



Submission No 46

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

Organisation: Department of Immigration and Citizenship

**SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION
BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP
TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE

IN RELATION TO THE INQUIRY INTO

AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION**

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DIAC activities within overseas posts

Supplementary Information about staffing of offshore DIAC offices

DIAC can confirm that as at end February 2012 amongst its expatriate Locally Engaged Staff working in its overseas offices, it had:

- over 150 Australian citizens,
- over 65 citizens of countries with which DIAC has close co-operation on migration issues through the Five Country Conferences (ie the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand) excluding those who are dual citizens of the host country; and
- over 40 additional third country nationals (ie they do not hold the citizenship of the country in which they are employed).

Emerging DIAC workload pressures and priorities

DIAC's initial submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Inquiry into Overseas Representation noted the overall size of the Migration, Humanitarian and Temporary Entry visa programs delivered in 2010-11 and outlined the top source countries for these programs. More detailed statistical information is at **Attachment A**.

The North Asia region now contributes almost a quarter of the Migration Program, due largely to growth in the caseload from China. Medium-term growth in people flows from South Asia has also been significant, despite the reduction in Student Visa applications from India lodged offshore in the last couple of years. Since 2005-06, demand for family migration from some source countries, such as the United Kingdom, has remained strong while demand from other countries has increased significantly including China (up 73 per cent), India (up 54 per cent), Vietnam (up 41 per cent) and the Philippines (up 26 per cent).

Flow-on effects of irregular maritime arrivals are also impacting other caseloads as those granted permanent residence seek to bring immediate and extended family members to Australia. Where clients are found not to be refugees, there is significant work undertaken at associated posts to support removals to the client's country of origin.

In 2010-11 in the high volume, Temporary Migration Program, for example:

- the strongest demand for student visas was from Chinese clients with close to 26 000 cases* lodged offshore and close to 24, 800 cases lodged onshore. While only around 5 800 Indian clients lodged a student visa case offshore, close to 25 000 Indian clients lodged a student visa case onshore;
- compared to 2005-06, there was significant growth in lodgements of student cases offshore from countries such as China (up around 22 per cent), Vietnam (up 124 per cent), Pakistan (up 117 per cent), Colombia (up 85 per cent), Philippines (up 115 per cent), Saudi Arabia (up 197 per cent) and Iran (up 152 per cent);

* Cases includes both primary visa applications and subsequent entry visa applications (ie dependants).

- compared to 2009-10, there was significant growth in Visitor visa cases[†] lodged offshore from countries such as China (up 32 per cent), Singapore (up 96 per cent), South Korea (up 83 per cent), Malaysia (up 56 per cent), Tonga (up 50 per cent), Iran (up 29 per cent) and Ireland (up 24 per cent);
- compared to 2005-06, Working Holiday Maker visa cases lodged offshore increased significantly from countries such as the United Kingdom (up 24 per cent), South Korea (up 13 per cent), Germany (up 70 per cent), Ireland (up 53 per cent) and France (up 187 per cent).

Fluctuations in visa volumes from different source countries indicate broader departmental work pressures but are an imperfect guide to pressures in DIAC's overseas representation. DIAC has increasingly moved to process visas on a global basis increasing the use of specialised onshore processing centres. Therefore, examining visa volumes by country is only one factor DIAC takes into account when reviewing its overseas office footprint.

The range of factors considered includes workload demands, volumes and risks; the geographic spread of clients; the need to provide reasonable access to services for clients; and budget constraints. In balancing these factors, the rationale for where visas are processed is increasingly based primarily on risk and integrity factors and where proximity to the client is desirable to verify identity and assess applicant bona fides. Where a decision requires a high degree of client contact, either face-to-face or by phone, or where significant local knowledge is required to assess bona fides, the processing work is likely to remain offshore or to be informed by intelligence from a significant offshore presence. The most pertinent information for the Committee in examining the adequacy of DIAC's offshore footprint, therefore, is around DIAC's risk and integrity management.

While DIAC manages fraud and bone fides issues in all caseloads, currently key pressure points include managing risks in the high volume Chinese and Indian caseloads and several complex Middle Eastern and African caseloads. DIAC continues to make adjustments to the location of its A-based representation to manage these risks. For example, DIAC is in the process of relocating an A-based resource from East Asia to the Middle East. Nevertheless, resources continue to be stretched offshore, particularly in managing complex, high risk caseloads. DIAC can provide more detailed information to the Committee about this work on a confidential basis.

