

Population and Immigration: Fact Sheet 2

2020-21 Permanent Migration

November 2020

The October 2020 budget set the 2020-21 Migration Program ceiling at 160,000 places – the same as in 2019-20, but 30,000 fewer than the previous eight years.

There are two main streams in the Migration Program: Skill and Family.

The **Skill Stream** ceiling is 79,600 (50.7% of the Migration Program) for 2020-21, down from 128,550 (68%) in 2018-19 and 108,682 (69.5%) in 2019-20. Within the Skill Stream, migrants sponsored by employers and state governments form the largest component. In 2020-21, the Global Talent (Independent) and Business Innovation and Investment Program cohorts have also been prioritised, tripling to 15,000 and 13,500 places, respectively.

The **Family Stream** ceiling is 77,300 (49.2% of the Migration Program) for 2020-21, up from 57,400 (37%) in 2018-19 and 47,732 (30.5%) in 2019-20. The major component of the Family Stream comprises partners of Australian residents.

These figures do not include two additional components, the Humanitarian program and New Zealand citizens.

The **Humanitarian Program** ceiling in 2020-21 is 13,750 places – the same as in 2013-14 to 2016-17, but a drop from 18,750 places in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The entry of **New Zealand citizens** is uncapped. New Zealand citizens who enter on the basis of their citizenship can gain indefinite (but not permanent)

Australian residence, subject only to character and health requirements. On 30 June 2019, the number of New Zealand (Special Category 444) visa holders resident in Australia was 678,656, an increase of 5,460 since June 2018. New Zealand citizens who convert their status to permanent under a new visa category announced in February 2016 will be counted within the 160,000 ceiling.

The 2020-21 combined ceiling for the Migration and Humanitarian Programs is 173,750, but this target may not be met due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated international travel restrictions and constraints on the ability of applicants to meet visa requirements.

There is confusion in media and public discussion of immigration statistics as a result of failure to distinguish between: [a] the permanent program and various long-stay categories, such as student and business entrants, which are largely uncapped; [b] the target or ceiling on the permanent program and the net total; and, [c] change-of-status and new arrivals.

Each year there are a significant number of departures. In the year ending 31 December 2019, 322,900 people emigrated from Australia.

Many of those who gain permanent residence under the Migration Program, particularly in the Family Stream, are not new arrivals – they are already living in Australia on a temporary or long-term migration visa. In the year ended 30 June 2020, 64% of those granted permanency were living in Australia, up from 23% in 1997. This trend has now escalated.

Migration and Humanitarian program, planning levels 2013-2020

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 ceiling	2018-19 ceiling	2019-20 ceiling	2020-21 ceiling
Family	61,112	61,085	57,400	57,400	57,400	57,400	47,732	77,300
Skill	128,550	127,774	128,550	128,550	128,550	128,550	108,682	79,600
Total Migration Program	190,000*	190,000*	190,000*	190,000*	190,000*	190,000*	160,000*	160,000*
Humanitarian Program – visa grants	13,768	13,756	17,555	13,750	16,250	18,750	18,750	13,750
Total – Migration Program and Humanitarian Program	203,768	202,853	207,325	203,750	206,250	208,750	178,750	173,750

Source: Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library, [Budget Review 2020-21](#), Immigration; Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Migration Program Report; Offshore Humanitarian Programme. *Total includes special eligibility places.