

Migrants bringing in \$300m

By Mathew Murphy
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Business migration to Victoria has more than doubled in the past year as the Bracks Government steps up its campaign to woo more immigrants.

The number of business migrants jumped from 301 in 2003-04 to 680 for 2004-05, with 65 per cent of those from China.

Employment Minister Jacinta Allan told a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing yesterday that the increase equated to \$300 million of investment and nearly 2000 new jobs for Victoria.

She later told *The Age* the influx was due to a deliberate push by the Government to secure more business and skilled migration, especially in regional areas, culminating in its \$6 million Skilled Migration Strategy.

Ms Allan said the Government's Live in Victoria website, launched in May and reaching nearly 50,000 hits in its first month, was a "key tool" in attracting those interested in migrating to Australia.

"We know that when people want to move countries they turn to the internet," she said.

Ms Allan said that China had become an incredibly important source of business migrants because of the skills they could offer Victoria.

"When you consider the powerhouse that China is in terms of its economy and industry, we can gain a lot from what they have to offer," she said.

"We have even set up the Live in Victoria website so that some pages can be downloaded in Chinese."

Jeffrey Li and his wife Jun Wang moved to Victoria back in 1996 when the Chinese Government company he worked for "fell on hard times".

"As business people we had to look at other opportunities and we had some friends in Victoria who said we should come and try our luck," he said.

Mr Li, 40, who originally ran a clothing and textiles importing business and has recently started exporting goods as well, said many more Chinese businessmen and women were on the move.

"Over the last couple of years it is a very big story. In terms of hospitality, IT, accounting, Victoria is No.1 and I have told friends in China that," he said.

An article in *The Times* in London last week stated that Victoria was "desperate" for skilled workers and that "a one-way ticket to Melbourne has never been easier to achieve"

Opposition business spokeswoman Louise Asher said that while increased business migration was good, the state Liberal Party would be looking at "more than a website to attract people".