

# **Displaced Ukrainians in Australia 2022-2024 Key Visa Issues, Survey Results and Recommendations**

**September 2024**

Prepared by the  
**Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations**



AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION  
OF UKRAINIAN ORGANISATIONS

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3 **APPENDIX A** National AFUO DP survey results: September 2024

Charts reporting geographic distribution, age group, qualifications, English proficiency, visa status, mental health concerns, accomodation, levels of government assistance, employment analysis, volunteering and permanent residency aspirations.

Data and case studies of challenges facing displaced Ukrainians.

## 1 Executive Summary

### 1.1 Overview

Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Australian Government made an [initial offer](#) of a 3 year temporary humanitarian stay (subclass 786 visa) for Ukrainians already in Australia on temporary visas or arriving on visitor visas (subclass 600).

This offer of a temporary humanitarian stay expired on 31 July 2022, after which Ukrainian nationals wishing to stay in Australia could [apply](#) for a protection visa (subclass 866/bridging visa A) or bridging visa E (subclass 050).

The [Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations](#) (AFUO) estimates there are currently around **3,790** Ukrainian Displaced Persons (DPs) in Australia on 786 visas, which are **due to expire between March and July 2025**; and up to an additional **1,000** DPs who are on bridging visas.

### 1.2 AFUO DP Survey July-August 2024

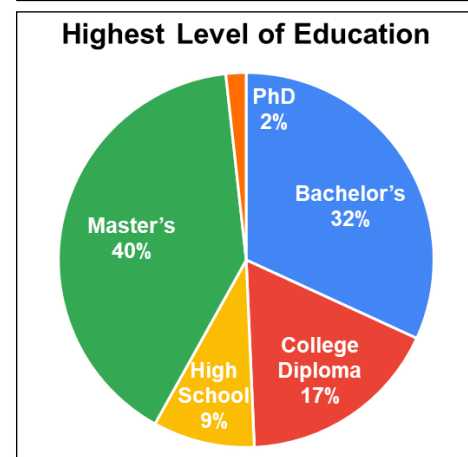
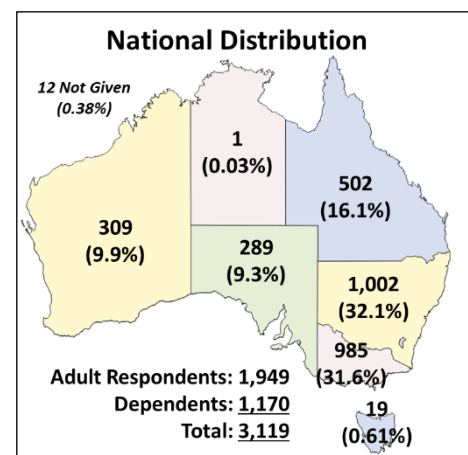
The AFUO conducted an online survey of displaced Ukrainians between 24 July - 14 August 2024 to obtain further information about the cohort and identify key challenges and barriers regarding their visa status (Appendix A). The survey builds on [earlier surveys](#) conducted by the Ukrainian Council of NSW and knowledge obtained from [Ukrainian state 'hromada' organisations](#).

Responses were received from **1,949 adults**, who collectively have 1,170 dependents (3,119 individuals), comprised of ~900 family units and ~615 individuals.

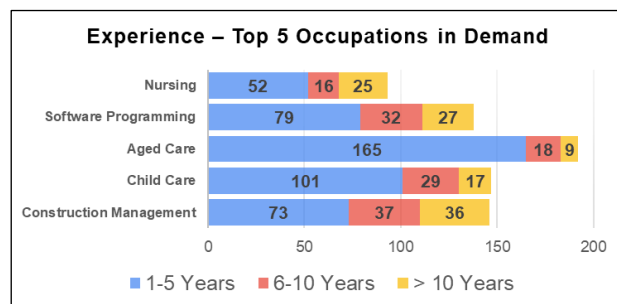
#### 1.2.1 Profile of the cohort

The survey results show that this is a cohort of motivated, industrious and educated people with the skills that Australia needs, and who would make immediate and strong contributions to Australia's economic prosperity.

- The cohort have settled mainly in capital cities across Australia, with the largest populations in NSW (32.1%) and Victoria (31.6%) (see *Appendix A, p4*)
- 86% of respondents reported mental and physical health challenges due to visa uncertainty (see *Appendix, p6*)
- **Almost all (99.6%)** surveyed DPs are seeking permanent residency (see *Appendix, p10*)
- The cohort is older, with ~31% over 46 yrs of age, and ~35% between 36-45 yrs of age (see *Appendix A, p5*)
- The cohort is highly educated, with ~32% holding a Bachelors degree and ~40% holding a Masters degree (see *Appendix A, p5*)
- Private sector accommodation has been found by 83% of the cohort (see *Appendix A, p7*)
- 64% of the cohort are not receiving any type of government financial assistance (see *Appendix A p7*)
- Employment has been secured by 66% of adult respondents despite employment obstacles created by their visa situation, and limited Australian recognition of Ukrainian qualifications, with only 36% working in their area of expertise (see *Appendix A, p7*)



- The cohort is highly experienced in fields identified as among the [Top 20 Occupations in Demand](#) (see [Appendix A, p9](#))
- Pending recognition of Ukrainian qualifications, 40% of the cohort are underemployed in entry level jobs earning the minimum wage or less (\$45,000/year) (see [Appendix A, p8](#))



### 1.3 Problems and challenges

1. The upcoming **expiration of the 3-year 786 visa** by mid next year is an immediate and critical problem and has contributed to extremely high levels of stress amongst the cohort (**86%**) (see [Appendix A, p6](#)).
2. Although almost all surveyed visa holders are seeking permanent residency, **existing recommended pathways to permanent residency for 786 visa holders and bridging visa holders are not fit for purpose.** (see [Appendix A, pp11-18](#)):

Obstacle to permanent residency	Experienced by percentage of cohort
No direct Australian relatives or blocked from family visa	69%
Meeting English proficiency standards	47%
Scarcity of sponsored employment opportunities	33%
Completing a Skills Assessment	33%
Exceeding age limits (for Skilled visas)	32%
Financial concerns	27%
Qualification not in the list of Occupations in Demand	20%

3. Displaced Ukrainian students are generally being treated by universities as full fee-paying international students, rendering **university studies financially non-viable** unless a scholarship can be obtained.

### 1.4 International and domestic precedents

Internationally, [New Zealand](#), [Canada](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Austria](#), the [Czech Republic](#) and [Poland](#) have established residence pathways for displaced Ukrainians.

Domestically, the Australian Government has facilitated large scale migration programs for [Afghans](#) and specific PR pathways for [Hong Kong](#) residents. Under the [Resolution of Status](#) visa, offered from February 2023, 19,000 refugees on Temporary Protection (subclass 785) and Safe Haven Enterprise visas (subclass 790) are able [to apply](#) for permanent residency.

### 1.5 Recommendation

1. **Recommendation:** Develop a dedicated pathway for permanent residency for displaced Ukrainians on 786 or bridging visas, with an immediate extension of the soon to expire 786 visa for another 3 years to alleviate immediate stress.

### 1.6 Conclusion

Displaced Ukrainians have settled well into Australia, learnt English, found jobs and secured private sector accommodation. They are highly experienced in top occupations in demand. Yet they are highly stressed about their visa limbo and are seeking a permanent residency option.

We believe a permanent residency option will enable displaced Ukrainians to feel stability and confidence in their future, support their desire to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and enable them to make strong contributions to Australia’s multicultural and economic prosperity.

## 2 Displaced Ukrainians in Australia 2022 – 2024: Key visa issues and recommendations

### 2.1 Introduction

The Australian-Ukrainian community is extremely grateful for the significant resourcing and funding provided by the Australian Government and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) in aid of the resettlement of Ukrainians seeking safe refuge in Australia following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Our community is also proud of the integration of displaced Ukrainians in Australia, made simpler by Ukraine and Australia sharing common values of freedom, dignity and equality.

However, immigration policies for displaced Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion have been inconsistent, posing significant challenges for those seeking refuge. The current fragmented approach to visa pathways has exacerbated the stress and anxiety experienced by our Ukrainian displaced persons and community members during an already painful time.

Based on findings from research conducted by the [Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations](#) (AFUO), the report identifies key problems and challenges Ukrainian displaced people are experiencing in their visa status and/or options to secure permanent residency in Australia.

The AFUO would like to acknowledge the role of Andrew Mencinsky, Ukrainian Council of NSW (UCNSW) and Nadia Mencinsky (AFUO) in the preparation of this report; and Liza Maryan and Vlad Guz, displaced Ukrainians, and Marta Artemenko (UCNSW), for their assistance with the AFUO DP survey.

The AFUO would also like to acknowledge the central role our state 'hromada' organisations have played in supporting displaced Ukrainians and building extensive knowledge about their problems and challenges. The AFUO further notes the wide-ranging engagement state 'hromada' organisations have conducted with State Governments and Federal and State MPs about visa issues, from the very first days of displaced Ukrainians arriving in Australia. This includes the [Ukrainian Council of NSW](#), the [Association of Ukrainians in Victoria](#), the [Ukrainian Community of Queensland Inc](#), the [Association of Ukrainians in South Australia](#), the [Ukrainian Association of Western Australia](#), the [Association of Ukrainians in Tasmania](#) and the [Ukrainian-Australian Association of Northern Territory](#).

### 2.2 Background

#### 2.2.1 Temporary humanitarian and protection/BVE visas offered to Ukrainian nationals

Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Australian Government made an [initial offer](#) of a temporary humanitarian stay visa (subclass 786 visa) for Ukrainians in Australia arriving on tourist visas (subclass 600).

This offer of a temporary humanitarian stay expired on 31 July 2022, following which Ukrainian nationals wishing to stay in Australia could [apply](#) for a protection visa (subclass 866/bridging visa A) or bridging visa E (subclass 050).

#### **Temporary Humanitarian Stay visa (subclass 786) (offered before 31 July 2022)**

The temporary humanitarian stay visa (subclass 786 visa) was offered to Ukrainian nationals for a 3-year period, and allowed visa holders to work, study, and access to Medicare. The visa also enabled holders to be eligible for English language tuition and be eligible for settlement support services. This offer expired on 31 July 2022.

