



New Zealand  
Immigration Service  
*Te Ratonga Manene*

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Immigration Research Programme

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**Work Visas and Permits Research**

August 2001



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New Zealand Immigration Service  
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# Contents

|          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| 1.1      | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....  | 5         |
| 1.2      | RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....  | 5         |
| 1.3      | NATURE OF THE DATA .....   | 5         |
| 1.4      | WORK PERMIT CATEGORIES .....   | 6         |
| 1.5      | NATIONALITIES OF WORKERS.....  | 6         |
| 1.6      | THE GENDER OF WORKERS.....   | 7         |
| 1.7      | THE AGE OF WORKERS.....  | 7         |
| 1.8      | WORK PERMITS OVER TIME .....   | 7         |
| 1.9      | THE PROPORTION OF WORKERS WHO BECAME RESIDENTS .....   | 7         |
| 1.10     | THE OCCUPATIONS OF WORKERS .....   | 7         |
| 1.11     | THE INDUSTRIES OF WORKERS .....  | 8         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| 2.1      | INTRODUCTION .....   | 9         |
| 2.2      | STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT .....  | 9         |
| 2.3      | BACKGROUND .....   | 9         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| 3.1      | METHODOLOGY .....  | 11        |
| 3.2      | DEFINITIONS .....  | 13        |
| 3.3      | LIMITATIONS.....   | 13        |
| 3.4      | NATURE OF THE DATA .....   | 13        |
| <b>4</b> | <b>RESEARCH FINDINGS.....</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| 4.1      | INTRODUCTION.....  | 15        |
| 4.2      | WORK PERMIT CATEGORIES.....  | 15        |
| 4.3      | THE CRITERIA PEOPLE WERE GRANTED WORK PERMITS UNDER.....                                     | 17        |
| 4.4      | WORKERS NATIONALITIES .....  | 18        |
| 4.5      | THE NATIONALITIES OF INDIVIDUALS GRANTED WORK PERMITS DURING 1999/2000.....                  | 18        |
| 4.6      | SKILL SHORTAGE WORKERS' NATIONALITIES .....  | 20        |
| 4.7      | GENDER OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS.....   | 21        |
| 4.8      | AGE OF WORKERS.....  | 22        |
| 4.9      | WORK PERMITS OVER TIME .....   | 23        |
| 4.10     | SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS OVER TIME.....   | 24        |
| 4.11     | WORK PERMIT CATEGORIES OVER TIME.....  | 25        |
| 4.12     | THE PROPORTIONS OF WORKERS IN THE 1997/1998 YEAR WHO BECAME NEW ZEALAND RESIDENTS .<br>..... | 26        |
| 4.13     | THE OCCUPATIONS OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS .....   | 28        |
| 4.14     | THE INDUSTRIES OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS .....  | 30        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....</b>  | <b>33</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>APPENDIX A: DETAILED TABLES .....</b>   | <b>35</b> |
| <b>7</b> | <b>APPENDIX B: POWERPLAY AND IMPROMPTU REPORTS AND QUERIES.....</b>                          | <b>37</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>APPENDIX C: DETAILED TABLES .....</b>   | <b>41</b> |

## Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 1 THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING PEOPLE WHO HAD WORK PERMITS IN 1997/1998 AND LATER BECAME RESIDENTS .....  | 12 |
| FIGURE 2 THE SAMPLE SURVEY PROCESS.....  | 12 |
| FIGURE 3 WORK PERMITS BY CRITERIA, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079) .....  | 17 |
| FIGURE 4 THE NATIONALITIES OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079).....   | 18 |
| FIGURE 5 THE NATIONALITIES OF INDIVIDUALS GRANTED WORK PERMITS DURING 1999/2000 (N = 33,955 7) .....   | 19 |
| FIGURE 6 THE NATIONALITIES OF PEOPLE GRANTED SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS IN 1999/2000 (N = 18,177).....  | 20 |
| FIGURE 7 THE GENDER OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS BY WORK PERMIT CATEGORY, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079).....  | 21 |
| FIGURE 8 THE AGES OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS (N = 38,079).....   | 22 |
| FIGURE 9 THE AGE OF PEOPLE GRANTED SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS (N = 18,177).....   | 22 |
| FIGURE 10 WORK PERMIT NUMBERS BY YEAR, 1997/1998 - 1999/2000 .....   | 23 |
| FIGURE 11 SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS OVER TIME, 1997/1998-1999/ .....   | 24 |
| FIGURE 12 WORK PERMIT CATEGORIES, 1997/1998 - 1999/2000 .....  | 25 |
| FIGURE 13 THE PROPORTIONS OF WORKERS WHO BECAME RESIDENTS BY RESIDENCE APPROVAL POLICY .....   | 26 |
| FIGURE 14 THE NUMBER OF WORKERS WHO BECAME RESIDENTS AS A PROPORTION OF THE NUMBER OF WORK PERMITS GRANTED IN 1997/1998 BY RESIDENCE APPROVALS .....       | 27 |
| FIGURE 15 THE OCCUPATIONS OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS, LEVEL ONE NEW ZEALAND STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS, 2000/2001 (N = 883) .....                  | 28 |
| FIGURE 16 THE TOP TEN OCCUPATIONS OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS, THREE-DIGIT LEVEL, NEW ZEALAND STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS, 2000/2001 (N = 883) ..... | 29 |
| FIGURE 17 THE INDUSTRIES PEOPLE GRANTED GENERAL, AND MEDICAL AND DENTAL WORK PERMITS WERE EMPLOYED IN, 2000/2001 (N = 869).....                            | 30 |
| FIGURE 18 THE TOP TEN INDUSTRIES OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS, THREE-DIGIT LEVEL, NEW ZEALAND STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS, 2000/2001 (N = 869) .....  | 31 |
| FIGURE 19 AN EXAMPLE OF A POWERPLAY QUERY USED.....  | 37 |
| FIGURE 20 THE FIRST IMPROMPTU QUERY .....  | 38 |
| FIGURE 21 THE SECOND IMPROMPTU QUERY.....  | 39 |

## TABLES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| TABLE 1 THE CLASSIFICATION OF WORK PERMIT CRITERIA USED IN THE REPORT.....  | 35 |
| TABLE 2 SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS.....  | 36 |
| TABLE 3 WORK PERMIT CATEGORIES BY GENDER, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079).....   | 41 |
| TABLE 4 WORK PERMITS CATEGORIES 1997/1998- 1999/2000.....   | 41 |
| TABLE 5 WORK PERMITS GRANTED COMPARED WITH INDIVIDUALS GRANTED WORK PERMITS DURING EACH YEAR 1997/1998-1999/2000 .....  | 41 |
| TABLE 6 THE NATIONALITIES OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079).....   | 42 |
| TABLE 7 THE NATIONALITIES OF INDIVIDUALS GRANTED WORK PERMITS, 1999/2000 (N = 33,955).....  | 42 |
| TABLE 8 THE NATIONALITIES OF PEOPLE GRANTED SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS .....   | 43 |
| TABLE 9 THE AGE GROUPINGS OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS, 1999/2000 ( N = 38,079) .....   | 43 |
| TABLE 10 THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK PERMITS IN 1997/1998 WHO BECAME RESIDENTS BY 1999/2000 .....   | 43 |
| TABLE 11 THE OCCUPATIONS OF PEOPLE GRANTED GENERAL, AND MEDICAL AND GENERAL WORK PERMITS, HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE NEW ZEALAND STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OCCUPATIONS, 2000/2001 (N = 1,000) ..... | 44 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| TABLE 12 THE TOP TEN OCCUPATIONS OF PEOPLE GRANTED WORK GENERAL, AND MEDICAL AND DENTAL PERMITS, THIRD LEVEL OF THE NEW ZEALAND STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OCCUPATIONS, 2000/2001 (N = 883) ..... | 44 |
| TABLE 13 THE INDUSTRIES PEOPLE GRANTED GENERAL, AND MEDICAL AND DENTAL WORK PERMITS WERE EMPLOYED IN, 1999/2000 (N = 869).....   | 44 |
| TABLE 14 SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS BY GENDER .....   | 45 |
| TABLE 15 SKILL SHORTAGES WORK PERMITS BY AGE GROUP .....   | 45 |
| TABLE 16 SKILL SHORTAGE WORK PERMITS BY YEAR .....   | 45 |
| TABLE 17 THE RESIDENCE APPROVAL CRITERIA OF PEOPLE ON MEDICAL WORK PERMITS.....  | 45 |
| TABLE 18 THE RESIDENCE APPROVAL CRITERIA OF PEOPLE FORMERLY HOLDING GENERAL WORK PERMITS.....  | 46 |
| TABLE 19 THE RESIDENCE APPROVAL CRITERIA OF PEOPLE FORMERLY HOLDING BUSINESS WORK PERMITS.....   | 46 |



# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction and background

This research project was undertaken to document some of the characteristics of New Zealand's work permit policy and its links with residence. Current work permit policy allows non-New Zealand residents to legally work in New Zealand for periods of up to three years. Work permits can be granted for a diverse assortment of reasons. Standard work permit objectives are to protect the employment of New Zealanders while still allowing:

- Employers to recruit workers from overseas to fill shortages;
- New Zealand to meet its obligations to neighbouring Pacific countries;
- People to work on approved reciprocal working holiday schemes; and
- Visitors to lawfully work while on holiday, in certain circumstances.

There are also 29 special work permit categories with a collection of disparate purposes. For example, the fiancé(e)s of New Zealanders may be granted work permits, as may Halal slaughtermen, the executives of multinational companies, and professional sports people.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives were, with a particular focus on work permits granted to address skill shortages in New Zealand:

- To examine the characteristics of people granted New Zealand work permits;
- To identify any trends in work permits over time;
- To identify the proportion of people granted work permits who go on to become residents; and
- To estimate the occupations and industries people granted work permits enter.

To meet these objectives, a series of analyses of the New Zealand Immigration Service's (NZIS) Management Information System (MIS) information were undertaken. This included a sample survey of the Application Management System (AMS) records.

## 1.3 Nature of the data

The data presented in this report were, for the most part, based on counts of work permits and the characteristics of these. Multiple work permits granted to distinct individuals during a given reference period, such as a year, were each counted separately.

## 1.4 Work permit categories

During the 1999/2000 July to June financial year<sup>1</sup> some 38,000 work permits were granted, and of the various categories the "General"<sup>2</sup> category was the single most populous, accounting for 38 percent (14,488) of all work permits<sup>3</sup>. Following General in descending order of share of the total, were Working Holiday schemes (15 percent), Spouses/partners (15 percent), Asylum Seekers (11 percent), Medical Personnel (6 percent), Entertainers and Sports Professionals (5 percent), and at 2 percent each, Business People, Skilled Trades People and Tertiary Education Employees<sup>4</sup>. Forty-six percent of work permits were granted to address skill shortages in New Zealand. Skill shortages work permits were those approved under the General, Medical and Business policies.

## 1.5 Nationalities of workers

There was considerable diversity in the nationalities of people granted work permits in the 1999/2000 year - evidenced by the fact that 32 percent of work permits were granted to people of nationalities other than those of the top ten work permit source countries. Overall, more work permits (27 percent) were granted to people from Great Britain than any single other nationality. Other top nationalities included the United States of America (9 percent), Japan (7 percent), India (5 percent), South Africa (4 percent), Canada (4 percent) and China (4 percent). The nationalities of people granted skill shortage work permits did not differ greatly from those specified above.

The nationalities of distinct individuals granted work permits during 1999/00 displayed a pattern similar to that of the work permits granted. There were, however, some noteworthy departures. While Great Britain was the single largest source of distinct individuals, accounting for 26 percent of the total, Japan was the second most prominent nation, contributing to 16 percent of the total. Following Japan were: the United States (7 percent); Canada and South Africa (4 percent); China (3 percent); Fiji, Ireland and Thailand (2 percent); and Other (30 percent).

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<sup>1</sup> All years specified in this report are July to June years.

<sup>2</sup> "General" work permits are granted to non-New Zealand residents when an employer is unable to fill a job vacancy with a suitable New Zealander.

<sup>3</sup> Note that administrative work permits, such as replacements and permission to recruit overseas, have been excluded from the analysis, as have group work permits.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from the General and Asylum Seeker categories, the others are aggregated categories. For example the Spouse/Partner category groups together Spouse of New Zealand citizen/resident, De facto partner of New Zealand citizen/resident, Same sex partner of New Zealand citizen/resident, Fiancé(e) of New Zealand citizen/resident, and Partner & child of New Zealand citizen/resident.

## **1.6 The gender of workers**

In 1999/2000, almost 60 percent of work permits were granted to males. Males predominated in all of the highly aggregated work permit categories except for Working Holiday, Medical Personnel and Spouse/ Partner. There were not significant differences in the gender proportions of skill shortage workers.

