visa. I don't have enough time to obtain Australian qualification & experience, because I am a 41 year old single mother of three children (10, 13 and 15. I don't have enough emotional stability and energy to prepare while working full time (plus weekends) and raising three kids. It is impossible for one person, exhausted and escaped from the war



Olha K

3. Challenge 4: Skills Assessment

Specific challenges are including but not limited to: a) **Language Barriers**: Limited English proficiency; b) **Credential Recognition**: Difficulties in having qualifications and work experience recognised; c) **Experience Gaps**: Inability to provide sufficient evidence of prior work experience due to displacement and limited documentation; d) **Skill Mismatch**: Skills acquired in Ukraine not aligning perfectly with Australia's specific demands; and e) **Financial Constraints**: Limited financial resources to cover the associated costs



I have education in Management (MBA) from Kyiv National University with honours, but this education doesn't fit too many skills assessments requirements. I worked as a Marketing team leader in Ukraine. To have my skills assessed I need 3 years of work experience, but my company have paid me officially only 2 years out of 3 due to COVID and corporate takeovers. I need help or advice how to prove that I was employed, if I haven't had payslips from day 1



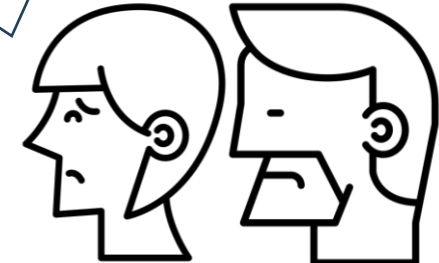
Vladyslav G

My Master Degree (Engineer of Meteorology) from Ukraine not relevant to my current job in Australia (Quality Assurance Analyst), that is why I need to have 2 local years full time job for eligibility to apply to 486 visa



Kateryna L

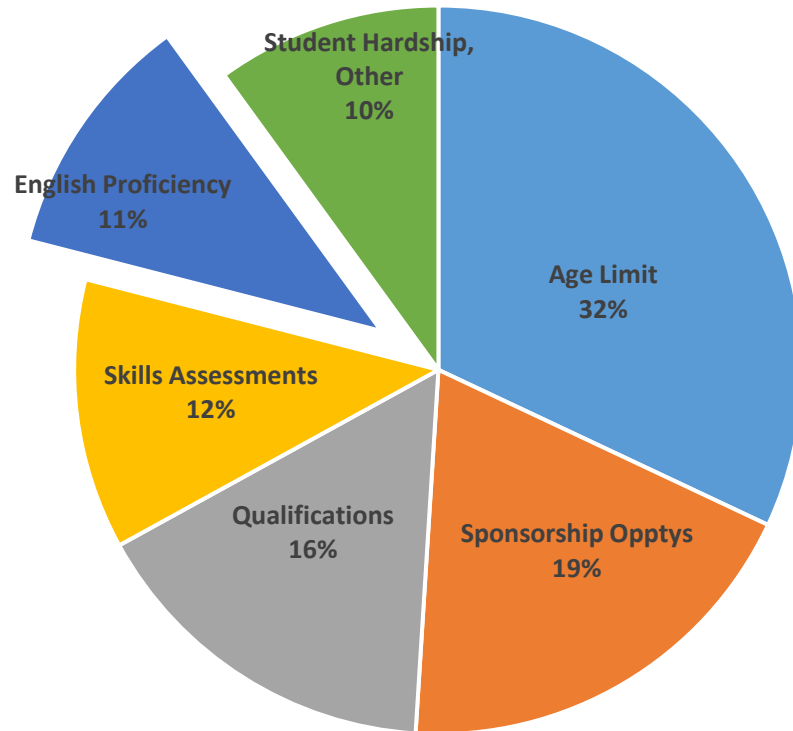
I have a Law Degree however my working experience is in ICT Industry. Skill assessment provider for my occupation (TRA) doesn't do RPL (Recognition Of Prior Learning), meaning I have the experience, knowledge, and skills acquired overseas to work in a profession, but no official educational qualification in ICT and I cannot get my qualification recognised. My wife has similar situation, she has the same degree as I do, but she works as a Retail Store Manager in Australia. It is unlikely we can get our qualifications recognised which makes it very difficult to get permanent residency



Igor Z and Manyana R

3. Challenge 5: English Proficiency

Displaced Ukrainians encounter significant challenges in meeting the English proficiency requirements for skilled and work visas in Australia. The emphasis is placed on the necessity of obtaining an IELTS score of 7, a demanding standard that many refugees struggle to achieve while still improving their English language skills through educational programs such as TAFE



