



Senator Amanda Vanstone

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

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New Migrants Delivering the Skills Australia Needs

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Australia's Migration Program is delivering results according to the new report, 'Immigration in a Time of Domestic Skilled Shortages: Skilled Movements in 2003-04,' by Dr Bob Birrell and colleagues of Monash University.

The report examines the international movement of skilled workers to and from Australia and shows that Australia is attracting increasing numbers of skilled workers despite intense international competition.

In 2001-02 there was an increase of 385 600 skilled jobs in Australia. During this period, Australia received 114 500 skilled migrants which is equivalent to 30 per cent of the increase in skilled jobs.

'Importantly the report confirms that Australia is attracting the people with the skills that it needs,' Senator Vanstone said.

'While most of the net gain was in people with professional qualifications, the net gain in tradespersons also more than doubled - from about 3000 in 2001-02 to over 6000 in 2002-04. A marked increase in nurses was also reported, from about 1000 in 2001-02 to close to 2500 in 2003-04.

'In April we announced 97 500 places in the Skill Stream of the 2005-06 Migration Program, an increase of 20 000 places, to help employers meet their skilled labour force needs.

'There has been an increasing need for this, not only because of current skill shortages but also because of the projected decline in Australia's working age population.

'Without immigration, the number of Australians of working age will begin to decline in little more than a decade.

'Despite recent concerns about a 'brain drain' the Birrell report also shows that the movements of skilled Australians from Australia appear to have stabilised. In 2003-04 there was a high net gain of some 43 000 skilled persons to Australia from international movements.

'The report attributes this largely to a buoyant domestic labour market and an expansion in the programs targeting skilled permanent migrants to Australia.'

The report is available on the DIMIA website www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/index.htm

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