## **1.7 The age of workers**

Eighty percent of people on work permits were aged between 21 and 40 years. Eleven percent was aged between 41 and 50 years, while 1 percent were aged over 60 years. Skill shortage workers were slightly older than the figures for all workers as set out above. For example, 44 percent were aged between 21 and 30 years, 35 percent between 31 and 40 years, and 14 percent between 41 and 50 years.

## **1.8 Work permits over time**

There was a steady increase of approximately 4,000 work permits per year between 1997/1998 and 1999/2000. In 1997/1998, 29,967 work permits were issued, in 1998/1999, 34,062 and in 1999/2000, 38,079. The number of skill shortage work permits did not increase over time in the same way as all work permits. In 1997/1998 15,636 skill shortage work permits were granted, this dropped to 15,252 in 1998/1999, only to rise to 18,177 in 1999/2000. Skill shortage workers accounted for most of the increase in work permits between 1998/1999 and 1999/2000.

Also rising over time, were the number of distinct individuals granted work permits. In 1997/98 27,890 individuals were granted work permits. This grew to 31,373 in 1998/99 and 33,955 by 1999/00.

## **1.9 The proportion of workers who became residents**

It is of note that 30 percent of people in New Zealand on work permits in 1997/1998 became residents by 30 September 2000. Fourteen percent were approved under Spouse/Partner residence policies and 14 percent, under the General Skills residence category. It is possible that additional people from the 1997/1998 cohort of workers will become residents in periods subsequent to September 2000.

## **1.10 The occupations of workers**

In 2000/2001, 31 percent of "general" work permits were granted to people classified as Sales or Service Workers, 28 percent to Professionals and 20 percent to Technicians and Associated Professionals.

### **1.11 The industries of workers**

Twenty-two percent of 'general' work permit holders' worked in services allied to transport, 17 percent worked in medical or dental industries, 9 percent worked in business services and 7 percent worked in education services.

## **2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research project was undertaken to document some of the characteristics of New Zealand's work permit policy and its links with residence. Information was collected about the characteristics of people granted work permits, the categories people were granted work permits under, the occupations and industries of work permit holders, and links between work permits and residence.

### **2.2 Structure of the report**

The report is structured in four main parts. The first covers the background to the research, the research objectives, the methodology used and limitations of the research. In the second part the main findings of the research are presented, while in part three the findings are discussed and some of the implications of these explored. Finally, the fourth part contains appendices where detailed technical information is provided.

### **2.3 Background**

Work permits allow non-New Zealand residents to legally work in New Zealand and can be granted for a diverse assortment of reasons. Standard work permit objectives are to protect the employment of New Zealanders while still allowing:

- Employers to recruit workers from overseas to fill shortages;
- New Zealand to meet its obligations to neighbouring Pacific countries;
- People to work on approved reciprocal working holiday schemes; and
- Visitors to lawfully work while on holiday, in certain circumstances.

There are also 29 special work permit categories with a collection of disparate purposes. For example, the fiancé(e)s of New Zealanders may be granted work permits, as may Halal slaughtermen, the executives of multinational companies, and international sports people. Work permits can be granted for a range of periods, up to a maximum of three years.



### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central aim of the research was to provide background information on work permit policy in New Zealand. There was a particular focus on work permits granted for the purpose of addressing skill shortages in New Zealand. The specific objectives were:

- To examine the characteristics of people granted New Zealand work permits;
- To identify any trends in work permits over time;
- To identify the proportion of people granted work permits who go on to become residents; and
- To estimate the occupations and industries people granted work permits enter.

#### 3.1 Methodology

Data mining the New Zealand Immigration Service's (NZIS's) electronic records was the main research technique used. To identify the characteristics of people granted work permits, a series of PowerPlay reports were run on the Management Information System (MIS)<sup>5</sup>. These yielded information about the nationalities, genders, ages, and approval criteria of people granted work permits. PowerPlay was also used to identify trends in work permits over time.

Impromptu MIS queries were used to determine the proportion of people on work permits who went on to become residents. A series of queries were run to capture the client identification numbers (IDs) of all those granted work permits during the 1997/1998 July to June year<sup>6</sup>. The ID numbers were then used as filters to pick up subsequent residence approvals, up to the time the research commenced - 30 September 2000. See Figure 1, over, for a graphical representation of the process.

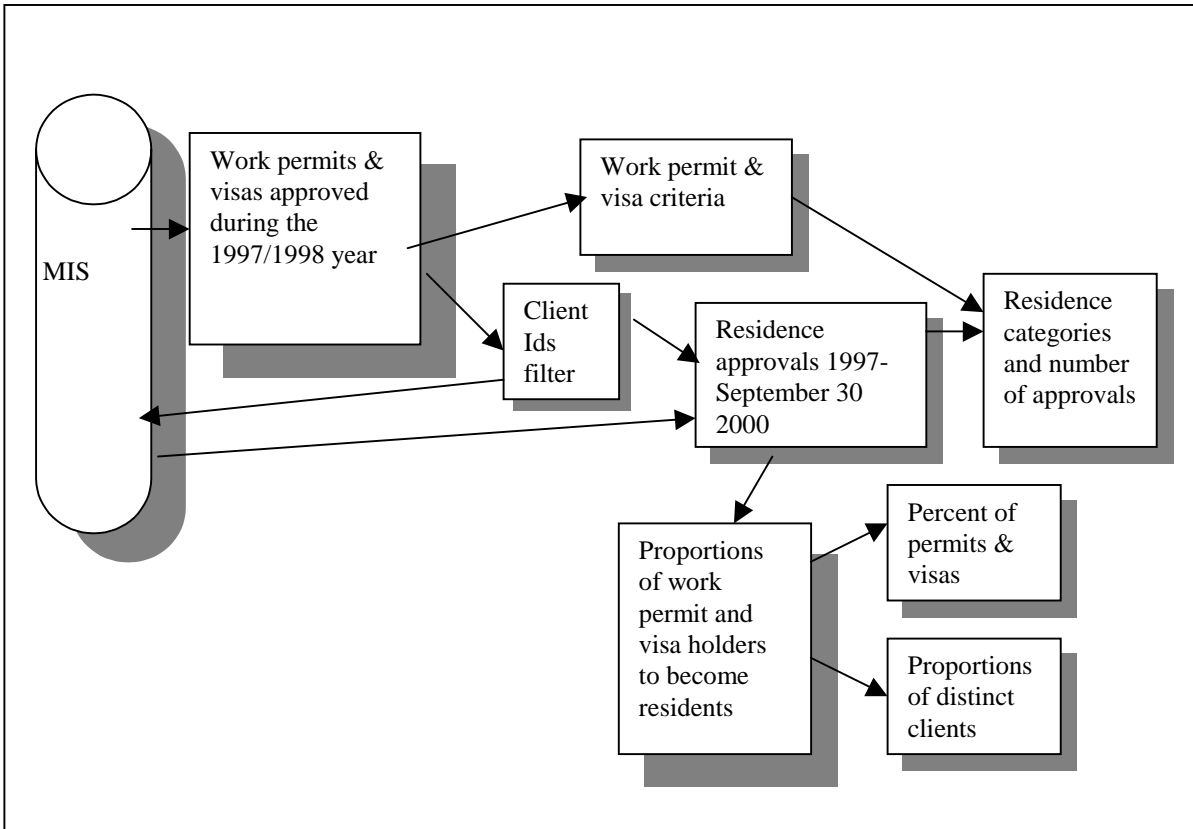
To estimate the occupations and industries people on work permits entered, it was necessary to manually retrieve a random sample of records from the NZIS's Application Management System (AMS). Initially a small survey with a sample size of 150 work permits was undertaken in 2000. However, as part of related work the following year, a much larger survey with a sample of 1,000 was conducted. The occupations and industries were classified in accordance with the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, and the New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification.

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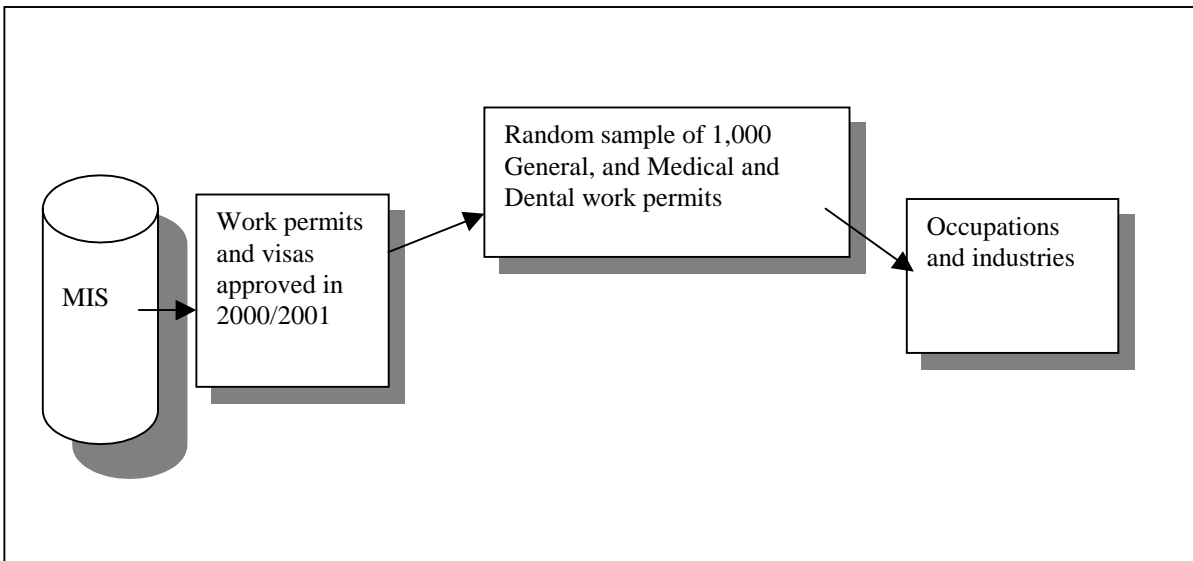
<sup>5</sup> PowerPlay and Impromptu are two computer analysis tools used to extract data from the NZIS's databases.

<sup>6</sup> The NZIS's current MIS began on 1 July 1997.

**Figure 1 The process of identifying people who had work permits in 1997/1998 and later became residents**



**Figure 2 The sample survey process**



## 3.2 Definitions

"Workers"- this term is used to collectively denote people granted work permits or issued with work visas - in other words, people "on" work permits.

"Work permits"- will be used to denote both "work permits" and "work visas". In the NZIS's operational reporting, an application for a work permit is said to be finalised when either a work visa is issued to an offshore applicant, or a permit is issued to an onshore applicant. When a person arrives at a New Zealand border with a work visa they are issued a corresponding work permit - which is not counted again.

"Year" - these are July to June years, unless otherwise stated.

"Skill shortage work permits" - are work permits granted under the general work permit policy, the medical and dental personnel policy, the business policies, skilled trade policies and tertiary education policies. The distinction is made between these types of work permits and those not requiring a labour market test, such as the working holiday and spouse partner policies.

## 3.3 Limitations

The patterns identified in the analysis of MIS information are specific to the period in question and it may not be appropriate to extrapolate these to other periods or cohorts.

The count of people who moved from work to residence permits is likely to be an undercount, being based on data pertaining to the interval starting at 1 July 1997 and ending at 30 September 2000. It is probable that additional people in subsequent periods would increase the number of residents identified in this report. As MIS only became "live" in July 1997, analysis of past trends was limited to this period.

The occupations and industries of work permit holders were identified using a survey. The standard errors are between plus or minus 1 to 3 percentage points. As a consequence, the standard errors of the estimates need to be taken into account. For example, where two estimates are close - such as 28 percent and 30 percent - they should be interpreted as being of similar rather than different percentages. Also, it was not possible to identify the occupations and industries in a number of cases and it is not known how this may have affected the estimates.

## 3.4 Nature of the data

The analyses presented in the report were, for the most part, derived from counts of work permit applications and the characteristics of these, not from counts of distinct individuals granted work permits<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> This was because the NZIS's MIS primary units are applications as opposed to people.



## 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

The following sections present the key findings of the research. First, work permit policy is discussed. Second, the categories under which people were granted work permits are explored. Next, the research objectives are addressed by: outlining the demographic characteristics of workers; documenting work permit patterns over time; identifying the proportion of workers who go on to become residents; and estimating the occupations and industries entered by people on work permits.

### 4.2 Work permit categories

This section provides some examples of General work permit circumstances and outlines the composition of the main work permit categories used in the report. For a detailed taxonomy of the classification of work permit categories used, see Appendix A.

#### General

General category work permits may be granted when an employer is unable to fill a vacancy with a suitable New Zealand resident and this is substantiated by a "labour market test"<sup>8</sup>. Examples of General category work permits granted in the 1999/2000 year include:

- A one-year permit for an ethnic Indian chef ;
- A 16 month permit for a speech and language therapist to work in a school;
- A one-month permit for a Japanese tourist escort;
- A six month permit for an Americas Cup syndicate crew member; and
- A four-month permit for a vet.

