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Over 1.6 million temporary visa holders in Australia on Census night

Media Release

Released 28/04/2023

Source: [Temporary visa holders in Australia, 2021](#)
[Cultural diversity: Census, 2021](#)

There were 1,639,000 temporary visa holders in Australia in August 2021, made up of 1,614,000 temporary residents and 25,000 overseas visitors, according to data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Jenny Dobak, ABS head of migrant statistics, said today's release offers a unique insight into temporary residents in Australia on Census night 2021. Temporary residents include people residing in Australia for at least 12 months on temporary skilled, student, working holiday and Special Category (New Zealand citizen) visas.

"Today's data highlights the characteristics of temporary residents in Australia, with results showing that 92 per cent of people were proficient in English," Ms Dobak said.

"Almost two in five temporary residents, or around 39 per cent, held a bachelor's degree or higher, with around half of students and just under two-thirds of temporary skilled visa holders holding at least a bachelor's degree."

The new data also offers insights into employment, with Carers and Aides (7 per cent) the most common occupation for employed temporary residents. ICT Professionals (12 per cent) was the most common for people who held a temporary skilled visa.

Top 10 occupations(a) of employed temporary residents

Occupation	Persons	Proportion (%)(b)
1 Carers and Aides	66,000	6.8
2 Road and Rail Drivers	53,100	5.5
3 Cleaners and Laundry Workers	52,500	5.4
4 Sales Assistants and Salespersons	47,600	4.9
5 Food Trades Workers	47,400	4.9
6 Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	45,600	4.7
7 Specialist Managers	40,000	4.1
8 Hospitality Workers	38,200	3.9
9 Factory Process Workers	38,000	3.9
10 Health Professionals	34,900	3.6

a. Top 10 by number of persons.

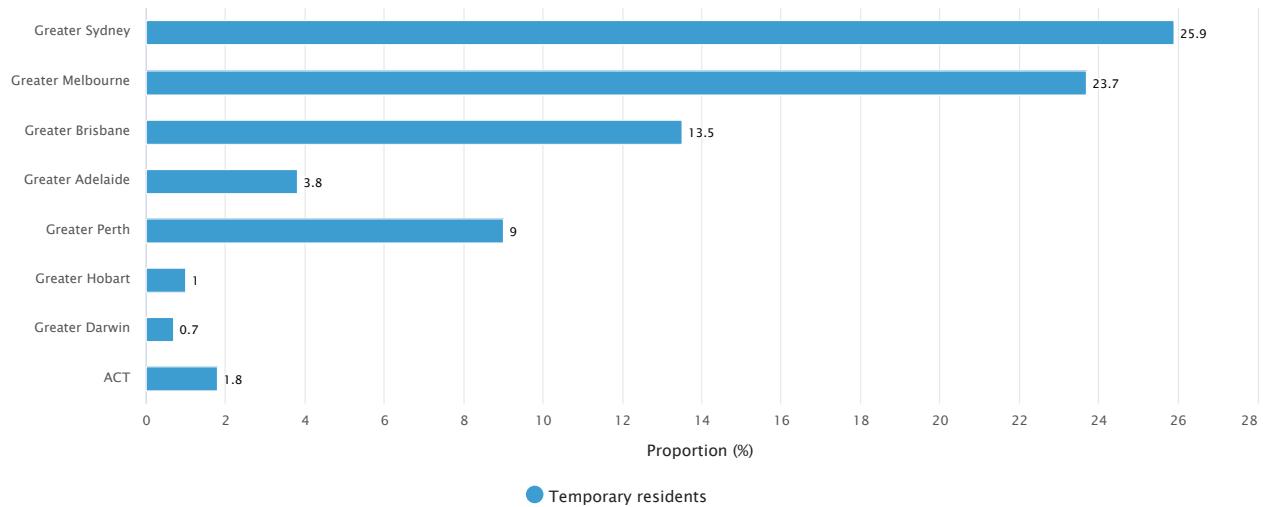
b. Occupation not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

The most common industry of employment for employed temporary residents was Food and Beverage Services (12 per cent), with 23 per cent of students working in the industry.

Around 1.3 million temporary residents lived in capital cities, mainly living in Greater Sydney (26 per cent), Greater Melbourne (24 per cent) and Greater Brisbane (13 per cent).

"Greater Brisbane claimed the highest representation of New Zealand citizens, under the Special Category visa, with a population of 139,600 people," Ms Dobak said.

Temporary residents living in capital cities(a)



a. As a proportion of temporary residents in Australia (including Other Territories, no usual address and migratory, offshore and shipping areas).

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Temporary visa holders in Australia

Characteristics of selected types of temporary visa holders who were present in Australia on Census Night, 10 August 2021.

Reference period 2021

Released 28/04/2023

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Key statistics

In August 2021, there were 1,639,000 temporary visa holders in Australia, made up of 1,614,000 temporary residents and 25,000 overseas visitors.

