
**The Significance of Host Country Language Ability
to Skilled Migration Outcomes: Australia**

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Employment Barriers for Overseas-Qualified Migrants: Australian Research Evidence

1. **English/ effective communication skills** in a 'lean' workforce without 'backroom' jobs
2. **Credential recognition**
3. **Technological 'fit'** (eg engineering, medicine, nursing)
4. **Ancillary professional knowledge:**
 - Management style
 - Industrial relations/union issues
 - Occupational health and safety
 - Duty of care (etc)
5. **Interview style** (type and location of information)
6. **Supply and demand** in the Australian workforce ('niche' economies)

Source: *Labour Market Barriers for Immigrant Engineers in Australia*, L Hawthorne, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994

Case Studies in the Importance of English

Medicine and Nursing (Hawthorne & Toth 1996):

- The Occupational English Test prevents or significantly delays 42.6% of NESB medical candidates from proceeding to pre-registration
- Doctor failure rate: 22%, Nurse failure rate: 53%
- Compared to pre-registration exams or courses
- Case study: Hawthorne et al 2006 OTD study for the Department of Health and Ageing

Engineering (Hawthorne 1994, 2006, Birrell & Hawthorne 1997, 1999)

IT (Kinnaird 2005, 2006)

Relevance of English Language Ability: Employer Versus Government Selection of Skilled Workers (Australia and Canada 2006)

Australia: Top 4 Groups Employer-Nominated	Canada Foreign Worker Program: Top 4 Groups Employer-Nominated
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UK/Ireland (35%) 2. India (10%) 3. US (7%) 4. South Africa and Japan (5%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. USA (14%) 2. UK/Ireland (4%) 3. Australia (2%) 4. Philippines (2%)
Australia (Permanent Migration): Top 4 Skill Migrant Groups (2003-04)	Canada (Permanent Migration): Top 4 Skill Migrant Groups (2001-03)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UK/Ireland (22%) 2. India (13%) 3. China (9%) 4. South Africa (6%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China (22%) 2. India (12%) 3. Pakistan (6%) 4. Philippines (5%)

Source: *Labour Market Outcomes for Migrant Professionals: Canada and Australia Compared*, L Hawthorne, Statistics Canada, Ottawa (forthcoming)

Skilled Migration Selection Changes in Australia: 1999-2005

Abandonment of human capital model of selection:

1. **Mandatory pre-migration English language testing for all Principal Applicants:**

- Independently validated

2. **Mandatory pre-migration qualifications screening:**

- By relevant professional or trade regulatory body, where these have the power to control access to employment

3. **'Select for success' among potential applicants:**

- Privileging of former students (now over 50% of all skill migration applicants): young, recognised qualifications, competent English ability
- Trained to employer requirements

