

Employer Perspectives on Skilled Migration in Australia

Industry survey on workforce planning and
employer sponsorship experiences

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Executive Summary

The Employer Perspectives on Skilled Migration in Australia – Industry Survey on Workforce Planning and Employer Sponsorship Experiences was conducted by The Employee Mobility Institute (TEMi) Immigration Advisory Group (IAG) to capture employer perspectives on the practical use of skilled migration and how current visa settings are impacting workforce planning across Australia.

The survey was distributed to Australian employers currently using, or considering using, skilled migration, across industries including Healthcare and Aged Care, Professional Services, Technology, Engineering and Construction, Retail and Consumer, and Financial Services. Respondents included HR leaders, Talent Acquisition professionals, Global Mobility specialists, and senior business leaders responsible for hiring and sponsorship decisions.

Results highlight a strong reliance on overseas talent to address critical skill shortages. Employers frequently identified the Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) and the Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) as key components of their workforce strategy, alongside the use of the Temporary Work (Short Stay Specialist) visa (subclass 400), the Student visa (subclass 500), and the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417 and 462).

Across industries, employers reported that required skills are often not available locally, particularly for specialist technical, operational, leadership, and project-based roles. When overseas workers are unavailable, organisations report project delays, reduced service capacity, increased workload for existing staff, and higher labour costs.

Employers also highlighted compliance complexity, administrative burden, processing times, costs, salary thresholds, and occupation list limitations as key challenges when sponsoring overseas workers.

Insights from the Employer Perspectives on Skilled Migration in Australia survey will contribute to industry advocacy and policy discussions with the Department of Home Affairs, ensuring employer perspectives are represented in future skilled migration policy settings.

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About the Survey

The **Employer Perspectives on Skilled Migration in Australia – Industry Survey on Workforce Planning and Employer Sponsorship Experiences** was conducted by The Employee Mobility Institute (TEMi) Immigration Advisory Group (IAG).

The survey was distributed through an online questionnaire, with the survey link shared by TEMi and members of the IAG across their professional networks.

The survey was open between **17 February and 24 March**, during which time a total of **48 responses** were received from organisations across multiple industries in Australia.

Respondents included professionals involved in workforce planning, recruitment, talent acquisition, global mobility, and employer sponsorship, providing insights into how organisations are currently engaging with Australia's skilled migration programs

Key Results

The survey results provide a clear picture of how Australian employers are currently engaging with skilled migration and the role it plays in workforce planning across industries. Overall, the findings confirm that skilled migration remains a critical workforce solution, primarily used to address genuine labour shortages rather than replace local hiring.

Strong reliance on overseas talent to address skill shortages

Employers consistently identified skills unavailable locally (77.42%) and insufficient local candidates (64.52%) as the primary reasons for employing overseas workers. This reinforces that migration is being used as a direct response to structural labour market gaps rather than preference-based hiring.

Local recruitment remains the priority

The majority of organisations (64.52%) reported that they prioritise recruiting locally and only use overseas workers when local recruitment is unsuccessful. A further 29.03% consider local and overseas candidates in parallel. Direct reliance on overseas recruitment remains limited.

Increasing use of onshore migrant talent

A notable share of employers (32.26%) indicated that they employ existing visa holders already in Australia, suggesting that organisations are increasingly relying on the onshore migrant workforce as a practical and efficient recruitment pathway.

Overseas workers play a critical operational role

Overseas workers are highly important to organisational operations. 40.62% of respondents described them as essential, and 34.38% said they are very important to their organisation's ability to operate. Without access to overseas talent, employers reported major operational impacts, including:

- Increased workload or burnout risk for existing staff (45.16%)
- Reduced service levels or output (48.39%)
- Delays or cancelled projects (38.71%)
- Reduced ability to grow or take on new work (45.16%)

Employer-sponsored visas remain central to workforce strategy

The Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) continues to dominate as the most critical visa pathway. It was selected by 100% of respondents as a visa their organisation uses and by 77.42% as the most critical visa category for workforce strategy. The Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) also remains an important pathway, used by 77.42% of respondents, while other temporary pathways such as Student, Working Holiday and Graduate visas continue to support workforce pipelines.

Operational and specialist technical roles are most affected

The parts of organisations most affected by labour shortages are specialist technical roles (62.07%) and operational roles (51.72%), indicating that workforce shortages are concentrated in frontline and highly specialised positions. Leadership roles (24.14%) and project-based roles (20.69%) are also affected, but to a lesser extent.

Salary thresholds affect a substantial proportion of employers

A significant proportion of organisations (44.83%) are directly affected by salary threshold requirements such as the Core Skills Income Threshold (CSIT) and Specialist Skills Income Threshold (SSIT), while 37.93% are not and 17.24% report no impact due to salaries already exceeding thresholds. Most employers indicated that less than 10% of roles sit near the threshold, though a smaller group remains exposed to future increases.

Key challenges remain consistent across industries

Employers identified several ongoing challenges when using the skilled migration system, including:

- Processing times (75.76%)
- Cost (54.55%)
- Administrative burden (36.36%)

Other concerns included occupation list settings (24.24%), salary threshold requirements (21.21%), policy instability (18.18%), the SAF levy (18.18%), permanent residence pathways (18.18%) and skills assessments (15.15%).

These findings show that while employers rely on skilled migration to meet workforce needs, processing efficiency, program costs and administrative complexity continue to create significant operational pressure.

Skilled migration complements local hiring

There is strong consensus among employers that employer sponsorship complements, rather than replaces, local recruitment, with an average agreement score of 86.2 out of 100. This reinforces the role of skilled migration as a targeted solution to workforce shortages rather than a substitute for domestic hiring.

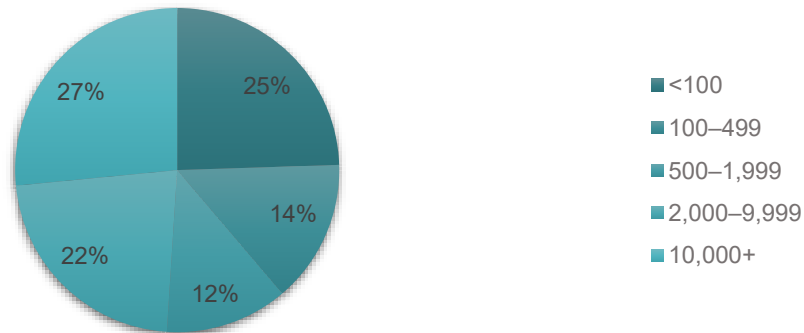
Reliance on employer-sponsored migration is expected to remain stable or increase

Looking ahead, most organisations expect their reliance on employer-sponsored visas to stay about the same (69.70%) or increase (27.27%) over the next two to three years. Only 3.03% expect their reliance to decrease, indicating that employer-sponsored migration will remain an important and stable component of workforce strategy.

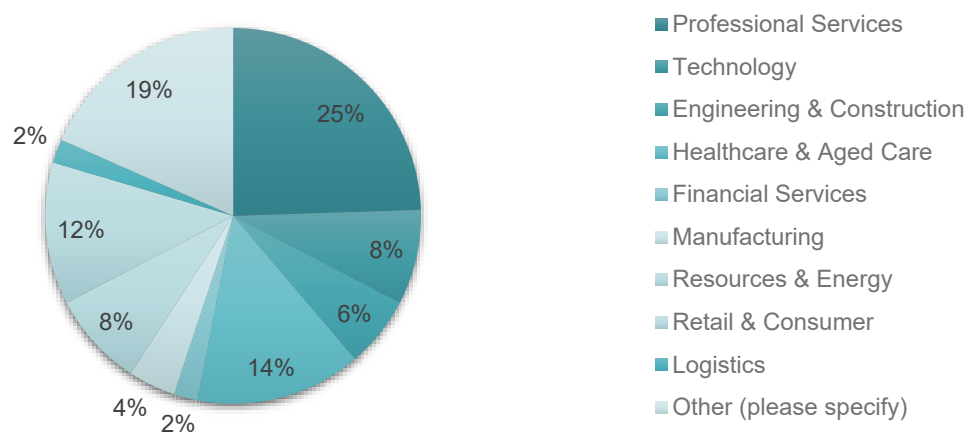
The following pages present the detailed results and responses for each question, along with accompanying descriptions that explain the insights reflected in the graphs above.

1. Organisation & Respondent Profile

1.1 Organisation size



1.2 Industry

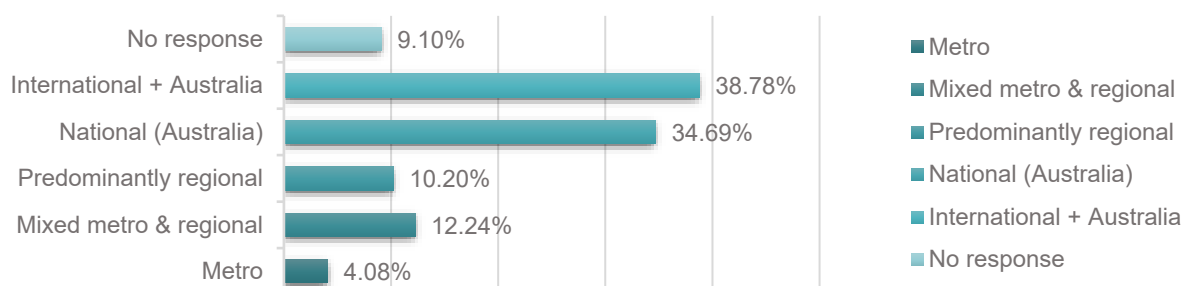


Responses were received from organisations across a broad range of industries, with several sectors more prominently represented.