Of temporary residents:

- almost four out of five (79%) lived in capital cities

- almost two out of five (39%) had a Bachelor degree or higher
- the most common industry of employment was Food and Beverage Services (12%).

The statistics used in this release are from the Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset (ACTEID) which links data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing with temporary visa holder data from the Department of Home Affairs.

In this data:

- Temporary residents are temporary visa holders who either have stayed or intended to stay in Australia for twelve months or more.
- Overseas visitors are temporary visa holders who indicated in the Census that they usually lived in another country and were visiting Australia for less than one year.

The information in this release mainly focuses on temporary residents.

Previous releases of these statistics were published in: Insights from the Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset, Australia.

The 2021 Census was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when international borders were closed. This impacted the number and type of temporary visa holders who were present in Australia on 10 August 2021. Please consider this when making comparisons with other data sources.

Temporary visa holders in Australia

In August 2021, there were 1,639,000 temporary visa holders in Australia.

Visa type of temporary visa holders

Visa type	Persons	Proportion (%)
Temporary skilled	95,600	5.8
Student	363,900	22.2
Special Category (New Zealand citizen)	654,500	39.9
Working Holiday Maker	31,300	1.9
Other temporary	468,200	28.6
Total temporary residents	1,613,500	98.5
Overseas visitors	25,300	1.5
Total temporary visa holders	1,638,800	100.0

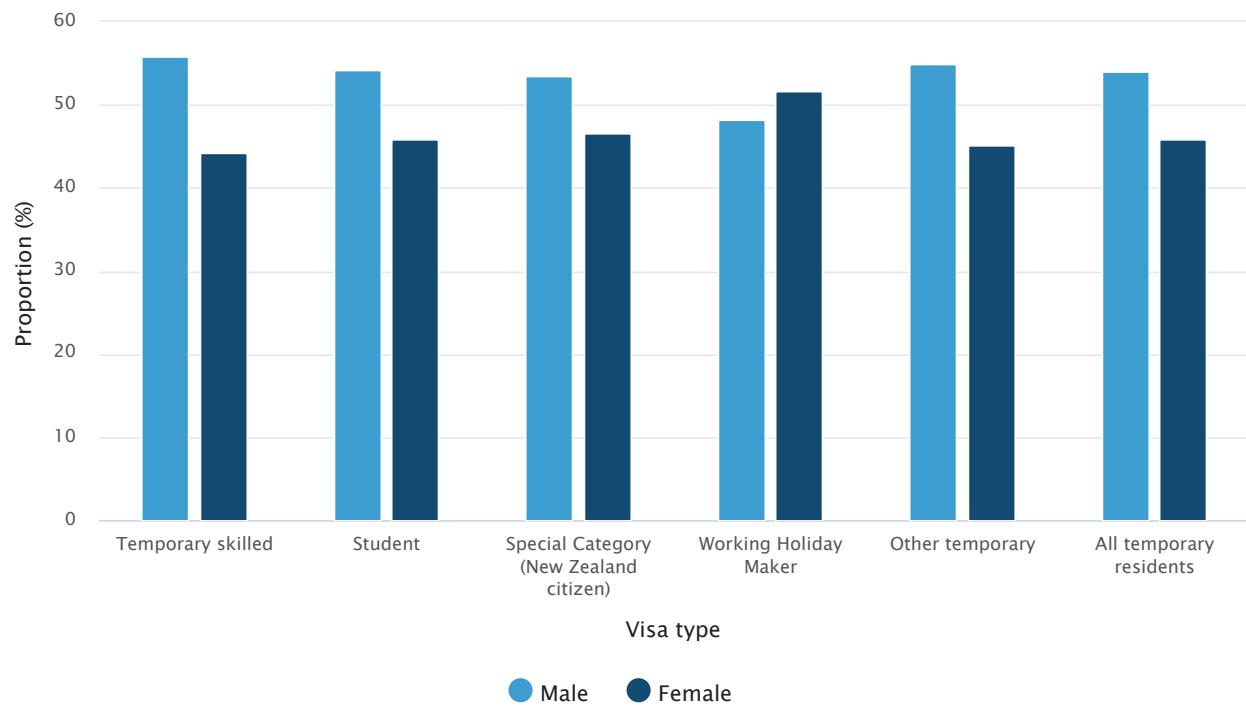
Temporary residents in Australia

In 2021 there was 1,614,000 temporary residents in Australia.

Of temporary residents:

- 92% were primary applicants – the remainder were secondary applicants
- 54% were male
- 45% arrived in the five years prior to the 2021 Census.

Temporary residents by sex and visa type



Age

Half (50%) of temporary residents were aged 20-34 years, and their median age was 30 years.