4. **Factor labour demand into field-specific selection:**

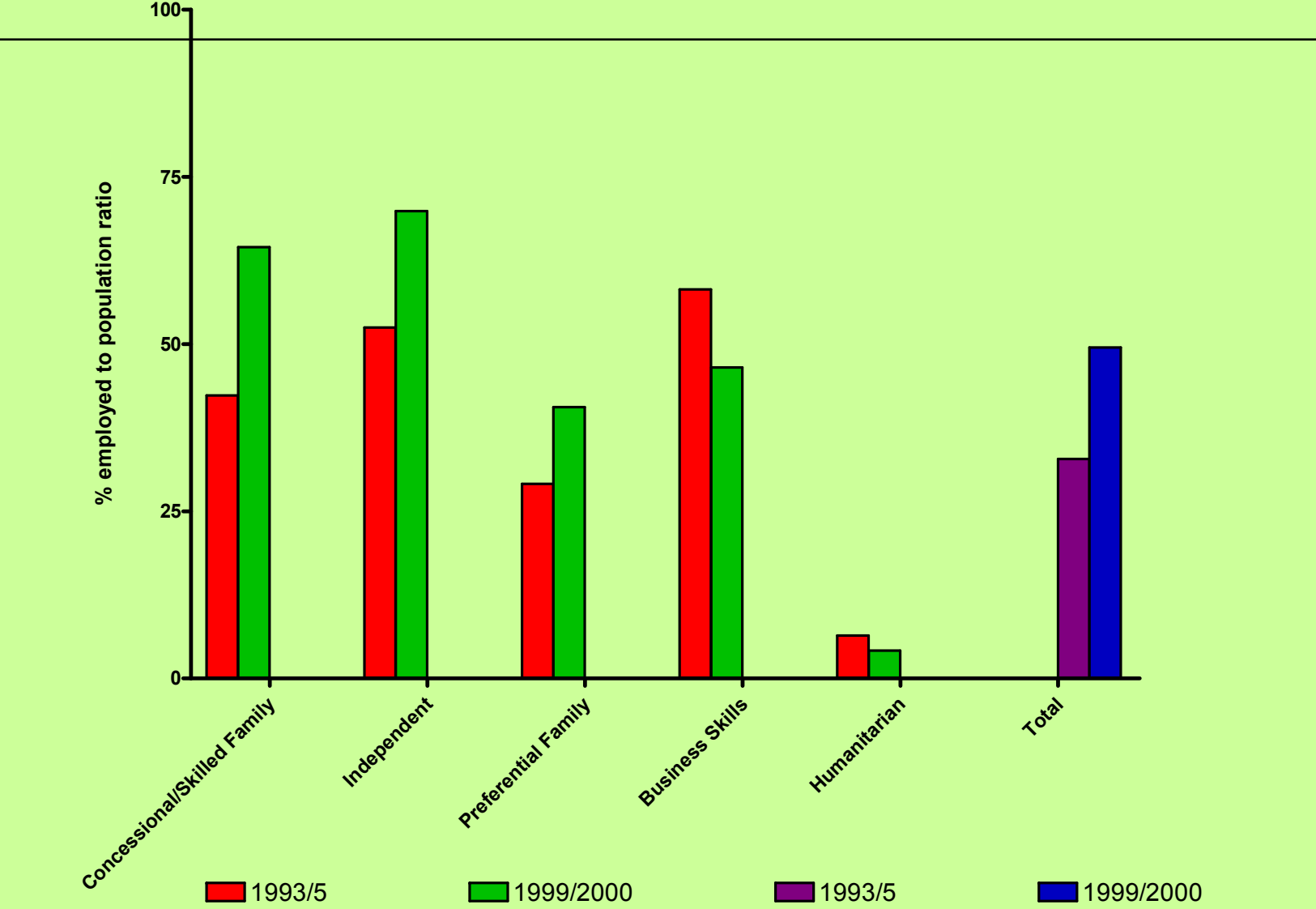
- Return of 'occupations in demand'; bonus points for job offer, local experience etc

Pre-Migration English Language Screening

Principles:

- IELTS or specialist assessment (Occupational English Test x 13 health professions)
- User-pays
- Global monthly administration (British Council)
- Current 'integrity' measures (China)

Employment by Migration Category 6 Months Post-Arrival (Longitudinal Data): Mid 1990s Versus 2000



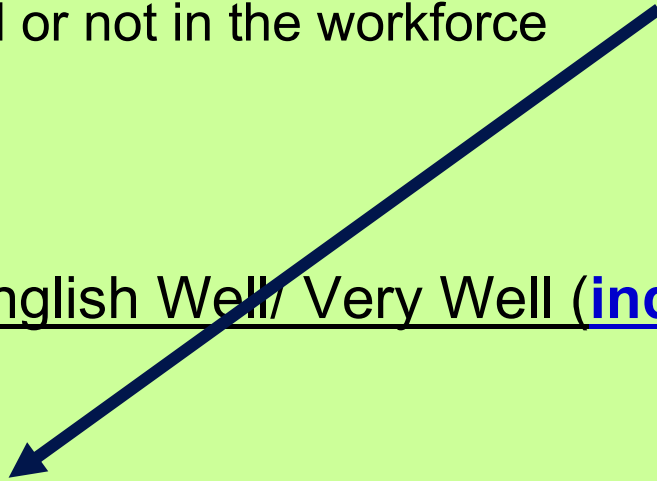
The Impact of Externally Validated English Ability on the Employment of Skilled Migrants (2000)

1993-95 Speaks English Well/ Very Well (**self-assessed**):

- **45%** employed
- 56% unemployed or not in the workforce

1999-2000 Speaks English Well/ Very Well (**independently assessed**):

