Australian Labour Market for Migrants

The Australian Labour Market for Migrants publication provides information on the Australian labour market. It is intended to inform recent migrants to Australia, people interested in working in Australia on a temporary or permanent basis, and organisations providing services to migrants and potential visa applicants.

The Australian labour market continues to perform well, although there are signs of further softening in labour market conditions. See the Jobs and Skills Australia website for recent labour market data and analysis.

Unless otherwise stated, data in this publication are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, May 2025.[1,2]

Employment

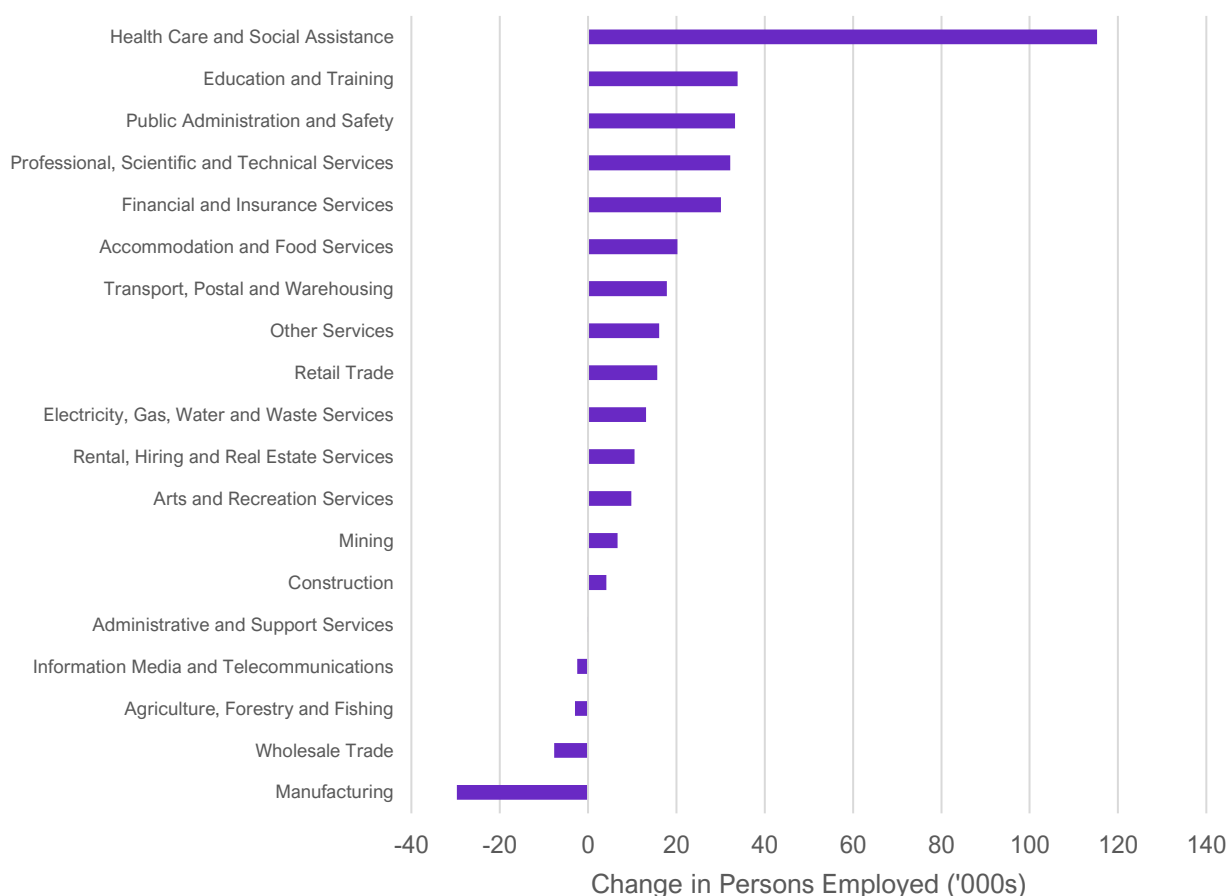Over the 12 months to May 2025, employment opportunities and growth varied widely across industries.

Figure 1 shows the largest increases in trend employment occurred in Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 115,200), Education and Training (up by 33,900) and Public Administration and Safety (up by 33,300). The largest decreases in employment occurred in Manufacturing (down by 29,700), Wholesale trade (down by 7,600) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (down by 3,000).

The strongest rates of employment growth were in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (up by 7.1%), Financial and Insurance Services (5.6%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (5.1%).

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[1] Statistics on employment by industry and occupation in this publication are based on data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia using ABS *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* data for May 2025, released 26 June 2025.

[2] The analysis in this publication uses the 2022 edition of Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), The timeframe for use of the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) for this publication will be determined by the release of official statistics using this new classification.