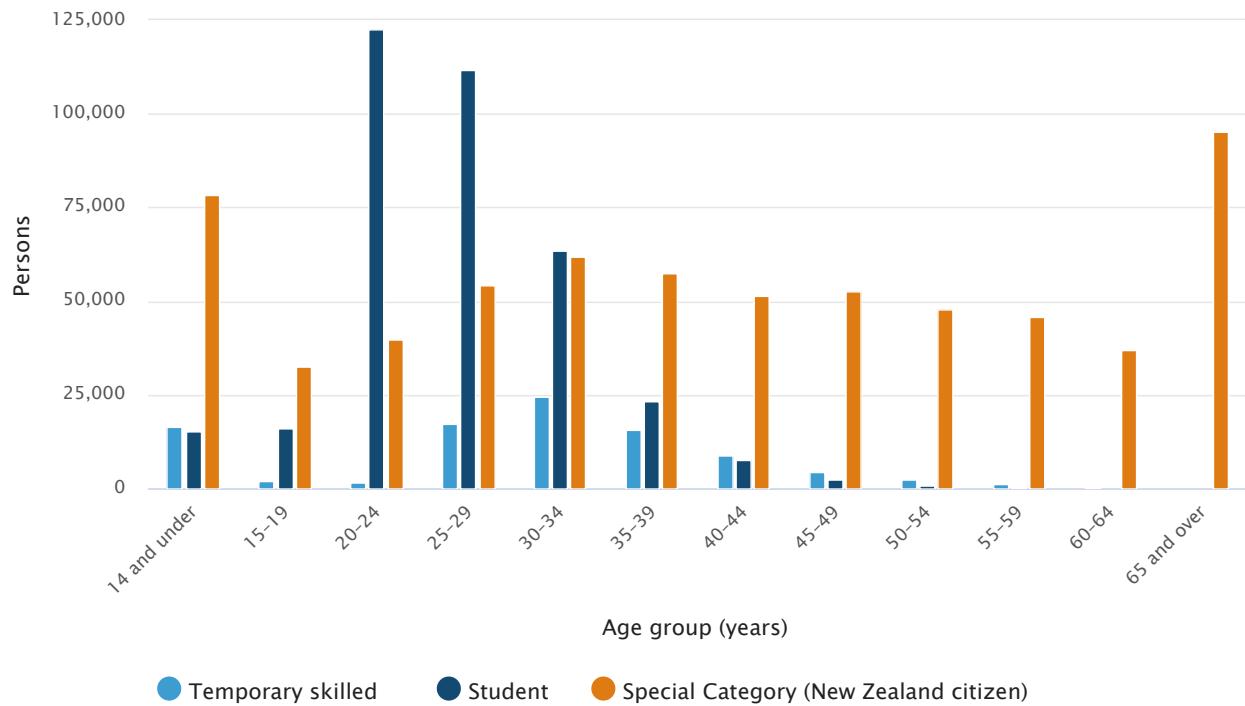
Median ages by visa type were:

- Temporary skilled (31 years)
- Student (26 years)
- Special Category (New Zealand citizen) (40 years)
- Working Holiday Maker (27 years)
- Other temporary (30 years).

Temporary skilled residents had the highest proportion of children aged 0 to 14 years (17%),

while Special Category (New Zealand citizen) residents had the highest proportion of persons aged 65 years or older (15%).

Age of temporary residents by selected visa types



Location

Of temporary residents:

- Almost four out of five (79% or 1.3 million) lived in capital cities.
- Half (50% or 799,400) lived in Sydney and Melbourne.

By visa type:

- The capital city with the highest share of Temporary skilled residents was Greater Sydney (38%), followed by Greater Melbourne (22%) and Greater Perth (10%).

- Most Students (90%) lived in capital cities, with 62% living in Greater Sydney and Greater Melbourne.
- Greater Brisbane was the capital city with the highest number of Special Category (New Zealand citizens) (139,600 persons). Over one-third (37%) of Australia's Special Category (New Zealand citizens) lived in Queensland.
- One in five (20%) Working Holiday Makers lived in Rest of Queensland.

Temporary residents by Greater Capital City Statistics Areas by visa type

	Temporary skilled	Student	Special Category (New Zealand citizen)	Working Holiday Maker	Other temporary	All temporary residents
Greater Sydney	37.6	33.6	17.4	17.6	29.9	25.9
Rest of NSW	5.1	2.9	5.0	9.2	4.7	4.5
Greater Melbourne	22.4	28.0	19.2	9.5	27.8	23.7
Rest of VIC	3.1	1.6	2.7	5.4	3.8	2.9
Greater Brisbane	7.5	9.9	21.3	9.2	6.7	13.5
Rest of QLD	6.0	4.6	15.9	19.5	5.6	9.8
Greater Adelaide	2.1	6.4	1.7	2.1	5.1	3.8
Rest of SA	0.5	0.1	0.6	1.3	0.7	0.5
Greater Perth	10.3	7.1	11.1	9.3	7.3	9.0
Rest of WA	2.2	0.1	2.8	7.2	1.1	1.7
Greater Hobart	0.3	1.7	0.3	0.3	1.7	1.0
Rest of TAS	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.6
Greater Darwin	0.7	0.9	0.4	1.4	0.9	0.7
Rest of NT	0.3	0.1	0.3	1.4	0.4	0.3
ACT	1.3	2.6	0.6	0.4	3.1	1.8
Australia(a)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Australia(a) (persons)	95,600	363,900	654,500	31,300	468,200	1,613,500

a. Includes Other Territories, no usual address and migratory, offshore and shipping areas.