Cases 12 months or older

When DIAC appeared before the Committee on 10 February 2012, the Committee indicated an interest in lengthy processing times as potential indicators of departmental pressures offshore. It referred to the published information at **Attachment B**.

[†] Visitor figures only include Electronic Travel Authority processed by an overseas processing office. Thus a percentage increase in these figures does not necessarily correspond to a percentage increase in overall visitors to Australia from these countries.

As at 30 June 2011, the largest number of offshore, on-hand visa applications aged over 12 months were from Afghanistan (1 331), China (2 981), Vietnam (637), Iraq (300), Pakistan (195), Lebanon (192) and Thailand (170). Posts processing these caseloads are under pressure but delays in processing can be the result of a variety of factors including the need for checks to be completed (eg health and security checking), demand for visas which exceeds Migration Program planning levels, delays where DIAC is awaiting additional information requested from the client or their representative, an unexpected increase in visa applications or a need for the rebalancing of internal resource allocation. In recent years DIAC has further strengthened its monitoring and governance around managing compliance with service standards to ensure that issues over which the department has control are proactively managed.

Visa application lodgement

As outlined in DIAC's initial submission to the Committee, DIAC is increasingly offering clients the option of lodging visas on-line. At **Attachment C** is additional information regarding on-line take-up rates. As the graphs indicate, a significant portion of Visitor visas are now lodged on-line.

Service Delivery Partners

Globally, DIAC uses commercial partners (service delivery partners) in a variety of locations as detailed in DIAC's previous submission.

The Committee has sought more information regarding the department's recent acquisition of a service delivery partner (SDP) in the South Pacific. DIAC can confirm that it conducted an open procurement process for the provision of visa lodgement services in the South Pacific. The process was conducted in compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines with several commercial suppliers tendering bids. DIAC conducted an appropriate evaluation of the tenders with TT Services Pty Ltd being evaluated as the successful commercial supplier. The company has subsequently been awarded the contract and is part way through opening Australian Visa Application Centres in 14 locations in the South Pacific. Where SDPs have opened in the South Pacific close to 95 per cent of clients are choosing to take advantage of the SDP's lodgement service with only a small number of applications being lodged directly with the post.

DIAC is working to expand its SDP arrangements but in some locations small visa volumes make such an arrangement commercially unviable. DIAC is exploring further opportunities to collaborate with other Five Country Conference members. Biometrics collection, for example, has been successfully introduced using the existing UK Border Agency SDPs for the provision of visa application lodgement and biometric collection services.

Seasonal Worker Scheme

Service Delivery Partner arrangements in the Pacific are currently not being utilised for lodgement of Special Program (subclass 416) visas which includes seasonal worker visa applications within the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme.

Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme visa applications are lodged and processed at the Department's Hobart Office in Australia. Pacific and East Timorese seasonal workers apply for Special Program (subclass 416) visas. The Department has centralised visa lodgement and processing of the Special Program at the Hobart Special Program Processing Centre (HSPPC). Visa applications by Pacific and East Timorese seasonal workers are generally scanned and then lodged by email at HSPPC. Visa applications can also be posted or sent by facsimile to HSPPC.

The visa lodgement arrangements during the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme will continue when the ongoing Seasonal Worker Program commences in July 2012. The Seasonal Worker Program will provide for 12,000 visa places over four years in comparison to 2,500 visa places available during the four-year Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme.

Ukraine

The Committee expressed an interest in the department's workload demands in the Ukraine. On a global level, the demand for Australian visas by Ukrainian clients is comparatively small. In 2010-11 a total of 438 Ukrainian citizens applied for a permanent or provisional first stage visa and 2 542 Ukrainian citizens applied for a temporary entry visa.

Visas being processed offshore for this client group are managed by DIAC's Moscow office which accepts visa applications by post or courier. It is not necessary for Ukrainian clients to visit the office in person to lodge a visa application. Most Ukrainian clients choose to lodge their applications by courier or in person. The department conducts a small number of interview trips to the Ukraine each year to follow-up on complex cases.