Whilst we understand that up to 5,000 Ukrainian nationals accepted the initial offer of a subclass 786 visa, we believe that around [3,790 subclass 786 visa holders](#) remain in Australia, as at February 2024. The three-year expiry date for the 786 visa is rapidly approaching for these Ukrainians i.e. between March and July 2025.

### **Protection Visa (subclass 866) and Bridging Visa E (subclass 050) (after 31 July 2022)**

After the expiration of the offer of a temporary humanitarian stay visa on 31 July 2022, Ukrainian nationals could apply for a [protection visa \(subclass 866\) or bridging visa E \(subclass 050\)\(BVE\)](#) if they wished to remain in Australia.

The protection visa (866) is a permanent visa that, if granted, lets the holder stay in Australia indefinitely. Protection visa (866) applicants can apply for a bridging visa (BVA), which grants work rights in Australia, eligibility for Medicare, access to public schooling for children, and eligibility for free translating and interpreting services.

A bridging visa E (BVE) is a short-term bridging visa that allows eligible individuals to stay in Australia lawfully while they resolve their immigration status. Ukrainian nationals on a BVE have full work rights, can access Medicare and are eligible for free translating and interpreting services.

According to the DHA, a total of [617 Ukrainian nationals](#) applied for protection visas in 2022-2023; [223 Ukrainian nationals](#) in 2023-2024; and 46 Ukrainian nationals have applied for BVE's between 1 July 2023 – 31 May 2024, a total of 886 Ukrainian nationals. Allowing for additional applications which might have been received after June/May 2024, it is possible **up to 1,000 Ukrainians** are on BVA or BVE visas.

#### **2.2.2 Other visa holders**

According to the DHA, around [11,400 Ukrainians](#) have arrived in Australia since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. It is not currently clear how many of these Ukrainian nationals travelled to Australia on temporary tourist, family-stream and/or skilled stream visas. It is also unclear how many of these Ukrainian nationals remain in Australia or have returned to Ukraine.

### **2.3 Research project - AFUO DP survey**

The AFUO conducted an online survey of displaced Ukrainians between 24 July and 14 August 2024 to obtain information on the visas held, education levels, qualifications and family connections of Ukrainians who arrived in Australia due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The AFUO survey closely followed the format and questions used by the Ukrainian Council of NSW in DP [surveys](#) conducted in June and November 2023 to build on existing data sets and observations.

#### **2.3.1 Methodology**

The online survey consisted of quantitative and qualitative questions, to be filled out by adults only. The survey was promoted to displaced Ukrainians via AFUO social media platforms, [AFUO member organisations](#), and social media platforms created and used by displaced Ukrainians (e.g. Telegram channels).

Responses were received from 1,949 adults, collectively responsible for 1,170 dependents.

### **2.4 Findings from the AFUO DP survey**

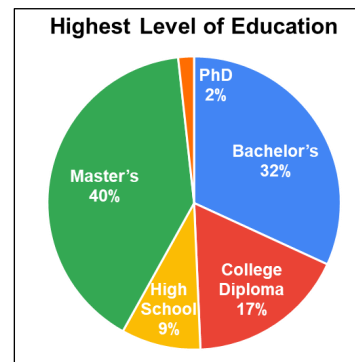
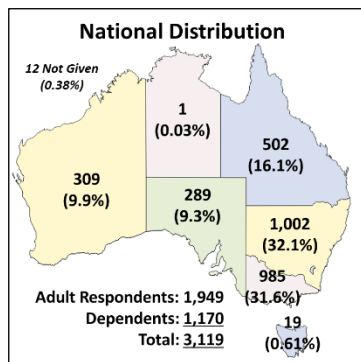
A detailed breakdown of the findings from the AFUO DP survey can be found in Appendix A - *“Displaced Ukrainians in Australia 2024 National Online Survey Results”*.

A summary of the findings is provided below.

#### **2.4.1 Respondent profile**

- Responses were received from 1,949 adults with 1,170 dependents (3,119 individuals)
- Respondents comprised ~900 family units and ~615 individuals
- The cohort have settled mainly in capital cities across Australia, with the largest populations in NSW (32.1%) and Victoria (31.6%) (see *Appendix A, p4*)

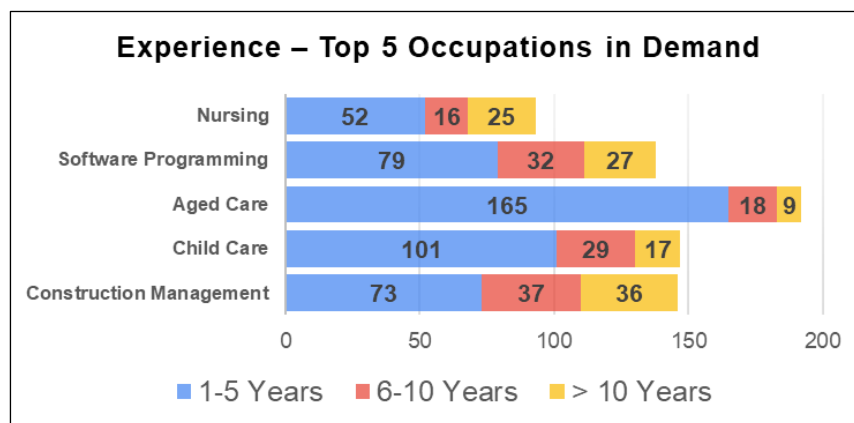
- The cohort is highly educated, with ~32% holding a Bachelor's degree and ~40% holding a Master's degree (see *Appendix A, p5*)



- The cohort is older, with ~31% over 46 years of age and ~35% between 36-45 years of age (see *Appendix A, p5*)
- 86% of respondents report mental and physical health challenges due to visa uncertainty (see *Appendix A, p6*)

#### 2.4.2 Accommodation/Government Assistance/Employment

- The cohort is highly experienced in fields identified as among the Top 20 Occupations in Demand (as per [report](#) from Minister for Skills and Training) (see *Appendix A, p9*)



- Private sector accommodation has been found by 83% of the cohort (see *Appendix A, p7*)
- A sizeable majority (64%) do not receive any type of government financial assistance, despite 37% of respondents reporting that visa type was a barrier to finding employment (see *Appendix A, p7*)
- Employment has been found by 66% of the cohort despite employment obstacles created by their visa situation (see *Appendix A, p8*)
- There is limited Australian recognition of Ukrainian qualifications, with only 36% working in their area of expertise (see *Appendix A, p8*)
- Pending recognition of Ukrainian qualifications and finding meaningful work, 40% of the cohort are underemployed in entry level jobs earning the minimum wage or less (\$45,000/year) (see *Appendix A, p8*)

#### 2.4.3 Permanent Residency

- Almost all (99.6%) of respondents are seeking permanent residency in Australia
- Almost half of family units (47%) and just under a third of individuals (30%) wish to sponsor further immediate family members from Ukraine if permanent residency were obtained, with an estimate of an additional 1,400 Ukrainians that may eventually seek permanent residency



These results were similar to the previously mentioned surveys conducted by the Ukrainian Council of NSW in 2023.

The data supports existing observations that displaced Ukrainians have settled in capital cities to obtain readier access to employment opportunities, education for their children, and engagement with their local Ukrainian-Australian community.

The survey results also clearly show that this is a cohort of motivated, industrious and educated people with the skills that Australia needs, and who would make immediate and strong contributions to Australia’s economic prosperity.

## 2.5 Immediate problems and challenges

### 2.5.1 The expiration of the 3-year subclass 786 visa between March - July 2025

For a significant proportion of the cohort, the imminent expiration of their 786 visa is an immediate and critical problem. There has been no communication from the Department of Home Affairs about what will happen as they approach their 786 visa expiration date, leaving many displaced Ukrainians in a state of limbo. The lack of visa certainty makes simple things, like securing new employment, leasing a new rental, or making any plans for the near to mid-term future, almost impossible (see Appendix p6).

### 2.5.2 Problems with alternative visa pathways

Unfortunately, displaced Ukrainians on 786 or bridging visas who seek permanent residency are being recommended standard visa pathways, including family, skilled and student visa programs. The existing pathways to permanent residency are not fit for purpose, and attempting to navigate them is frustrating and unproductive. The top 7 obstacles reported are:

Obstacle to Permanent Residency	Experienced by Percentage of Cohort
No direct Australian relatives or blocked from family visa	69%
Meeting English proficiency standards	47%
Scarcity of sponsored employment opportunities	33%
Completing a Skills Assessment	33%
Exceeding age limits	32%
Financial concerns	27%
Qualification not in the list of Occupations in Demand	20%

For further information and case studies, see Appendix A, pp 11-18.

### 2.5.3 Significant financial barriers to tertiary study

Displaced Ukrainian students are generally being treated by universities as full fee-paying international students, rendering any university studies financially non-viable unless a scholarship can be obtained. This ineligibility creates significant financial barriers to tertiary study for students finishing Year 12.

### 2.5.4 Visa uncertainty creating significant stress and hindering adaptation

As noted above a significant majority (**86%**) of displaced Ukrainians are **suffering mental and physical health challenges**, including uncertainty, fear, depression, anxiety, insomnia and feelings of despair due to ongoing uncertainty about their visa status.

Many of them hold the same 786 humanitarian visas issued to them upon their arrival into the country, with the majority of them (55%) having no direct family connections in Australia. Many are missing the support of extended family here and are truly “on their own”.

This visa limbo and lack of family support has also hindered the process of adaptation and multicultural integration.