Country of birth

- New Zealand was the top country of birth for temporary residents (29%).
- India was the top country of birth for Temporary skilled residents (16%) and Students (20%).

Top 10 countries of birth of temporary residents by selected visa types

	Temporary skilled	Student	Special Category (New Zealand citizen)	Working Holiday Maker	All temporary residents
1	India	15,500India	72,300New Zealand	471,000England	4,600New Zealand 471,300
2	England	10,400China(a)	53,100Australia(b)	42,300Taiwan	3,600India 193,200
3	Philippines	8,600Nepal	41,000Samoa	24,700Ireland	3,200China(a) 112,500
4	South Africa	4,800Brazil	13,600England	17,900France	2,400Nepal 76,600
5	Ireland	4,200Colombia	13,200India	10,800Korea, Republic of (South)	2,000Australia(b) 71,300
6	China(a)	4,000Vietnam	13,100South Africa	9,700Argentina	1,700England 48,500
7	Australia(b)	3,300Malaysia	11,600Cook Islands	9,000China(a)	1,500Philippines 42,400
8	Japan	3,000Philippines	11,600Philippines	6,900Italy	1,400Malaysia 41,000
9	United States of America	2,900Indonesia	10,400Fiji	6,500Japan	1,200Vietnam 34,300
10	Korea, Republic of (South)	2,800Korea, Republic of (South)	10,000China(a)	4,700Germany	1,000Sri Lanka 27,800

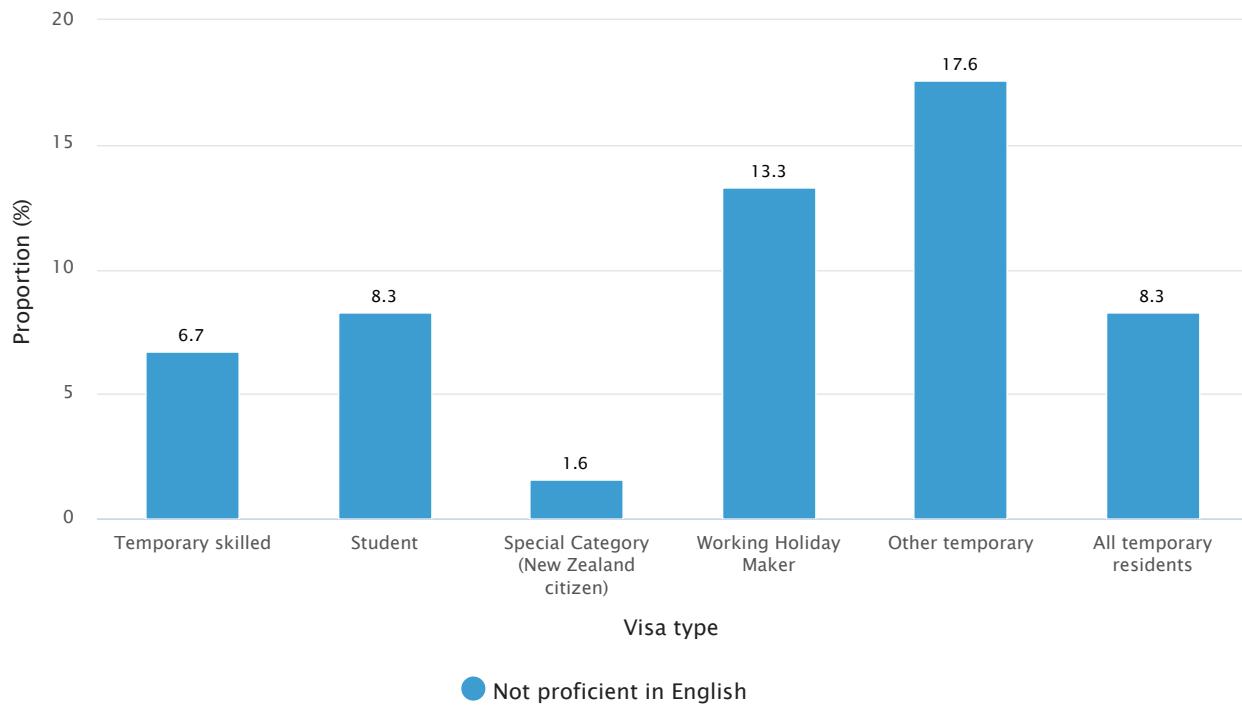
a. Excludes Taiwan and Special Administrative Regions (SARs) which comprise 'Hong Kong (SAR of China)' and 'Macau (SAR of China)'.

b. People born in Australia to parents who were temporary visa holders. Includes 'Australia, (includes External Territories), nfd', 'Norfolk Island' and 'Australian External Territories, nec'.