The Committee noted that some skilled Ukrainians working in the mining industry may be interested in working in Australia. These clients would generally apply for a General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa on-line or by post or courier. The applications would be lodged at the Adelaide Skilled Processing Centre in Australia where they are processed.

From 1 July 2012, SkillSelect will be implemented. It is an on-line system that enables skilled workers interested in migrating to Australia to record their details to be considered for a skilled visa through an Expression of Interest (EOI). People intending to migrate to Australia may be found and nominated for skilled visas by Australian employers or state and territory governments, or they may be invited by the Australian Government to lodge a visa application.

ATTACHMENT A

The Migration Program

The Migration Program for 2010-11 was set at 168 700 places. This included a Skill Stream of 113 850 places, a Family Stream of 54 550 places and 300 Special Eligibility places. Below is a table outlining the top ten source countries of migrants under this program in 2010-11.

Table 1 Migration Program visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Male	Female	Total+
New Zealand permanent settlers*	17 597	16 971	34 568
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	12 741	16 805	29 547
UK	12 577	11 354	23 931
India	11 632	10 136	21 768
Philippines	4 794	6 028	10 825
South Africa	4 302	4 308	8 612
Malaysia	2 381	2 749	5 130
Vietnam	1 659	3 050	4 709
Sri Lanka	2 379	2 218	4 597
South Korea	1 948	2 378	4 326
Ireland	2 251	1 449	3 700
Total of Top 10 countries	56 664	60 475	117 145
Proportion of program	33.6	35.9	69.4
*New Zealand nationals are not counted in the Migration Program and are included here for comparative purposes only			
+Excludes New Zealand permanent settlers			

Since 1997-98 the Skill Stream has been the main migration pathway to Australia. In 2010-11, it contributed more than two-thirds of the 2010-11 Migration Program places.

Australia's Skill Stream comprises four components:

- General Skilled Migration;
- Employer Sponsored;
- Business Skills; and
- Distinguished Talent.

The General Skilled Migration stream accounted for over half (around 54 per cent) of the Skill Stream, and 36.4 per cent of the total Migration outcome, in 2010-11. The Employer Sponsored Scheme accounted for 39 per cent of the Skilled Stream. Information regarding the top ten source countries for migrants under the General Skilled Migration and Employer Sponsored streams in 2010-11 appears below.

Table 2 General Skilled Migration visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Total	Proportion of Total General Skilled Migration grants (%)
India	12 733	20.7
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	12 158	19.8
UK	8 380	13.6
Sri Lanka	3 242	5.3
Malaysia	3 032	4.9
South Africa	2 762	4.5
Philippines	1 747	2.8
Nepal	1 405	2.3
Iran	1 384	2.3
South Korea	1 330	2.2
Total Top 10 countries	48 173	78.4
Other countries	13 286	21.6
Total Program	61 459	100

NB: General Skilled Migration visas are processed onshore at DIAC's General Skilled Migration Processing Centres in Adelaide and Brisbane but integrity information is sourced through DIAC's offices offshore. This includes a range of checks on individual cases called "referrals".

Table 3 Employer Sponsored visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Total	Proportion of Total Employer Sponsored stream grants (%)
UK	9 282	20.9
Philippines	6 097	13.7
India	4 537	10.2
South Africa	4 499	10.1
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	3 480	7.8
Ireland	1 565	3.5
South Korea	1 309	3.0
Zimbabwe	874	2.0
Germany	822	1.9
USA	770	1.7
Total Top 10 countries	33 235	74.9
Other countries	11 110	25.1
Total	44 345	100.0

The majority of Employer Sponsored outcomes (88.1 per cent) in 2010-11 were from onshore applicants already in Australia on a Temporary Business (Long Stay) (Subclass 457) Visa.

The Family migration stream enables the migration of immediate family members such as spouses, children, parents and certain other members of extended families. Information regarding the top ten source countries for migration under the Family Stream appears below.