#### Working holiday

Included in the Working Holiday aggregation were the various working holiday arrangements such as the French Working Holiday Scheme and the United Kingdom Working Holiday Scheme. These provisions generally allow a specific number - 2000 in the case of the United Kingdom scheme - of "young people" to work in New Zealand for up to 12 months.

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<sup>8</sup> Immigration officers must be satisfied that there are no New Zealand citizens or residents available to do the job offered. Employers make a case for each individual application; and/or NZIS offices in New Zealand and overseas check an offer of employment through the Department of Work and Income and/or NZIS offices seeking labour market advice from others in the particular industry.

**Spouse/partner**

Spouses, partners and fiancé(e)s of New Zealanders may work in New Zealand if they meet certain conditions, such as being in a genuine and stable relationship with their partner. Spouses and partners are not subject to the "labour market test" that is applied to certain other categories of work permits.

**Asylum seekers**

People claiming refugee status in New Zealand may be granted work permits while their claim is considered. Such work permits are not labour market tested.

**Medical**

Medical and dental personnel are subject to general work permit policy, but once in New Zealand can vary the conditions of their permit and change employers.

**Entertainment-sport**

This category grouped sundry sport and performance people ranging from dance and music examiners to professional sports coaches to artists of international distinction. There were various labour market tests for the people in these categories.

**Business**

Business people on both short and long-term secondments were included in this category.

**Trade**

Specialist machinery installers and service technicians, Halal slaughter men and crew of fishing boats were aggregated as "trade".

**Tertiary**

This classification was for people working in tertiary institutions, such as lecturers and research students.

**Other**

This was the standard residual category.

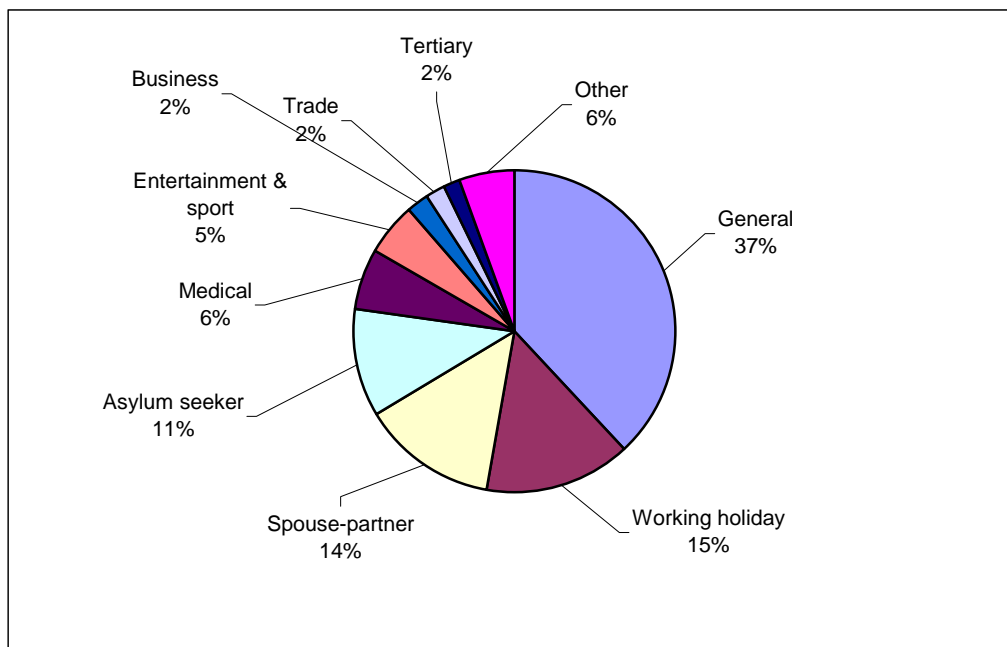
**Skill shortage work permits**

This is a grouping of work permits consisting of General, Medical, Business policies, and selected Trade and Tertiary. The aggregation allows for a separate analysis, isolated from other work permit criteria such as Asylum seeker and Spouse/partner.

### 4.3 The criteria people were granted work permits under

During the 1999/2000 July to June year, over 38,000 work permits were granted<sup>9</sup>. Figure 3, below, shows that of the main groupings, "General" was the single largest category accounting for 38 percent of the total<sup>10</sup>. Following the General category in size were, Working Holiday schemes (15 percent), Spouses and Partners (14 percent), Asylum Seekers (11 percent), Medical Personnel (6 percent), Entertainers and Sports Professionals (5 percent), Business People (2 percent), Trades Persons (2 percent) and Tertiary Institution Workers (2 percent). In total, 46 percent of work permits were granted under skill shortage policies.

**Figure 3 Work permits by criteria, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079)**



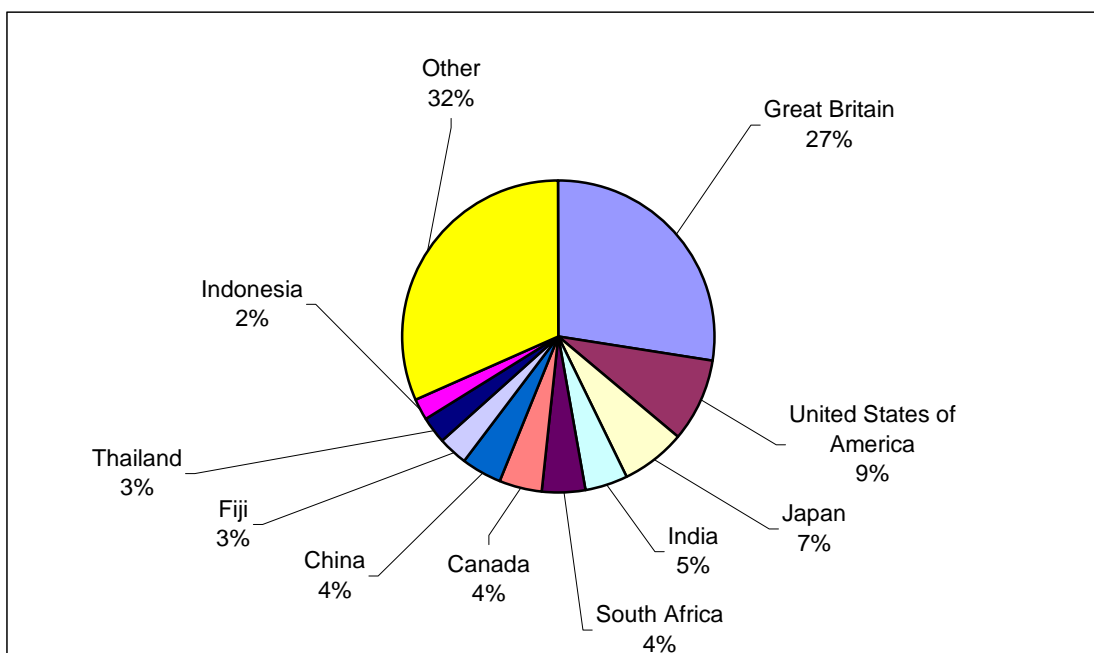
<sup>9</sup> The total of 38,000 work permits excludes group work visas. These mainly granted to the crew of foreign fishing vessels, entertainers/performers and their support workers, and to sports teams. In 1999/2000 3033 group visas were granted - a decrease from the 4,049 granted in 1998/1999 and the 3,973 in 1997/1998.

<sup>10</sup> Also Excluded from the analysis presented in this section are administrative activities, which are counted in MIS as work permits. These include replacing permits and endorsing employers' applications to recruit offshore workers.

#### 4.4 Workers nationalities

The nationalities of work permit holders during 1999/2000 were diverse. Great Britain<sup>11</sup> was the most numerically significant source of workers - accounting for 27 percent of the total. The United States made up 9 percent of workers, Japan 7 percent, India 5 percent, while South Africa, Canada and China were 4 percent each. The diversity of nationalities is evidenced by the size, 32 percent, of the "Other" category. One trend of note identified, was a slight shift towards diversity at the expense of the top 10 nationalities. For example, in 1997/1998, 26 percent of workers were from "Other" nationalities. In 1998/1999 the corresponding proportion was 31 percent, and 32 percent by 1999/2000.

**Figure 4 The nationalities of people granted work permits, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079)**



#### 4.5 The nationalities of individuals granted work permits during 1999/2000

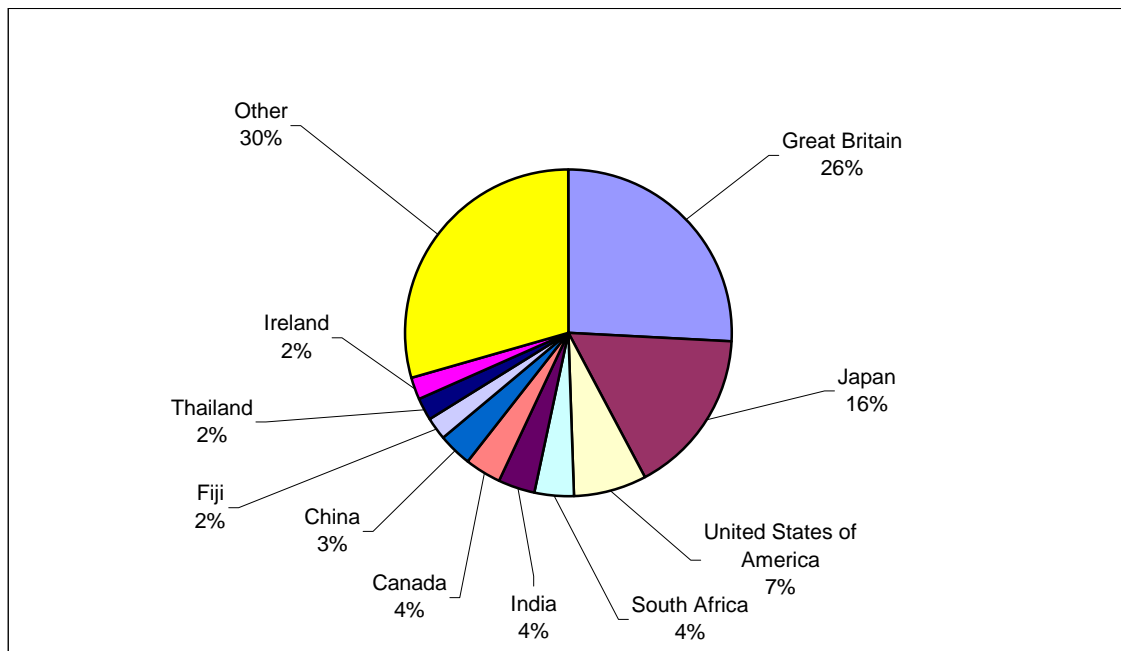
The following analysis was based on distinct individuals granted work permits rather than numbers of work permits issued. The nationalities of distinct individuals holding work permits in 1999/00 had a pattern similar to that of the workers granted work permits during the same period. However, there were some notable variations. Twenty-six percent of the individuals were from Great Britain - which was again the pre-eminent nationality. However, 16 percent of the individuals were from Japan, 7 percent from the

<sup>11</sup> The NZIS classifies nationalities as they are stated on passports. This explains why Great Britain rather than the United Kingdom appears in this report.

United States, 4 percent each from South Africa and Canada, 3 percent from China, 2 percent each from Fiji, Thailand and Ireland, and 30 percent from all the other nations.

The most marked difference between the individuals' and workers, was the proportion of Japanese individuals. Sixteen percent of all individuals were from Japan, in comparison, only 7 percent of work permits were granted to workers from Japan. Another prominent divergence, was the proportions from the United States - 9 percent of workers were from the United States compared with only 7 percent of individuals holding work permits. Finally, Ireland appeared among the top ten nationalities of individuals, but Indonesia did not.