Proficiency in English

- Most temporary residents (92% or 1.5 million) reported being proficient in English, that is they only spoke English or spoke English very well or well. For all visa types, most temporary residents were proficient in English.
- More than half (59% or 945,600) of temporary residents used a language other than English at home.
- Students were the most likely to use another language at home (91%), and Special Category (New Zealand citizens) were least likely (21%).

Temporary residents who were not proficient in English(a) by visa type



a. Spoke English not well or not at all. Language not stated and English proficiency not stated have been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

- Over one quarter (28% or 31,900) of temporary residents born in China were not proficient in English, the highest number of persons of all countries of birth.
- While the second highest number of persons who were not proficient in English was India (10,600), this only represented 6% of all temporary residents born in India.

Top 10 countries of birth(a) of temporary residents not proficient in English(b)

	Country of birth	Persons	Proportion (%)(c)
1	China(d)	31,900	28.5
2	India	10,600	5.5
3	Malaysia	9,900	24.4
4	Australia(e)	9,000	13.3
5	Vietnam	8,200	23.9
6	Korea, Republic of (South)	7,900	32.3
7	Thailand	6,200	31.4
8	Taiwan	6,000	36.1
9	Samoa	3,000	11.5
10	Iran	2,800	20.6

- a. Ordered from highest to lowest number of temporary residents who were not proficient in English.
- b. Spoke another language and spoke English not well or not at all.
- c. As a proportion of temporary residents who were born in each country. Language not stated and English proficiency not stated have been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.
- d. Excludes Taiwan and Special Administrative Regions (SARs) which comprise 'Hong Kong (SAR of China)' and 'Macau (SAR of China)'.
- e. People born in 'Australia, (includes External Territories), nfd', 'Norfolk Island' and 'Australian External Territories, nec' to parents who were temporary visa holders. Most of this group (94% or 8,500) were aged under 5 years.

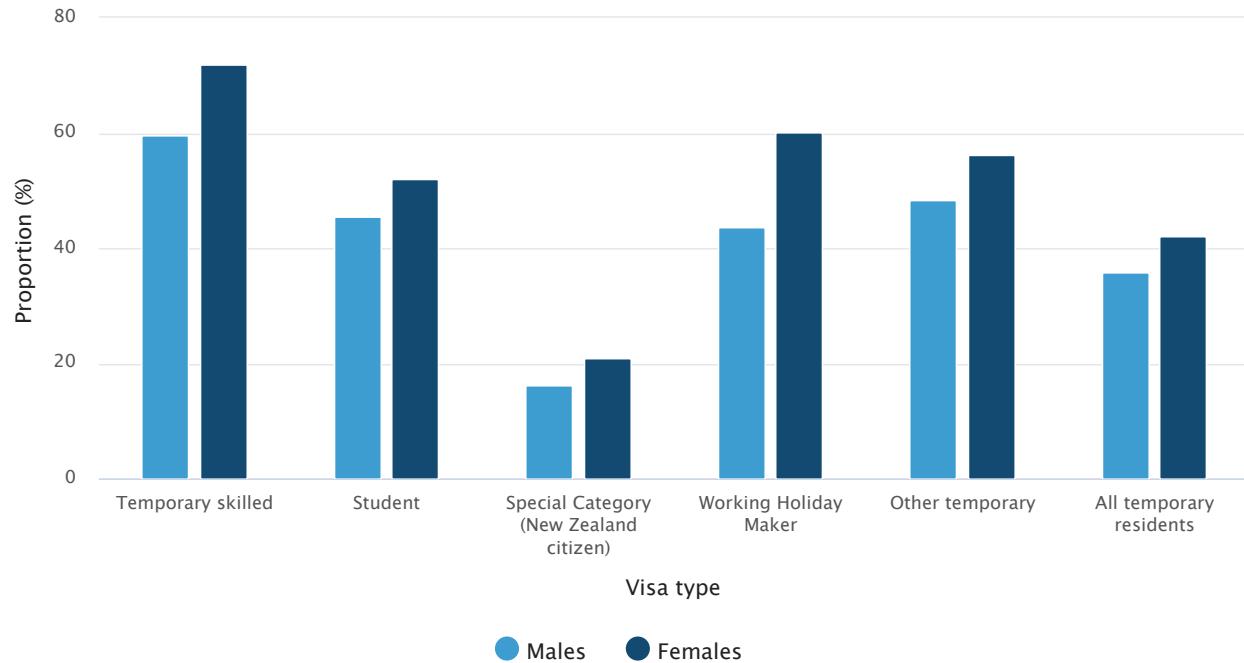
Education level

- Most (92% or 1.3 million) temporary residents aged 15 years and over had an education level of Year 10 or above. This was slightly higher than people aged 15 years and over in the Australian population (89%) as reported in the 2021 Census.