Figure 1: Employment growth by industry ('000s persons) – May 2024 to May 2025

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed,* May 2025 (Table 04: Employed persons by Industry division of main job (ANZSIC)), released 26 June 2025. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

Occupation by state/territory

Figure 2 shows that in May 2025 (trend data), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) had the highest share (60.0%) of employment in the selected occupation major groups (i.e. Managers, Professionals, and Technicians and Trade Workers), followed by Victoria (54.8%) and New South Wales (NSW, 54.6%).

In the 12 months to May 2025, the share of workers employed in these selected occupation groups increased in all states and territories except for Tasmania (down by 0.2pp).[3] The largest increases were in Queensland (up by 0.7pp) and NSW (up by 0.6pp) Increases were also estimated for South Australia (SA, up by 0.3pp), Western Australia (WA, up by 0.2pp) and the ACT (up by 0.2pp)

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[3] "pp" means percentage points.

Figure 2: Share of employment in selected occupation groups[#] by state/territory – May 2024 to May 2025

Selected occupation groups include ANZSCO Major Groups 1 to 3 (i.e. Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Trades Workers).

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* (Table EQ08: Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO, Sex, State and Territory), May 2025, released 26 June 2025. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.
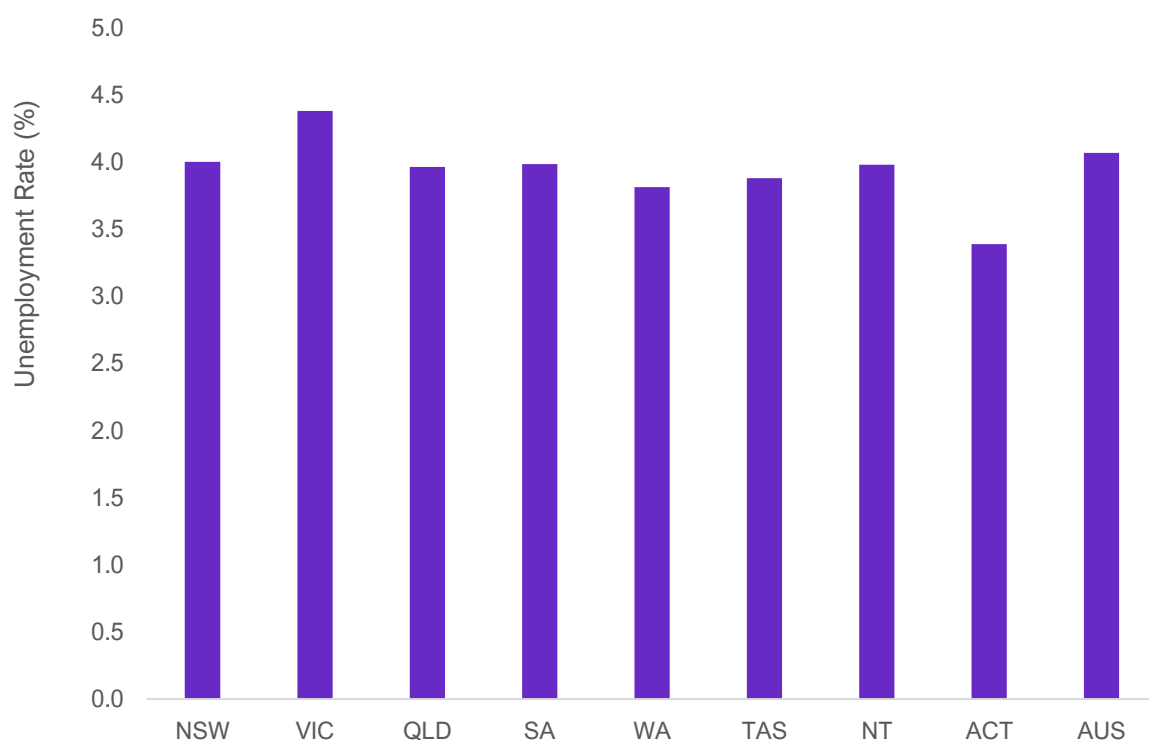
Unemployment

The trend unemployment rate in Australia was 4.1% in May 2025, up from 4.0% in May 2024.

Over the 12 months to May 2025, the unemployment rate decreased in the ACT (3.7% to 3.4%), Tasmania (4.1% to 3.9%) and NT (4.1% to 4.0%); while remaining unchanged at 3.8% in WA, 4.0% in SA and 4.4% in Victoria. The unemployment rate rose in NSW (3.9% to 4.0%).

Figure 3 shows that the ACT recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 3.4%, while Victoria recorded the highest rate at 4.4%.