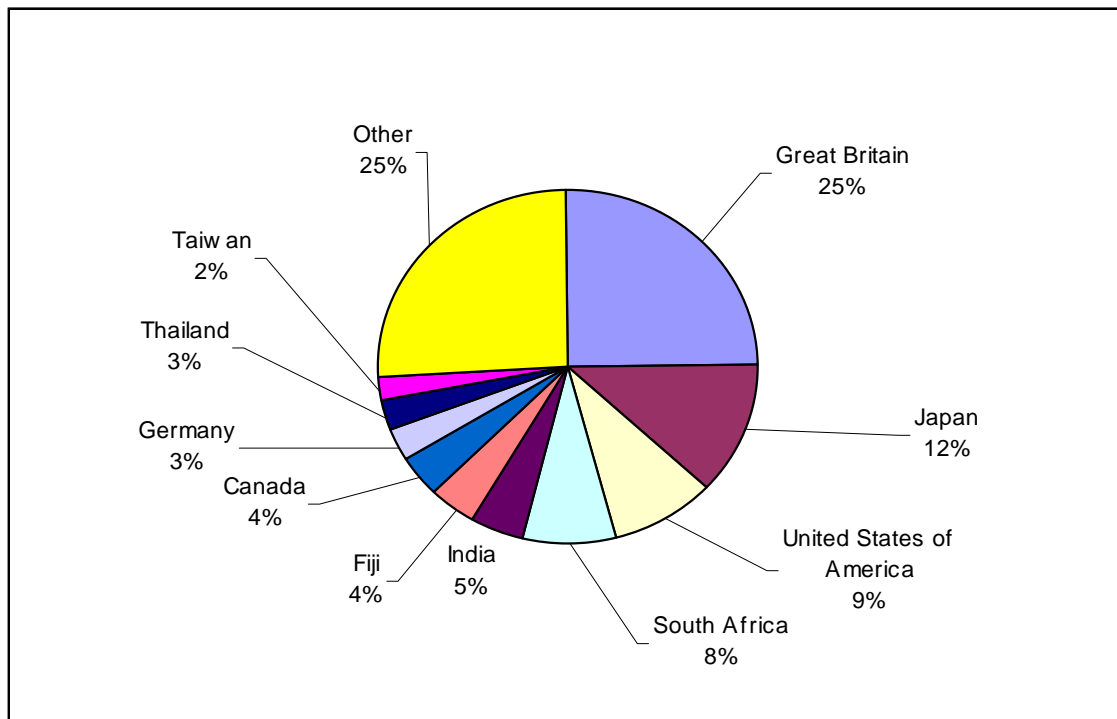
**Figure 5 The nationalities of individuals granted work permits during 1999/2000 (N = 33,955 7)**



#### 4.6 Skill shortage workers' nationalities

An alternative analysis of workers' nationalities is provided in Figure 6, below, which is an analysis of people granted *skill shortage* work permits by nationality. Interestingly, the distribution is similar to that of all work permits approved in 1999/2000. Great Britain was, at 25 percent, still the single most prominent nationality. However, while the top five nationalities were the same, the order was different. Japan was the second most significant source country at 12 percent, followed by the United States of America (9 percent), South Africa (8 percent) and India (5 percent).

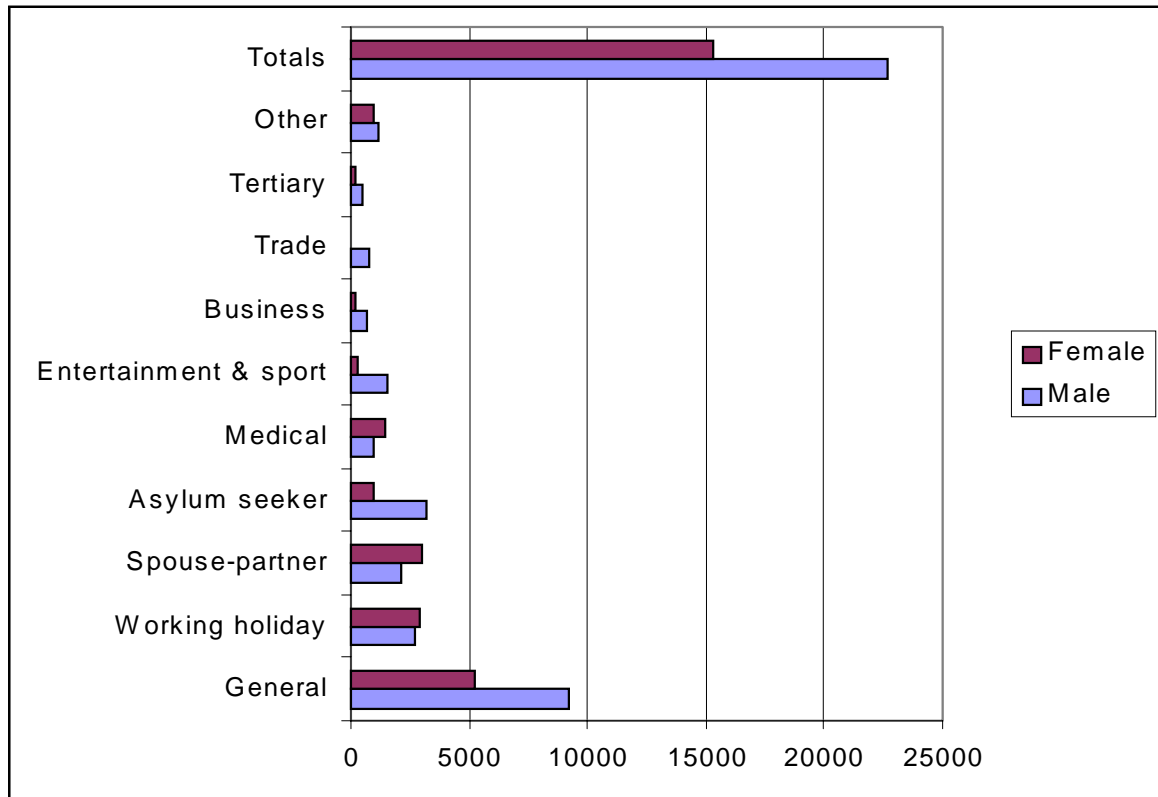
**Figure 6 The nationalities of people granted skill shortage work permits in 1999/2000 (N = 18,177)**



#### 4.7 Gender of Work Permit Holders

Almost 60 percent of work permits were granted to males in 1999/2000. Figure 7, below, shows that males were predominant in General, Asylum Seeker, Entertainment/Sport, Trades, Business, Tertiary and Other categories. Females out numbered males in the Spouse/Partner, Working Holiday and medical categories.

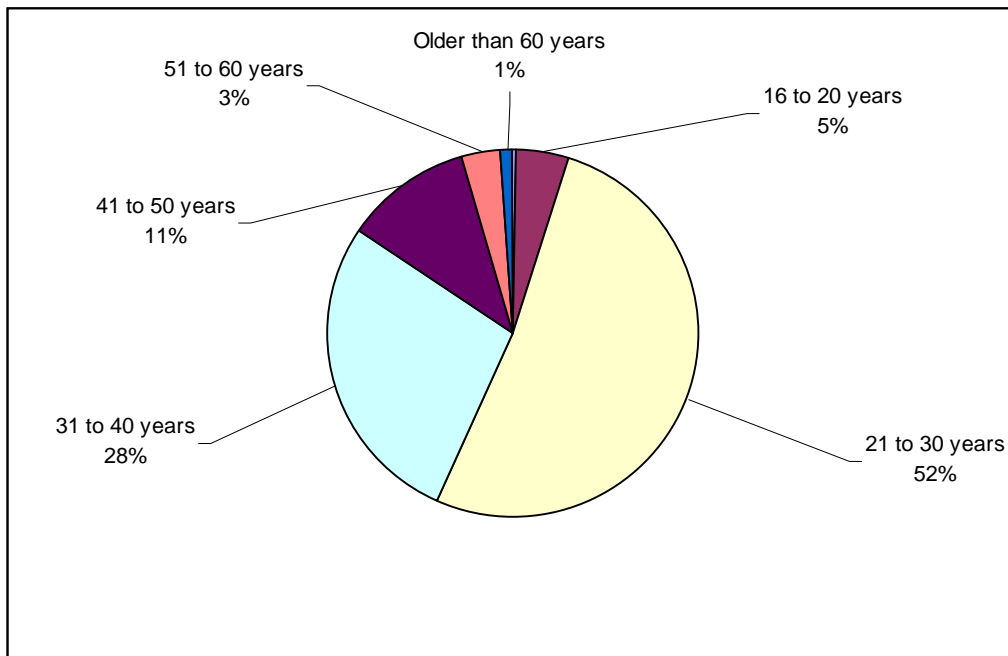
**Figure 7 The gender of people granted work permits by work permit category, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079)**



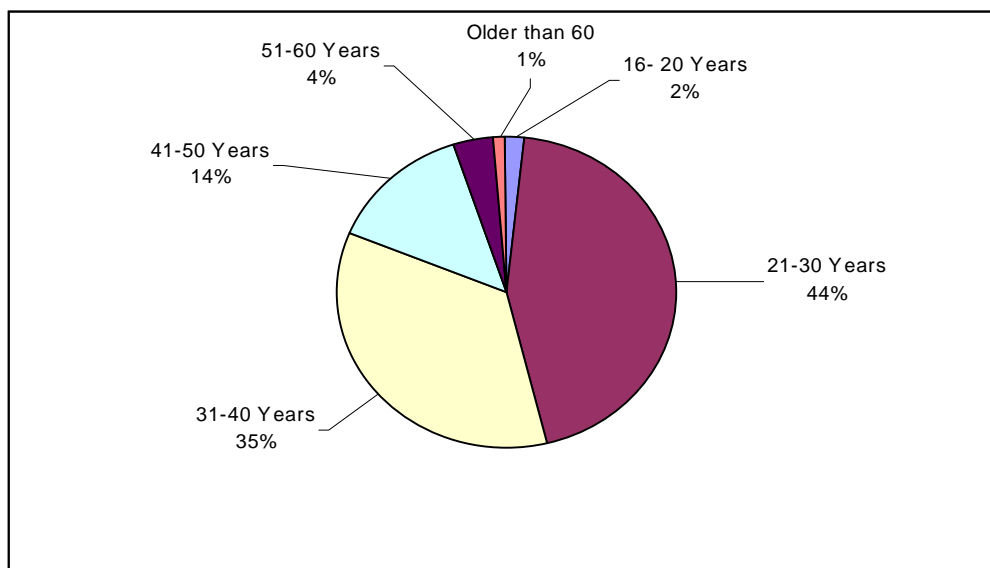
## 4.8 Age of workers

Figure 8, below, shows that the majority (52 percent) of people granted work permits were aged between 21 and 30 years. In total, 80 percent of people granted work permits were aged between 21 and 40 years. People granted skill shortage work permits were slightly older than those granted all types of work permits. For example, Figure 9 shows that 35 percent of skill shortage work permits were granted to people aged between 31 and 40 years, and 14 percent to people aged between 41 and 50 years.

**Figure 8 The ages of people granted work permits (N = 38,079)**



**Figure 9 The age of people granted skill shortage work permits (N = 18,177)**

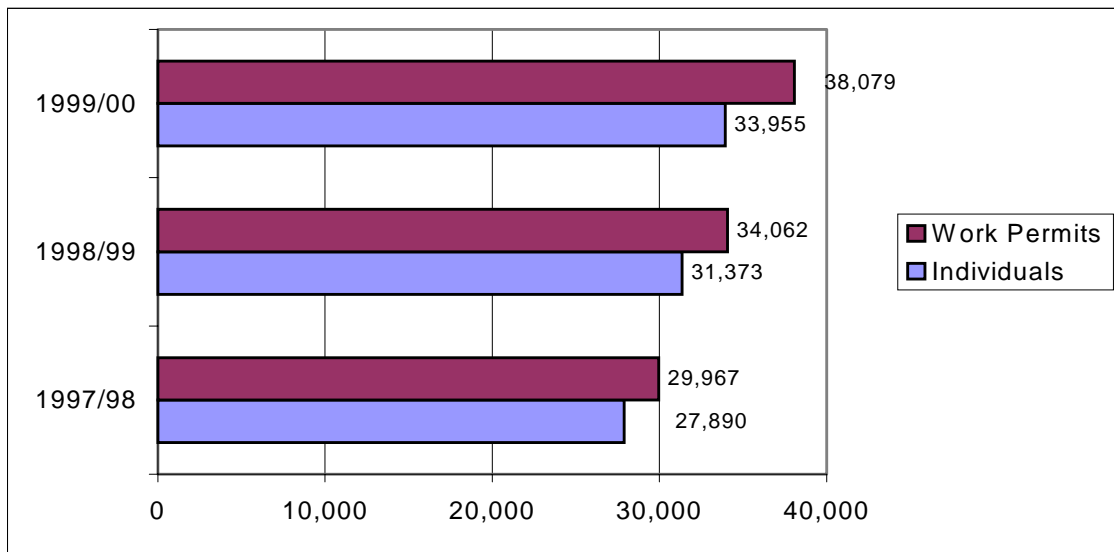


#### 4.9 Work permits over time

There was a steady growth in the number of work permits approved during the last three financial years. Figure 10, below, shows that 29,032 work permits were approved in 1997/1998, 34,062 in 1998/1999, and 38,079 in 1999/2000. This is roughly equivalent to an increase of 4,000 approvals a year.

Also rising over time, were the number of distinct individuals granted work permits. In 1997/98 27,890 individuals were granted work permits. This grew to 31,373 in 1998/99 and 33,955 by 1999/00.