- **73%** employed
- 27% unemployed or not in the workforce




Proportion of Skilled Migrants Employed 6 Months Post-Arrival in Australia (1993-5 Compared to 1999/2000) by Select Origin

Birthplace of Skill Principal Applicants	Employment Within 6 Months (1993-95 Arrivals)	Employment Within 6 Months (1999-2000 Arrivals)
UK/Ireland	85%	86%
South Africa	76%	89%
North West Europe	73%	83%
Philippines	57%	76%
India	56%	73%
HK/Malaysia/Singapore	53%	68%
China	45%	61%
M East/ N Africa	42%	72%
N, SE & C Asia	40%	77%
Eastern Europe	31%	79%

Source: *Labour Market Outcomes for Migrant Professionals: Canada and Australia Compared*, L Hawthorne, Statistics Canada, Ottawa (forthcoming)

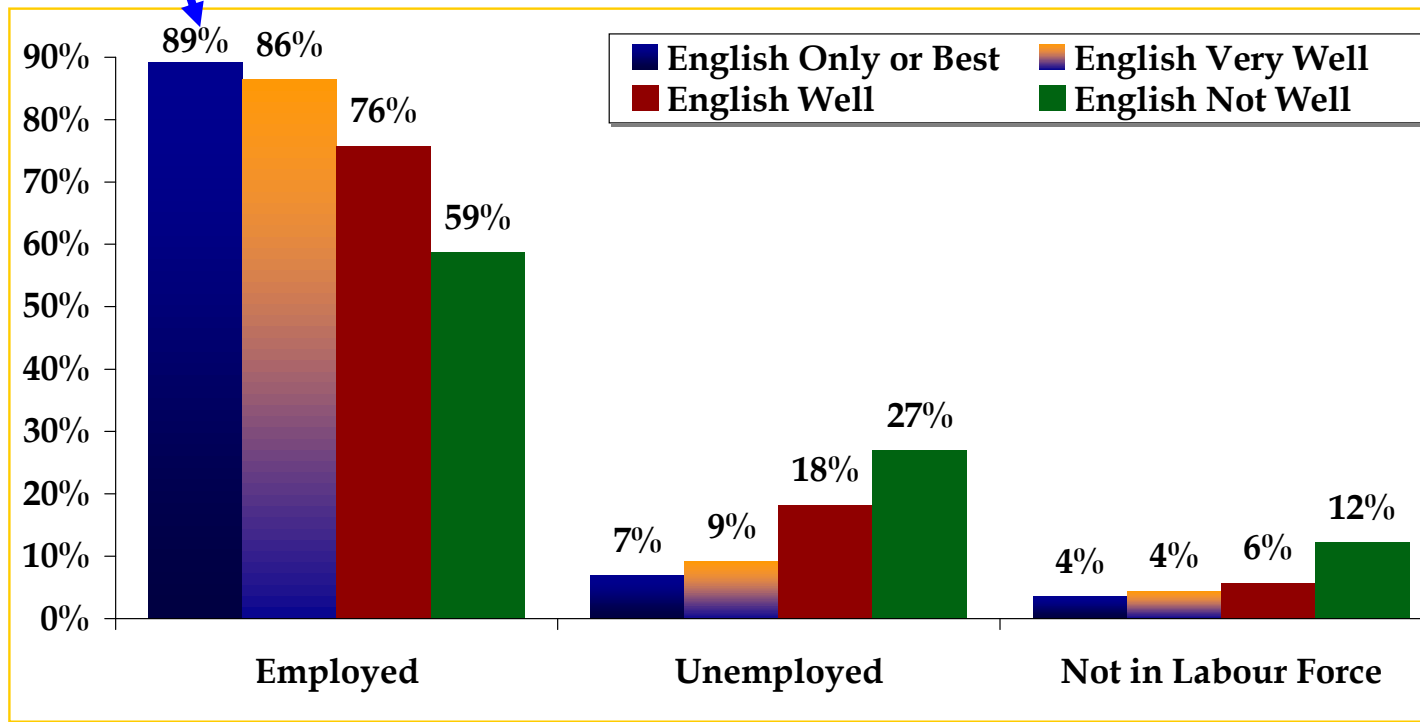
The Aim of Australia's 2005-06 Skilled Migration Review