Noting that many temporary visas are associated with tertiary study, or specific skills that require tertiary qualifications:

- 39% (or 544,900) of temporary residents aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor degree or higher. This was higher compared to the Australian population (29% of people aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor degree or higher).
- almost two-thirds (65% or 50,200) of Temporary skilled residents aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor degree or higher.

Temporary residents aged 15 years and over who held a Bachelor degree or higher(a)(b) by visa type and sex



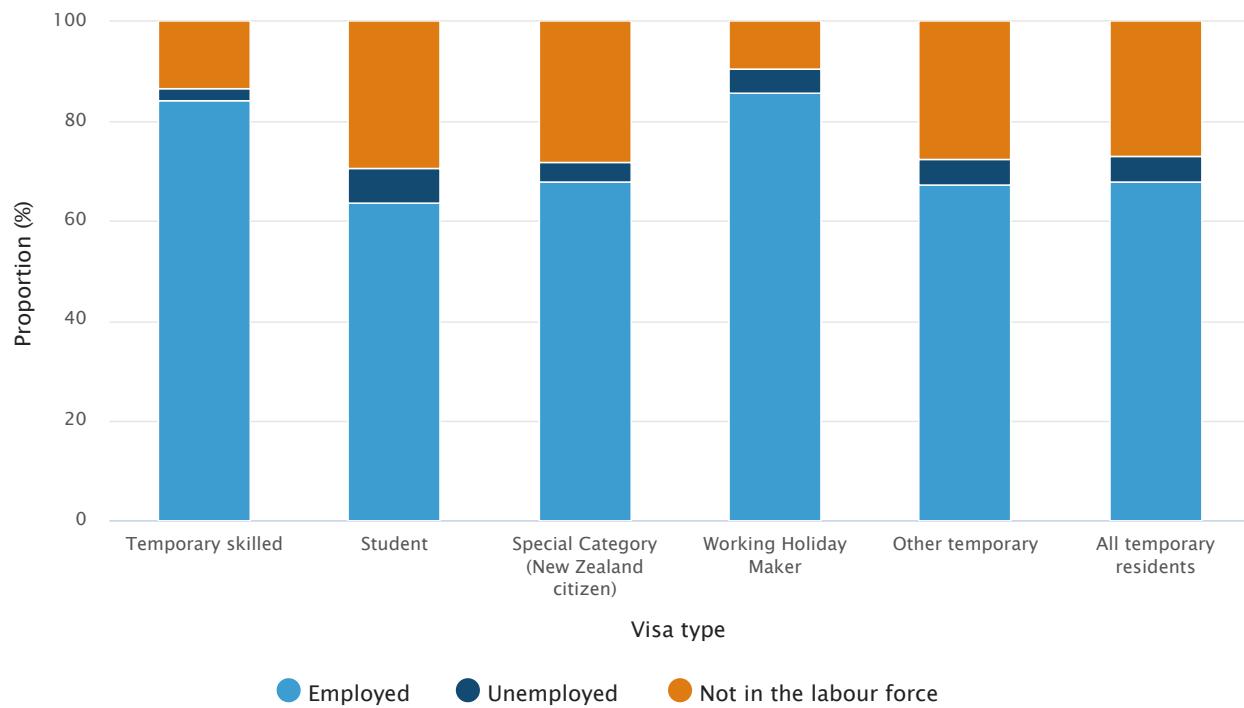
a. Includes Bachelor degree, Graduate diploma and graduate certificate and Postgraduate degree.
b. Educational attainment not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

Employment and income

Of temporary residents aged 15 years or over:

- almost three quarters (73%) were in the labour force (that is, either employed or unemployed)
- the most likely to be in the labour force were Working Holiday Makers (91%)
- the least likely to be in the labour force were Students (71%).

Labour force participation of temporary residents aged 15 years and over(a)



a. Labour force status not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

For employed temporary residents, the most common occupation was Carers and Aides (7%).

By visa type the most common occupations were:

- Temporary skilled – ICT Professionals (12%)
- Student – Carers and Aides (11%)
- Special Category (New Zealand citizen) – Specialist Managers (6%)
- Working Holiday Maker – Factory Process Workers (15%)
- Other temporary – Carers and Aides (7%).