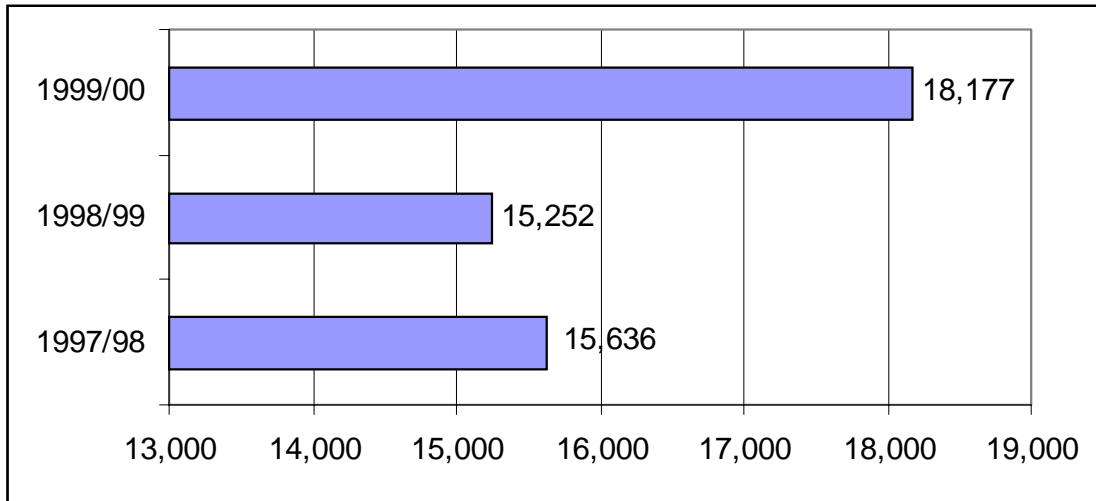
**Figure 10 Work permit numbers by year, 1997/1998 - 1999/2000**



#### 4.10 Skill shortage work permits over time

Skill shortage work permits did not steadily increase over time as total work permits did. Figure 11, indicates that there was a drop of about 400 in the numbers of skill shortage workers in 1998/1999 compared to 1997/1998. However, in 1999/2000 the number increased over the 1998/1999 figure by almost 3,000 - accounting for much of the rise in permit numbers for that period.

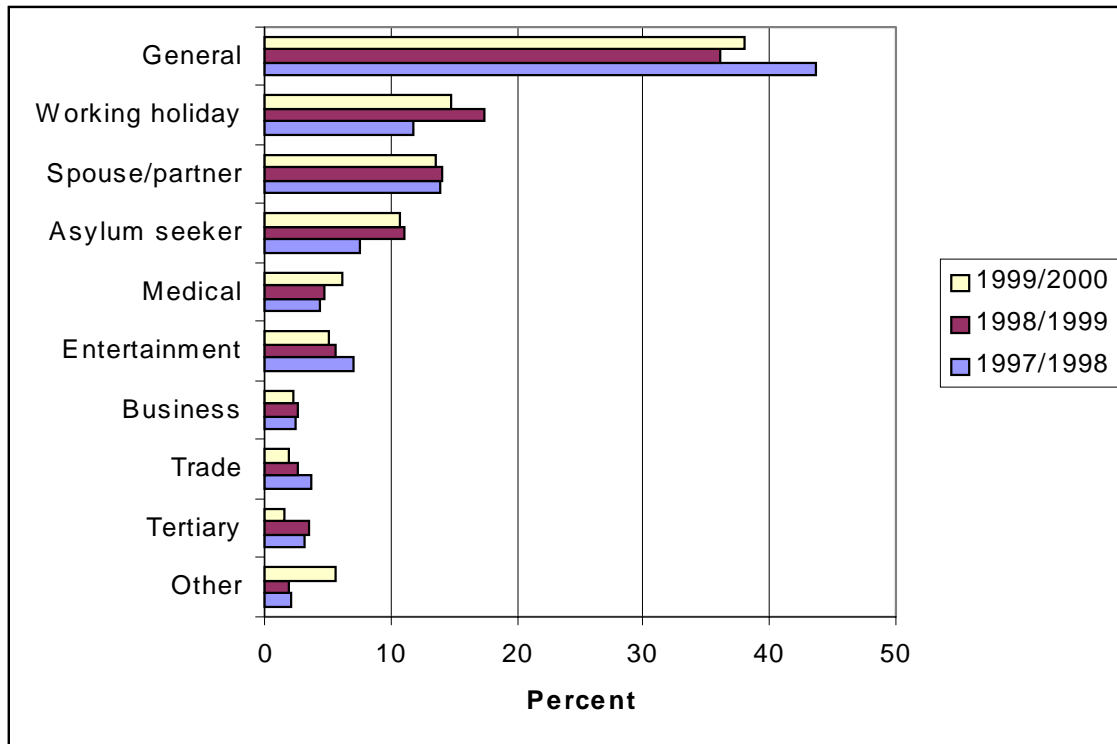
**Figure 11 Skill shortage work permits over time, 1997/1998-1999/2000**



#### 4.11 Work permit categories over time

Figure 12, below, indicates that there were some fluctuations in the categories of permits approved during the three-year period from 1997/1998 to 1999/2000. For example, in 1997/1998 44 percent of work permits were General category permits. This figure dropped to 36 percent in 1998/1999 and rose to 38 percent in 1999/2000. However, because more work permits were approved in 1999/2000 the actual number of General work permits increased. There were small annual declines in the Trade and Entertainment categories, while the Medical categories increased slightly.

**Figure 12 Work permit categories, 1997/1998 - 1999/2000**

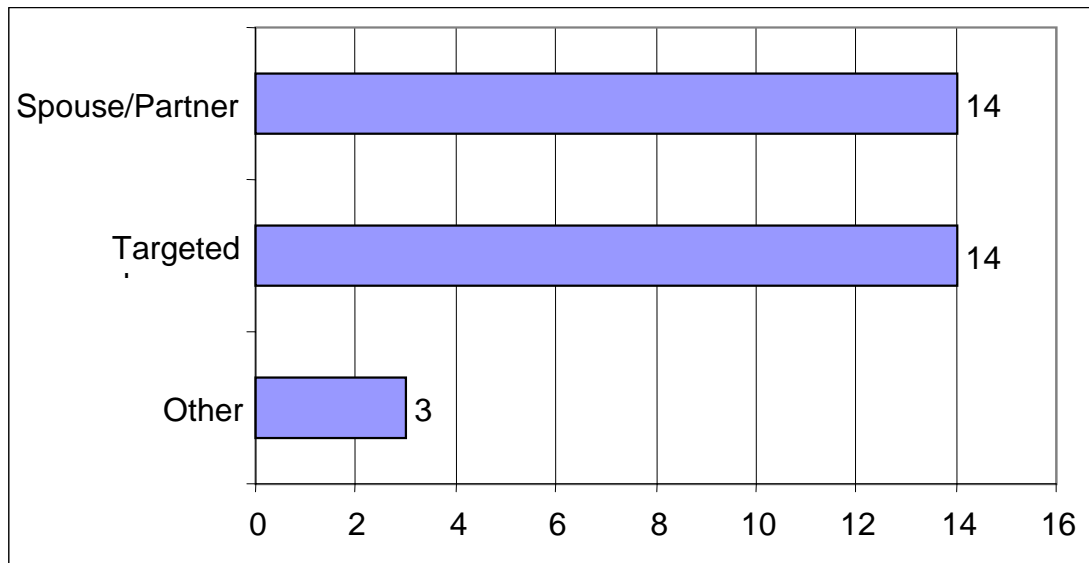


#### 4.12 The proportions of workers in the 1997/1998 year who became New Zealand residents

This section examines the propensity of workers to become residents and identifies the categories workers were approved for residence under. Figure 12 shows that in total 30 percent of the individuals granted work permits in 1997/1998 became residents by September 2000. This equates to 305 residence approvals per 1,000 workers.

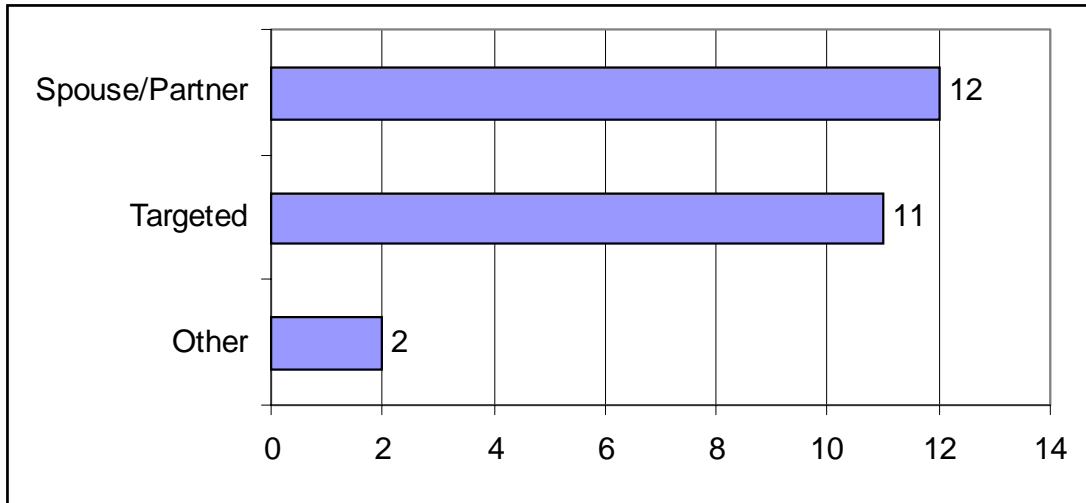
Over 90 percent of the workers approved for residence were approved under either the General Skills category or one of the Family Spouse/Partner policies. Figure 13 shows that of all those granted work permits in 1997/1998, 14 percent (3,456 people) were approved for residence under spouse/partner residence policies and 14 percent (3,347 people) under targeted policies such as the General Skills and Business Categories. Only 3 percent were approved under other residence policies.

**Figure 13 The proportions of workers who became residents by residence approval policy**



Because an individual can be granted more than one work permit in a year, it is also useful to calculate the ratio of residents to *work permits* granted. This was lower than that of the preceding analysis at 248 residents per 1,000 work permits. Figure 14 shows that the number of workers who became residents equated to 25 percent of the total number of work permits granted in 1997/1998.

**Figure 14** The number of workers who became residents as a proportion of the number of work permits granted in 1997/1998 by residence approvals

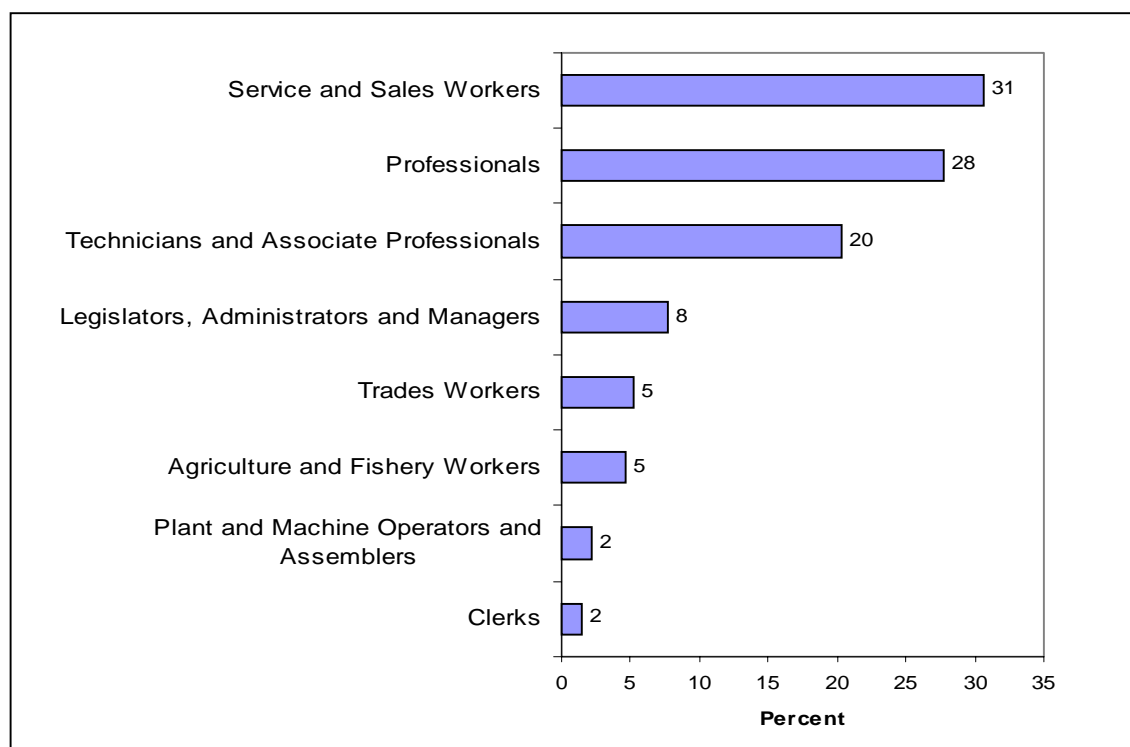


### 4.13 The occupations of work permit holders

This section examines the occupations of people granted work permits under General and, Medical and Dental criteria, during 2000/2001. Two analyses using the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (NZSCO) are provided. The first shows the distribution of occupations at the highest level of the classification, while the second features the top ten occupations at the, more disaggregated, three-digit level of the classification. As mentioned in the Limitations section, standard errors of between plus or minus 1 percent to 3 percentage points need to be considered when interpreting the magnitude of the estimates.