	Own Profession	Other Profession	Admin/Management	Sub-Profession	Other	Unemployed	NILF	Not Stated	Number
South Africa	23.6%	19.2%	14.0%	10.2%	14.3%	4.4%	13.5%	0.9%	9097
UK/Ireland	22.2%	22.5%	12.9%	9.2%	15.9%	4.0%	12.5%	0.8%	26595
New Zealand	19.2%	17.7%	11.3%	10.8%	25.6%	4.7%	9.9%	0.9%	14957
USA/Canada	14.4%	21.2%	14.2%	8.2%	12.7%	4.4%	23.7%	1.2%	8565
India	12.9%	12.3%	3.6%	5.6%	31.7%	10.8%	21.4%	1.6%	14626
Philippines	9.3%	5.8%	1.7%	5.7%	42.5%	7.9%	26.0%	1.2%	6566
China (exc. Taiwan)	9.2%	8.7%	3.3%	5.1%	24.3%	10.0%	38.0%	1.2%	14039
Malaysia/HK/Singapore	9.2%	8.0%	3.1%	3.9%	11.7%	7.7%	55.8%	0.6%	13011
Lebanon	8.7%	7.7%	2.6%	7.2%	25.7%	9.6%	36.7%	2.0%	586
Viet Nam	5.9%	7.2%	0.6%	4.6%	25.8%	13.5%	41.6%	0.8%	1552
Iraq	5.7%	3.7%	0.3%	2.4%	18.6%	26.4%	42.4%	0.5%	1904
Indonesia	4.7%	4.2%	2.2%	3.4%	26.8%	11.4%	46.5%	0.8%	7198
Taiwan	3.8%	6.9%	4.3%	2.9%	12.1%	7.0%	62.2%	0.8%	2229
Other	10.1%	10.1%	4.7%	5.4%	25.4%	9.2%	33.7%	1.5%	56921
Average	11.4%	11.1%	5.6%	6.0%	22.4%	9.4%	33.1%	1.1%	

Impact of English Ability on Employment Outcomes 6 Months Post-Arrival (October 2005)

Labour Force Status at 6 months of Skilled PA's by English Proficiency



Language Issue 1: Employer Expectations Versus Current Policy

Policy to 2006:

- IELTS 5 = 15 points
- IELTS 6.0 = 20 points

1. Health professionals

- IELTS 7.0 the minimum

2. Engineering professionals

- IELTS 6.0 required (lower = poor job interview performance; high level of error in written reports; minimal capacity to describe simple processes)