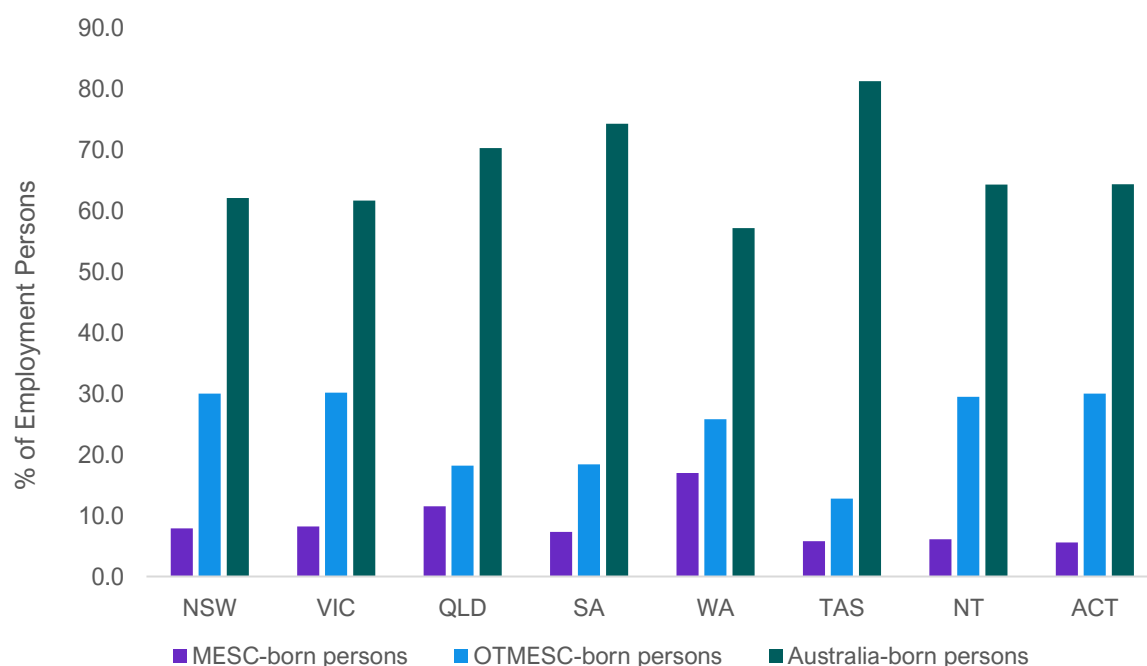**Figure 3: Unemployment rates (%) by state/territory – May 2025**

Source: ABS *Labour Force, Australia*, May 2025 (Table 12: Labour force status by Sex, State and Territory - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original), released 19 June 2025.

Migrant employment

Australian-born people represent the highest share of people employed in Tasmania (81.3%) and the lowest share in WA (57.2%). The share of employed people born in other than main English-speaking countries (OTMESC)[4] is highest in Victoria, NSW and the ACT (30.2%, 30.0% and 30.0% respectively). See Figure 4.

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[4] Main English-speaking countries (MESC) are the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand.

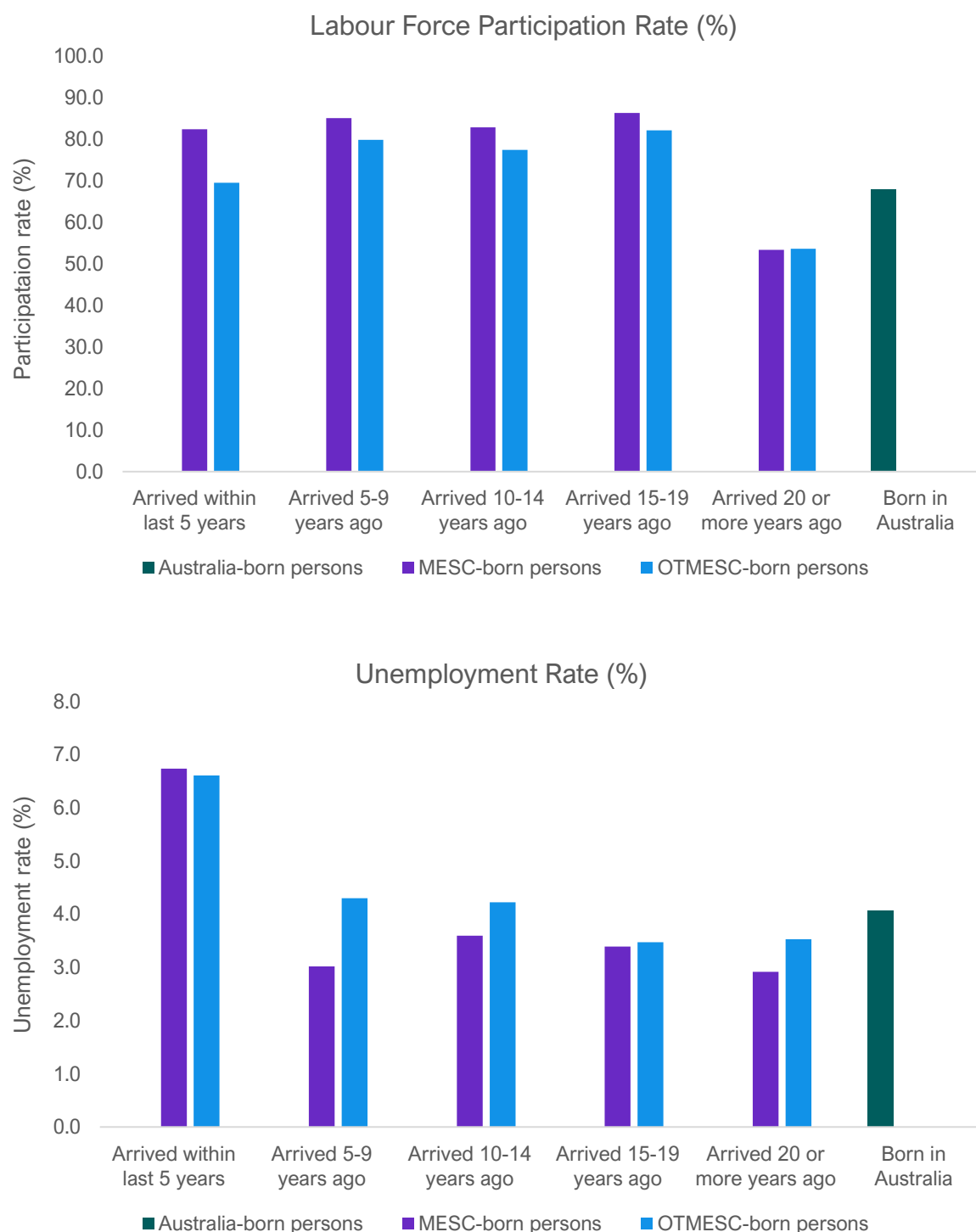**Figure 4: Share of employment by state/territory and place of birth – May 2025**