Figure 15, below, shows that Service and Sales Workers and Professionals were the two most populous occupational groupings, respectively making up 31 percent and 28 percent of the of the total. Technicians and Associate Professionals was the next largest grouping and accounted for 20 percent of the occupations. The remaining groupings were, in descending order of size, Legislators, Administrators and Managers (8 percent), Trade Workers (5 percent), Agriculture and Fishery workers (5 percent) Plant and Machinery Operators and Assemblers (2 percent), and Clerks each at (2 percent).

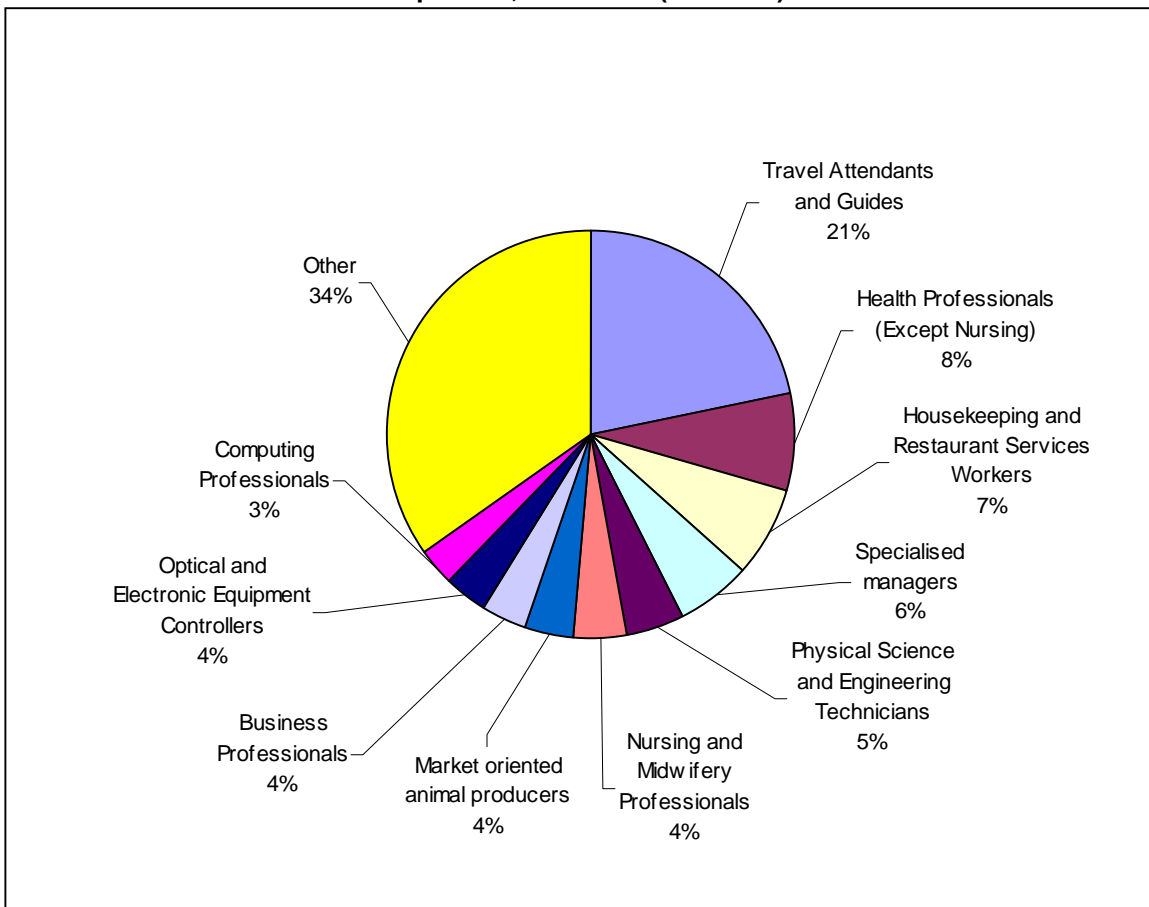
**Figure 15 The occupations of work permit holders, Level One New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2000/2001 (n = 883<sup>12</sup>)**



<sup>12</sup> The sample size was 1,000 work permits, however, it was only possible to identify the occupations in 883 of the cases.

The Travel Attendants and Guides grouping was by far the single most sizeable three-digit NZSCO category, accounting for 21 percent of the total. Figure 16, below, shows the next largest groupings were Health Professionals (8 percent), Housekeeping and Restaurant Services Workers (7 percent) and Specialised Managers (6 percent). At between 5 and 3 percent were occupations classified as Physical Science and Engineering Technicians (5 percent), Nursing and Midwifery Professionals (4 percent), Market Oriented Animal Producers (4 percent), Business Professionals (4 percent), Optical and Electronic Equipment Controllers (4 percent), and Computer Professionals (3 percent). Thirty-four percent of the occupations were classified as the residual "other" suggesting much diversity in the occupations work permit holders are employed in.

**Figure 16 The top ten occupations of work permit holders, Three-digit level, New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2000/2001 (n = 883<sup>13</sup>)**



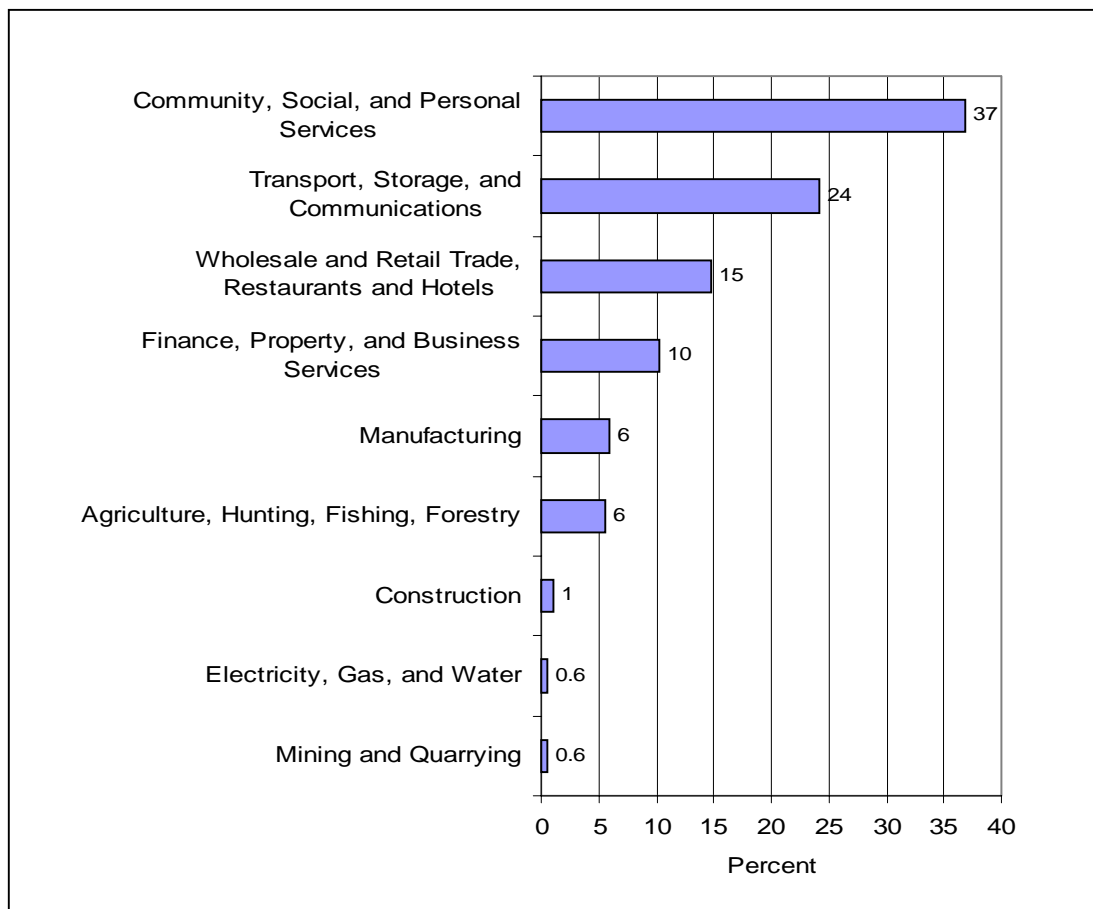
<sup>13</sup> The sample size was 1,000 work permits, however, it was only possible to identify the occupations in 883 of the cases.

#### 4.14 The industries of work permit holders

This section examines the industries work permit holders were employed in. The structure follows that of the previous section, but draws on analysis of the New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (NZSIC) as opposed to the NZSCO. Again, only work permits granted under general, and medical and dental criteria are included.

It can be seen in Figure 17, below, that the Community, Social and Personal Services industry group was the largest category at 37 percent of the total. Other major industry groupings at the top level of the NZSIC were Transport, Storage and Communications (24 percent), Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels (15 percent) and Finance, Property and Business Services (10 percent). A smaller proportion of work permits were granted to people working in Manufacturing (6 percent), Agriculture, Hunting, Fishing and Forestry (6 percent), Construction (1 percent) and Electricity, Gas and Water (0.6 percent).

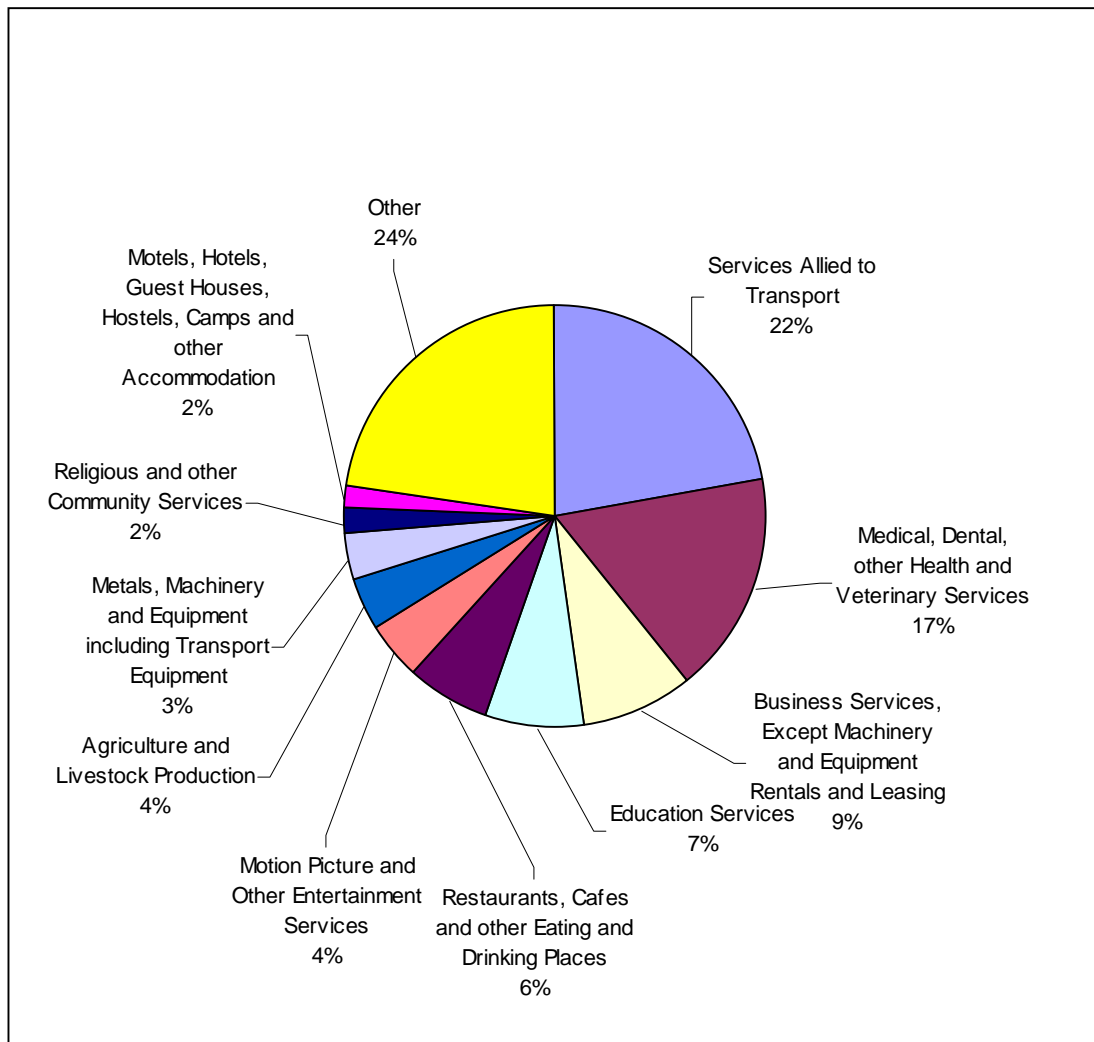
**Figure 17 The industries people granted General, and Medical and Dental work permits were employed in, 2000/2001 (n = 869)<sup>14</sup>**



<sup>14</sup> The sample size was 1,000 work permits, however, it was only possible to identify the industries in 869 of the cases.