## 2.6 Domestic and international precedents

- **Australia** – Large scale migration program for [Afghans](#), specific PR pathways for [Hong Kong](#) residents. [Resolution of Status](#) visas for [TPV/SHEV holders](#) from February 2023 offered 19,000 refugees on Temporary Protection (subclass 785) and Safe Haven Enterprise visas (subclass 790) a pathway [to apply](#) for permanent residency.
- **New Zealand** – Dedicated permanent residency pathway for [Special Ukraine Visa](#) holders
- **Canada** – Special permanent [residency pathway](#) for Ukrainians
- **Luxembourg** – [Residency pathway](#) for Ukrainians who have found employment and are not living in state-run shelters
- **Austria** – The country’s Red-White-Red Plus Card (a work permit for skilled workers that provides open access to the labour market) [is available to displaced persons from Ukraine](#) who have worked (including in a self-employed capacity) in Austria for at least twelve months in the two years preceding their application.
- **Czech Republic** – The new [residence permit](#) for Ukrainian refugees: after 2 years of holding temporary protection, being employed, self-sufficient, and having children in school. Eligible for PR after 5 years continuous residence.
- **Poland** – [Residence pathway](#) for Ukrainians arriving after February 24, 2022, with temporary protection: eligible for Karta pobytu (leading to PR) if officially employed, or own a business, or hold a Blue Card (for skilled professionals).

## 2.7 Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, the AFUO **recommends** the Australian Government:

1. **Develop a dedicated pathway for permanent residency for displaced Ukrainians currently in Australia on 786 visas or bridging visas, with an immediate extension of the soon-to-expire 786 visa for another 3 years to alleviate immediate stress**

## 2.8 Conclusion

Displaced Ukrainians have settled well into Australia, learnt English, found jobs and secured private sector accommodation. They are highly experienced in top occupations in demand. Yet they are highly stressed about their visa limbo and are seeking a permanent residency option.

We believe a permanent residency option will enable displaced Ukrainians to feel stability and confidence in their future, support their desire to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and enable them to make strong contributions to Australia’s multicultural and economic prosperity.



# APPENDIX A

## DISPLACED UKRAINIANS IN AUSTRALIA 2024

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NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



**AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION  
OF UKRAINIAN ORGANISATIONS**

СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ АВСТРАЛІЇ

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Version 1.0 | 11 September 2024

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- 1 National Online Survey – Executive summary
- 2 Survey Question Analysis
- 3 Case Studies – Challenges to Applying for Permanent Residency
- 4 Appendix 1 – Survey Question Set

# 1. NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1 Survey Purpose and Methodology

- The AFUO conducted a national online survey of displaced Ukrainians between 24 July - 14 August 2024 to obtain information on the visas held, education levels, qualifications and family connections of Ukrainians who had arrived in Australia due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine
- The survey was promoted to the **~5,000 displaced Ukrainians in Australia** (~3,800 on 786 Humanitarian visas and ~1,000 on Protection or Bridging visas) via social media platforms, email campaigns and member organisations
- Respondents could respond anonymously. The survey included quantitative and qualitative questions.

## 2 Respondent Summary

- Responses were received from **1,949 adults**, who have **1,170 dependents (3,119 individuals)**
- Respondents comprised **~900 family units** and **~615 individuals**
- The AFUO considers the survey statistically significant due to the volume of respondents and the proportion of displaced Ukrainians in Australia that responded

## 3 Demographic Overview

- The cohort have settled across Australia, with the largest populations in **NSW (32.1%)** and **Victoria (31.6%)**
- The cohort is older, with **~31% over 46 years of age**, with **~35% between 36-45 years of age**
- The cohort is **highly educated**, with **~32%** holding a Bachelor's Degree and **~40%** holding a Master's Degree

## 4 Visa Status And Mental Health Concerns

- The significant majority (**85%**) hold the same **786 humanitarian visas issued to them upon their arrival** into the country, with the majority of them (55%) having no direct family connections in Australia
- This "visa limbo" and lack of family support directly contributes to the **86% who are suffering mental and physical health challenges** due to ongoing uncertainty due to their visa status.

## 5 Accommodation/Government Assistance/Employment

- Private sector accommodation has been found by 83% of the cohort**, with 64% not receiving any government financial assistance, despite 37% of respondents reporting that visa type was a barrier to finding employment
- Employment has been found by 66%** of the cohort despite employment obstacles created by their visa situation.
- There is limited Australian recognition of Ukrainian qualifications, with **only 36% working in their area of expertise**
- Pending recognition of Ukrainian qualifications and finding meaningful work, 40% of the cohort work in entry level jobs earning the minimum wage or less (\$45,000/year)
- Cohort is **highly experienced** in Top 20 Occupations in Demand (as per [report](#) from Minister for Skills and Training)

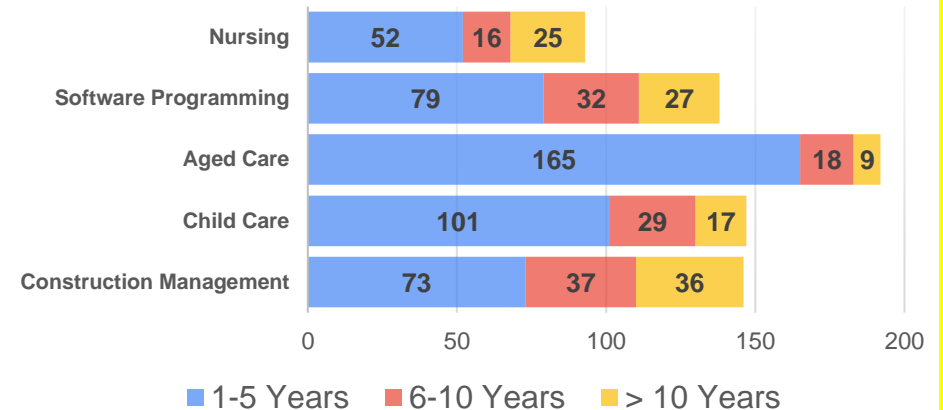
## 6 Permanent Residency

- Almost all (**99.6%**) of respondents are seeking permanent residency in Australia
- Almost **half of family units (47%)** and just under a **third of individuals (30%)** wish to sponsor further immediate family members from Ukraine if permanent residency were obtained, with an estimate of **an additional 1,400 Ukrainians that may eventually seek permanent residency**

## 7 Obstacles To Applying For Permanent Residency

- The existing pathways to permanent residency are **not fit for purpose** for this cohort, and attempting to navigate through them is frustrating and can feel futile
- The top obstacles reported are 1) English proficiency (47%); 2) Employer unwillingness to sponsor (33%); 3) Age Limit (32%), 4) Financial Concerns (27%); and 5) Qual Not in Demand (20%)

## 8 Experience – Top 5 Occupations in Demand

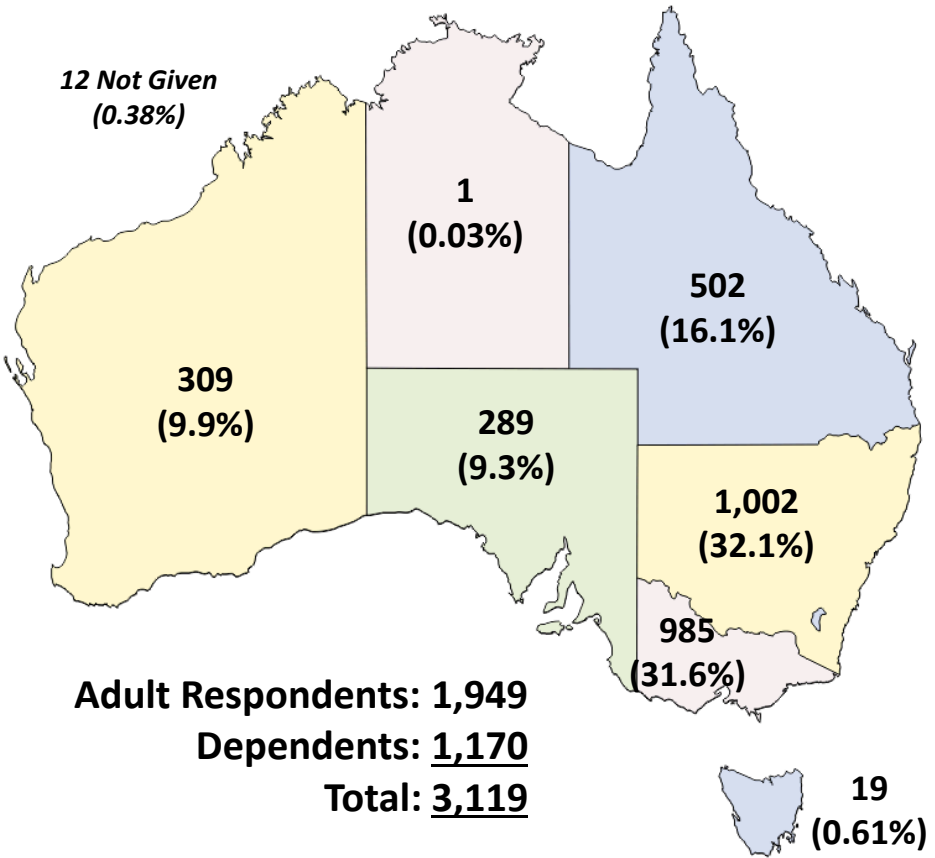


1949 responses received.  
Further detail on following pages

# 2. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Displaced Ukrainians have settled across Australia, with the largest populations in NSW and Victoria. The data supports existing observations that displaced Ukrainians have tended to settle in capital cities to obtain readier access to education/employment opportunities, education for their children and engagement with the local Ukrainian-Australian community.