Table 4 Family Stream visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Total Grants	Proportion of Total Family stream grants (%)
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	9 077	16.6
UK	5 806	10.6
India	4 426	8.1
Vietnam	3 323	6.1
Philippines	2 963	5.4
Thailand	2 041	3.7
USA	1 794	3.3
Indonesia	1 221	2.2
South Korea	1 016	1.9
South Africa	1 002	1.8
Other	21 874	40.1
Total	54 543	100.0

The Temporary Entry Program

In 2010–11, 4 136 116 temporary entry visas were granted. Clients sought to enter Australia temporarily for a variety of purposes including for tourism, business and work, study and working holidays. In 2010–11, the vast majority of temporary entry visas (71.6 per cent) were granted to tourists, with 10.7 percent of temporary visas granted to short-term business visitors, 6.1 per cent granted to students and 4.5 per cent granted to working holiday makers. The remaining 7.1 per cent were granted in a variety of other visa classes such as Business Long Stay and Specialist Entry visas.

Table 5 Tourism visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Total 2010-11 grants	Proportion of Tourist visa grants (%)
UK	530 454	17.9
USA	310 329	10.5
Japan	301 170	10.2
Malaysia	177 671	6.0
South Korea	163 159	5.5
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	138 488	4.7
Germany	128 202	4.3
Singapore	122 394	4.1
France	112 392	3.8
Canada	93 807	3.2
Other countries	885 279	29.9
Total Tourism	2 963 345	100.0

NB: Offshore grants only

Table 6 Short-term business visitor visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Country of Citizenship	Total 2010-11 grants	Proportion of total Short-term business visitor visa grants (%)
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	74 320	16.8
USA	62 669	14.2
UK	40 016	9.0
India	25 586	5.8
Japan	23 045	5.2
Singapore	19 290	4.4
Indonesia	15 892	3.6
Malaysia	14 480	3.3
Germany	13 927	3.1
Thailand	13 179	3.0
Other countries	140 078	31.7
Total	442 482	100.0

Table 7 Student visa grants 2008-09 to 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Source country	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Per cent change (2009-10 to 2010-11) (%)
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	55 331	54 541	49 852	-8.6
India	65 516	29 826	28 954	-2.9
South Korea	17 351	16 416	13 238	-19.4
Brazil	12 525	11 461	9 780	-14.7
Malaysia	11 545	10 643	9 709	-8.8
Thailand	13 489	11 742	9 273	-21.0
Nepal	13 995	6 073	8 830	45.4
US	9 644	9 007	8 562	-4.9
Indonesia	8 681	8 729	8 088	-7.3
Saudi Arabia	7 629	7 318	7 798	6.6
Other	103 926	104 743	96 354	-8.0
Total	319 632	270 499	250 438	-7.4

NB: Excludes student guardians (subclass 580), change of provider and permission to work.

Table 8 Working Holiday visa grants 2010-11: Top 10 source participating countries

Arrangement country/ citizenship	Total	Proportion (%)
UK	38 974	21.0
South Korea	30 527	16.4
Ireland	21 753	11.7
Germany	21 146	11.4
France	18 530	10.0
Taiwan	13 809	7.4
Canada	7 899	4.3
Japan	7 746	4.2
Italy	6 429	3.5
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	4 545	2.5
Other	14 122	7.6
Total	185 480	100.0

Table 9 Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa grants 2010-11: top 10 source countries

Citizenship country	Total 2010-11 grants	Proportion of total grants (%)
UK	21 667	24.0
India	15 808	17.5
USA	7 020	7.8
Philippines	5 898	6.5
Ireland	5 817	6.5
South Africa	3 494	3.9
China (excludes SARS and Taiwan)	2 979	3.3
Canada	2 731	3.0
Germany	2 144	2.4
France	2 089	2.3
Total Top 10 countries	69 647	77.3
Other	20 472	22.7
Grand Total	90 119	100.0

NB: The Business Long Stay visa is a common pathway to permanent residence. In 2010-11, 41 710 people transitioned from this visa to a place in the Migration Program, with 96.2 per cent granted a permanent skilled visa and 3.8 per cent a family visa. The majority making the transition to permanent residence were sponsored by their employer.

Excludes Subclass 4571E (independent executives)

The Humanitarian Program

Australia's Humanitarian Program consists of an offshore resettlement component for people outside Australia who are in need of humanitarian assistance and an onshore protection component for people who seek asylum after arrival in Australia and are subsequently found to be refugees.