Figure 18, below, presents the top ten industries of work permit holders. Services Allied to Transport was the single largest industry group, making up 22 percent of the total. Medical, Dental, Other Health and Veterinary Services (17 percent) was the next largest category, followed by Business Services (9 percent), Education Services (7 percent), Restaurants, Cafes and Other Eating and Drinking Places (6 percent), Motion Picture and Other Entertainment Services (4 percent), Agriculture and Livestock Production (4 percent), Metals, Machinery and Equipment including Transport Equipment (3 percent), Religious and other Community Services (2 percent), Motels, Hotels, Guest Houses, Hostels, Camps and other Accommodation (2 percent), and Other (24 percent).

**Figure 18 The top ten industries of work permit holders, Three-digit level, New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2000/2001 (n = 869)**





## 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to provide background information about work permits. To this end, a series of work permit related variables were isolated and examined. The variables included the criteria under which work permits were approved, the nationalities, genders and age groups of work permit holders, the percentages of workers who went on to become residents, and the occupations and industries people on work permits entered.

The research found that in 1999/2000, 46 percent of all work permits were approved under the skill shortage policies requiring a labour market test. Over half of the work permits were approved under special work permit policies. For example, of the total number of work permits, 15 percent were approved under working holiday policies, 14 percent under spouse/partner policies, and 10 percent under asylum seeker provisions.

Work permits were granted to people of a diverse array of nationalities in 1999/2000. The diversity was apparent in both the total work permits and the skill shortage work permits. The top ten nationalities for all permits were Great Britain (27 percent), the United States of America (9 percent), Japan (7 percent), India (5 percent), South Africa (4 percent), Canada (4 percent), China (4 percent), Fiji (3 percent), Thailand (3 percent), Indonesia (2 percent) and Other (32 percent).

Sixty percent of work permits were granted to males in 1999/2000. Males also predominated in each work permit category, except for medical personnel, working holidays and spouses and partners of New Zealand residents. Eighty percent of work permits were issued to people aged between 21 and 40, although the skill shortage permits attracted an older age group.

There was a steady increase, of about 4,000 a year, in the number of work permits granted in the last three years. In 1997/98 29,967 work permits were approved, in 1998/1999 34,062 and in 1999/2000 38,079. The number of skill shortage work permits approved fluctuated during the period 1997/1998 - 1999/2000. However, they accounted for much of the most recent increase.

In total, 30 percent of those in New Zealand on work permits in 1997/1998 had become residents by September 2000. About half of these people were approved under the General Skills category and half under Family Spouse or Partner policies.

About 80 percent of work permits granted under the General, Medical or Dental policy had occupations classified as Service and Sales, Professionals, or Professionals and

Technicians. The main industrial groupings of these workers were in Community, Social and Personal Services; Transport, Storage and Communications; and Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels.

In conclusion, this research has shown that while in 1999/2000 the majority of work permits were approved under one of the many special work permit policies, 46 percent were approved under skill shortage policies. Only 37 percent of work permits, however, were approved under the standard policy of importing people to address skill shortages in New Zealand.

## 6 APPENDIX A: DETAILED TABLES

Table 1 The classification of work permit criteria used in the report

| CATEGORY               | NZIS CRITERIA                              |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>General</b>         | General                                    |
|                        |  |
| <b>Asylum seeker</b>   | Asylum seeker                              |
|                        |  |
| <b>Spouse-partner</b>  | Spouse of NZ cit/res                       |
|                        | De facto partner of NZ cit/res             |
|                        | Fiancé(e) of NZ cit/res                    |
|                        | Same sex partner of NZ cit/res             |
|                        |  |
| <b>Working holiday</b> | French Working Holiday Scheme              |
|                        | NZ/Malaysia working holiday                |
|                        | Kiribati work permit scheme                |
|                        | Netherlands Working Holiday Scheme         |
|                        | Republic of Ireland working holiday scheme |
|                        | United Kingdom working holiday scheme      |
|                        | Japan/NZ Working Holiday                   |
|                        | NZ/Canada working holiday                  |
|                        | Tuvalu work permit scheme                  |
|                        | Korea/NZ working holiday scheme            |
|                        |  |
| <b>Medical-</b>        | Medical & dental personnel                 |
|                        | Medical & dental trainee                   |
|                        |  |
| <b>Entertainment</b>   | Entertainer/performing artist & support    |
|                        | Show judge/sports referee                  |
|                        | Dance/music examiner                       |
|                        | Sports player/professional coach           |
|                        | NZ racing conference apprentice            |
|                        |  |
| <b>Business</b>        | Business - short term                      |
|                        | Business - long term executive             |
|                        | Long term Business                         |
|                        | BIC residence direct investor              |
|                        |  |
| <b>Trades</b>          | Halal slaughterman                         |
|                        | Machinery installer/servicer               |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
|                 | Crew of foreign fishing vessel                 |
|                 |  |
| <b>Tertiary</b> | Research/post doctoral fellow                  |
|                 | University lecturers                           |
|                 | Work experience for student                    |
|                 | German law student/graduate                    |
|                 |  |
| <b>Other</b>    | Japanese interpreter                           |
|                 | Minister/missionary/pastor                     |
|                 | Job Search                                     |
|                 | Domestic staff for consular personnel          |
|                 | Normal   |
|                 | Operation deep freeze                          |
|                 | Domestic staff for seconded business personnel |
|                 | Singapore/NZ work exchange programme           |
|                 | Spouse/dependent of US Govt personnel          |

**Table 2 Skill shortage work permits**

|                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Skill shortage work permits | General                        |
|                             | Medical & dental personnel     |
|                             | Medical & dental trainee       |
|                             | Business - short term          |
|                             | Business - long term executive |
|                             | Long term Business             |
|                             | BIC residence direct investor  |

## 7 APPENDIX B: POWERPLAY AND IMPROMPTU REPORTS AND QUERIES

Figure 19 An example of a PowerPlay query used

|                          | General +<br>General + Long | General | General | Long term<br>Business |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| All Nats                 | na                          | na      | na      | na                    |
| Great Britain            | 4,538                       | 1,686   | 1,551   | 18                    |
| Japan                    | 2,162                       | 1,729   | 366     | 1                     |
| United States of America | 1,620                       | 744     | 478     | 6                     |
| South Africa             | 1,405                       | 387     | 707     | 5                     |
| India                    | 826                         | 460     | 261     | 6                     |
| Fiji                     | 733                         | 244     | 309     | 5                     |
| Canada                   | 716                         | 257     | 254     | 1                     |
| Germany                  | 515                         | 213     | 204     | 5                     |
| Thailand                 | 498                         | 358     | 121     | 4                     |
| Taiwan                   | 433                         | 381     | 32      | 0                     |
| Malaysia                 | 430                         | 222     | 142     | 1                     |
| South Korea              | 394                         | 125     | 172     | 21                    |
| China                    | 381                         | 154     | 158     | 4                     |
| Philippines              | 375                         | 97      | 135     | 1                     |
| France                   | 328                         | 93      | 97      | 0                     |

Figure 20 The first Impromptu query

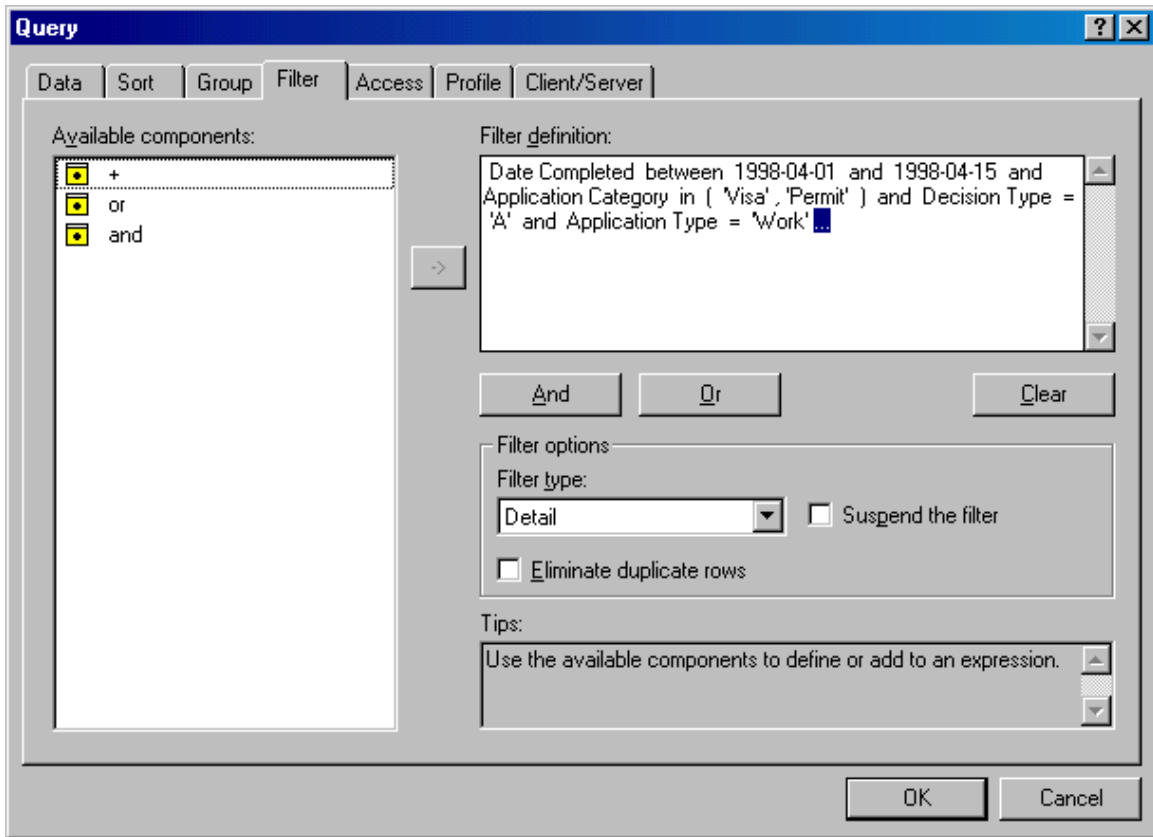
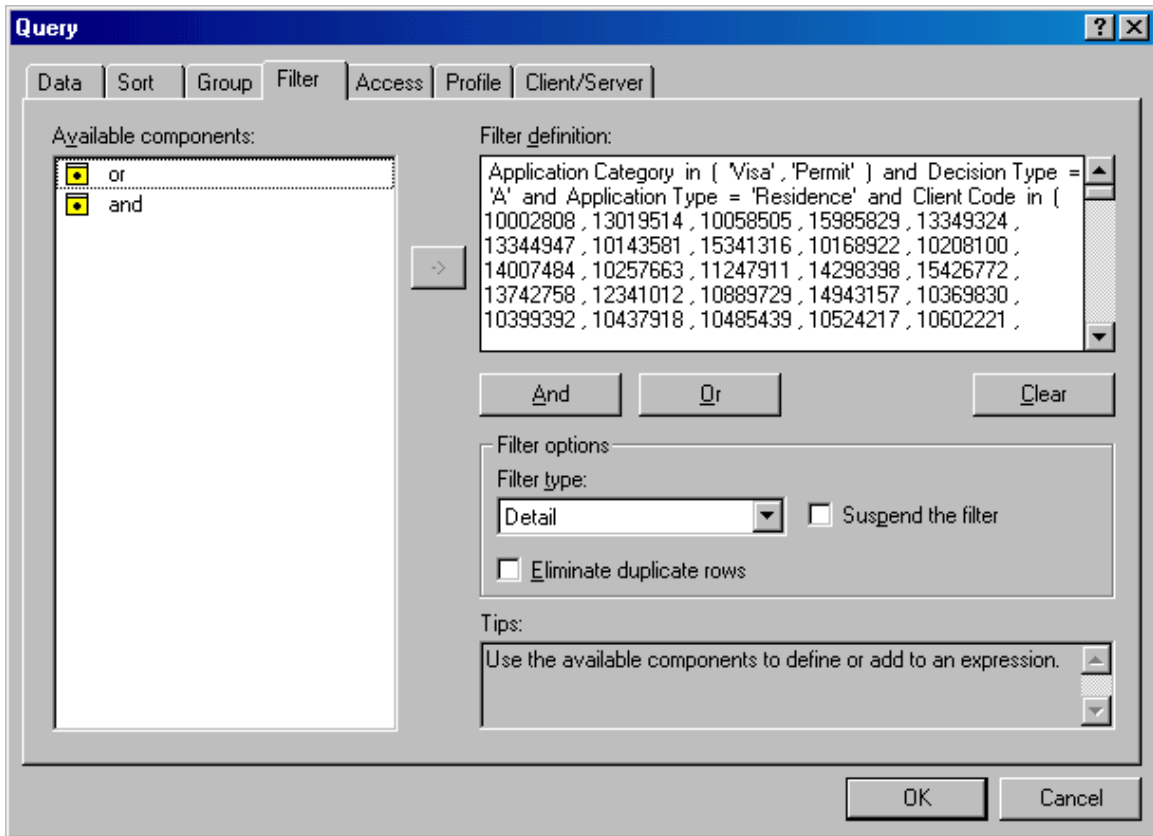