**National Distribution**



NSW – Top 10 LGAs	
Rockdale	89
Willoughby	86
Sydney	78
The Hills Shire	68
Ku-ring-gai	60
Sutherland Shire	59
Warringah	56
Woollahra	56
Liverpool	52
Strathfield	47
Other LGAs	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,002</b>

VIC – Top 10 LGAs	
Kingston	164
Monash	114
Stonnington	110
Moreland	82
Yarra	73
Wyndham	64
Port Phillip	53
Whitehorse	46
Mornington Peninsula	28
Whittlesea	27
Other LGAs	224
<b>Total</b>	<b>985</b>

QLD – Top 10 LGAs	
Brisbane	182
Gold Coast	65
Logan	55
Moreton Bay	35
Redland	32
Scenic Rim	30
Tablelands	27
Sunshine Coast	26
Toowoomba	12
Townsville	11
Other LGAs	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>

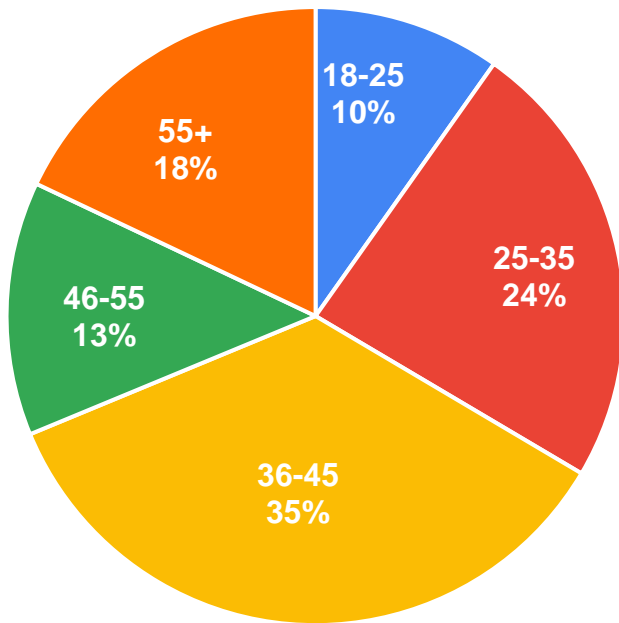
WA – Top 10 LGAs	
Stirling	68
Vincent	47
Melville	27
Swan	26
Rockingham	23
Wanneroo	22
Victoria Park	19
Serpentine-Jarrahdale	17
Subiaco	12
Kalamunda	12
Other LGAs	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>

SA – Top 10 LGAs	
West Torrens	70
Port Adelaide Enfield	39
Salisbury	31
Onkaparinga	25
Unley	22
Norwood Payneham St Peters	19
Tea Tree Gully	18
Charles Sturt	16
Walkerville	14
Prospect	12
Other LGAs	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>

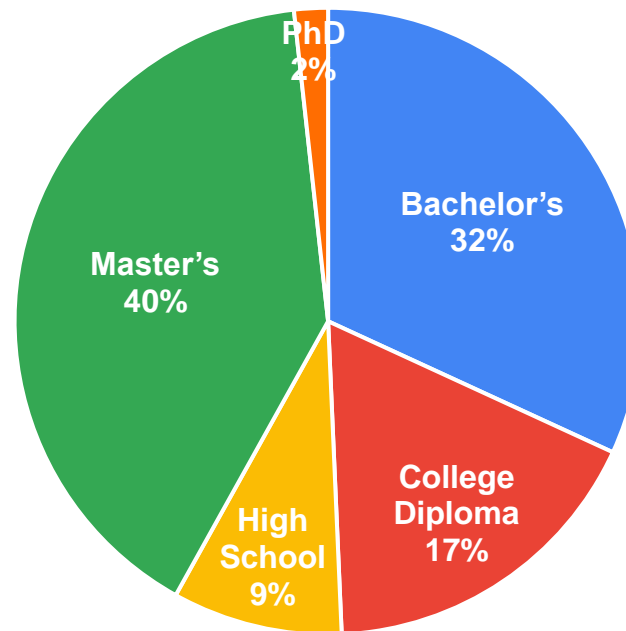
## 2. AGE GROUP/QUALIFICATIONS/ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The displaced Ukrainian cohort is older, with ~31% over 46 years of age, with ~35% between 36-45 years of age. They are highly educated with ~74% holding graduate and post graduate degrees. English proficiency is an ongoing challenge. Only 28% report high level of English proficiency, with 36% reporting minimal to elementary English proficiency.

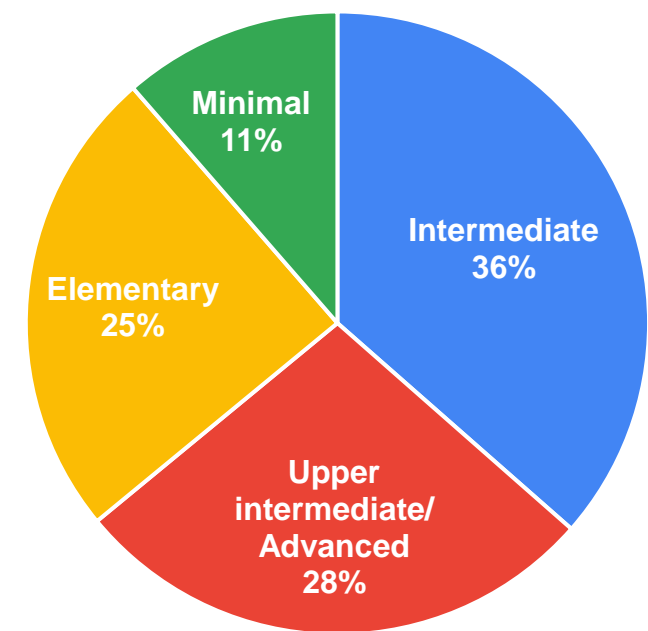
Age Group



Highest Level of Education



English Proficiency (Self Assessed)

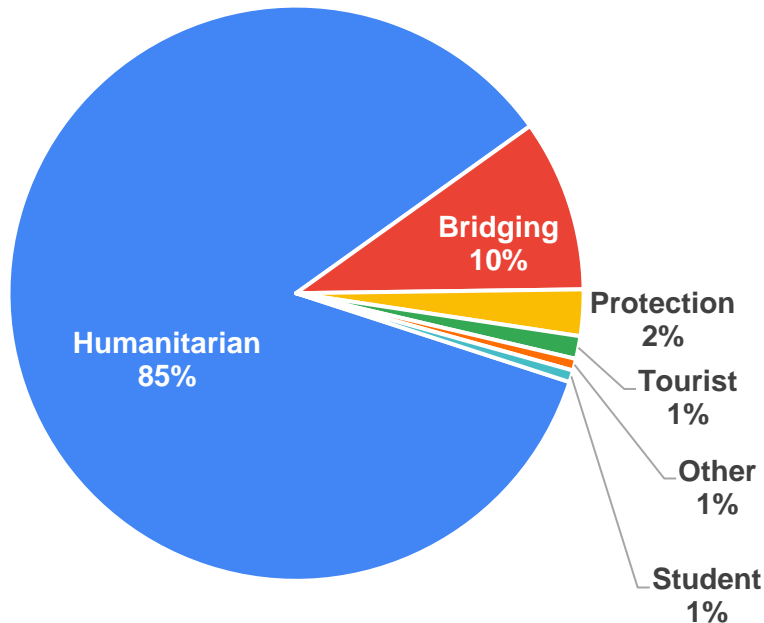




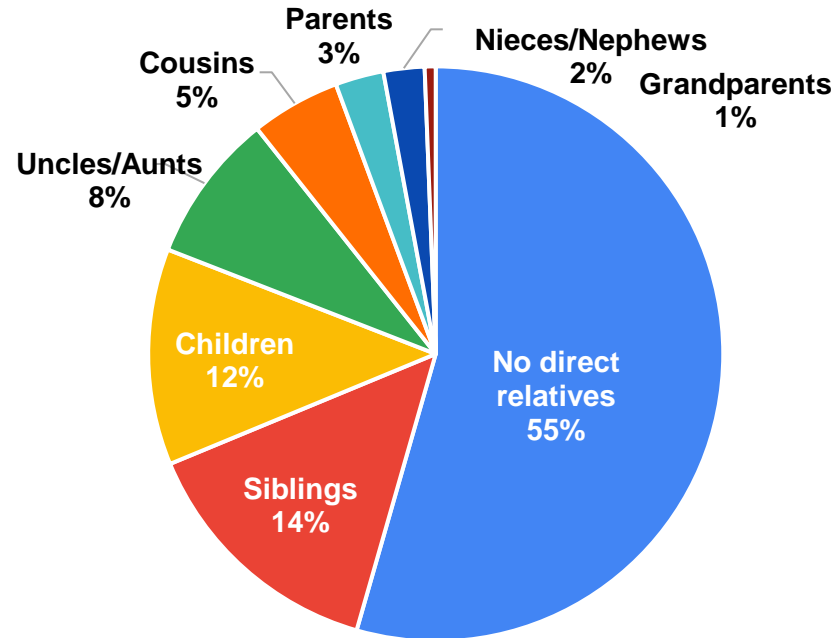
# 2. VISA STATUS AND MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

The significant majority (85%) of displaced Ukrainians hold the same 786 humanitarian visas issued to them upon their arrival into the country, with the majority of them (55%) having no direct family connections in Australia. Many are missing the support of extended family here and are truly “on their own”. This “visa limbo” and lack of family support directly contributes to the 86% who are suffering mental and physical health challenges due to ongoing uncertainty due to their visa status.