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, May 2025, (Table LM7: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory), released 26 June 2025.

Migrant unemployment

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Several factors influence migrant unemployment rates including skill level, age, English language proficiency, recent and relevant work experience and the period since arrival in Australia. Data consistently shows that recently arrived migrants have a higher unemployment rate on average than those who have lived in Australia for some years.

Figure 5 shows the participation and unemployment rates of the Australian-born and migrants by broad country of birth groups and period of residence in Australia (average of the last 12 months to May 2025).
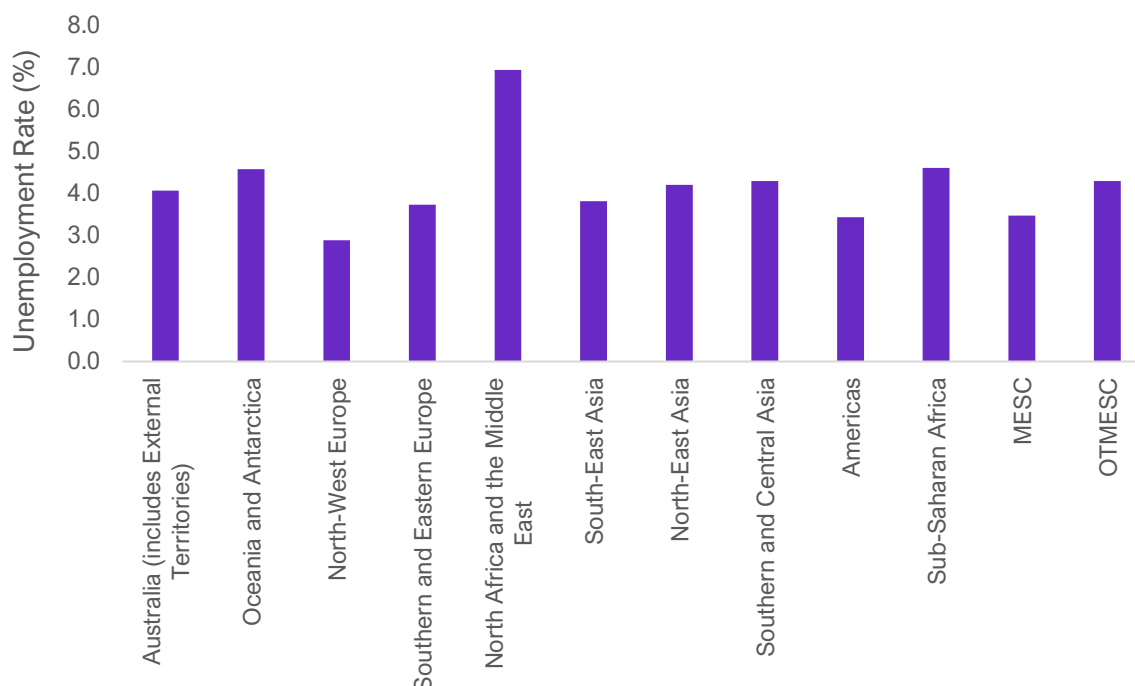
Figure 5: Labour force participation rate and unemployment rate, by years since arrival in Australia for broad country of birth groups – 12 months to May 2025 average

Labour Force Participation Rate (%)

Unemployment Rate (%)

Source: ABS *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, May 2025 (Table LM7: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory), released 26 June 2025.