- Professional services is the most represented sector:** Approximately 25% of respondents operate in professional services, making it the largest industry group in the survey.
- Healthcare and aged care also form a significant share:** Around 14% of respondents operate in healthcare or aged care, reflecting sectors with ongoing workforce demand.
- Retail and consumer and “other” sectors show strong representation:** Retail and consumer businesses account for 12% of respondents, while a further 19% fall under “other” industries, indicating a diverse mix of additional sectors not specifically categorised.
- Technology and resources and energy contribute moderately:** Both sectors represent 8% of respondents each, showing consistent demand across these industries.

- **Several other sectors appear in smaller numbers:** Engineering and construction (6%), manufacturing (4%), financial services (2%) and logistics (2%) are also represented, demonstrating the broad cross-industry relevance of skilled migration.

1.3 Primary Operating Footprint

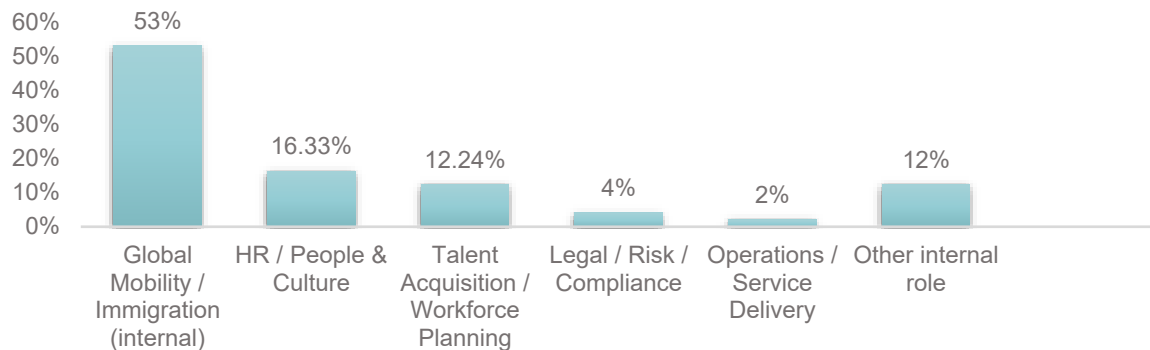


Respondents represent organisations operating at different geographic scales across Australia and internationally.

- **Many respondents operate at a national or international level:** The largest group consists of organisations with both international and Australian operations (38.78%), followed by those operating nationally within Australia (34.69%).
- **Some organisations operate across both metropolitan and regional areas:** Around 12.24% of respondents indicated a mixed metro and regional footprint, suggesting workforce challenges may span multiple labour markets.
- **Regional businesses are also represented:** Approximately 10.20% of respondents operate predominantly in regional locations, highlighting the importance of migration settings for regional employers.
- **Metro-only operations are less common:** Only 4.08% of respondents operate solely in metropolitan areas, indicating that most organisations have broader geographic reach.
- **A small portion did not specify:** 9.10% of respondents did not provide a response.

Overall, the results reflect a mix of national, international and regional employers, with a strong skew towards organisations operating across multiple jurisdictions, reinforcing that skilled migration challenges are not limited to a single geographic context.

1.4 Role

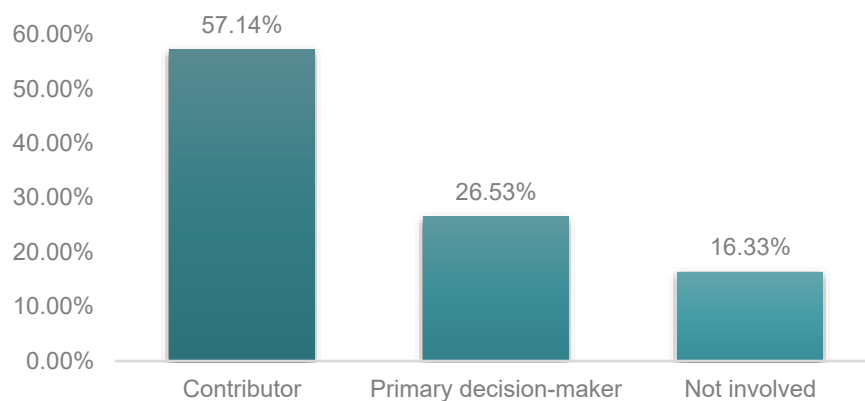


The majority of survey responses were provided by professionals directly involved in immigration management and workforce planning.

- 53.06% of respondents work in Global Mobility or Immigration functions.
- 16.33% represent HR or People & Culture teams.
- 12.24% come from Talent Acquisition or Workforce Planning roles.
- 4% are Legal/ Risk/ Compliance
- 2% are Operations/ Service Delivery
- 12% other internal roles

This indicates that the survey results reflect insights from professionals closely involved in immigration compliance, workforce planning, and international recruitment decisions within their organisations.

1.5 Are you involved in visa hiring or sponsorship decisions?



Most respondents indicated that they play a direct role in visa hiring or sponsorship decisions within their organisations.

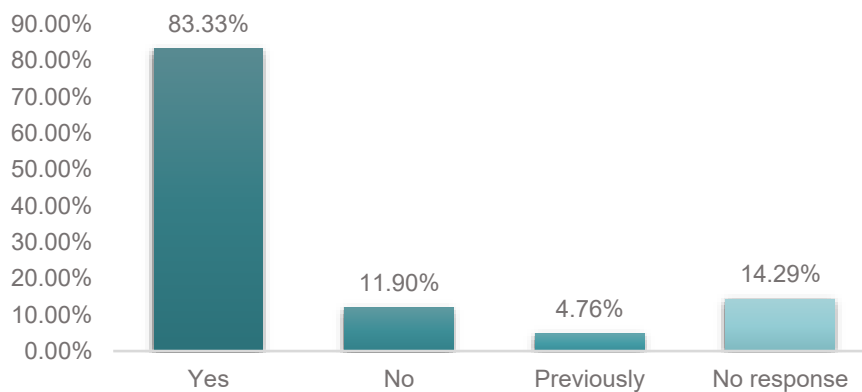
- 57.14% of respondents contribute to visa hiring or sponsorship decisions, suggesting that many participants are involved in the process even if they are not the final decision-maker.

- 26.53% reported being the primary decision-maker, indicating that a significant portion of responses come from individuals responsible for approving or leading sponsorship decisions.
- 16.33% indicated they are not directly involved, although they may still work in roles that interact with immigration or workforce planning processes.

Overall, the results suggest that the majority of survey participants have direct visibility into employer-sponsored migration decisions, strengthening the relevance of the insights provided.

2. Use of Overseas Workers

2.1 Does your organisation currently employ overseas workers on Australian skilled visas?

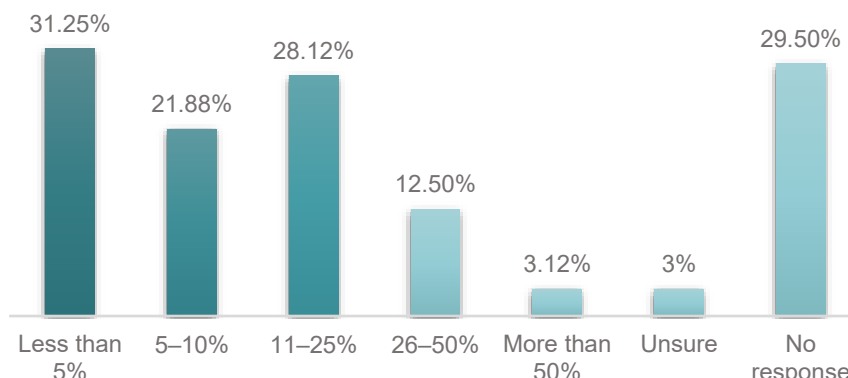


Most organisations participating in the survey currently employ overseas workers on Australian skilled visas.

- 83.33% of respondents confirmed they currently employ overseas workers on skilled visas, indicating that the majority of organisations represented actively use employer-sponsored migration programs.
- 11.90% reported that they do not currently employ overseas workers, suggesting some organisations rely primarily on domestic recruitment.
- 4.76% indicated they previously employed overseas workers, but are not currently doing so.
- 14.29% of survey participants did not respond to this question.

Overall, the responses indicate that the survey results primarily reflect the experience of organisations actively using the skilled migration system.