3. IT professionals

- Poor communication skills now unacceptable; pressure for IELTS 7.0

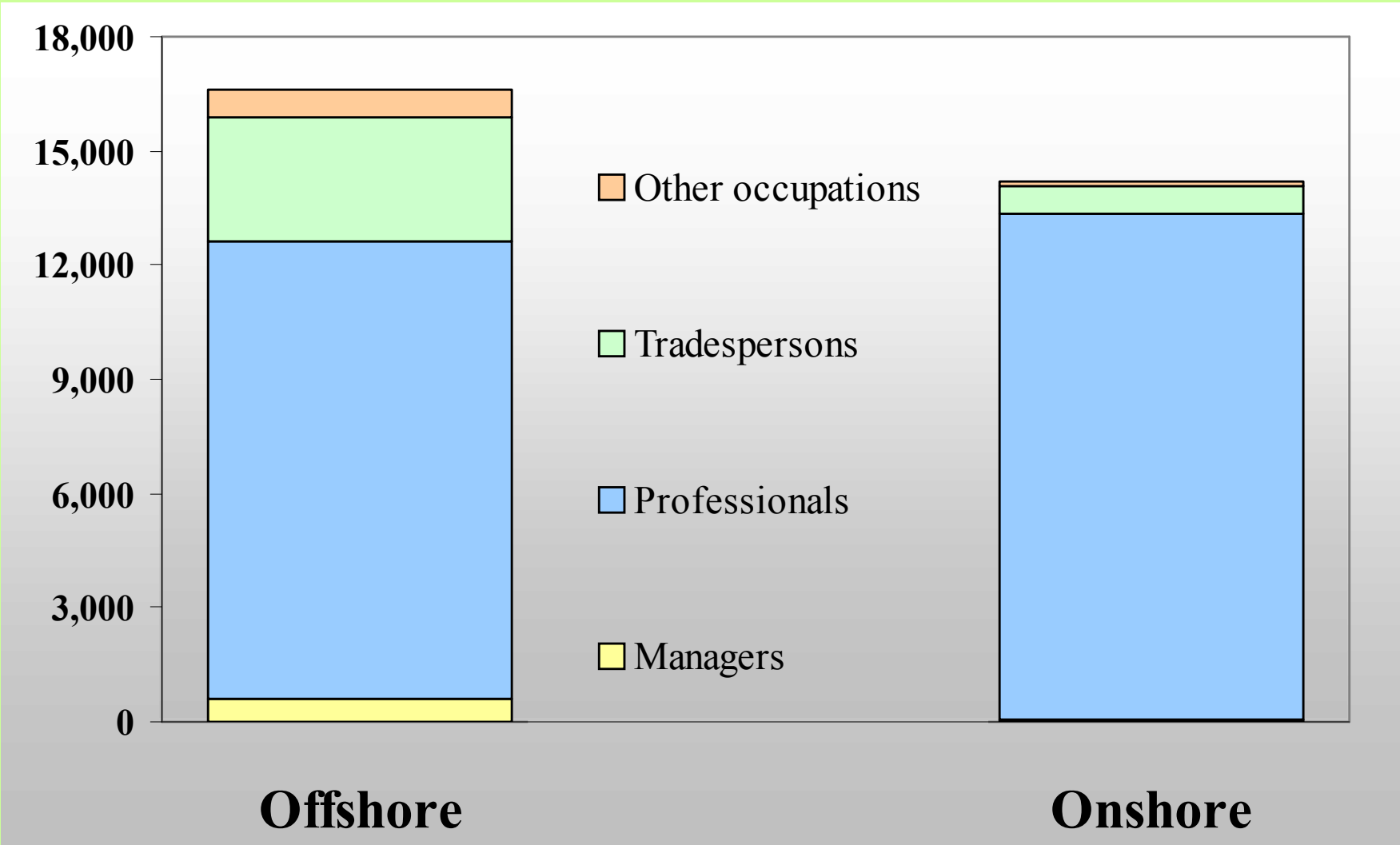
→ **Potential solutions:** Level, exemptions, timing of testing

Current Migration Occupations in Demand List (2006)

Year	Professions	Trades and Vocational Occupations
1999 (June)	IT, Accountancy, Physiotherapist, Registered Nurse, Sonographer	Boilermaker, Machinist, Pastry Cook, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Mechanic, Welder
2002 (Oct)	IT, Accountant, Hospital Pharmacist, Retail Pharmacist, Physiotherapist, Registered Nurse, Midwife, Mental Health Nurse, Radiographer, Sonographer, Radiation Therapist	Hairdresser, Chef, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Mechanic
2005 (Nov)	Accountant Engineers: Civil, Mining, Petroleum, Chemical Health: General Practitioner, Anaesthetist, Dermatologist, O&G, Ophthalmologist, Emergency, Paediatrician, Pathologist, Psychiatrist, Specialist Physician, Radiologist, Surgeon, Registered Nurse, Midwife, Mental Health Nurse, Dentist, Dental Specialist, Hospital Pharmacist, Retail Pharmacist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Speech Therapist, Podiatrist, Radiographer, radiation Therapist, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Sonographer	Chefs, Fitter, Metal Machinist, Toolmaker, metal Fabricator, Welder, Sheetmetal Worker, Motor Mechanic, Automotive Electrician, Panel Beater, Vehicle Painter, General Electrician, Electrician, Refrigeration & Airconditioning Mechanic, Electrical Powerline Tradesperson, General Electronic Instrument Tradesperson, Electronic Equipment Tradesperson, Carpenter & Joiner, Fibrous Plasterer, Bricklayer, Solid Plasterer, General Plumber, Pastrycook, Cook, Cabinetmaker, Hairdresser, Furniture Upholsterer

Source: Adapted by L Hawthorne from tables prepared by Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2005)

Language Issue 2: International Students as a Source of Skilled Migrants (2005)