In 2010–11, 8 971 visas were granted to people overseas, while 4 828 visas were granted to people found to be refugees in Australia. The majority (58.1 per cent) of the 8 971 persons granted a visa in the offshore component were granted a Refugee (subclass 200) visa. This represents 37.8 per cent of the total Humanitarian Program and these clients are predominantly persons residing overseas, and outside their home country, who have been referred to the Australian Government by the UNHCR.

Table 10 Humanitarian Program Refugee visa grants 2010-11: top 5 source countries

Source Country	Grants
Burma	1 289
Iraq	1 023
Bhutan	975
DR Congo	386
Afghanistan	289

Table 11 Global Special Humanitarian visa grants 2010-11: top 5 source countries

Source Country	Grants
Iraq	1 037
Afghanistan	604
Sri Lanka	211
Sudan	182
Iran	130

Table 12 Protection (IMA) visa grants 2010-11: top 5 source countries

Source Country	Grants
Afghanistan	1 335
Stateless	481
Iran	333
Iraq	239
Sri Lanka	236

ATTACHMENT B

Table 1 Average processing time, in days, for Family applications, by overseas post

Office/Post	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012 (to 31 Oct)
Amman	331	349	300	361
Ankara	209	250	245	194
Athens	143	128	385	**
Auckland	157	139	161	243
Bangkok	119	152	211	237
Beirut	207	240	259	293
Belgrade	200	147	138	159
Berlin	168	203	175	243
Brasilia	117	143	171	195
Cairo	215	316	245	251
Colombo	151	118	147	172
Dhaka	175	249	229	248
Dili	242	132	230	**
Dubai	296	542	446	426
Guangzhou	69	162	220	191
Hanoi	252	180	251	427
Ho Chi Minh City	231	243	297	344
Hong Kong	155	101	145	164
Islamabad	362	712	**	
Jakarta	139	109	135	145
Kuala Lumpur	215	173	183	171
London	75	88	154	152
Madrid	112	69	141	200
Manila	166	148	157	170
Moscow	194	197	213	188
Nairobi	282	305	275	292
New Delhi	103	110	148	201
Ottawa	112	100	159	199
Phnom Penh	249	236	219	277
Port Moresby	158	308	360	429
Pretoria	216	231	241	221
Santiago de Chile	151	128	157	163
Seoul	112	104	122	225
Shanghai	162	176	206	237
Singapore	154	162	161	168
Suva	257	185	205	215
Taipei	96	60	79	96
Tehran	281	420	337	262
Tel Aviv	85	99	132	166
Tokyo	92	86	143	221
Vienna	134	188	208	244
Washington	142	149	152	172

** less than 10 applications finalised.

Table 2 Average processing time, in days, for Humanitarian applications by overseas post

Office/Post	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12 (to 31 Oct)
Amman	455	377	288	412
Ankara	288	446	357	261
Athens	62	**		
Bangkok	261	272	271	258
Beijing	387	320	299	328
Beirut	222	334	298	266
Belgrade	**	**	78	
Berlin	229	209	239	308
Brasilia		**	**	91
Cairo	227	40	26	93
Colombo	135	177	211	264
Dhaka	202	206	**	19
Dubai	290	320	280	313
Guangzhou	147	128		
Hong Kong	**	**	785	**
Islamabad	519	**	**	
Jakarta	363	346	222	230
Kuala Lumpur	242	322	290	299
London	357	**	**	
Victoria OHPC	77	173	119	76
Manila	**	**		198
Moscow	**	**	162	**
Nairobi	226	300	147	438
New Delhi	267	281	202	264
Pretoria	345	305	409	**
Santiago De Chile	183	81	**	
Shanghai	218	241		
Suva	**	95	**	
NSW OHPC	129	253	442	397
Tehran	399	527	422	889
Washington	212	114	148	**