Figure 6 shows average unemployment rates for the 12 months to May 2025 for people resident in Australia by their major birth country groups (by subcontinent). People born in the North West Europe had the lowest unemployment rate (2.9%), while the unemployment rate for people born in North Africa and the Middle East (6.9%) was relatively high (possibly reflecting English language proficiency and period of residence in Australia).

Figure 6: Unemployment rate by major birth country groups – 12 months to May 2025 average

Note: Australia (includes External Territories)' is within 'Oceania and Antarctica.

Source: ABS *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, May 2025, (Table LM5: Labour force status by age, major country group (subcontinent) of birth (SACC) and sex; and Table LM7: Labour force status by elapsed years since arrival, main English-speaking countries, sex, state and territory), released 26 June 2025.

Employment by occupation

Over the 12 months to May 2025, the largest increases in employment (trend data) occurred for Professionals (up by 147,900), Community and Personal Service Workers (up by 63,000) and Technicians and Trades Workers (up by 34,800). Declines in employment growth occurred for Machinery Operators and Drivers (down by 3,600), Clerical and Administrative Workers (down by 3,000) and Labourers (down by 2,200). Employment growth for the major occupation groups is shown in Table 1.

Additional information on occupational groups is provided in the following section on internet vacancy data.

Table 1: Trend employment growth by occupation – 12 months to May 2025

Occupational Group	1 Year Change ('000 persons)	1 Year Change (%)
Managers	23.0	1.3
Professionals	147.9	3.9
Technicians and Trades Workers	34.8	1.8
Community and Personal Service Workers	63.0	3.8
Clerical and Administrative Workers	-3.0	-0.2
Sales Workers	28.2	2.5
Machinery Operators and Drivers	-3.6	-0.4
Labourers	-2.2	-0.2

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* (Table EQ08: Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO, Sex, State and Territory), May 2025, released 26 June 2025. Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.
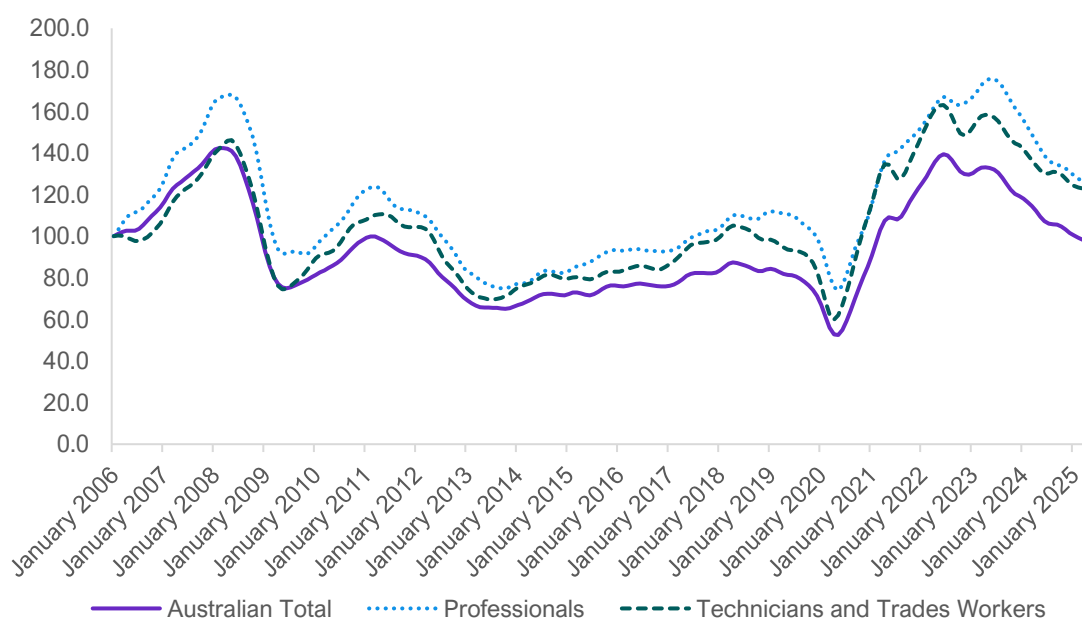
Internet Vacancy data[5]

Jobs and Skills Australia produces the monthly Vacancy Report which contains the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI). See Figure 7.

Over the year to May 2025, trend vacancies decreased for all occupation groups: Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 21.3%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (down by 10.6%), Professionals (down by 10.5%), Sales Workers (down by 9.8%), Managers (down by 9.5%), Technicians and Trades Workers (down by 5.8%), Labourers (down by 5.0%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (down by 2.7%).

At the more detailed occupation level, trend vacancies decreased in 44 of 48 occupation clusters over the year to May 2025. The largest decreases were for Hospitality Workers (down by 52.5%), Food Preparation Assistants (down by 30.7%) and Engineers (down by 18.6%). The largest increases were for Construction Trades Workers (up by 4.9%) and Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers (up by 3.8%).