2.2 Approximate % of your total Australian workforce who are overseas workers

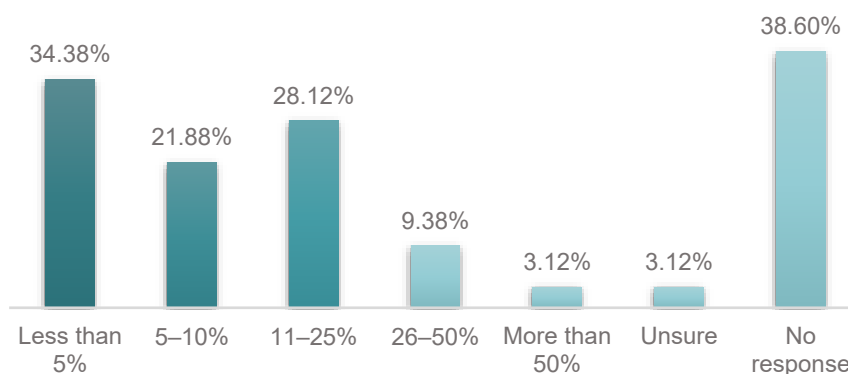


The results suggest that overseas workers represent a relatively small proportion of the workforce for most organisations, although a minority rely more heavily on international talent.

- 31.25% reported that overseas workers make up less than 5% of their Australian workforce.
- 28.12% indicated overseas workers account for 11–25% of staff, suggesting a moderate reliance on migration in some organisations.
- 21.88% reported that overseas workers make up 5-10% of their Australian workforce.
- 12.5% reported that overseas workers represent 26–50% of their workforce, indicating a more significant dependence on global talent in certain sectors.
- Only 3.12% reported that more than half of their workforce consists of overseas workers.

Where estimation challenges exist, the main reasons relate to complex employment structures or multiple visa types, rather than a lack of organisational awareness.

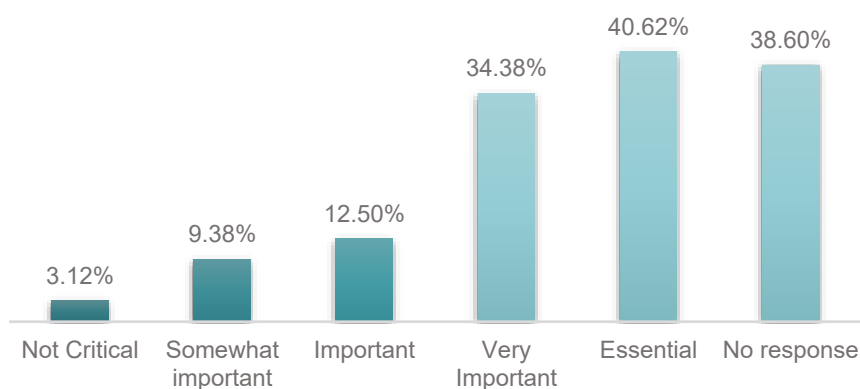
2.3 Approx. % of your skilled roles filled by overseas workers



The results suggest that overseas workers typically fill a relatively small share of skilled roles for most organisations, although reliance varies across sectors.

- 34.38% of respondents reported that less than 5% of skilled roles are filled by overseas workers, indicating limited reliance on migration for many employers.
- 28.12% indicated that overseas workers fill 11–25% of skilled roles, suggesting a moderate dependence on international talent in some organisations.
- 21.88% respondents reported that 5-10% of skilled roles are filled by overseas workers.
- 9.38% reported that 26–50% of skilled roles are filled by overseas workers, while 3.12% indicated more than half of skilled roles rely on overseas workers.
- 3.12% were unsure, and 38.6% did not provide a response, which may reflect the difficulty of estimating workforce composition across large or decentralised organisations.

2.4 How critical are overseas workers to your organisation’s ability to operate?



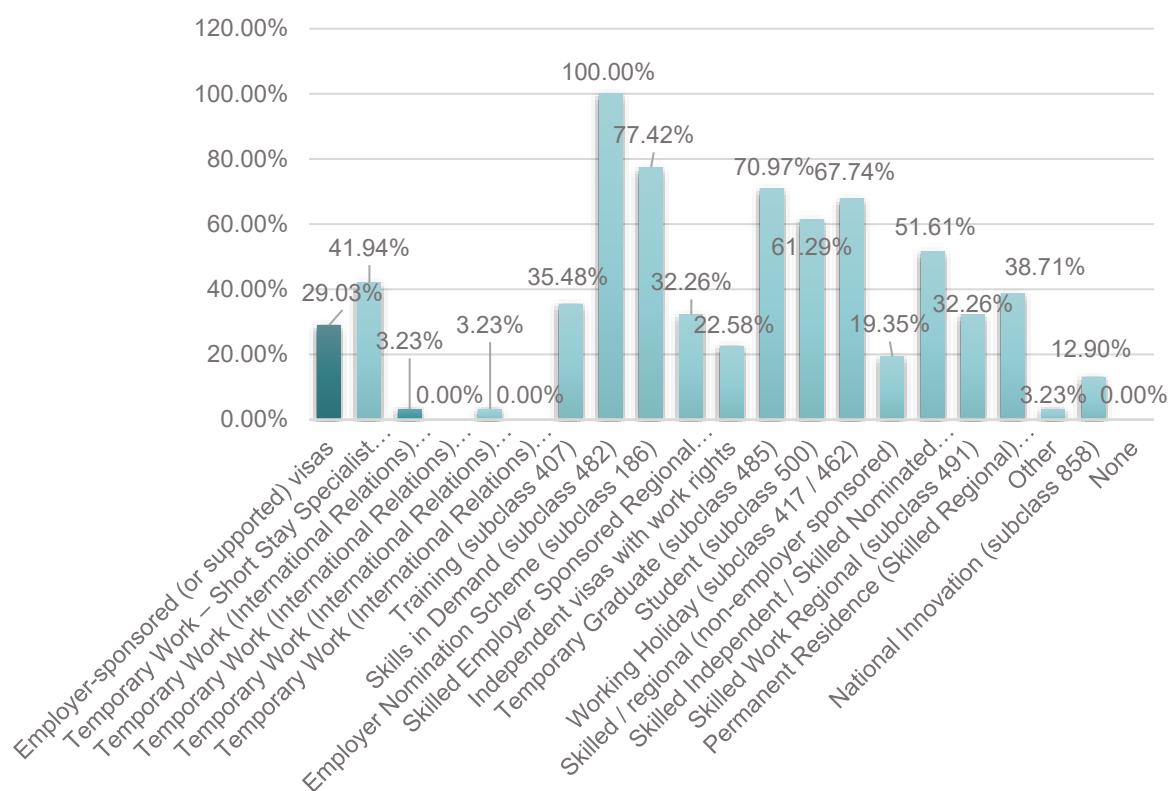
The responses indicate that overseas workers play a significant role in supporting organisational operations for many employers.

- 40.62% of respondents described overseas workers as essential to their organisation’s ability to operate.
- 34.38% indicated they are very important, reinforcing the strong operational value placed on international talent.
- 12.50% reported overseas workers as important, while 9.38% considered them somewhat important.
- Only 3.12% indicated that overseas workers are not critical to their organisation.
- More than three quarters of respondents (87.50%) rated overseas workers as important, very important or essential, highlighting their central role in maintaining workforce capacity and operational continuity.
- A notable 38.60% recorded no response, which may reflect differing organisational exposure to overseas workers or internal visibility across teams.

Overall, the results suggest that a substantial portion of employers view overseas workers as central to maintaining workforce capacity and operational continuity.

3. Skilled Visa Programs Used

3.1 Which visa subclasses does your organisation typically see or use for overseas workers?

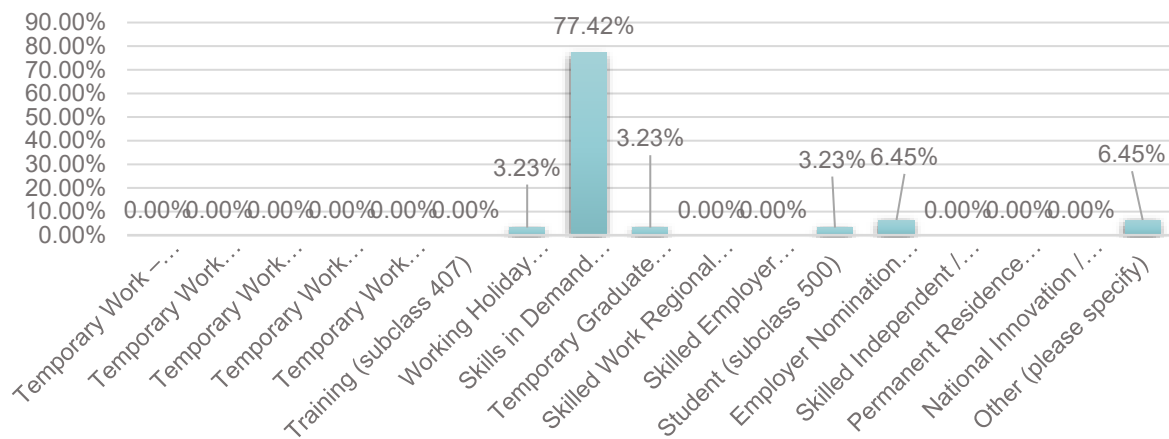


The responses show that employer-sponsored skilled visas dominate organisational use of Australia's migration system.

- The Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) is the most commonly used pathway, selected by 100% of respondents, reinforcing its role as the primary employer-sponsored visa.
- Permanent employer-sponsored pathways, particularly subclass 186, are also widely used, with 77.42% of organisations reporting use.
- Graduate and temporary work visas, including subclass 485, student visas, and working holiday visas, are frequently used as part of workforce pipelines or transitional employment pathways.
- Regional and specialised visas, such as subclass 494 and subclass 491, are used by a smaller but notable portion of organisations, reflecting targeted regional recruitment strategies.