Top 10 occupations(a) of employed temporary residents

Occupation	Persons	Proportion (%) ^(b)
1 Carers and Aides	66,000	6.8
2 Road and Rail Drivers	53,100	5.5
3 Cleaners and Laundry Workers	52,500	5.4
4 Sales Assistants and Salespersons	47,600	4.9
5 Food Trades Workers	47,400	4.9
6 Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	45,600	4.7
7 Specialist Managers	40,000	4.1
8 Hospitality Workers	38,200	3.9
9 Factory Process Workers	38,000	3.9
10 Health Professionals	34,900	3.6

a. Top 10 by number of persons.

b. Occupation not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

For employed temporary residents, the most common industry of employment was Food and Beverage Services (12%). By visa type the most common industries were:

- Temporary skilled – Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (except Computer System Design and Related Services) (11%)
- Student – Food and Beverage Services (23%)
- Special Category (New Zealand citizen) – Construction Services (6%)
- Working Holiday Maker – Agriculture (18%)
- Other temporary – Food and Beverage Services (13%).

Top 10 industry of employment(a) of employed temporary residents

Industry	Persons	Proportion (%) ^(b)
1 Food and Beverage Services	112,700	11.7
2 Construction Services	44,300	4.6
3 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services(c)	43,200	4.5
4 Residential Care Services	39,700	4.1
5 Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Other Support Services	38,600	4.0
6 Food Retailing	38,100	4.0
7 Social Assistance Services	33,200	3.5
8 Other Store-Based Retailing	31,700	3.3
9 Food Product Manufacturing	31,200	3.2
10 Road Transport	27,100	2.8

a. Top 10 by number of persons.

b. Industry not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

c. Excludes Computer System Design and Related Services.

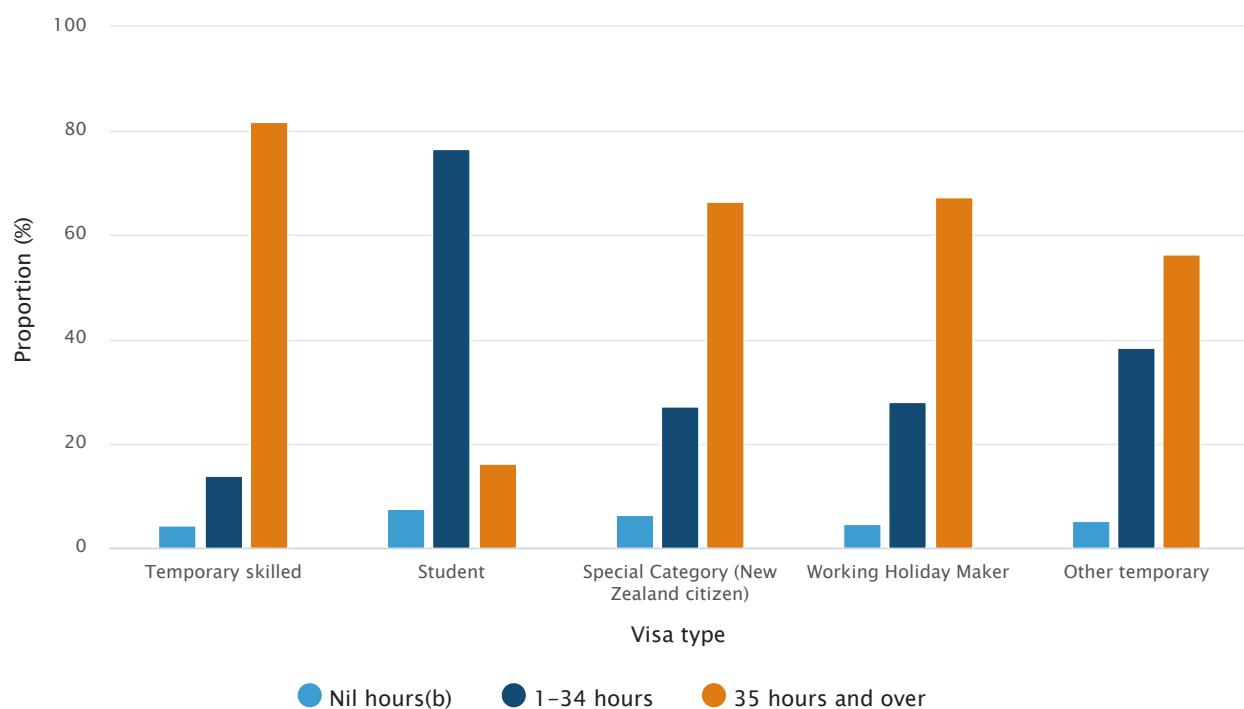
In the week prior to Census Night:

- More than half (54%) of employed temporary residents worked full-time hours (35 hours or

more).

- The visa type most likely to work full-time hours was Temporary skilled (82%).
- Over three quarters (76%) of employed Students worked part-time hours (1-34 hours).

