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# Tuberculosis Identified Through Offshore Pre-Migration Health Screening 2023

## About the Migration Health Requirement

The Australian *Migration Act 1958* and *Migration Regulations 1994* require that most visa applicants must meet Public Interest Criteria (PIC). The health-related PICs (4005 and 4007) stipulate that applicants must be free from tuberculosis (TB) and/or not be a public health threat or danger to the Australian community; and not have a disease or condition that would pose a significant cost burden to the Australian community or prejudice the access of Australian residents to services in short supply.

The only medical condition that prevents the grant of a visa as prescribed in the *Migration Regulations 1994* is TB. If an applicant is found to have active TB, they must demonstrate that they have satisfactorily completed a full course of treatment, and an Australian Medical Officer of the Commonwealth (MOC) must be satisfied that they are not a threat to public health before they can be considered for the grant of a visa.

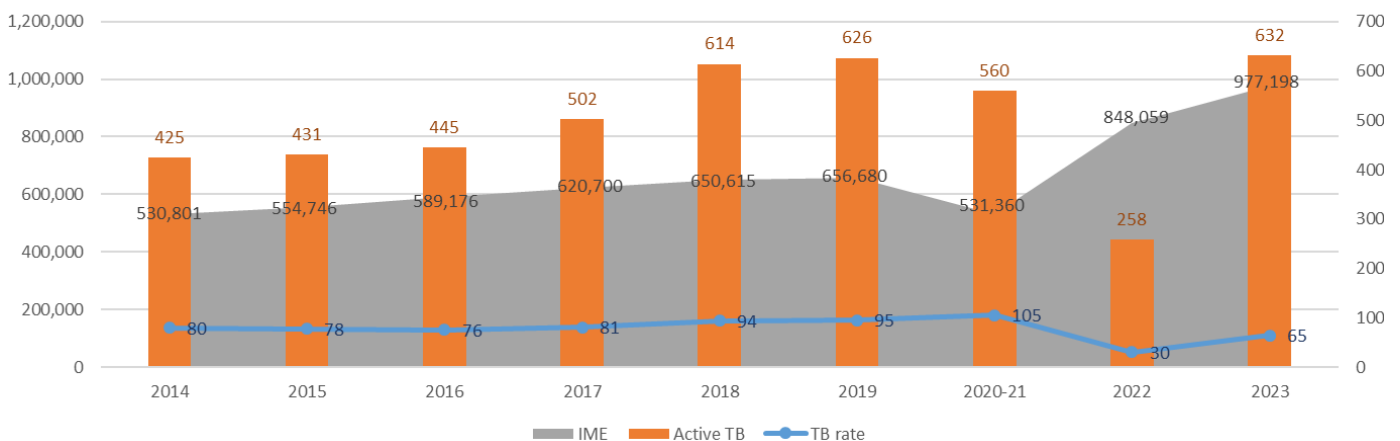
Australia maintains one of the lowest rates of TB in the world and offshore TB screening contributes to this. This low rate has been maintained despite large-scale migration from countries with higher TB rates than Australia, largely because of effective pre-migration screening and the activities of specialised, multi-disciplinary TB services in the states and territories of Australia.

## Tuberculosis detected through offshore pre-migration health screening

*Note: data has been drawn from a dynamic system environment. The information is correct at the time of publication and figures may differ slightly from previous or future reporting*

In 2023, 977,198 Immigration Medical Examinations (IMEs) were undertaken by visa applicants outside of Australia. There were 632 cases of active TB detected from these IMEs, representing an offshore IME TB rate of 65 cases per 100,000 IME caseload.