Overall, the results indicate that employers rely on a mix of employer-sponsored, graduate, and temporary work visas, with the 482 visa clearly remaining the central pathway for accessing international talent.

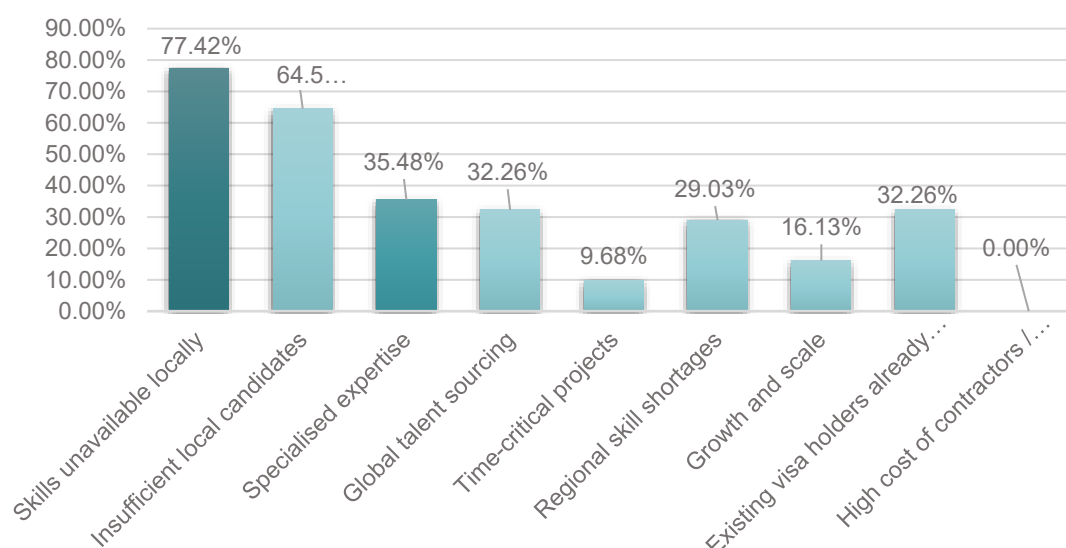
3.2 Which visa category is most critical to your workforce strategy?



- The Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) is the most critical visa for employers:** More than four in five organisations (77.42%) identified the 482 visa as the most important visa category for their workforce strategy.
- Other visas play a limited but targeted supporting role:** A small number of respondents identified alternative pathways such as the Temporary Graduate visa (3.23%), Working Holiday visa (3.23%), Student visa (3.23%), and Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) (6.45%) as their most critical category, typically reflecting specific workforce pipelines or industry needs.
- Most other visa categories are not considered critical:** Several visa options, including regional, skilled independent and innovation pathways, recorded minimal or no selection (0.00%), indicating limited relevance for employer-led workforce strategies.
- Other responses remain minimal:** Only 6.45% selected “other”, reinforcing that the vast majority of employers rely on a small number of core visa pathways.
- The results reinforce the central role of employer-sponsored visas in workforce planning:** The dominance of the 482 visa highlights its importance as the primary mechanism through which organisations address skills shortages and support workforce continuity and growth.

4. Why You Employ Overseas Workers

4.1 Why does your organisation employ overseas workers?

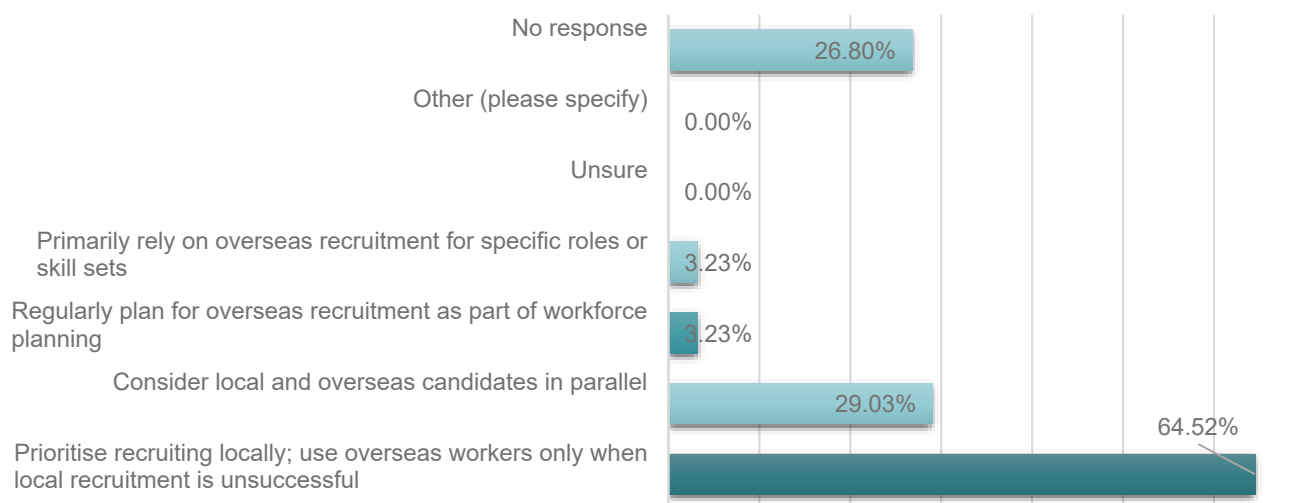


The results show that local skill shortages and limited candidate availability are the primary drivers behind organisations engaging with skilled migration.

- 77.42% of respondents identified skills unavailable locally as the key reason for hiring overseas workers, highlighting a persistent gap in the domestic labour market.
- 64.52% of respondents reported insufficient local candidates, reinforcing that workforce shortages are driven by both capability gaps and low applicant availability.
- 35.48% of respondents rely on migration for specialised expertise, indicating the need for niche or highly skilled roles that are difficult to source locally.
- 32.26% of respondents use global talent sourcing, and an equal 32.26% hire existing visa holders already in Australia, demonstrating that both offshore and onshore migration pathways play a strategic role.
- 29.03% of respondents identified regional skill shortages, highlighting ongoing workforce challenges outside metropolitan areas.
- 16.13% of respondents indicated growth and scale as a driver, while 9.68% cited time-critical project needs, showing that business expansion and urgency also contribute to migration demand.

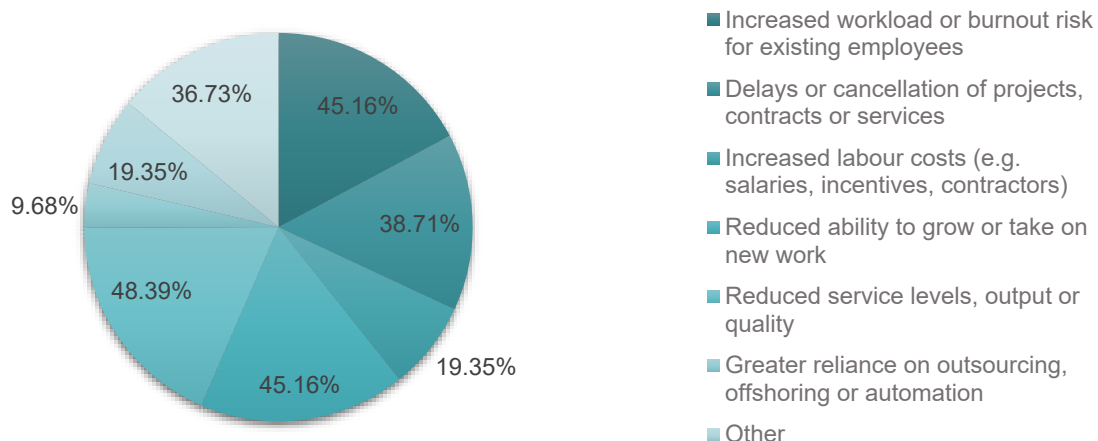
Overall, the responses reinforce that skilled migration is primarily used as a strategic solution to address genuine skill shortages and workforce gaps, rather than as a cost-saving measure.

4.2 When filling skilled roles, which best describes your organisation's typical approach?



- Local recruitment remains the primary strategy for most employers:** More than 64.52% of organisations reported that they prioritise recruiting locally and only turn to overseas workers when local recruitment is unsuccessful.
- Some employers consider global talent alongside local recruitment:** Around 29.03% indicated they consider local and overseas candidates in parallel, reflecting a more integrated workforce strategy.
- Direct reliance on overseas recruitment is uncommon:** Only a small number of respondents indicated they primarily rely on overseas recruitment (3.23%) while the other 3.23% indicated they regularly plan for overseas recruitment as part of their workforce planning, reinforcing that skilled migration is generally used to complement rather than replace local hiring.