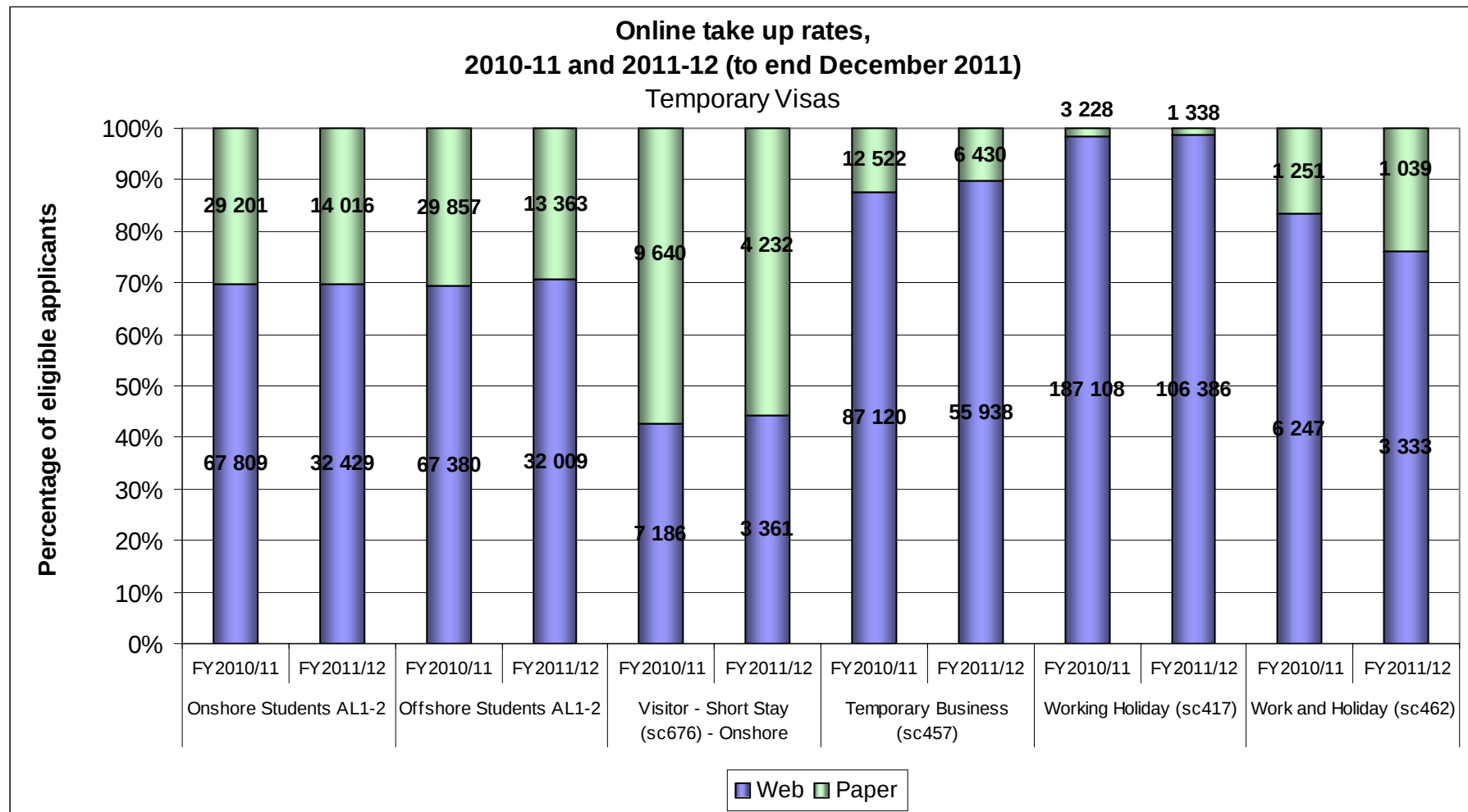
Notes:

1. ** less than 10 applications finalised.
2. Victoria Offshore Humanitarian Processing Centre (OHPC) processes applications from people living in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
3. NSW Offshore Humanitarian Processing Centre (OHPC) processes applications from people living in Africa.

Table 3 Average processing time, in days, for Skilled applications by overseas post

Office/Post	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012 (to 31 Oct)
Hong Kong	382	405	425	393
Pretoria	997			
Taipei	152	181	224	

From 2009/2010, Business Skills visa applications (in the Skill Stream) were only processed offshore in Taipei and Hong Kong. From February 2011, Hong Kong has been the only offshore post processing Business Skills visa applications (Skill Stream).



**Online take up rates,
2010-11 and 2011-12 (to end December 2011)
Permanent Visas**