I am currently on a 786 visa. I also found a job in my specialty in the Orange region. I am a music teacher by profession. I teach now at the Australian Conservatory. But in order to apply for a work visa, teachers need to pass an English test for the highest scores. Unfortunately, in a short time it is very difficult for me



Anna K

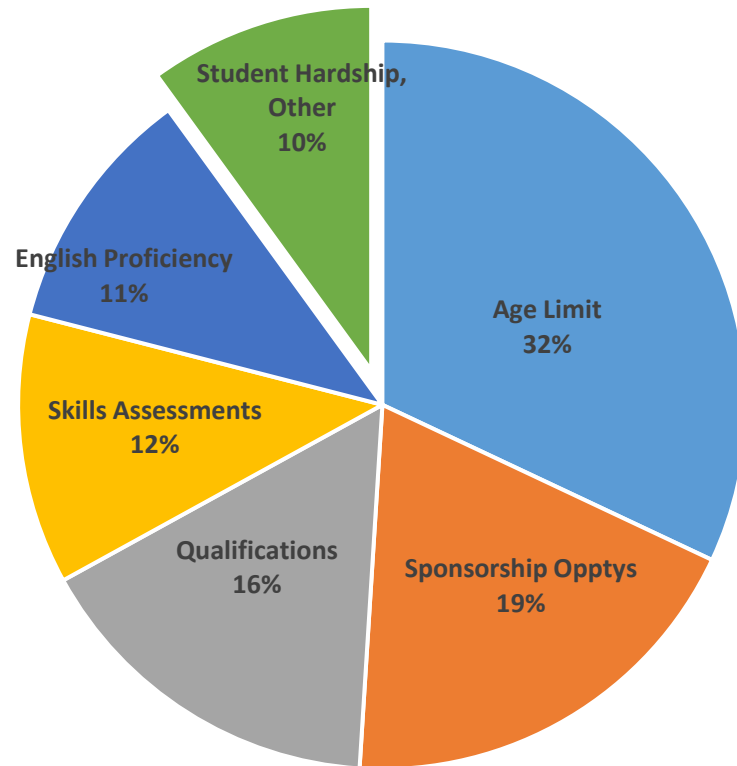
I am unable to apply for any visas because my English isn't good enough to pass IELTS exam. I can't collect required works documents because my town and my company is under occupation of the Russian military. I can't get enough points for skilled visas



Kateryna B

3. Challenge 6: Other challenges

This section covered future students in financial hardship, traders, and other challenges



I'm 17 years old, a high school leaver, I'm on 786 visa but my parents don't have 786 visa and cannot apply for any permanent or long term visa. In about 5 months I will finish school and I don't know what to do next and what my future will be. I cannot return and study in Ukraine, my town is 30km from the frontline and not far from the city of Bakhmut. If I don't get any scholarship, I will not be able to study in Australia and apply for a student or any visas. It is very hard emotionally and is stressing me out, as I'm still at school but need to worry so much about my future. I'm top of my class in my Australian school for almost all subjects.



Oleksandra P

I've started my business from scratch, with the assistance of the organisation "Thrive" who helped with a loan. I've checked business visas conditions, and I realised that I can't adjust myself to those conditions in 2 years



Khalilula D

4. APPENDIX 1: June Survey Question Set

1

Survey Details

- Survey open from **21 June 2023** to **6 August 2023**
- **730** families requested to participate
- **394** responses received

2

Survey Question Set

1. Email address
2. Name and Surname
3. Phone number
4. Would you consider staying in Australia once your 786 visa expires?
5. Please explain why you are unable to apply for any other visas available in Australia?
6. Please give us detailed information about your particular visa case?

5. APPENDIX 2: Nov Survey Question Set

1

Survey Details

- Survey open from **8 Nov 2023** to **15 November 2023**
- **730** individuals requested to participate
- **546** responses received

2

Survey Question Set

1. Email address
2. Name and Surname
3. Please confirm your age group
4. In what LGA do you live?
5. How many dependent children are with you in Australia?
6. Do you have any relatives who are already in Australia?
7. Please confirm your highest level of education
8. Please confirm your qualification (if any)
9. What was your occupation in Ukraine?
10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas
11. Are you currently employed in Australia?
12. Is your current job related to your qualification?