Hours worked(a) for temporary residents aged 15 years and over by visa type



- Hours worked in all jobs during the week prior to Census Night. Hours worked not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.
- Had a job in the week prior to Census Night but worked nil hours in that week, for example were on leave or temporarily stood down.

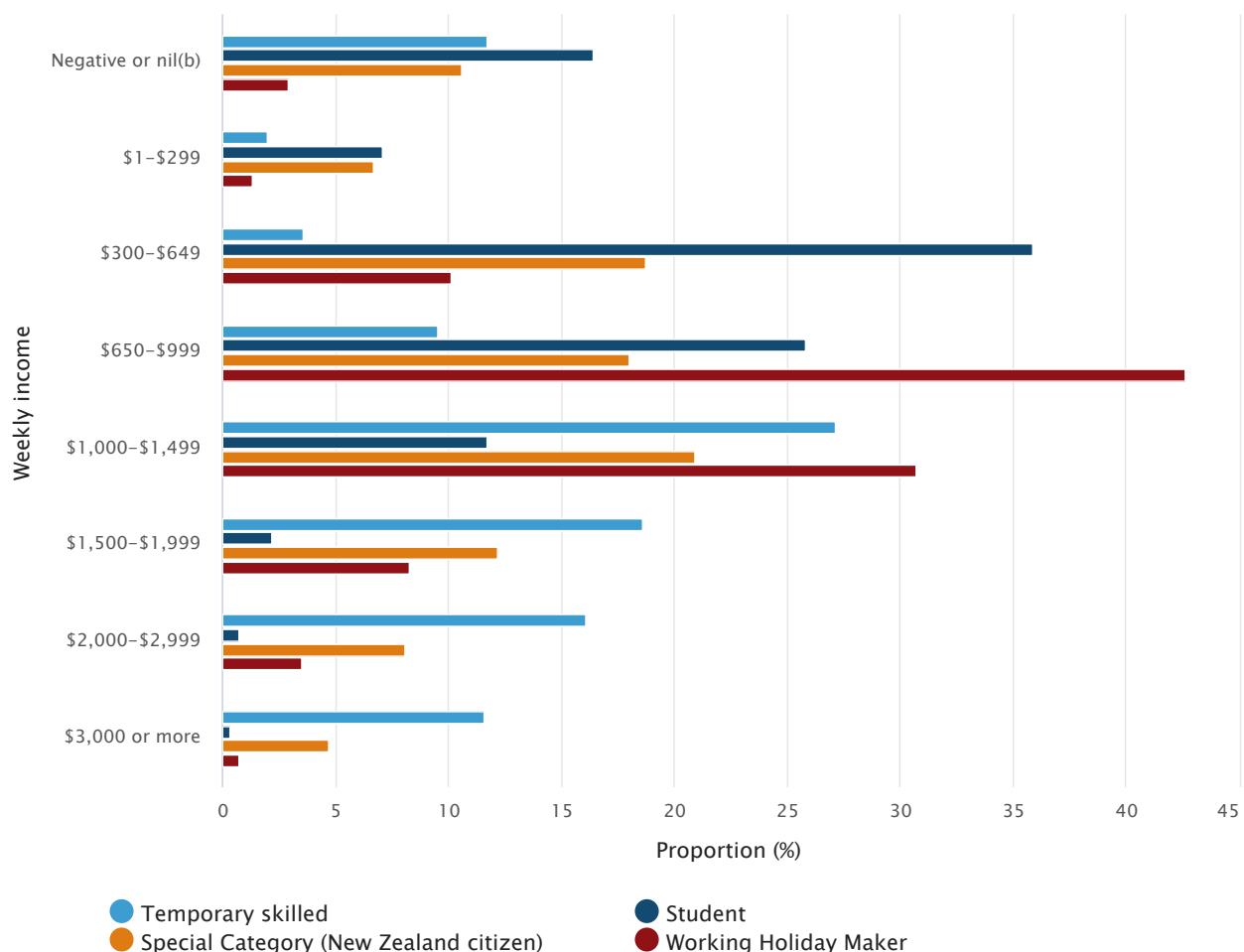
The median individual weekly income of temporary residents aged 15 years and over was \$790.

Median individual weekly incomes by visa type were:

- Temporary skilled (\$1,416)

- Student (\$568)
- Special Category (New Zealand citizen) (\$924)
- Working Holiday Maker (\$949)
- Other temporary (\$807).

Individual weekly income for temporary residents aged 15 years and over(a) by selected visa types



a. Income not stated has been excluded from totals when calculating proportions.

b. Negative income in the Census includes people who own their own business and report negative income due to losses or negative gearing of rentals.

Data downloads

Temporary visa holders in Australia 2021 Datacube

 [Download XLSX](#)

[282.96 KB]

Methodology

[Temporary visa holders in Australia methodology, 2021](#)

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