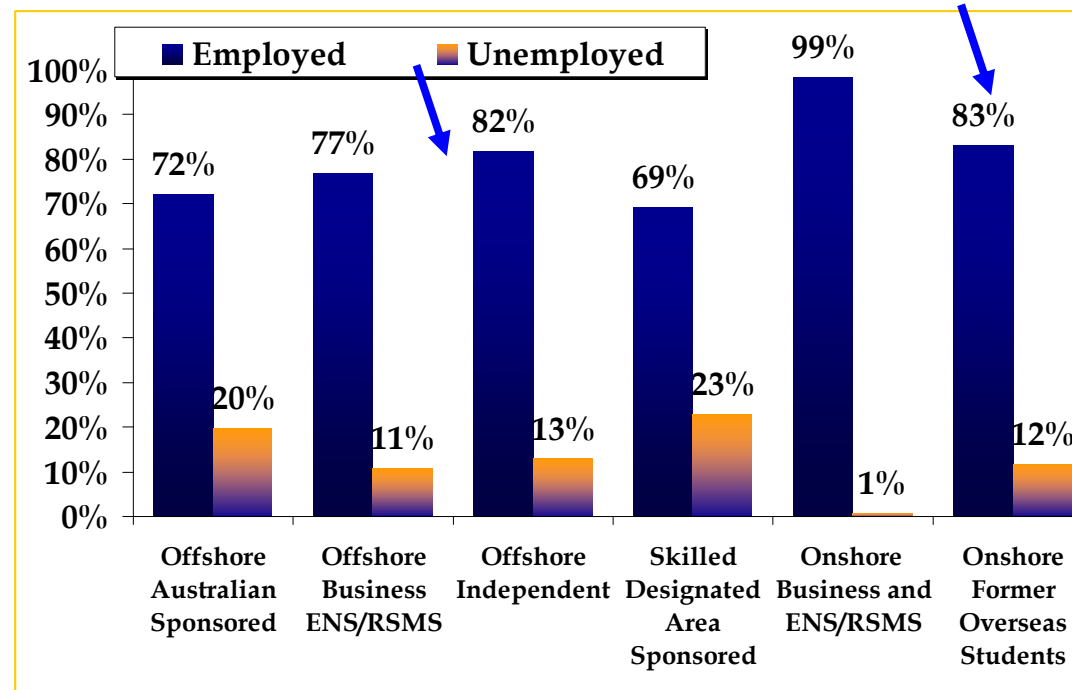
International Student Enrolments in Australia by Major Source (July 2005)

International Student Source Country (All Australian education sectors)	Total Enrolments	Growth 2004- 05
China	71,747	18.9%
India	24,462	29.8%
South Korea	21,990	8.0%
Hong Kong	19,199	-7.2%
Malaysia	18,749	-3.4%
Japan	16,232	-3.0%
Indonesia	14,728	-11.1%
Thailand	13,877	-1.0%
Singapore	9,703	-8.7%
USA	11,291	-1.9%
Other	82,057	5.8%
Total	304,035	6.1%

Source: Adapted by L Hawthorne from Australian Education International data, 14 September 2005

Employment Outcomes for Skilled Migrants (6 Months), October 2005 Data

Employed/Unemployed Skilled PA's
by Visa Category at 6 months :% of visacat, C3



IELTS Scores of Ex-International Students Tested on Course Completion (2004-05) by Country of Origin

Select Source Country	ESL Points: 0	ESL Points: 15 (IELTS 5)	ESL Points: 20 (IELTS 6)	Total Number Tested
China	0%	43%	56%	2,655
India	0%	5%	94%	2,433
Indonesia	0%	16%	84%	1,408
Malaysia	0%	16%	84%	1,113
Hong Kong	1%	17%	83%	863
Korea	0%	23%	76%	474
Singapore	0%	10%	90%	440
Bangladesh	0%	23%	77%	436
Sri Lanka	0%	10%	90%	360
Japan	0%	18%	82%	248
Taiwan	0%	24%	76%	231
Pakistan	1%	9%	90%	224
Thailand	2%	29%	70%	200
Vietnam	0%	36%	64%	200

Source: Adapted by L Hawthorne from table prepared by V Rapson based on DIMIA data (unpublished)