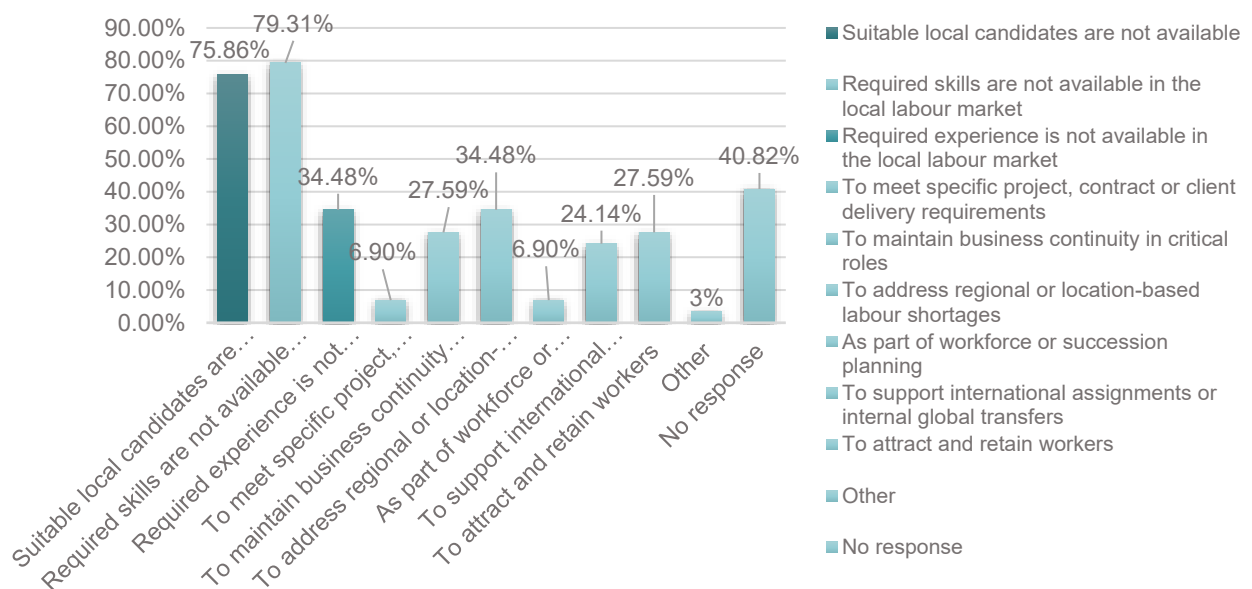
4.3 If overseas workers were unavailable, which two outcomes would have the greatest operational or commercial impact?



- Operational pressure would increase significantly without overseas workers:** The most common impact identified was increased workload or burnout risk for existing employees (45.16%), highlighting the operational dependency many organisations have on migrant labour.
- Service delivery and project timelines would be directly affected:** A substantial proportion of organisations reported reduced service levels, output or quality (48.39%), along with delays or cancelled projects, contracts or services (38.71%).
- Business growth would also be constrained:** Nearly half of respondents (45.16%) indicated that their organisation’s ability to grow or take on new work would be reduced if overseas workers were unavailable.
- Cost and workforce model pressures would increase:** Some organisations reported increased labour costs (19.35%) and greater reliance on outsourcing, offshoring or automation (19.35%), reflecting a shift in workforce strategy where migration pathways are limited.
- Other impacts were minimal:** A small proportion of respondents (9.68%) identified other impacts, suggesting the primary risks are concentrated in operational capacity, service delivery and growth.

5. Employer Sponsorship

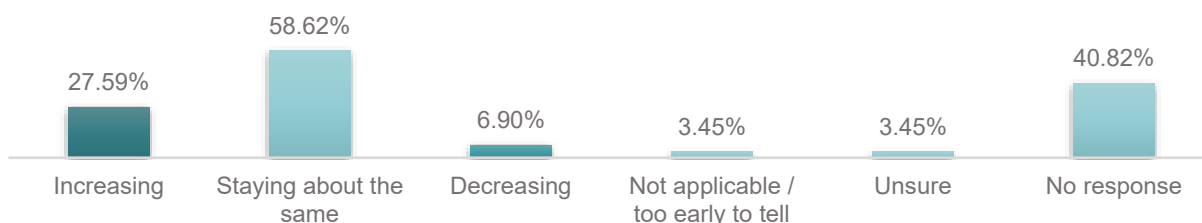
5.1 Why does your organisation sponsor workers on employer-sponsored visas?



- Local labour shortages remain the primary driver of sponsorship:** A significant 75.86% of respondents indicated that their organisation sponsors workers because suitable local candidates are not available, while an even higher 79.31% cited a lack of required skills in the local labour market.

- **Experience gaps are also influencing recruitment strategies:** Around 34.48% of organisations reported sponsoring workers because the required experience is not available locally.
- **Regional workforce shortages remain an important factor:** Approximately 34.48% of organisations indicated that sponsorship is used to address regional or location-based labour shortages.
- **Operational continuity also drives sponsorship decisions:** 27.59% of employers sponsor workers to maintain business continuity in critical roles, highlighting the importance of skilled migration for maintaining service delivery and operational capacity.
- **Workforce planning and retention strategies are also emerging drivers:** Sponsorship is increasingly used as part of broader workforce or succession planning (6.90%) and to attract and retain workers (27.59%), indicating a more strategic, long-term approach to migration.
- **Global engagement and niche project needs play a smaller role:** A smaller proportion of organisations sponsor workers to support international assignments or internal transfers (24.14%) or meet specific project requirements (6.90%), suggesting these are more targeted use cases rather than primary drivers.
- **Other factors remain limited:** Only 3% of respondents identified other reasons, reinforcing that sponsorship decisions are largely driven by structural labour market constraints rather than discretionary factors.

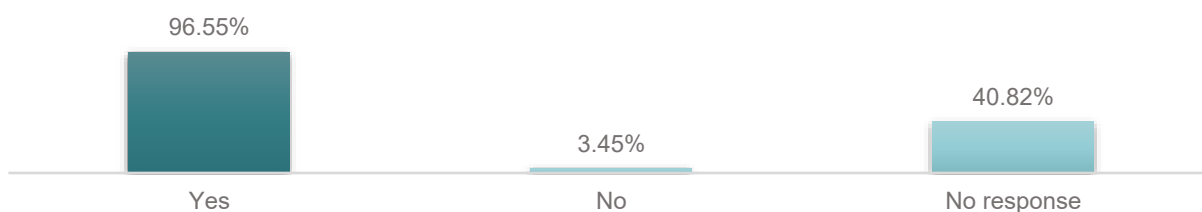
5.2 For the reasons above, how is your organisation's use of employer-sponsored visas changing?



- **Employer demand for sponsorship appears relatively stable:** The most common response was that use of employer-sponsored visas is staying about the same (58.62%), indicating that many organisations expect their reliance on sponsorship to remain consistent in the near term.
- **Some organisations anticipate increased reliance on sponsorship:** 27.59% of respondents reported that their use of employer-sponsored visas is increasing, reflecting ongoing skill shortages and workforce pressures.
- **Only a small number expect a decline:** A limited proportion (6.90%) indicated that their use of employer-sponsored visas is decreasing.
- **Uncertainty and non-applicability remain minimal:** Only 3.45% of respondents reported that this question was not applicable or too early to determine, and a further 3.45% were unsure, suggesting most organisations have a clear forward view on their workforce strategy.

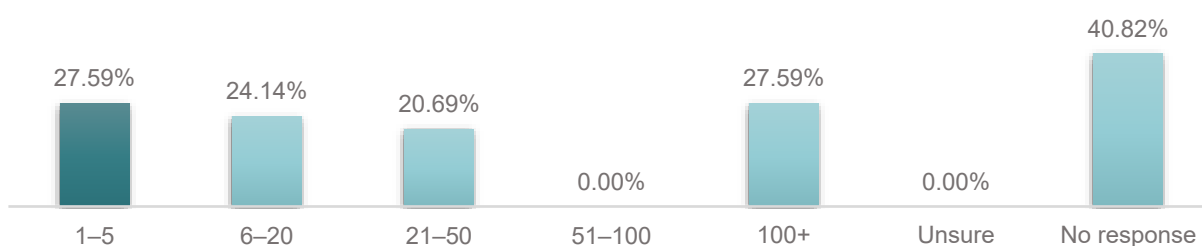
- **Non-response indicates some variability in engagement:** A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may reflect varying levels of internal visibility or differing relevance of sponsorship planning across organisations.

5.3 Are you an accredited sponsor?



- **Most respondents represent accredited sponsors:** More than half of organisations (96.55%) indicated that they are accredited sponsors, suggesting that many respondents have direct experience with employer-sponsored visa programs.
- **Very few respondents reported not being sponsors:** Only 3.45% indicated they are not accredited sponsors, which suggests the survey audience was largely composed of organisations actively engaged in sponsorship.
- **A large proportion of respondents did not answer this question:** Around 40.82% of submissions did not provide a response, which may indicate that some participants were unsure of their organisation's sponsorship status or that the question was not applicable to their role.