Historical Active TB Trend 2014 - 2023



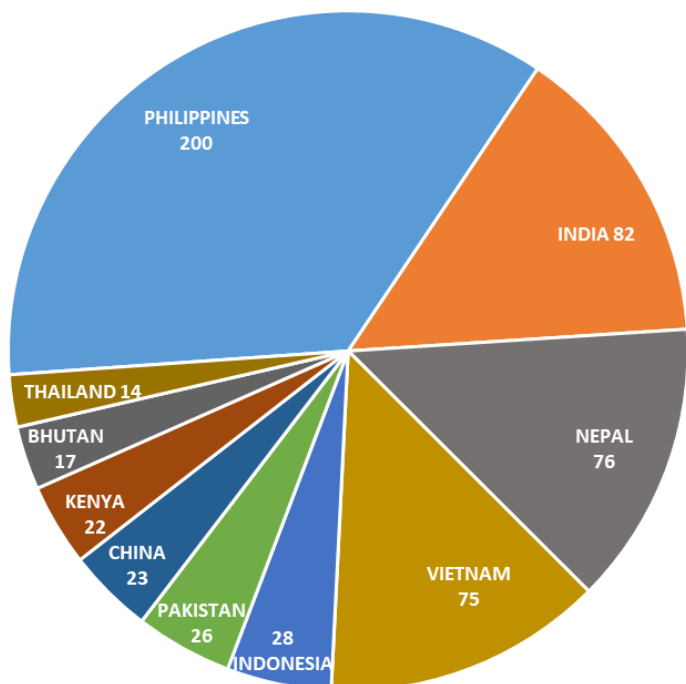
In 2023, both TB case detections and the TB rate increased by more than two times compared to 2022. While individual TB detections have now increased to align more closely with pre-pandemic numbers, the TB rate in 2023 remains lower when compared to historic offshore IME TB trends.

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## Geographical Distribution of Tuberculosis in Immigration Medical Examinations (IME)

The regions outlined in the table below relate to the location where the visa applicant undertook their IME, rather than the nationality of visa applicants. Only countries with >1000 IMEs within that region have been included (625 cases out of the total 632 TB cases detected in 2023).

Region	2023			
	TB Cases	IME Caseload	IME TB rate / 100,000 Caseload	WHO TB rate
Asia	551	719,887	77	243
Africa	31	41,239	75	206
Middle East	27	85,685	32	116
Pacific	8	29,441	27	97
Americas	7	49,021	14	33
Europe	<5	29,690	<5	24

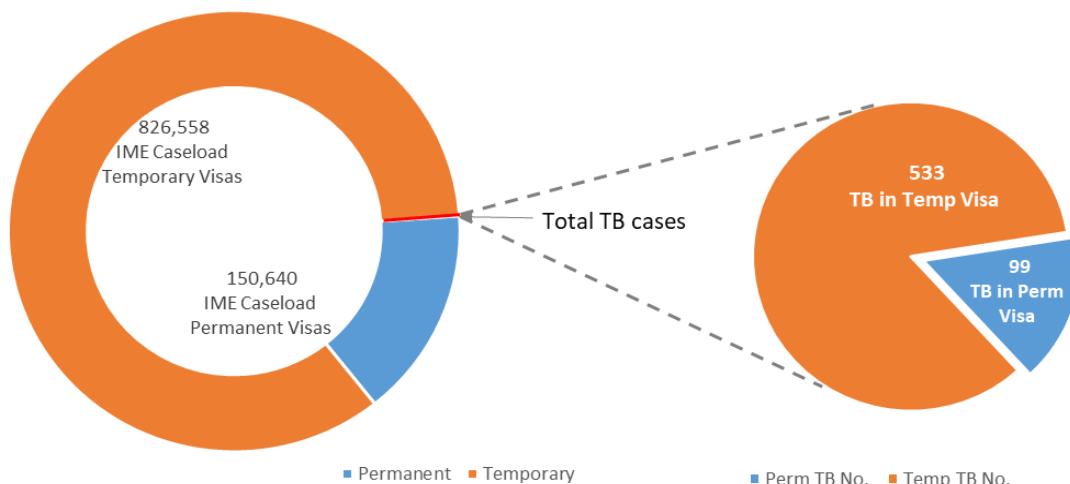


Left – Top ten IME countries with the highest number of TB case detections. These countries made up 89 per cent of all TB cases detected through offshore IME screening. Nine out of the top ten countries are in the Asia region.

The IME caseload within Asia represented 66 per cent of total offshore IMEs and equated to 86 per cent (n=541) of the total TB detected through offshore pre-migration health screening in 2023.

## Distribution of Tuberculosis by Visa Type

2023 saw more TB cases detected in Temporary visa applicants, which is relative to the larger IME caseload for Temporary visa programs.