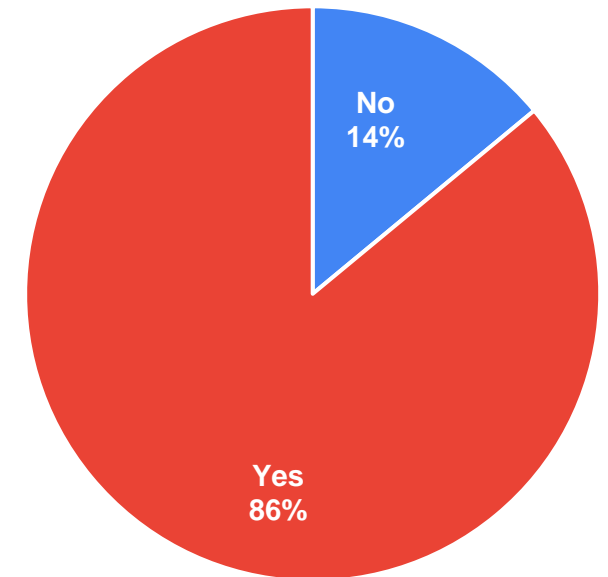
Visa Type



Direct Family Connections



Visa Status Causing Mental/Physical Health Concerns

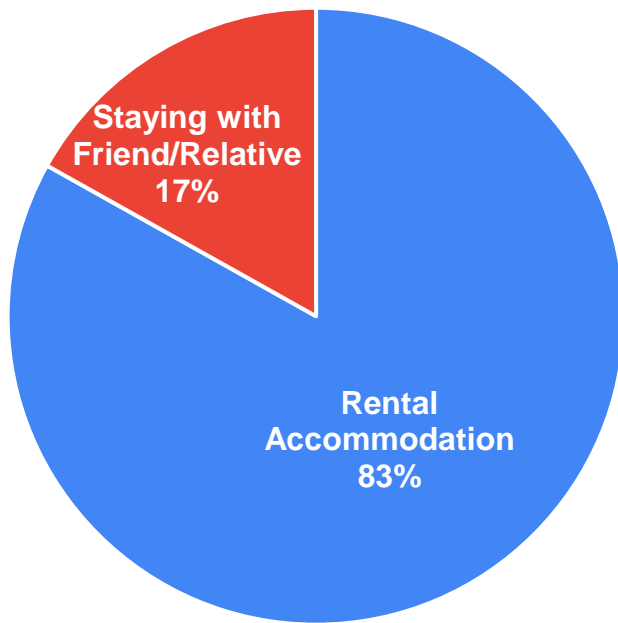




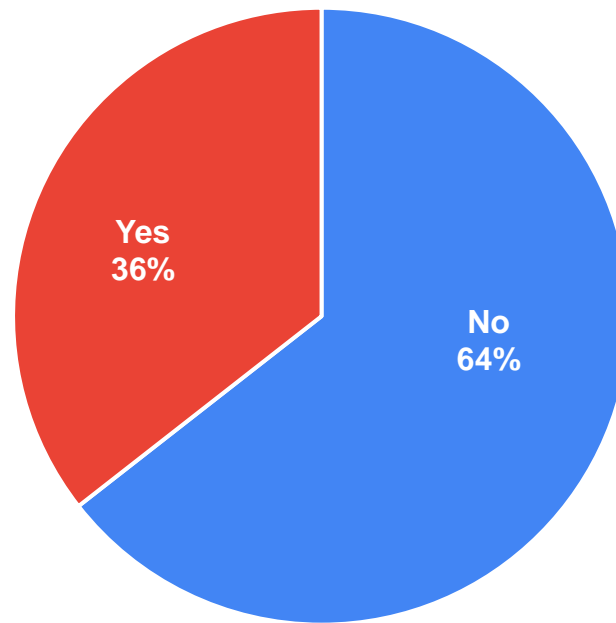
## 2. ACCOMMODATION/GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Displaced Ukrainians are proving to be highly self sufficient. Private sector accommodation has been found by 83% of the cohort, with 64% not receiving any financial assistance from the Federal Government. This is despite 37% of respondents reporting that their visa type was a barrier to finding employment.

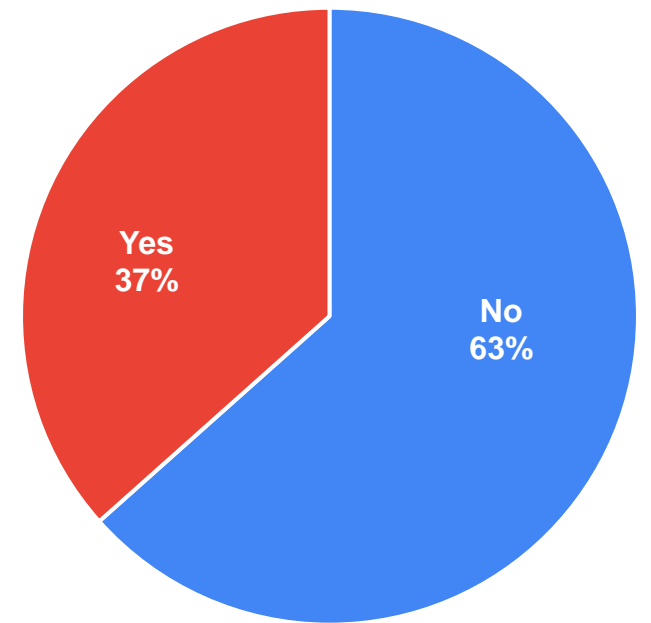
Current Housing Situation



Receiving Government Financial Assistance



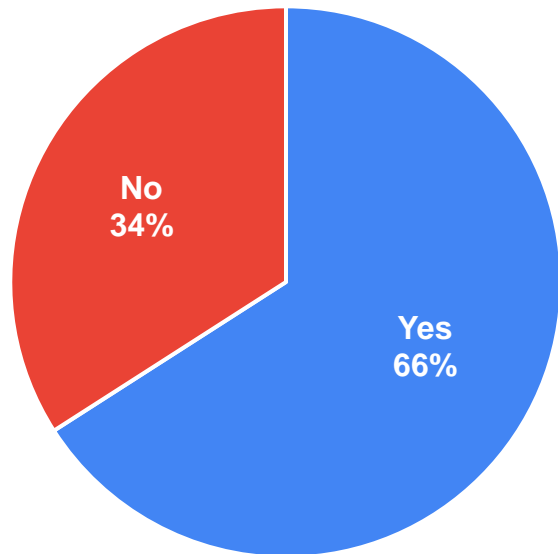
Visa Type a Barrier to Employment



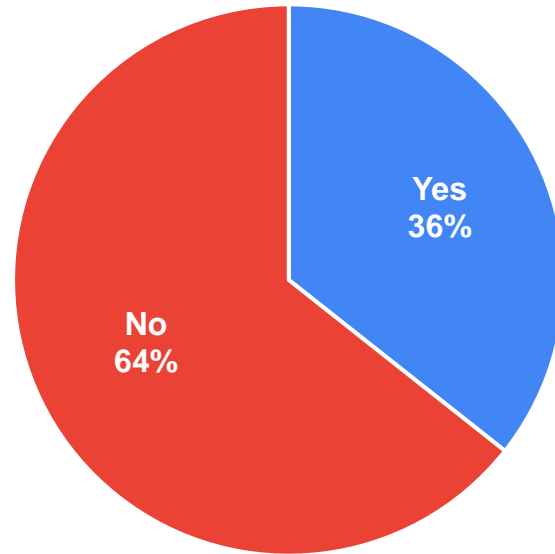
## 2. EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS

Displaced Ukrainians in Australia are industrious, with 66% employed despite employment obstacles created by their visa situation. There is limited Australian recognition of Ukrainian qualifications, with only 36% working in their area of expertise. Less than half are working in jobs on the skilled occupation list, limiting options for permanent residency. While some have found well paid employment, a minimum of 40% of displaced Ukrainians earn significantly less than the median Australian wage of \$1,300/week ([ABS 2024](#)).