Over the year to May 2025, trend vacancies fell in all states and territories, decreasing in the ACT (down by 24.9%), Tasmania (down by 22.0%), Victoria (down by 16.6%), WA (down by 9.2%), NSW (down by 8.6%), NT (down by 8.0%), Queensland (down by 5.2%) and SA (down by 1.1%). For a full list of occupations and their recent growth in vacancies, see the Vacancy Report and supporting datafiles.

Figure 7: Internet Vacancy Index – January 2006 to May 2025

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[5] See Jobs and Skills Australia, _Internet Vacancy Index_ (June 2025, released 16 July 2025). The IVI is based on a count of online job advertisements newly lodged on SEEK, CareerOne and Workforce Australia during the month. Duplicate advertisements are removed before IVI vacancies are coded by Jobs and Skills Australia to occupations based on ANZSCO. The data are seasonally adjusted and trended, then indexed (January 2006=100).

Hot Topic: Temporary skilled migration for regulated occupations in persistent shortage in Australia[6]

This Hot Topic provides an overview of employer-sponsored temporary skilled migration for regulated occupations in persistent shortage in the Australian labour market.[7] The visa data in this Hot Topic is mainly for the Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visa (subclass 482).[8,9]

The Government's Migration Strategy noted the pathways to recognise overseas qualifications was a barrier to the participation of some skilled migrants.[10] An area for future reference outlined in the Strategy is to reduce the complexity in skills assessment processes. This analysis which covers the 5 years period 2019-20 to 2023-24, presents information on the main source countries for regulated occupations in persistent shortage where approved Australian businesses make significant use of the TSS visa program.

Regulated occupations in persistent shortage

For the purpose of this Hot Topic, occupations with persistent shortages were occupations on the 2024 Occupation Shortage List that were also in shortage in at least two of the three Skills Priority Lists between 2021 and 2023.[11] A total of 248 occupations were in persistent shortage between 2021 and 2024. Several regulated occupations and ANZSCO occupation Unit Groups in scope had significant primary TSS visa grant numbers for nationals of specific countries. These were Resident Medical Officers (ANZSCO 253112), the Registered Nurse (ANZSCO 2544) Unit Group, several occupations related to the Construction industry and several professional Engineering occupations.

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[6] The analysis in this Hot Topic does not represent the view of the data custodians (i.e. the Department of Home Affairs). The authors are responsible for any errors or omissions.

[7] Regulated occupations are those where registration or licensing for individual workers is specified, administered and enforced in Australia under federal, state or territory laws. These laws are non-discriminatory and apply to all workers in an occupation regardless of their residency status

[8] Visa data refers to primary visas only (i.e. excluding visas granted to members of the family unit of overseas workers). As this Hot Topic analyses data prior to the implementation of the Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) in December 2024, it will refer to the subclass 482 visa as the TSS visa. There may be a small number of Temporary Work Skilled (subclass 457) visas.

[9] The analysis in this Hot Topic uses the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), with information on the ANZSCO classification structure (including definition of Unit Group) at Classification structure | Australian Bureau of Statistics.

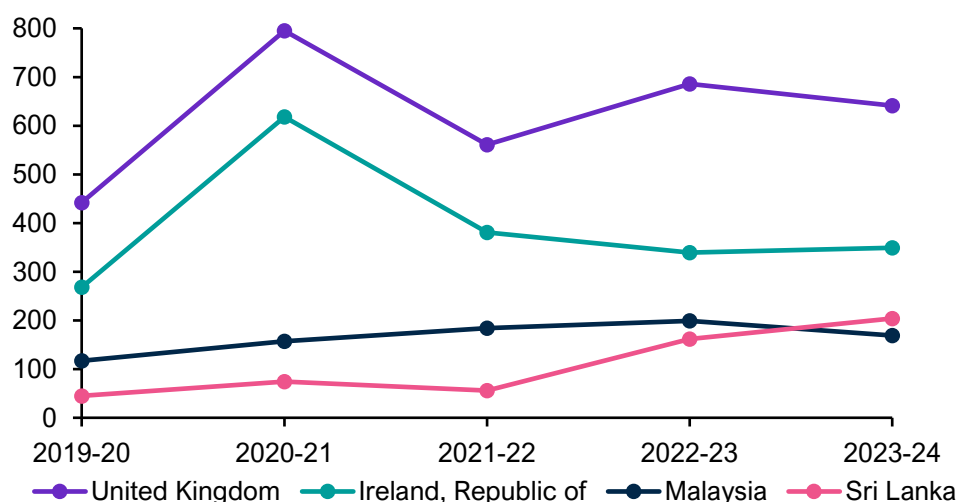[10] For more information see: Migration Strategy.

[11] For more information see: Occupation Shortage List | Jobs and Skills Australia

Resident Medical Officer (ANZSCO 253112)

Figure A shows the United Kingdom (UK) was the main source country for Resident Medical Officers (ANZSCO 253112) under the TSS visa program between 2019-20 and 2023-24. This was followed by Ireland, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. In 2023-24, Sri Lanka overtook Malaysia as the third main source country.