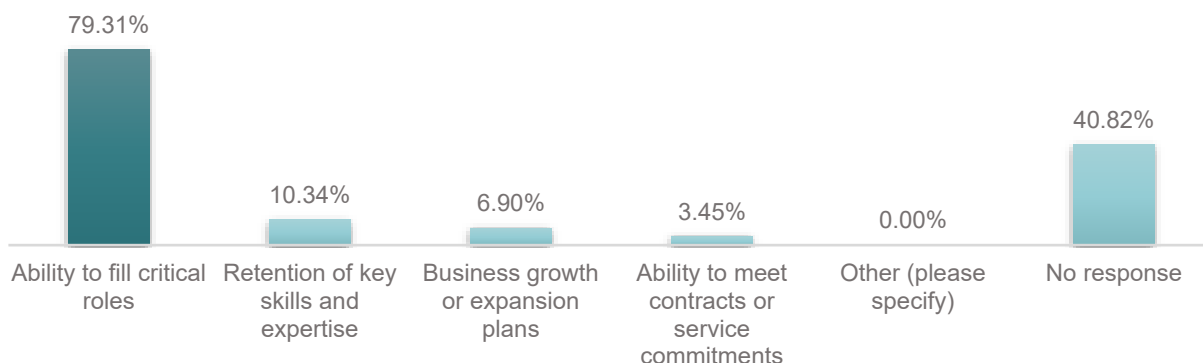
5.4 Approximately how many employer-sponsored visa applications does your organisation lodge in a typical year?



- **Visa lodgement volumes vary across organisations:** Respondents reported a broad range of sponsorship activity, from organisations lodging 1–5 applications per year (27.59%) to those lodging 100+ applications annually (27.59%), indicating both small-scale and high-volume users are equally represented.
- **A significant portion of organisations are moderate users:** 24.14% lodge between 6–20 applications annually, while 20.69% lodge between 21–50 applications, suggesting many organisations use sponsorship as a targeted workforce solution rather than at scale.
- **Mid-range high-volume usage is limited:** No respondents reported lodging 51–100 applications (0.00%), indicating a gap between moderate and very high-volume users.

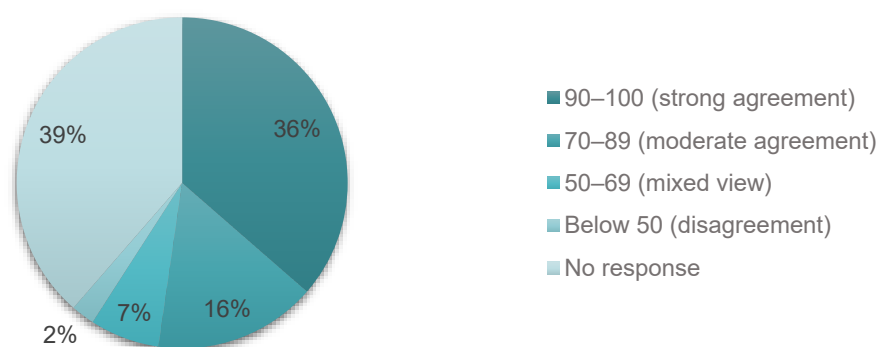
- **Non-response suggests varying levels of tracking or relevance:** A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may reflect differences in internal reporting, decentralised visa management, or that this metric is not closely tracked across all organisations.

5.5 Which of the following would be most at risk without access to employer-sponsored visas?



- **The ability to fill critical roles is the dominant risk:** A significant 79.31% of respondents indicated that their ability to fill critical roles would be most at risk without access to employer-sponsored visas, highlighting the essential role of skilled migration in maintaining workforce capacity.
- **Some organisations highlighted broader strategic risks:** A smaller proportion of respondents identified retention of key skills and expertise (10.34%) and business growth or expansion plans (6.90%) as areas that would be impacted.
- **Operational delivery risks were also noted:** A limited number of organisations (3.45%) identified their ability to meet contracts or service commitments as the primary risk if employer-sponsored visas were unavailable.

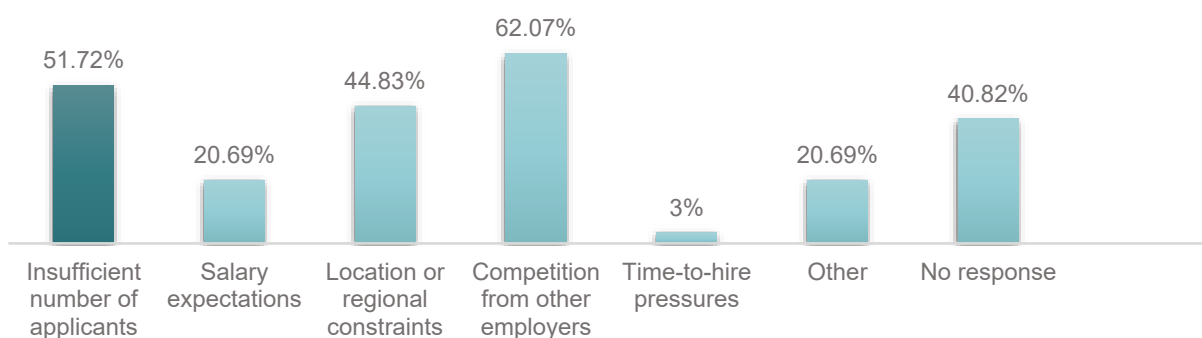
5.6 Rate the following statement: “Employer sponsorship complements, rather than replaces, local hiring.”



- **Strong consensus that sponsorship complements local hiring:** The statement received an average rating of 88 out of 100, indicating strong agreement among respondents that employer sponsorship supports rather than replaces local recruitment.
- **Most respondents express strong or moderate agreement:** 36% rated the statement between 90–100 (strong agreement), while a further 16% rated it between 70–89 (moderate agreement), reinforcing broad support for the role of sponsorship in workforce planning.
- **Some respondents hold mixed views:** 7% rated the statement between 50–69, suggesting that while generally supportive, some organisations may experience variability depending on role type or labour market conditions.
- **Very limited disagreement:** Only 2% of respondents provided a score below 50, indicating that disagreement with the statement is rare among participants.
- **Non-response indicates varying levels of engagement:** A notable 39% recorded no response, which may reflect differing levels of exposure to sponsorship programs or internal visibility across organisations.

6. Local Labour Market Reality

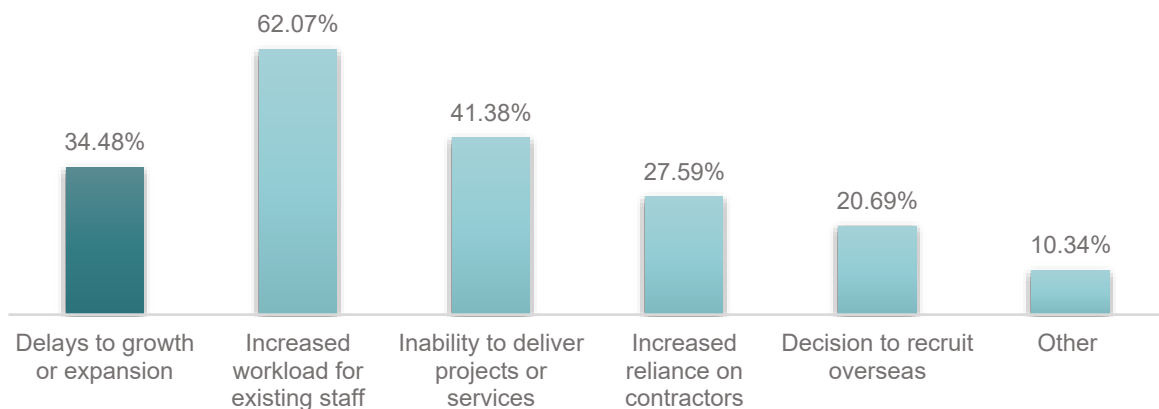
6.1 Aside from skills or experience, which factors most limit your ability to fill roles locally?



- **Labour market competition is a major constraint:** The most frequently cited factor was competition from other employers (62.07%), indicating that organisations are competing for a limited pool of available talent.
- **Applicant shortages remain a significant barrier:** 51.72% of respondents reported an insufficient number of applicants, highlighting ongoing labour supply challenges across industries.
- **Location continues to limit recruitment:** 44.83% of organisations indicated that regional or location constraints make it difficult to attract local candidates.
- **Salary expectations are a contributing factor but not the primary barrier:** 20.69% of respondents cited salary expectations, suggesting that while remuneration plays a role, broader structural shortages are more significant.

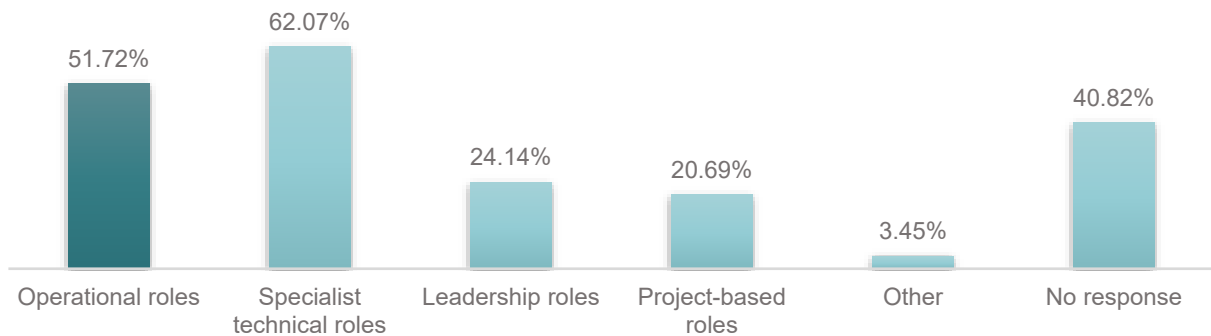
- **Time-to-hire pressures are minimal:** Only 3% of respondents identified time-to-hire as a key limitation, suggesting that the primary issue is talent availability rather than recruitment speed.
- **Non-response indicates varying levels of visibility:** A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may reflect differences in internal data tracking or the perceived relevance of these factors across organisations.