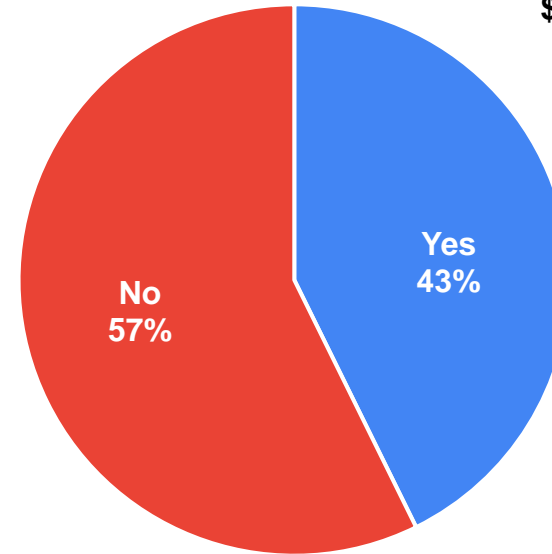
Employed in Australia



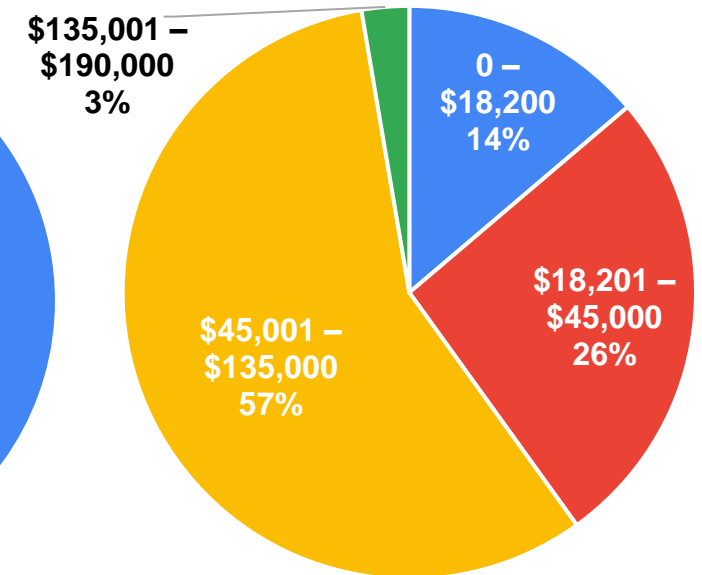
Employment related to Quals



Job on Skilled Occupation List

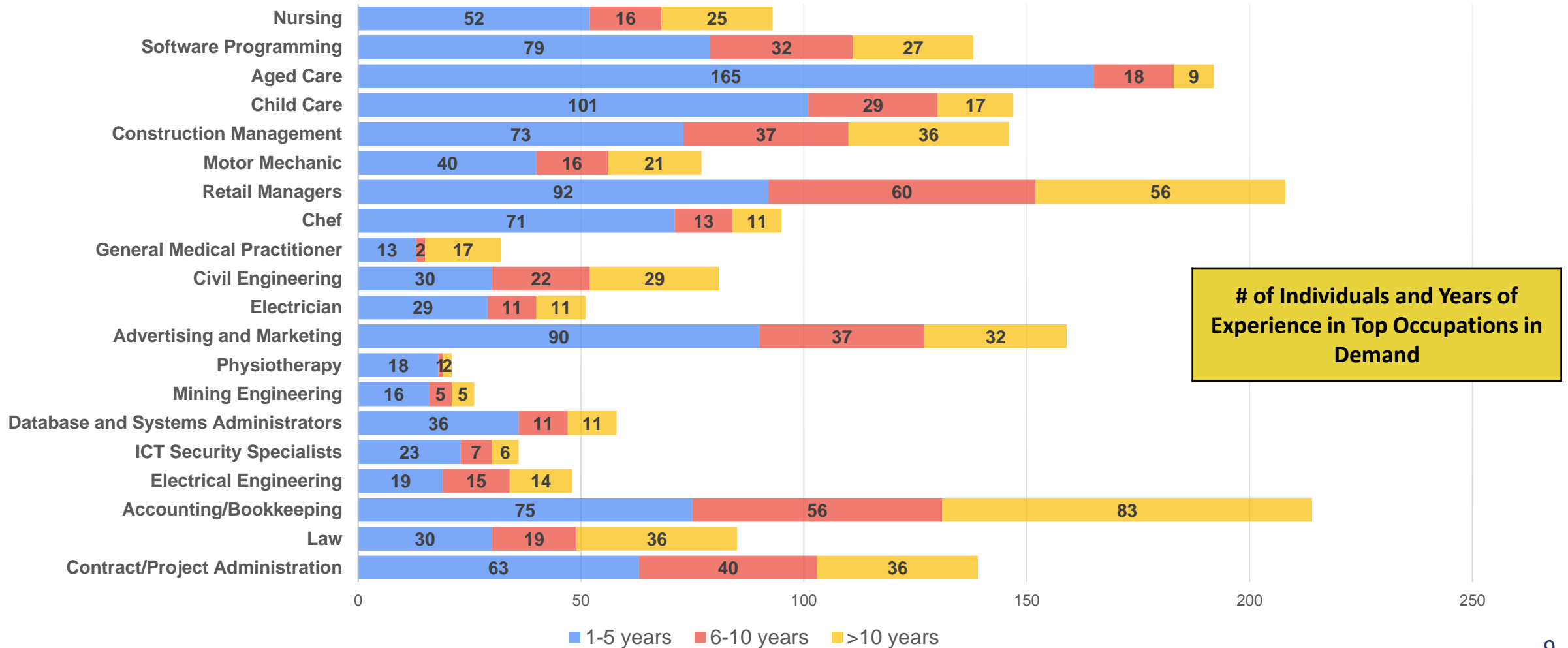


ATO Salary Band



# 2. EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS (CONTINUED)

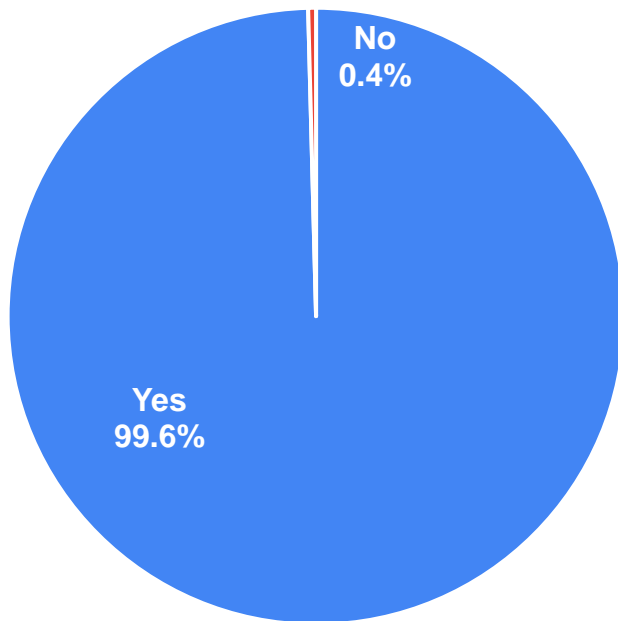
Displaced Ukrainians in Australia possess years of experience in the top 20 Occupations in Demand as per the February 2023 [Labour Market Update](#). This cohort would be of great benefit to Australia if granted permanent residency.



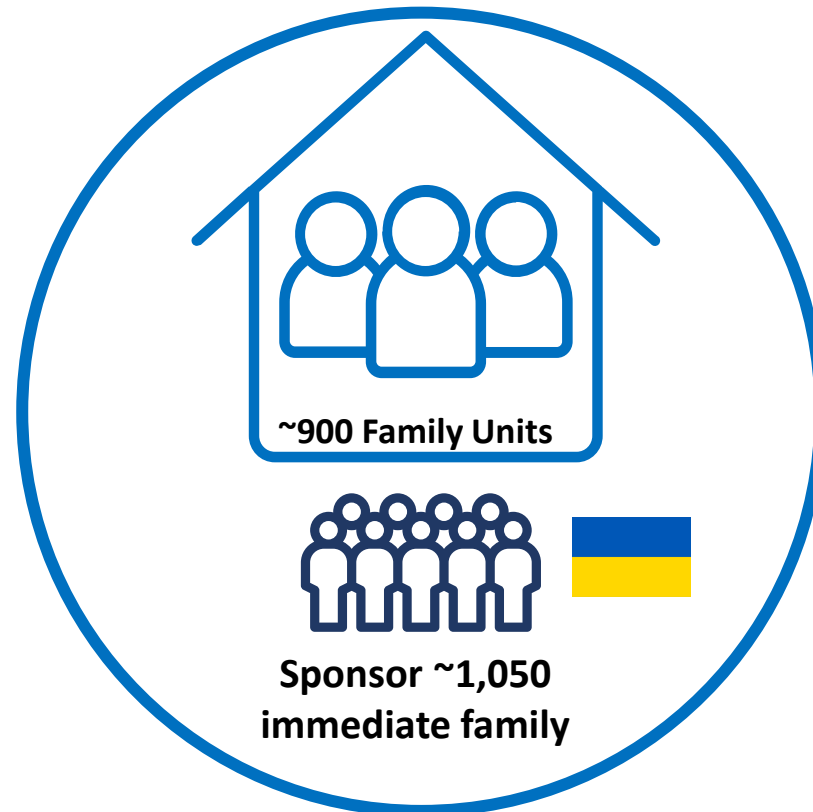
## 2. PERMANENT RESIDENCY

Almost all (99.6%) of respondents are seeking permanent residency in Australia. They have laid down roots here, and their children are settling into Australian life. Almost half of family units (47%) and just under a third of individuals (30%) wish to sponsor immediate family members if permanent residency were obtained, with an estimate of an additional 1,400 that may eventually seek permanent residency.

Seeking Permanent Residency in Australia



47% of ~900 family units expressed a desire to sponsor immediate family in Ukraine

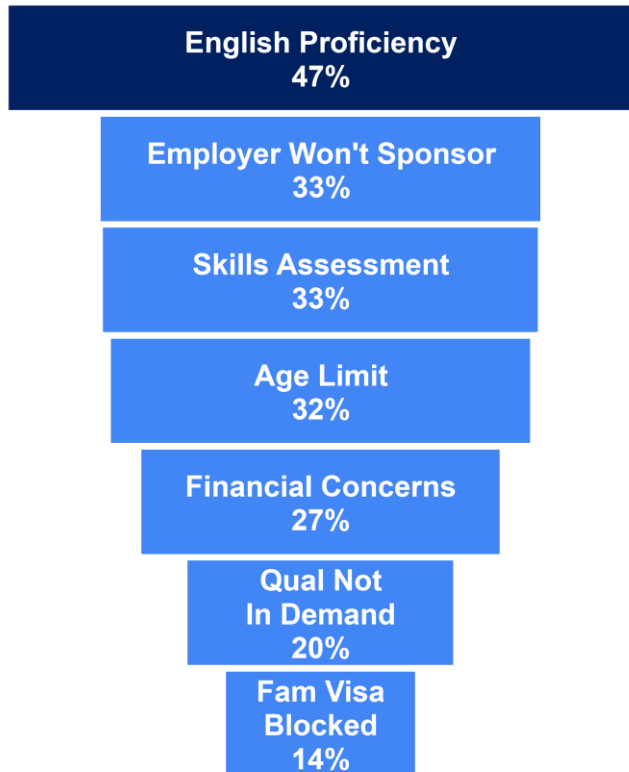


30% of the ~615 individuals expressed a desire to sponsor immediate family in Ukraine



# 3. CHALLENGE 1: ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Displaced Ukrainians encounter significant challenges in meeting the English proficiency requirements for skilled and work visas in Australia. The emphasis is placed on the necessity of obtaining an IELTS score of 7, a demanding standard that many refugees struggle to achieve whilst working and still trying improving their English language skills. People are striving to improve their language as fast as they possibly can, but doing so whilst juggling financial and childcare responsibilities makes it incredibly hard.



I am a single mum who works, cares for her child, and tries her best to study English to achieve a level required for skilled migration. Financial constraints, work/family responsibilities and a lack of time make it incredibly difficult to quickly improve my English skills in this short timeframe we have on 786 visas.



T P, NSW

My level of English is not sufficient to pass the exam to obtain a visa. Upon arrival in Australia, I chose the option to work, so I did not have enough time to go to a language school. But my English will improve a little at work. I completed a 6-month cookery course, this is not enough to get permanent residence or change the type of visa, and there is no time to continue studying, I need 3-4 years. At the moment, I decided to use the diplomas of a hairdresser and want to try to change jobs. But unfortunately, I have not worked as a hairdresser in Ukraine for the last 10 years and will not be able to provide official work experience to change the visa. We live and do not know what we will do tomorrow, very little time is left.



V T, QLD

# 3. CHALLENGE 2: SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Another prominent challenge identified in the survey is the scarcity of sponsorship opportunities from employers. Many employers are hesitant to sponsor people on temporary humanitarian and bridging visas due to the associated financial and administrative burdens, leading to the rejection of job applications from non-residents. This lack of sponsorship possibilities significantly limits the avenues available for displaced Ukrainians to continue their residency in Australia. Many struggle to even get hired while on a 786 visa, resorting to unstable and low-paid casual jobs.