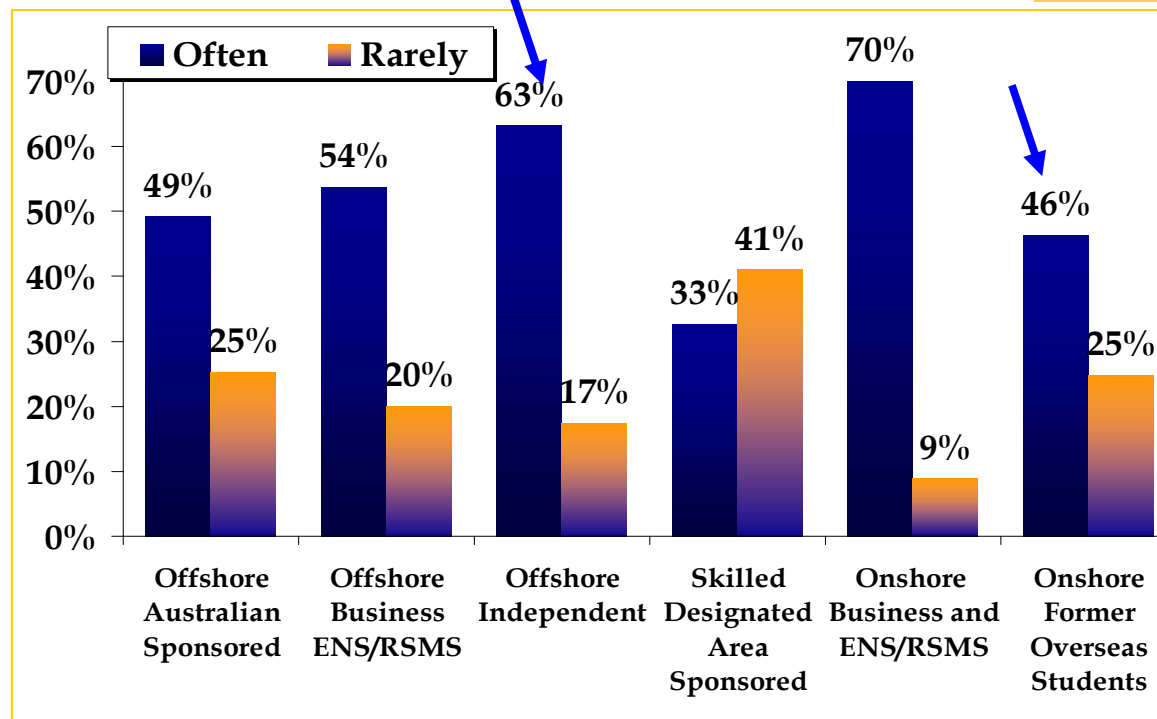
Language Issue 3: 'Packaged Visas' for On-Shore Applicants for Skilled Migration

Top 10 Off-Shore	No. Cases	%	Top 10 On-Shore	No. Cases	%
UK	5816	27%	China	2486	21%
India	3987	18%	Indonesia	1217	10%
China	1852	9%	India	1158	10%
Philippines	929	4%	Malaysia	1077	9%
Malaysia	870	4%	Hong Kong	1015	9%
Singapore	793	4%	Korea	459	4%
South Africa	696	3%	Singapore	449	4%
Sri Lanka	638	3%	Bangladesh	413	3%
Pakistan	431	2%	Sri Lanka	390	3%
Hong Kong	424	2%	Taiwan	277	2%

Language Issue 4: Impact of Lower English and Less Experience on Professional Employment (2005)

How Often Skilled PA's use Qualification in Job by Visa Category

% of visacat, excluding 'sometimes', C3 at 6 months



Key Policy Outcomes in Relation to English (Birrell, Hawthorne & Richardson 2006)

English standards:

- Key determinant of employment outcomes
- Growing concern re institutional practices (entry, packaged visas, and academic progression)
- Removal of most test exemptions pre transition from IS to skill migration
- IELTS 6.0 = baseline (15 points, all 4 components)
- IELTS 7.0 = increased bonus points (25 points, minimum 6 on any one test)
- Potential for 2 year TR post-study to secure additional points (English, vocational experience etc)
- **English as the key determinant of acceptance:** *The allocation of these extra points (IELTS 7.0) will mean that most applicants who can achieve this standard will be granted a permanent visa...*