

SA wins bigger slice of prized migrants

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL

SOUTH Australia is doing a better job than the other states in attracting business migrants but there is no room for complacency, the Australian Population Institute says.

"We have jumped from attracting just 1.7 per cent of the national intake of business migrants three years ago to more than 14 per cent last year," the institute's South Australian chairman, Michael Hickinbotham, said.

"Other states aggressively target overseas migrants like we do, so we need to continue to identify and use our

competitive advantages."

Mr Hickinbotham was commenting on new data showing SA took in 604 people – or about 200 families – on business migrant visas in 2005-06 compared to 93 in 2001-02.

Business migrants gain residency under various categories of visa, but most commonly must have a minimum of \$250,000 to invest on top of tens of thousands of dollars to establish a home for themselves and their families.

Many have substantially more.

Central to the rapid increase in numbers has been changes to Federal Government red tape. Changes introduced in 2003 have allowed the State Govern-

ment to actively market the business migration program and to sponsor individuals to the move to SA.

Business migrants are additional to people settling as skilled workers, a category in which Adelaide has an advantage over the other mainland capitals because it is classified as a regional destination.

SA Small Business Minister Karlene Maywald said "SA runs a very proactive marketing and promotions program and offers a range of services to attract more migrants to SA" and conducted "road shows in key markets" such as China, Korea and Britain.

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Government efforts have been helped by the private sector through organisations such as the Population Institute and Business SA.

"Business migrants are the jewel in the crown," Mr Hickinbotham said.

"These people come here with money to invest: they establish businesses, they generate wealth, they employ people and often they're exporting goods and services.

"It's exactly what you need."

Business SA chief executive officer Peter Vaughan said his employer organisation had advocated a population target of two million people for SA over the next decade.

"While ambitious, the benchmark provides forward thinking direction, rather than relying on a 'no change, business as usual' approach," he said.

"Business SA and the State Government have recently set up a Migration for Business Growth program which includes a welcome desk to help business migrants settle in and assist them through their early days in the state."

The program will act as an information and networking program with some sessions conducted in Chinese or Korean to cater for the large numbers of new migrants from those countries.

In SA, there is also support from the international trade chambers, which include the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Australia China Business Council, the Hong Kong Australia Business Association and the Korean Chamber of Commerce.

Immigration SA director Sunny Yang, said migrants were engaged in quite diverse businesses activities.

"Number one is that people are exporting," she said.

"For the state to sponsor them, I want to see them exporting.

"But many are setting up a small business. You see a lot of the Chinese and the Koreans running anything from a newsagency, to a florist, a bakery – that kind of small business.

"Then a third, smaller, group are involved in relatively larger and more significant investment projects, construction and so on."

Of the exporters, the goods and services they were engaged in often depended on their links with their countries of origin.

Many were in wine, seafood and agricultural projects such as wool and leather but others were engaged in technology, recycling and electronics goods. Another niche was in high-quality construction materials and goods such as paint.

THE MIGRANT SURGE

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Number of business migrants to SA (primary applicants and family members)	118	93	102	449	604
Number of business migrants to Australia	6409	5421	5073	4813	4237
SA's share of national intake of business migrants	1.8%	1.7%	2%	9.3%	14.3%
1. China	n/a	8	29	271	438
2. Korea	n/a	0	6	60	73
3. UK	n/a	11	16	28	28
4. Malaysia	n/a	8	9	8	17
5. Hong Kong	n/a	2	1	9	8
6. Taiwan	n/a	3	1	16	8
7. Singapore	n/a	17	11	18	2
8. South Africa	n/a	10	6	2	1
Other	n/a	15	6	28	29
TOTAL		93	102[†]	449	604

Source: DIMA
Immigration
Update