## Distribution of Tuberculosis by Age Group

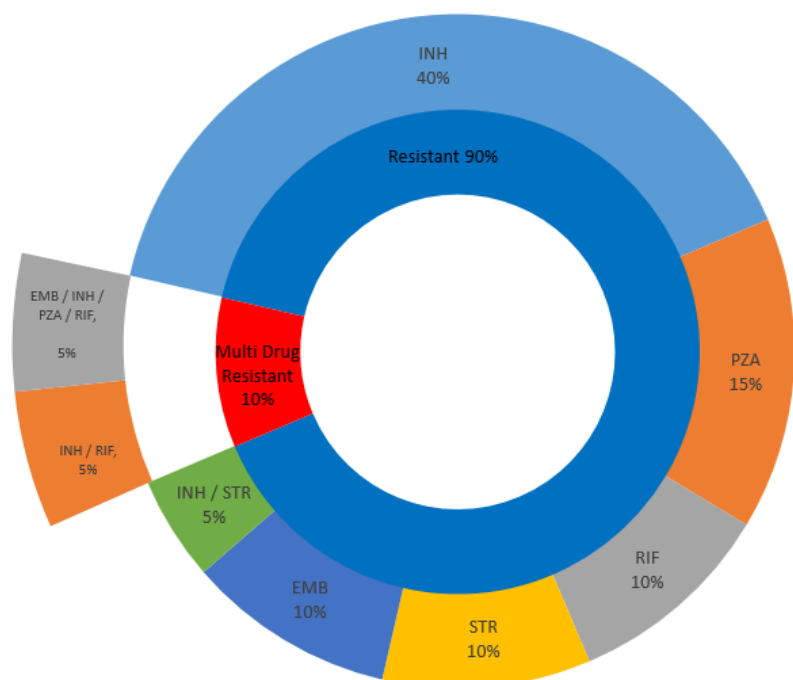
In 2023, visa applicants under the age of one through to 109 years completed an IME. TB was detected in children under the age of one through to adults aged up to 86 years old. The age group representing the highest number of TB detections is between 15 and 34 years old (338 TB cases - 53%) relative to the larger IME caseload for these age groups.

Female applicants aged between 15 and 44 years old generally have higher TB rates when compared to males within the same age group. However, male applicants generally have higher rates of TB from 45 years and over when compared to females within the same age group.

Number of TB cases by Age and Gender				IME TB rate by Age and Gender			
Age Group	Female TB No.	FEMALE MALE	Male TB No.	Age Group	Female rate	FEMALE MALE	Male rate
0 - 4yo	<5		6	0 to 4 yo	21		40
5 - 9yo	<5		<5	5 to 9 yo	8		15
10 - 14yo	<5		<5	10 to 14 yo	19		27
15 - 19yo	26		20	15 to 19 yo	59		35
20 - 24yo	69		50	20 to 24 yo	73		44
25 - 29yo	67		45	25 to 29 yo	73		52
30 - 34yo	22		39	30 to 34 yo	46		80
35 - 39yo	23		18	35 to 39 yo	87		58
40 - 44yo	10		8	40 to 44 yo	67		46
45 - 49yo	<5		9	45 to 49 yo	30		110
50 - 54yo	10		9	50 to 54 yo	68		126
55 - 59yo	13		16	55 to 59 yo	56		154
60 - 64yo	24		30	60 to 64 yo	90		180
65 - 69yo	14		29	65 to 69 yo	65		167
70 - 74yo	8		26	70 to 74 yo	69		229
75 - 79yo	12		7	75 to 79 yo	78		45
80 - 84yo	<5		5	80 to 84 yo	16		91
85 - 89yo	<5		<5	85 to 89 yo	0		135

## Drug Resistant Tuberculosis

Of the 632 TB cases identified in 2023, 20 cases were resistant to at least one antibiotic used to treat TB. 90 per cent of those cases (n=18) were resistant to first line anti-TB drugs and 10 per cent (n=2) were identified as multi drug resistant.



INH – Isoniazid  
 RIF – Rifampicin  
 PZA – Pyrazinamide  
 EMB – Ethambutol  
 STR - Streptomycin