Figure A: Main source countries for Resident Medical Officers under the TSS (Subclass 482) visa, 2019-20 to 2023-24 financial years
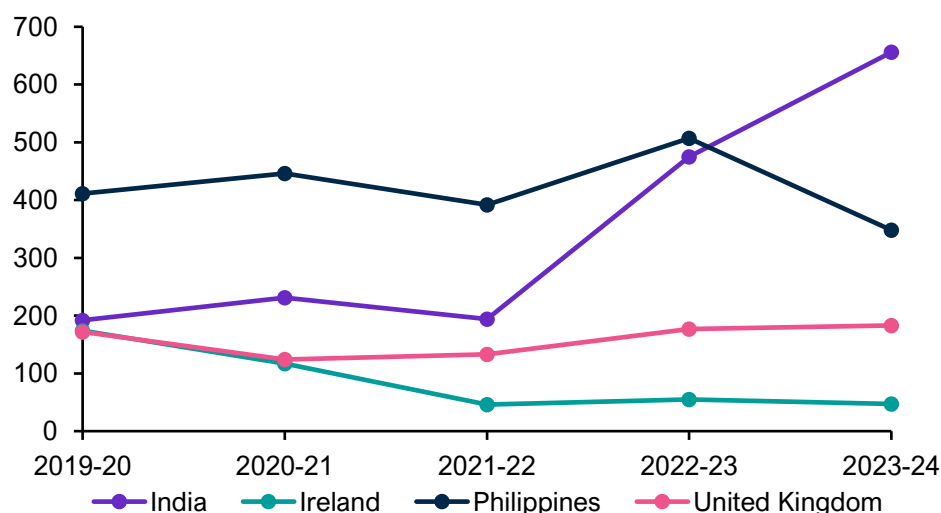

Source: Department of Home Affairs Temporary Work (skilled) visa program Table BP0014. Retrieved 11 December 2024
Temporary Work (skilled) visa program | Datasets | data.gov.au - beta

Registered Nurses (ANZSCO Occupation Unit Group 2544)

Figure B shows the Philippines was the main source country for Registered Nurses under the TSS visa program until it was overtaken by India in 2023-24. While the UK and Ireland were the other main source countries, visa numbers for Ireland declined over the last 2 financial years. For most source countries, Aged Care (254412), Critical Care and Emergency (254415) and Medical (254418) Registered Nurses were the occupations in the Unit Group with the most primary TSS visa grants. The UK also contributed a large number of Mental Health (254422) Registered Nurses while the Philippines contributed a large number of Perioperative (254423) Registered Nurses.

Figure B: Main source countries for Registered Nurses ANZSCO Unit Group 2544 under the TSS (Subclass 482 visa), 2019-20 and 2023-24 financial years

Source: Department of Home Affairs Temporary Work (skilled) visa program Table BP0014. Retrieved 11 December 2024
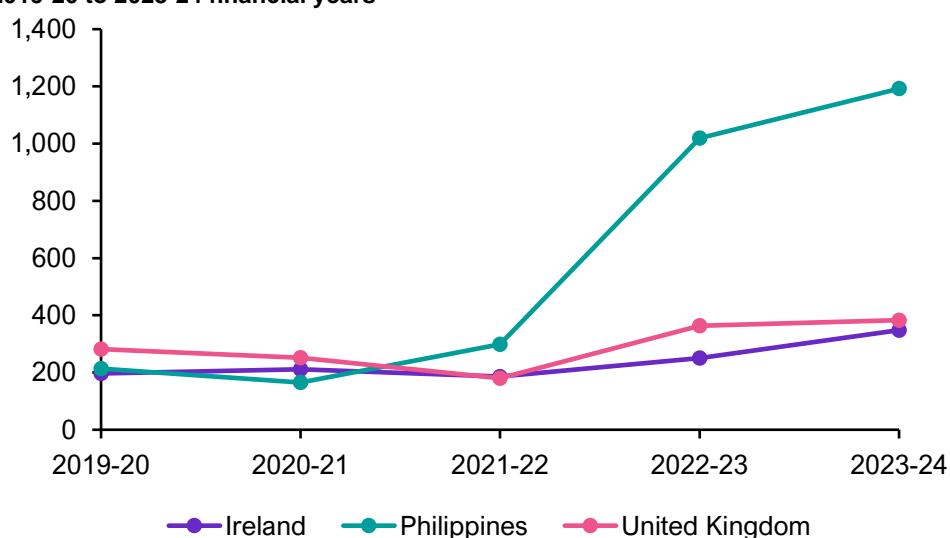Temporary Work (skilled) visa program | Datasets | data.gov.au - beta

Construction Occupations

For the purpose of this Hot Topic, Construction related occupations were analysed as one group. This allowed for analysis, including for source countries, that would not have been possible at the occupation level given low visa grant numbers.[12]

Figure C shows the main source countries for Construction occupations under the TSS visa program were the UK, Ireland and the Philippines. The UK was overtaken as the main source country for Construction occupations in 2021-2022 by the Philippines.