English Proficiency  
47%

Employer Won't Sponsor  
33%

Skills Assessment  
33%

Age Limit  
32%

Financial Concerns  
27%

I have a PhD in Law and fluent English. In Ukraine I worked as a University lecturer. My own reasons that prevent me from moving to another visa subclass are the following:

I can't find an employer willing to sponsor me. I work as a contractor in several institutions. Despite my PhD qualification and an occupation being in critical demand, I am not getting a competitive score for 190/491 (33 yo; 5+ years of irrelevant experience (lawyer) and 1 year of experience relevant to my PhD (University lecturer).



K T, WA

I have been working as a NAATI-certified interpreter and translator in Australia for 2.5 years now. I have casual contracts with 6 agencies, 2 of them – government ones. None of the agencies I cooperate with are willing to hire me full time, let alone sponsor me.

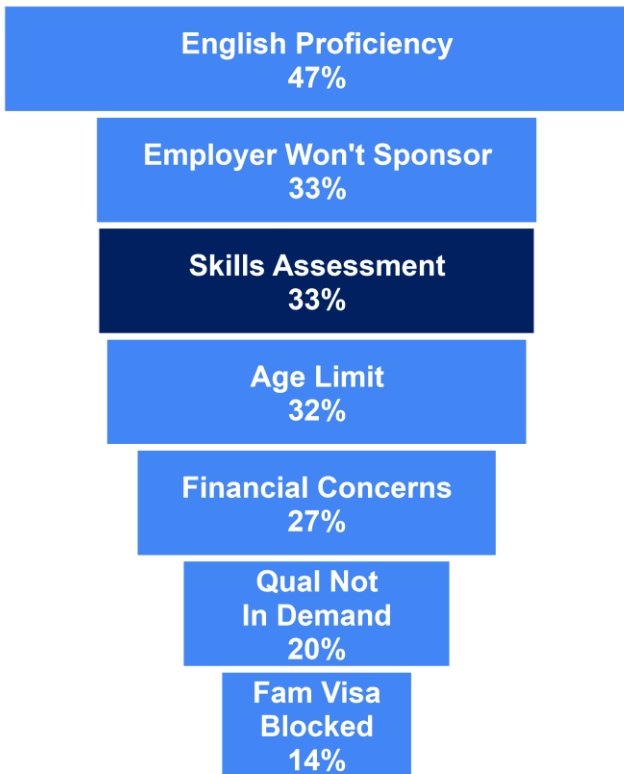
I score 90 points for a 190 visa with IELTS band 9, Australian work experience, a successful skills assessment, a passed NAATI CCL test, and a Bachelor's degree relevant to my occupation. My EOI was submitted a year ago. NSW isn't inviting me to apply. Thus, seems like nobody wants to sponsor me – neither my employers, nor the state I currently live in.



L M, NSW

# 3. CHALLENGE 3: SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Specific challenges in completing a skills assessment are including but not limited to: a) **Language Barriers**: limited English proficiency; b) **Credential Recognition**: difficulties in having qualifications and work experience recognised; c) **Experience Gaps**: inability to provide sufficient evidence of prior work experience due to displacement and limited documentation; d) **Skill Mismatch**: skills acquired in Ukraine not aligning perfectly with Australia's specific demands; and e) **Financial Constraints**: limited financial resources to cover the associated costs.



I am a primary school teacher, my occupation is in critical demand. However, my qualification and experience do not comply with the Australian standards. I am working as a learning assistant at a college and have studied in Australia for 2.5 years now to obtain another qualification, eligible for skilled migration. I am set to graduate from university 2 weeks after my visa expires. I was invited to Australia by my aunt, who cannot help me take a family visa pathway as she is not an immediate relative.



T K, QLD

This is my second time fleeing the Russian invasion. In 2014, I had to leave my hometown of Donetsk simply to survive. I almost got shot by Russian soldiers when I was just walking the street. In 2022, explosions woke me up and I had to leave my life behind again.

I have worked as a software engineer for years, and in Australia got employed by a tier 1 company. My employer is willing to sponsor me, but obtaining a skills assessment from Australian Computer Society (ACS) requires 6 years of eligible experience, which I don't have. I have a non-IT Master's Degree and I completed a 5-year course in IT, but this Diploma is not recognised by ACS.

Within the two years that I've worked in Australia, I have contributed to the Australian economy and society by working at a highly skilled job and paying tens of thousands in taxes.

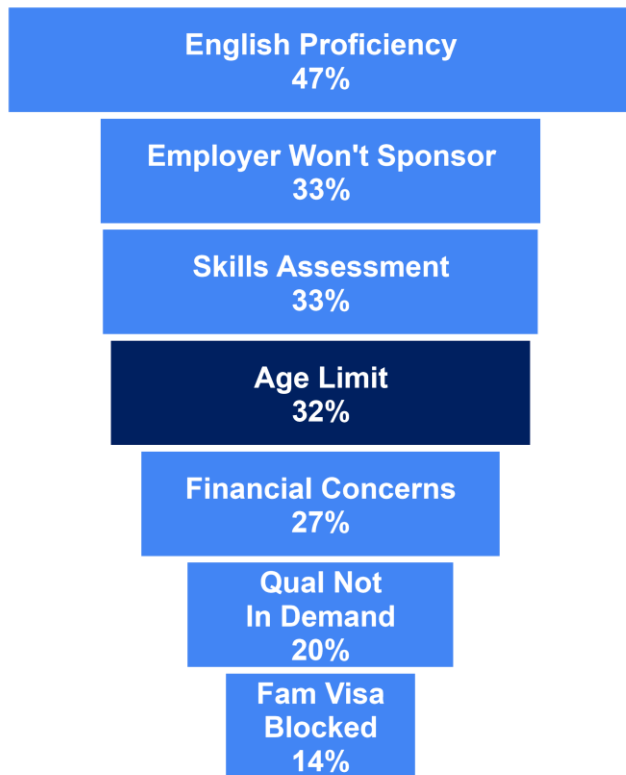


O S, NSW



# 3. CHALLENGE 4: AGE LIMIT

The age limit presents a major hindrance for displaced Ukrainians in Australia looking for potential skilled migration. Almost a third (32%) of respondents fall within the age range of 44 to 55, a critical period in their careers, making them ineligible to apply for certain visa categories that often lead to permanent residency (skilled visas, sponsorship visas through employers)



I am 85 years old, I don't have any relatives in Ukraine and came here with my nephew (PR) to his daughter, my grandniece (Citizen). She managed to get her father (my nephew) PR (visa 103), but I am not a closest relative and ineligible for any visa including the one for remaining relatives. I have 30% vision, I can't work, and I can't care about myself. I have nowhere to go back to.



V Z, TAS

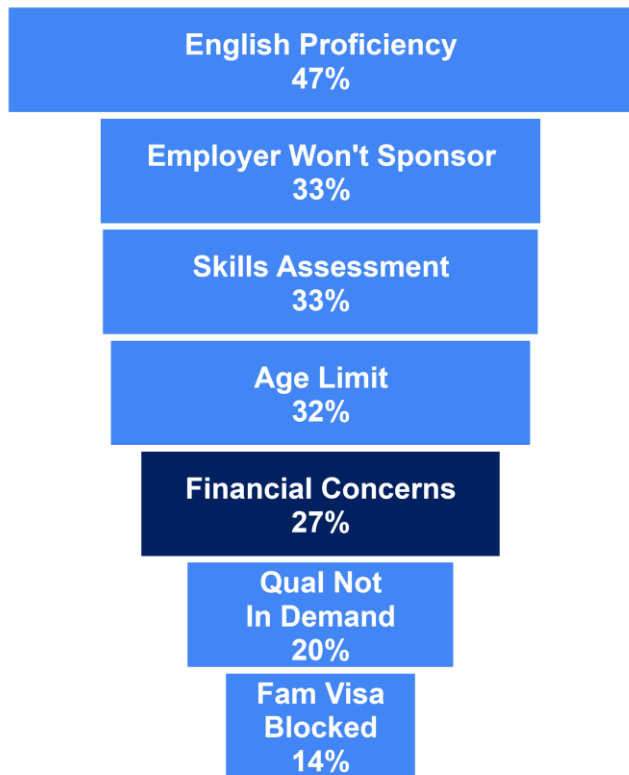
I have already sent Expression of interest for Visa 190, NSW nomination. I have a very high score for Visa 190 (90 points), perfect English (PTE 79+ for 4 sections), a NAATI CCL certificate, a Vocational Education and Training (VET) assessment with confirmed 8+ years of experience, and I hold a Doctor of Medicine (MD) Degree and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). In addition, I'm working in Healthcare as a Medical Manager which is a very qualified and well-paid job. The main issue is my age. I am 44 years and 5 months old. If I won't receive the invitation to apply for visa during next few months, unfortunately, I won't be able to do something, because you cannot apply for any type of skilled visa after the age of 45.



T S, NSW

# 3. CHALLENGE 5: FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Financial concerns pose a challenge in moving to other visa subclasses for 27% of displaced Ukrainians. These are mostly elderly parents, very young people without any support network, or families with kids who are unable to find skilled employment and make barely enough to survive.



My daughter doesn't earn enough to sponsor and support me for a parent visa. She is an Australian citizen and works part-time, as she has to care for a child with a disability. I am 61 years old and not eligible for any other type of visa.