6.2 How do these challenges most affect your organisation?



- **Operational pressure on existing staff is the most common impact:** The most frequently reported consequence was increased workload for existing staff (62.07%), indicating that recruitment challenges place significant strain on current employees.
- **Growth and service delivery are also affected:** 41.38% indicated difficulty delivering projects or services, while 34.48% of respondents reported delays to business growth or expansion, highlighting the broader operational impact of workforce shortages.
- **Some organisations rely more heavily on contractors:** 27.59% reported increased reliance on contractors, reflecting a common short-term response to labour gaps.
- **Recruiting overseas is sometimes used as a solution:** 20.69% of respondents indicated that these challenges lead to a decision to recruit overseas, reinforcing the role of skilled migration in addressing workforce shortages.
- **Other impacts are relatively limited:** A smaller proportion (10.34%) identified other impacts, suggesting that the primary consequences are concentrated in workload, service delivery, and growth constraints.

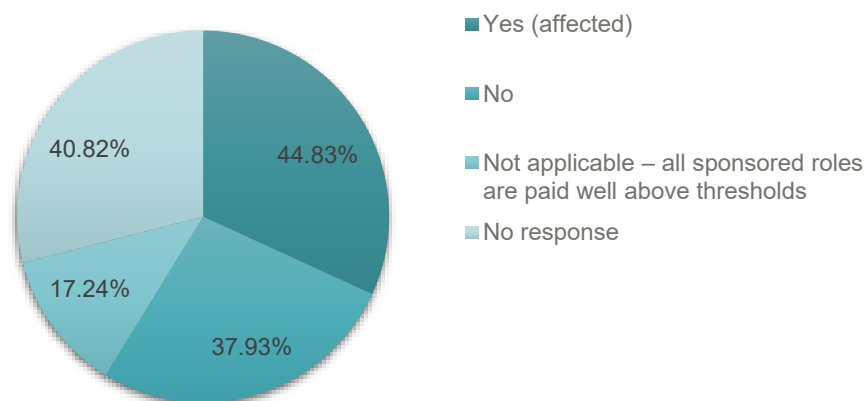
6.3 Which parts of your organisation are most affected?



- Operational and technical roles are the most affected:** The most frequently impacted areas were specialist technical roles (62.07%) and operational roles (51.72%), indicating that workforce shortages are most concentrated in frontline and highly specialised positions.
- Leadership roles are less commonly affected:** A smaller proportion of respondents (24.14%) indicated that leadership roles are impacted by recruitment challenges.
- Project-based work can also be affected:** 20.69% of respondents reported that project-based roles are impacted, which may affect organisations delivering time-sensitive projects or client commitments.
- Other role categories are minimally impacted:** Only 3.45% of respondents identified other roles as affected, suggesting that shortages are largely concentrated in core operational and technical functions.
- Non-response indicates varying levels of workforce segmentation:** A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may reflect differences in how organisations classify roles or track workforce shortages across functions.

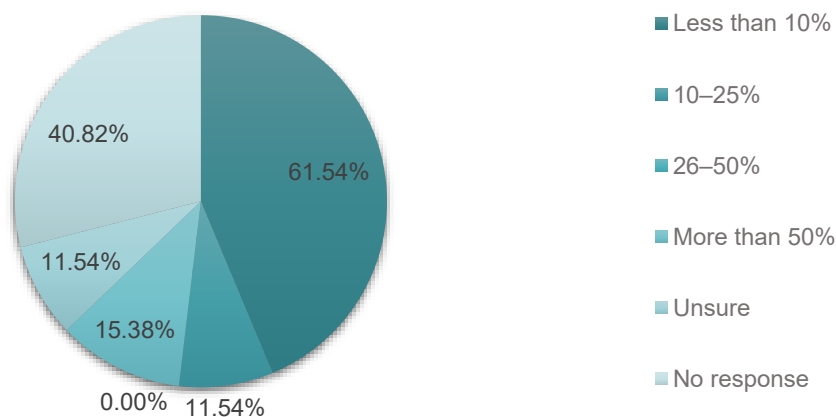
7. Salary Thresholds and Cost Impact

7.1 Is your organisation directly affected by skilled migration salary threshold requirements - e.g. current CSIT (\$76,515) and SSIT (\$141,210)?



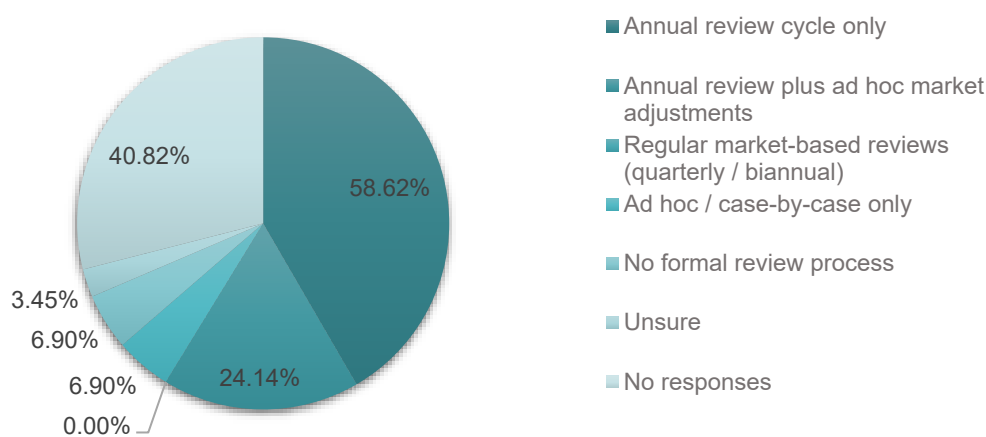
- A notable portion of employers are directly affected by salary thresholds:** Around 44.83% of respondents indicated that their organisation is directly affected by skilled migration salary thresholds, such as the Core Skills Income Threshold (CSIT) and Specialist Skills Income Threshold (SSIT).
- An equal share reported no direct impact:** Another 37.93% of respondents indicated that these thresholds do not affect their organisation, suggesting that their sponsored roles already meet or exceed the required salary levels.
- Some employers operate well above the thresholds:** Around 17.24% reported that the thresholds are not applicable, as their sponsored roles are already paid significantly above the required levels.
- A large proportion did not respond to this question:** Approximately 40.82% of respondents did not provide an answer, which may reflect uncertainty about the thresholds or that salary compliance is managed by another part of the organisation.

7.2 Approximate % of sponsored roles near the threshold



- **Most organisations report limited exposure to salary thresholds:** Among respondents who answered this question, the majority (61.54%) indicated that less than 10% of their sponsored roles are near the salary threshold, suggesting most positions are paid comfortably above minimum requirements.
- **Moderate exposure exists but remains limited:** 11.54% of organisations reported that 10–25% of their roles are near the threshold, while no respondents (0.00%) indicated exposure in the 26–50% range, highlighting a relatively low concentration of roles clustered around minimum salary settings.
- **A small number of organisations report significant exposure:** Around 15.38% indicated that more than half of their sponsored roles are close to the threshold, which may create sensitivity to future salary threshold increases.
- **Some uncertainty remains:** 11.54% of respondents indicated they were unsure of the proportion of roles near the threshold, possibly reflecting internal pay structures managed by different teams.
- **Non-response suggests varying visibility across organisations:** A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may indicate that this metric is not consistently tracked or centrally reported.

7.3 How does your organisation typically review and adjust salaries for sponsored roles?

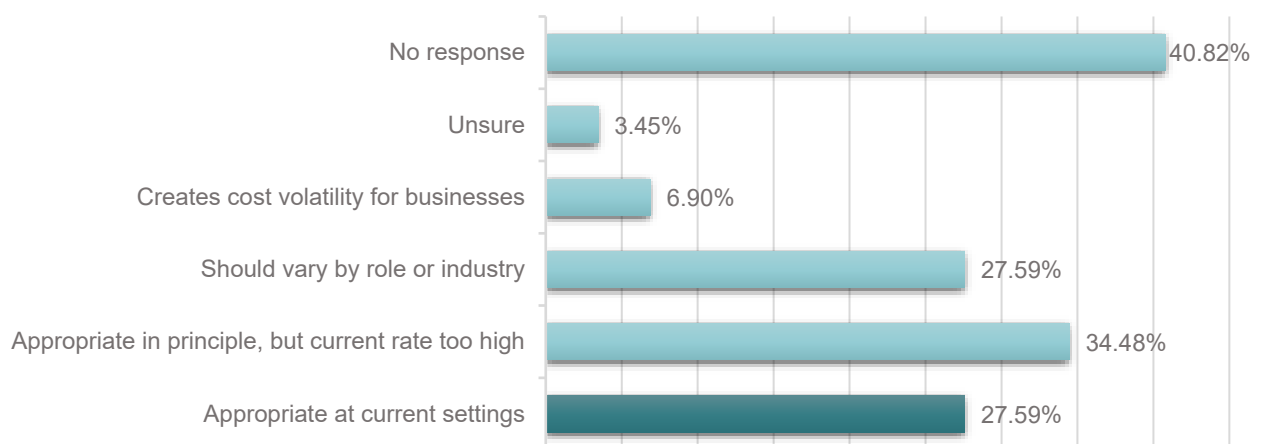


- **Most organisations rely on structured annual salary reviews:** The most common approach reported was an annual review cycle only (58.62%), suggesting that many employers manage salary adjustments for sponsored roles through standard organisational review processes.
- **Some organisations combine structured reviews with market adjustments:** Around 24.14% indicated they use annual reviews supplemented by ad hoc market adjustments, allowing them to respond to labour market pressures or salary threshold changes.
- **Few organisations rely solely on ad hoc or informal approaches:** A small proportion reported ad hoc or case-by-case reviews (6.90%) or no formal salary review

process (3.45%), suggesting most organisations maintain at least some structured approach.