Figure 21 The second Impromptu query





## 8 APPENDIX C: DETAILED TABLES

**Table 3 Work permit categories by gender, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079)**

| Category              | Male Percent | Male Number | Female Percent | Female Number | Nil Percent | Nil Number | Totals Percent | Totals Number |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| General               | 24.2         | 9214        | 13.8           | 5254          | 0.1         | 20         | 38.0           | 14488         |
| Working holiday       | 7.0          | 2680        | 7.7            | 2935          | 0.0         | 3          | 14.8           | 5618          |
| Spouse-partner        | 5.6          | 2149        | 7.8            | 2972          | 0.1         | 24         | 13.5           | 5145          |
| Asylum seeker         | 8.3          | 3173        | 2.5            | 952           | 0.0         | 3          | 10.8           | 4128          |
| Medical               | 2.5          | 933         | 3.8            | 1443          | 0.0         | 2          | 6.2            | 2378          |
| Entertainment & sport | 4.2          | 1592        | 0.8            | 320           | 0.1         | 27         | 5.1            | 1939          |
| Business              | 1.7          | 658         | 0.6            | 227           | 0.0         | 1          | 2.3            | 886           |
| Trade                 | 1.9          | 734         | 0.0            | 14            | 0.0         | 2          | 2.0            | 750           |
| Tertiary              | 1.2          | 451         | 0.4            | 162           | 0.0         | 0          | 1.6            | 613           |
| Other                 | 3.0          | 1136        | 2.6            | 997           | 0.0         | 1          | 5.6            | 2134          |
| Totals                | 59.7         | 22720       | 40.1           | 15276         | 0.2         | 83         | 100.0          | 38079         |

**Table 4 Work permits categories 1997/1998- 1999/2000**

| Permit criteria | 1997/1998 |        | 1998/1999 |        | 1999/2000 |        |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
|                 | Percent   | Number | Percent   | Number | Percent   | Number |
| General         | 43.7      | 13098  | 36.1      | 12298  | 38.0      | 14488  |
| Asylum seeker   | 7.5       | 2261   | 11.1      | 3793   | 10.8      | 4128   |
| Spouse/partner  | 13.9      | 4177   | 14.1      | 4798   | 13.5      | 5145   |
| Business        | 2.5       | 760    | 2.6       | 892    | 2.3       | 886    |
| Medical         | 4.4       | 1310   | 4.8       | 1631   | 6.2       | 2378   |
| Tertiary        | 3.1       | 941    | 3.6       | 1213   | 1.6       | 613    |
| Entertainment   | 7.1       | 2113   | 5.7       | 1955   | 5.1       | 1939   |
| Trade           | 3.7       | 1113   | 2.6       | 885    | 2.0       | 750    |
| Other           | 2.2       | 671    | 1.9       | 661    | 5.6       | 2134   |
| Working holiday | 11.8      | 3523   | 17.4      | 5936   | 14.8      | 5618   |
| Totals          | 100       | 29967  | 100       | 34062  | 100       | 38079  |

**Table 5 Work permits granted compared with individuals granted work permits during each year 1997/1998-1999/2000**

|              | 1997/98 | 1998/99 | 1999/00 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Work Permits | 29967   | 34062   | 38079   |
| Individuals  | 27890   | 31373   | 33955   |

**Table 6 The nationalities of people granted work permits, 1999/2000 (N = 38,079)**

| Nationality              | Percent | Number of people |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Great Britain            | 27.4    | 10,423           |
| United States of America | 8.7     | 3,306            |
| Japan                    | 6.7     | 2,555            |
| India                    | 4.6     | 1,736            |
| South Africa             | 4.4     | 1,694            |
| Canada                   | 4.3     | 1,637            |
| China                    | 4.3     | 1,634            |
| Fiji                     | 3.1     | 1,165            |
| Thailand                 | 2.6     | 974              |
| Indonesia                | 2.4     | 903              |
| Other                    | 31.6    | 12,052           |
| Total                    | 100     | 38,079           |

**Table 7 The nationalities of individuals granted work permits, 1999/2000 (N = 33,955)**

| Nationality              | Percent | Number of people |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Great Britain            | 25.8    | 8758             |
| Japan                    | 16.3    | 5545             |
| United States of America | 7.4     | 2529             |
| South Africa             | 3.7     | 1267             |
| India                    | 3.7     | 1266             |
| Canada                   | 3.6     | 1210             |
| China                    | 3.2     | 1070             |
| Fiji                     | 2.3     | 790              |
| Thailand                 | 2.2     | 751              |
| Ireland                  | 2.2     | 746              |
| Other                    | 29.5    | 10023            |
| Total                    | 100     | 33,955           |

**Table 8 The nationalities of people granted skill shortage work permits**

| Nationality              | Percent | Number |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|
| Great Britain            | 25.0    | 4,538  |
| Japan                    | 11.9    | 2,162  |
| United States of America | 8.9     | 1,621  |
| South Africa             | 7.7     | 1,405  |
| India                    | 4.5     | 826    |
| Fiji                     | 4.0     | 734    |
| Canada                   | 3.9     | 716    |
| Germany                  | 2.8     | 515    |
| Thailand                 | 2.7     | 498    |
| Taiwan                   | 2.4     | 433    |
| Other                    | 26.0    | 4729   |
| All Nats                 | 100.0   | 18,177 |

**Table 9 The age groupings of people granted work permits, 1999/2000 ( N = 38,079)**

| Age group           | Percent | Number |
|---------------------|---------|--------|
| Under 16 years      | 0.2     | 90     |
| 16 to 20 years      | 4.7     | 1,806  |
| 21 to 30 years      | 51.6    | 19,656 |
| 31 to 40 years      | 27.9    | 10,626 |
| 41 to 50 years      | 11.0    | 4,205  |
| 51 to 60 years      | 3.5     | 1,324  |
| Older than 60 years | 1.0     | 372    |

**Table 10 The proportion of people granted work permits in 1997/1998 who became residents by 1999/2000**

| Residence approval category | Number of people | Percent of workers | Percent of work permits |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Spouse/partner              | 3456             | 14.1               | 11.5                    |
| Targeted                    | 3347             | 13.6               | 11.2                    |
| Other                       | 657              | 2.7                | 2.2                     |

**Table 11 The occupations of people granted General, and Medical and General work permits, highest level of the New Zealand Standard Classification Occupations, 2000/2001 (n = 1,000)**

| Occupational grouping                      | Percent | Standard Error | number |
|--|---------|----------------|--------|
| Legislators, Administrators and Managers   | 7.7     | 1.8            | 68     |
| Professionals                              | 27.8    | 3.0            | 245    |
| Technicians and Associate Professionals    | 20.4    | 2.7            | 180    |
| Clerks                                     | 1.5     | 0.8            | 13     |
| Service and Sales Workers                  | 30.7    | 3.0            | 271    |
| Agriculture and Fishery Workers            | 4.6     | 1.4            | 41     |
| Trades Workers                             | 5.2     | 1.5            | 46     |
| Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers | 2.2     | 1.0            | 19     |
| Unknown                                    | --      | --             | 117    |

**Table 12 The top ten occupations of people granted work General, and Medical and Dental permits, third level of the New Zealand Standard Classification Occupations, 2000/2001 (n = 883)**

| Occupations specific                         | Percent | Standard error | n   |
|--|---------|----------------|-----|
| Travel Attendants and Guides                 | 21.7    | 2.7            | 192 |
| Health Professionals (Except Nursing)        | 7.7     | 1.8            | 68  |
| Housekeeping and Restaurant Services Workers | 7.1     | 1.7            | 63  |
| Specialised managers                         | 5.9     | 1.6            | 52  |
| Physical Science and Engineering Technicians | 4.6     | 1.4            | 41  |
| Nursing and Midwifery Professionals          | 4.3     | 1.3            | 38  |
| Market oriented animal producers             | 3.9     | 1.3            | 34  |
| Business Professionals                       | 3.5     | 1.2            | 31  |
| Optical and Electronic Equipment Controllers | 3.5     | 1.2            | 31  |
| Computing Professionals                      | 2.8     | 1.1            | 25  |
| Other  | 34.9    | 3.1            | 307 |

**Table 13 The industries people granted General, and Medical and Dental work permits were employed in, 1999/2000 (n = 869)**

| Industry   | Percent | Standard error | Number |
|--|---------|----------------|--------|
| Mining and Quarrying                               | 0.6     | 0.5            | 5      |
| Electricity, Gas, and Water                        | 0.6     | 0.5            | 5      |
| Construction                                       | 1.0     | 0.7            | 9      |
| Agriculture, hunting, fishing, forestry            | 5.6     | 1.5            | 49     |
| Manufacturing                                      | 6.0     | 1.6            | 52     |
| Finance, Property, and Business Services           | 10.2    | 2.0            | 89     |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels | 14.8    | 2.4            | 129    |
| Transport, Storage, and Communications             | 24.2    | 2.8            | 210    |
| Community, Social, and Personal Services           | 36.9    | 3.2            | 321    |
| Unknown  | --      | --             | 131    |

**Table 14 Skill shortage work permits by gender**

| Type             | Total  | Male   |         | Female |         | Unknown |         |
|------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
|                  | Number | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number  | Percent |
| Total            | 18,177 | 11,165 | 61.4    | 6,988  | 38.4    | 24      | 0.1     |
| General          | 14,487 | 9,213  | 63.6    | 5,254  | 36.3    | 20      | 0.1     |
| Business         | 882    | 654    | 74.1    | 227    | 25.7    | 1       | 0.1     |
| Medical & Dental | 2378   | 933    | 39.2    | 1443   | 60.7    | 2       | 0.1     |
| Other            | 430    | 365    | 84.9    | 64     | 14.9    | 1       | 0.2     |

**Table 15 Skill shortages work permits by age group**

| Age           | Percent | Number |
|---------------|---------|--------|
| 16 to 20      | 1.6     | 287    |
| 21 to 30      | 44.3    | 8054   |
| 31 to 40      | 34.8    | 6333   |
| 41 to 50      | 13.7    | 2490   |
| 51 to 60      | 4.2     | 768    |
| Older than 60 | 1.0     | 178    |

**Table 16 Skill shortage work permits by year**

|                  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total            | 15636 | 15252 | 18177 |
| General          | 13095 | 12298 | 14487 |
| Business         | 759   | 891   | 882   |
| Medical & Dental | 1310  | 1631  | 2378  |
| Other            | 472   | 432   | 430   |

**Table 17 The residence approval criteria of people on medical work permits**

|                       |      |     |
|-----------------------|------|-----|
| 1995 General skills   | 24.5 | 223 |
| 1995 Family marriage  | 1.4  | 13  |
| 1995 Family de facto  | 0.8  | 7   |
| 1995 Family parent    | 0.8  | 7   |
| Ministerial direction | 0.8  | 7   |
| (blank)               | 0.5  | 5   |
| Grand Total           | 26.0 | 237 |

**Table 18 The residence approval criteria of people formerly holding general work permits**

| Residence criteria          | Percent | Number |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------|
| 1995 General skills         | 19.7    | 1784   |
| 1995 Family marriage        | 4.2     | 382    |
| 1995 Family de facto        | 1.5     | 136    |
| Ministerial direction       | 0.9     | 81     |
| 1995 Refugee status         | 0.8     | 72     |
| 1995 Humanitarian           | 0.4     | 37     |
| 1995 Family parent          | 0.3     | 25     |
| 1995 Family child adult     | 0.2     | 17     |
| 1995 Family sibling         | 0.2     | 17     |
| 1995 Family homosexual      | 0.1     | 12     |
| 1995 Business investor      | 0.1     | 7      |
| Entrepreneur category       | 0.1     | 7      |
| 1991 Family marriage        | 0.1     | 6      |
| 1991 General category       | 0.1     | 6      |
| 1991 Humanitarian           | 0.1     | 6      |
| 1995 Family child dependent | 0.1     | 6      |
| Investor category           | 0.1     | 6      |
| Transition 33(2) compliance | 0.1     | 6      |
| Transition 33(2) voluntary  | 0.1     | 6      |
| (blank)                     | 0.1     | 5      |
| Grand Total                 | 27.9    | 2528   |

**Table 19 The residence approval criteria of people formerly holding business work permits**

| Residence criteria    | Percent | Number |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| 1995 Family de facto  | 0.2     | 1      |
| Ministerial direction | 0.2     | 1      |
| 1995 Family marriage  | 1.3     | 7      |
| 1995 General skills   | 9.3     | 51     |
| Grand Total           | 11.8    | 65     |