Y S, VIC

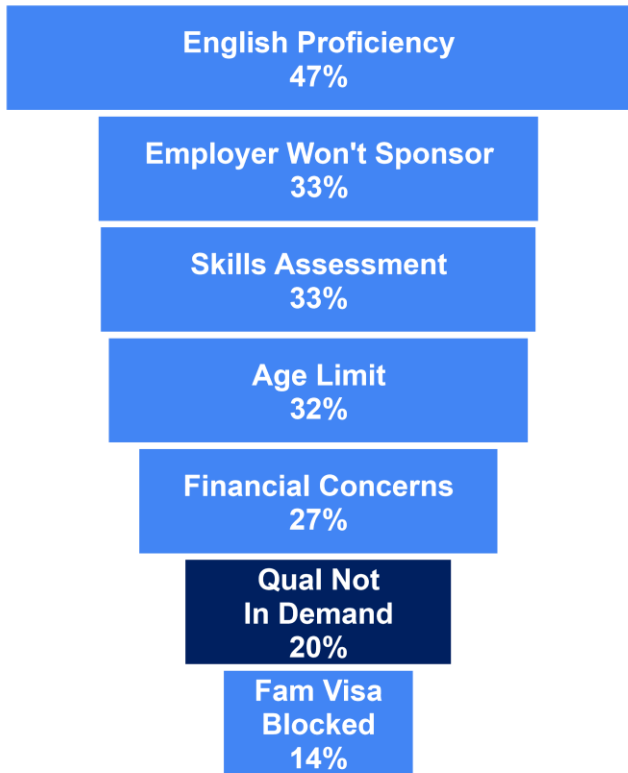
I am 70+ and never planned to move to Australia. But the brutal attack of russia on Ukraine changed everything. My house is located on the border with russia, only 10 km in Sumy oblast. There are daily bombardings and shellings. russia is killing Ukrainians everyday. There is no safe place. Due to this reason I am not able to return back home in Ukraine and I would like to stay with my daughter here in Australia. However, financial situation is the main obstacle that prevents me to apply for the parent visa. The visa situation is causing me lots of anxiety and pressure as I don't know if I can stay and be together with my daughter. In saying this, I am very thankful to Australian government and its people for the support provided to me and to all Ukrainians. I am really hoping that I would have a chance to call Australia home. Thank you all for support and care.



N K, QLD

# 3. CHALLENGE 6: QUALIFICATION

Respondents reported the challenges associated with their profession not being on the list of Occupations in Demand in their state. Many respondents expressed their intent to acquire new qualifications in Australia, but emphasised that obtaining the necessary certification and gaining relevant experience is a time-consuming process. As a result, the misalignment of their current profession with the state's demand further complicates their prospects of securing an alternative visa pathway in a timely manner.



I hold a master's degree in banking. However, I haven't worked in my field of specialisation since 2016. Since September 2022, I have been casually working at a nursery, so my experience in this field is insufficient for skilled/sponsored visa.

My English proficiency is far from the IELTS score of 7-8 required for a skilled visa. However, I am doing my best to improve it. I received a Cert IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping at TAFE in December 2022, but I don't have local experience and can't get a job in this field because my visa expires in less than one year. Employers don't want to hire someone with a visa expiring shortly. Even if I find a job as a bookkeeper, I will not be able to meet the skilled visa requirements in the foreseeable future.



D P, QLD

I'm 37 years old and I'm Pilates and Yoga instructor. I have 16 years work experience and a Master's in physical education and sport. I'm employed and working in several fitness studios here in Melbourne. My profession is very popular here, as people want to be fit and healthy. However, my occupation is not on the SOL and I can't apply for a permanent visa. This situation makes me feel unsafe and giving me anxiety.

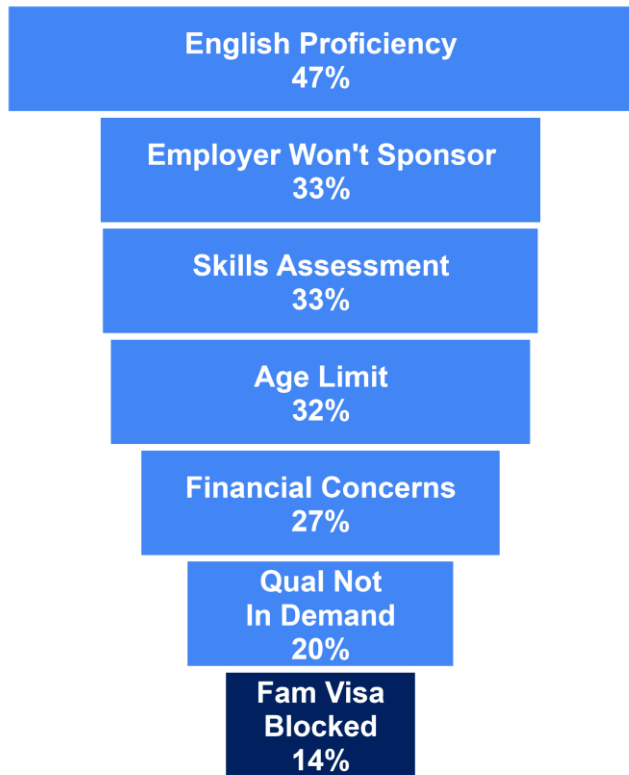
We hope that could be a chance for us to get permanent visa because we are young and we are working hard for Australian wellbeing. We pay taxes, rent, insurance and we don't ask about government payments. All we ask about is a permanent visa. We are praying for a normal life for our 10 years old daughter.



M H, VIC

# 3. CHALLENGE 7: FAMILY VISA BLOCKED

Respondents reported that they are ineligible for family visas despite having relatives in Australia who are citizens. The reasons for this are varied, however cause stress and frustration



My parents and sister (my entire family) are Australian citizens. I cannot apply for the Remaining Relative Visa because I have been in Australia on a Bridging Visa for more than 12 months. I was unable to apply earlier because my parents only recently received their permanent residency, and my family, including my 5-year-old son, has just arrived. Since I have been here for over 12 months, I am no longer eligible to apply for the Remaining Relative Visa.



A R, VIC

I am one of those people with nowhere to return to. My home in Kherson was underwater for a week in June 2023, flooded after the Kakhovka dam was destroyed. Then, in December, it was damaged by Russian artillery. I don't know if we will ever be able to live there again because I am already 72, and my husband is 74. I am not eligible for a parent visa, as only one of my children is an Australian citizen, but all my grandchildren live in Australia, and I would like to stay here with my family. My second son (of three) also came to Australia on the same 786 visa.



O M, NSW

# 3. CHALLENGE 8: OTHER

The challenge identified below is unique to an individual, however is included to show the challenges faced by displaced Ukrainians as they attempt to build new lives here. The existing pathways to permanent residency are not fit for purpose for this cohort, and attempting to navigate through them is frustrating and can feel futile.



In March 2022, I applied for confirmation of my qualifications and successfully received confirmation of my master's degree education and 10 years of overseas experience in July 2022. At that time, I also took an IELTS test, scoring Band 6. As of June 2022, I finally had 65 points to apply for an independent 190 visa, but the application for ROI in Victoria was closed at that time. I had to wait until September-October when submissions for the new financial year would open in order to apply.

However, on August 30th, 2022, I turned 40, and 10 points were deducted from my application, so I was no longer eligible for further submission of ROI. The only way to add an additional 10 points to my application was to get IELTS Band 7. It took 9 months and 4 additional attempts to reach this result, with a total cost of \$2,000 just for IELTS tests.

I reached IELTS Band 7 and got the additional 10 points in May 2023. Yet again, the submission of ROI to Victoria closed down, and I had to wait until September-October again. Apart from that, two weeks ago at the beginning of August, I received a notification from the DoHA that I lost 5 points, as I had been working in Australia for 2 years, reducing my overseas experience to 8 years.

Unfortunately, the additional 5 points for Australian experience will only be added when I get 3 years of work experience in Australia. Therefore, I am at 60 points again and thus not able to submit ROI for a 190 visa in Victoria.

Unfortunately, I cannot move to regional Australia to apply for a 491 visa as I am supporting and caring for two elderly mothers who live separately in my current region. I will keep trying to pass a NAATI CCL test to add another 5 points to my application, but I don't know how much time it will take.



# 4. APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTION SET

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1. Name and Surname (optional)
2. What visa do you currently hold?
3. Please confirm your age group
4. What is your postcode?
5. How many dependent children under 18 are with you in Australia? Note: If there are several adults in the family, please provide the number of children once only. Please ensure that all other adults in the family filling out this form select “0” in this question.
6. Do you have any direct relatives with permanent residency/citizenship who were living in Australia prior to February 2022?
7. Please confirm your highest level of education
8. What is your level of English proficiency?
9. Have you taken an English Proficiency Test recognised for migration purposes in Australia (e.g. IELTS, PTE)?

# 4. APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTION SET

- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Nursing]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Software Programming]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Aged Care ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Child Care]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Construction Management]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Motor Mechanic]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Retail]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Chef]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Generalist Medical Practitioner ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Civil Engineering]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Electrician]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Advertising and Marketing]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Physiotherapy]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Mining Engineering]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Database and System Analysts]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [ICT Security Specialists ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Electrical Engineering ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Accounting/Bookkeeping ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Law ]
- 10. Please confirm if you have any experience in the following areas. You may complete more than one row (Optional) [Contract, Program and Project Administrators]



# 4. APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTION SET

11. Are you currently employed in Australia?
12. Is your current job related to your qualification?
13. Is your current job on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL), allowing you to take a professional migration pathway?
14. Are you self-employed or have you established your own business in Australia?
15. What is your salary range? (Optional)
16. What is your current housing situation?
17. Are you receiving any government financial assistance?
18. Is your visa type a barrier to gaining employment?
19. Are you seeking permanent residency in Australia?
20. In case you will be applying for PR, will you be the only applicant or would you like to include other family members who are currently with you in Australia on 786 or bridging visas?
21. How many family members (secondary applicants who are with you in Australia on 786 or bridging visas) will you include in your application?
22. What are the barriers blocking you from obtaining permanent residency? You may pick more than one.
23. Is your visa status causing you stress or mental/physical health concerns?
24. Please provide detailed information on what is preventing you and/or your family members from moving to a different visa subclass (in English – use Google Translate or ChatGPT if required). OPTIONAL
25. If you were to obtain permanent residency would you want to sponsor immediate family members (partner/parents/children that are NOT currently in Australia) to live with you in Australia?
26. How many immediate family members (partner, parents and/or children that are NOT currently in Australia) would you consider sponsoring to migrate to Australia?
27. Do you participate in any community or volunteering activities in Australia?
28. Do you participate in Ukrainian community activities in Australia?
29. Would you be interested in volunteering for Ukrainian community events in Australia in your state?
30. Email Address (Optional)
31. Do you consent to your email being provided to the peak Ukrainian organisation in your state so you can be contacted about local Ukrainian community events?
32. Do you consent to AFUO contacting you by email about national community activities and events?