

Global competition for skilled migration.

This paper is broken down into two sections. The first refers to the global competition Australia faces to attract the best talent. The second is commentary from leaders from Australia's major industry sectors about our need for global talent.

**** All the statistics are referencing is quoted and referenced in the accompanying **Global Talent Program White Paper report** that AOYE published in April 2022

Introduction

Global talent is in high demand. With hopes of gaining a competitive advantage in the market for global talent, major immigrant countries have created special immigration policies for highly skilled individuals.

The United States has historically captured 40-50 per cent of this inflow to OECD nations, followed by the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. The United States tends to be the destination of choice for those at the highest levels of the talent ladder. More than 50 per cent of migrating inventors or Nobel Prize winners moved to America for their work.

United States

In the United States, immigrants with “extraordinary talent” may apply for the O-1 temporary visa. An individual seeking an O-1 must demonstrate “sustained national or international acclaim” through highly selective or prestigious awards, degrees, or affiliations. This is an uncapped visa category, (although the dependants of the visa holder cannot work). In the 2019 fiscal year, 17,751 visas were awarded—the highest level within the past five years.

The USA have just announced an increase in the uptake for 2023 to 80,000 applicants.

Exceptional talent can also apply for an EB-1 green card, which grants permanent residency but is subject to an annual 40,040 cap (including dependants). An additional 40,040 places are allocated for professionals with advanced degrees or exceptional ability. In 2019 visa issuances came close to reaching the cap in both categories.^{xx}

Visa issuances fell during the pandemic as a result of border closures. In 2021, of the 3,486 EB-1A visas (the EB-1 sub-category for science, arts, education, business or athletics) approved, applicants from China occupied the highest proportion, at 29 per cent.

Canada

Canada does not offer specific visas for exceptional talent, as it has work visa programs that can quickly and easily bring in exceptionally skilled individuals. **In 2020, Canada made a million immigrant quota plan in order to promote their economic growth** and support the country's recovery amid the pandemic. According to data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the country exceeded its 2021 immigration goal of 401,100

individuals, and marked 405,303 new permanent residents. Many of these immigrants arrived in Canada under their economic class program. **Looking to the future, IRCC has made a new quota goal of 432,000 residents in the 2022-2024 time frame.**

UK

The United Kingdom recently introduced the Global Talent visa for recognised and emerging leaders and top research scientists. Recognised leaders are those who have achieved national or international acclaim, while emerging leaders are those who demonstrate future potential.

The Global Talent visa also includes a separate, fast-tracked pathway for research scientists.

This pathway is uncapped. Applicants need an endorsement, but not a job offer to apply.

Pre-COVID there had been a 50 percent increase in the number of visas granted under the predecessor visa category – Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent), with 1,176 visas granted. Nearly half were granted to digital technology applicants. This trend indicates that under the prior system, the UK was experiencing an influx of technical talent. The new features of the Global Talent visa can be expected to bolster this growth.^{xxi}

Summary

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for Australia to lose exceptional talent to other markets with overseas skilled migration programs. For more than 20 years, Sandra Li, the CEO of AOYE Group, has brought extraordinary talent to Australia. Across years of expertise in immigration, she notes that **there are two aspects that contribute to Australia's loss of talent to overseas skilled migration programs.**

- 1. First is the complexity of guidelines for candidates. Ms. Li believes that the process for a candidate to be awarded a skilled visa in Australia can make it difficult for applicants to navigate steps. In some instances, the barriers for granted visas are too high in comparison to other competitor programs and discourage candidates for Australia.**
- 2. The second aspect that contributes to a loss of talent recruitment is a lack of consistency. Ms. Li has noticed that there isn't uniformity on the finish date or sunset of visa programs in Australia.**
- 3. Visa programs can be shut down when there is a change of government or even overnight by a sitting government with intent to change directions of operations. On the other hand, candidates**

In markets like Canada don't experience the same barriers, as Canada transparently states that their visa program will remain open to applicants for five years.

Australia's Talent Shortage (Industry Commentary)

Sam Kothari of Airwallex (Digitech)

He identified the pressures facing global businesses through talent shortages. **“It’s a very tight and difficult market at the moment. Especially in the tech industry there are a lot of talent shortages.”** In order to take advantage of the best talent available to them, Airwallex always builds multiple talent hubs. In Australia, they have hubs in Melbourne and Sydney.

Shanny Dyer CEO from ARCS (Health Industries)

ARCS is an Australian-based organisation that focuses on career-long professional development. CEO Shanny

The professional community of ARCS has supported applications from professionals working in China and is a strong advocate of the Global Talent Visa Program. With strong China connections in mind, ARCS believes that Australia is a very good destination for Chinese professionals to both live and work.

Nikhil Jayaraj, Managing Director of Regen Power (Energy)

Regen Power sees that labour shortages, particularly in highly specialised skill sets, could have a negative impact on projects, deepening the need for bringing global industry leading talent to Australia.

Ben Ford, FinTech industry leader with Frollo (Fintech)

He notes that this growth has already caused a skills **shortage, specifically in technology-focused roles in the financial industry.** **“Current conditions have resulted in an ‘employees’ market’ where candidates often have multiple job offers to choose from.** Any software engineering talent is likely to be in extremely high demand. The same applies to Data Science, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning skill sets.”

Overseas recruitment will be needed to support the innovation boom, as FinTech demands more specialised skills.

Travis Chambers, Executive from Advance Industrial (Advanced Manufacturing)

“Overseas recruitment has played a vital role in supporting critical Australian industries such as healthcare for years. This support has supplemented continued investment onshore, benefiting our healthcare program at large.” The Advance Industrial executive says that **“introducing overseas talent to our manufacturing potential in Australia could have a bolstering effect on production opportunities across critical manufacturing sectors.**