In 2022-23, the number of visa grants for the Philippines increased significantly to surpass 1,000 and this trend continued in 2023-24. This was mainly driven by an increase in Glaziers (333111), Painting Trades Workers (332211) and Welders First Class (322313). For this period, the UK contributed mostly Construction Project Managers (133111) and Carpenters (331212). Ireland contributed mostly Carpenters (331212) and Drainers (334113).

Figure C: Main source countries for Construction related occupations under the TSS (Subclass 482) visa, 2019-20 to 2023-24 financial years

Source: Department of Home Affairs Temporary Work (skilled) visa program Table BP0014. Retrieved 11 December 2024
Temporary Work (skilled) visa program | Datasets | data.gov.au - beta

Engineering Occupations

For the purpose of this Hot Topic, professional Engineering occupations were classified as one group to combine small visa grants numbers of main source countries.[13] Figure D shows the main source country for Engineering occupations under the TSS visa program was India which overtook the UK in 2020-21. China[14] was the third main source country until 2022-23 when it was overtaken by the Philippines and South Africa. Visa grants for main source countries peaked in 2022-23.
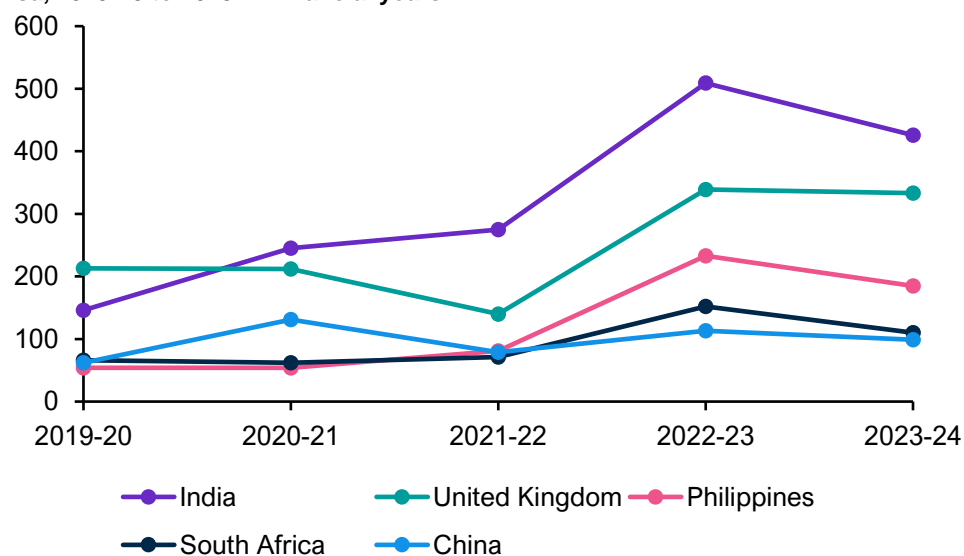
The UK contributed mostly Civil Engineers (233211) and Quantity Surveyors (233213). India contributed the most Mechanical Engineers (233512) and Electrical Engineers (233311). The Philippines and South Africa contributed mostly Civil Engineers (233211), and China contributed Electrical Engineers (233311).

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[12] The occupations in scope of this analysis were: Bricklayer (331111), Carpenter (331212), Painting Trades Worker (332211), Wall and Floor Tiler (333411), Drainer (334113), (Special Class) (341112), Floor Finisher (332111), Stonemason (331112), Glazier (333111), Pressure Welder (322312), Project Builder (133112), Building Inspector (312113), Construction Estimator (312114), Carpenters and Joiners (3312), Joiners (331213), Welders First Class (322313) and Roof Tilers (333311).
[13] The occupations in scope of this analysis were: Engineering Manager (133211), Chemical Engineer (233111), Civil Engineer (233211), Geotechnical Engineer (233212), Quantity Surveyor (233213), Structural Engineer (233214), Transport Engineer (233215), Electrical Engineer (233311), Electronics Engineer (233411), Mechanical Engineer (233512), Production or Plant Engineer (233513), Mining Engineer (excluding Petroleum) (233611), Petroleum Engineer (233612), Environmental Engineer (233915) and Engineering Professionals nec (233999).
[14] For this Hot Topic, China is the People's Republic of China (excluding Special administrative regions of China).

Figure D: Main source countries for professional Engineering occupations under the TSS (Subclass 482) visa, 2019-20 to 2023-24 financial years

Source: Department of Home Affairs Temporary Work (skilled) visa program Table BP0014. Retrieved 11 December 2024
Temporary Work (skilled) visa program | Datasets | data.gov.au - beta

Further information

Queries on the Australian Labour Market for Migrants publication, including requests for inclusion on the distribution list and copies of Hot Topics attached to previous editions, should be emailed to migration@jobsandskills.gov.au.