- **Minimal uncertainty among respondents:** Only 3.45% indicated they were unsure of their organisation’s salary review approach, suggesting general clarity in how salary decisions are managed.
- **A significant number of respondents did not answer this question:** Approximately 40.82% did not provide a response, which may reflect that salary review processes are handled by different teams or are not centrally tracked.

7.4 What is your organisation’s view on annual indexation of skilled migration salary thresholds?

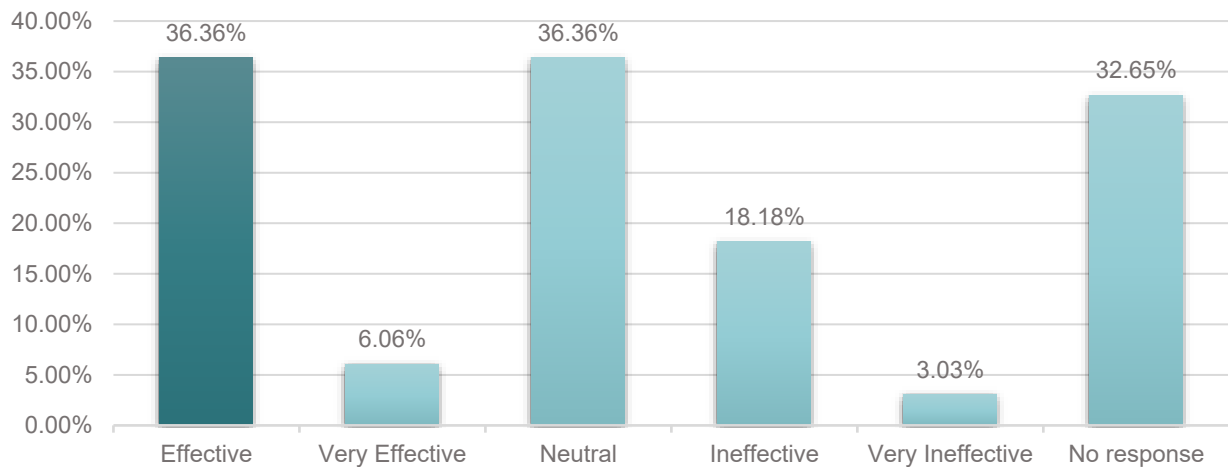


The results show that many employers accept the principle of salary threshold indexation, but a number believe the current rate may be too high or that the approach should be more flexible.

- 34.48% support indexation but feel the current rate is too high.
- 27.59% believe the current settings are appropriate.
- 27.59% think thresholds should vary by role or industry, indicating concern about applying a single national threshold across diverse occupations and sectors.
- A smaller proportion (6.90%) indicated that indexation creates cost volatility for businesses, suggesting financial unpredictability is a consideration but not a primary issue.
- Only 3.45% reported being unsure, indicating that most employers have a defined view on salary threshold settings.
- A notable 40.82% recorded no response, which may reflect that salary threshold policy is not closely monitored across all organisations or sits outside day-to-day operational focus.

8. System Performance & Reform

8.1 Overall effectiveness of the employer-sponsored skilled migration system

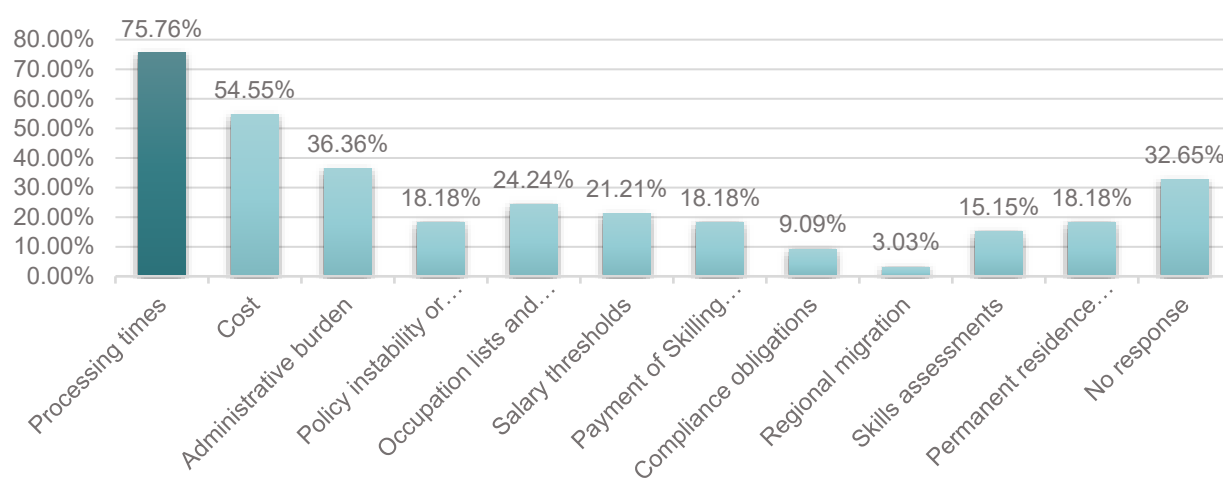


The results suggest that many respondents view the employer-sponsored skilled migration system as generally effective, although a significant proportion remain neutral.

- 36.36% rated the system as effective or very effective, indicating that a notable share of employers believe the system broadly supports workforce needs.
- 36.36% expressed a neutral view, suggesting mixed experiences or that effectiveness may vary depending on specific visa pathways or organisational circumstances.
- 18.18% rated the system as ineffective and 3.03% as very ineffective, indicating that some employers continue to face challenges navigating the system.
- While a meaningful proportion report challenges, favourable perceptions exceed negative ratings, reinforcing that the system is functioning for many employers.
- A notable 32.65% recorded no response, which may reflect differing levels of interaction with the system or limited exposure among some respondents.

Overall, the responses suggest that while the employer-sponsored migration framework is functioning for many organisations, there remains scope for improvements to ensure it consistently meets employer workforce needs.

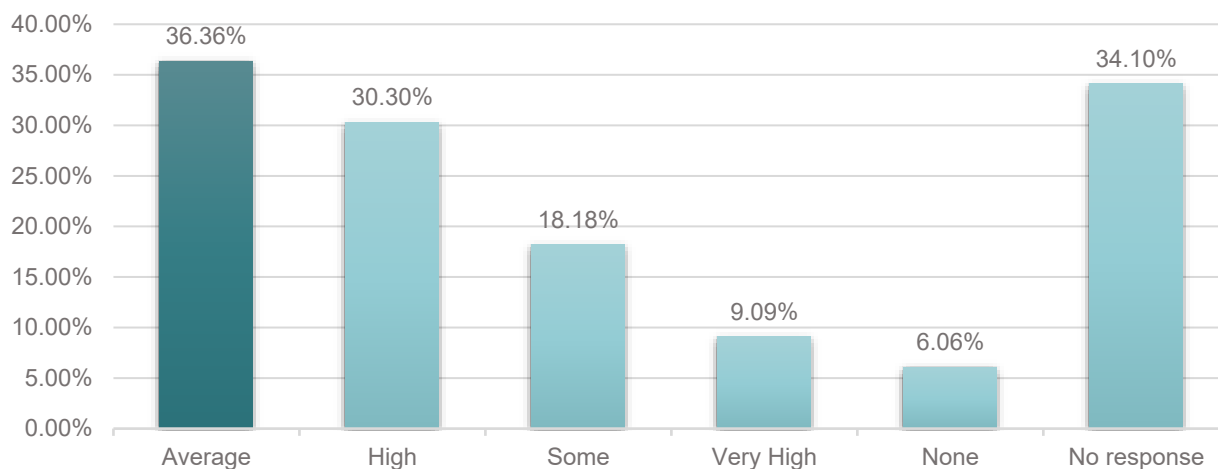
8.2 What are the biggest challenges your organisation faces with the current visa program?



The results indicate that employers face a combination of operational and regulatory challenges when navigating the employer-sponsored migration system.

- 75.76% identified processing times as a key challenge, making it the most frequently cited issue.
- 54.55% highlighted cost, reflecting the financial impact of visa fees, compliance costs and associated requirements.
- 36.36% pointed to administrative burden, indicating that complexity in the application and sponsorship process remains a significant concern.
- Key structural challenges include occupation list settings (24.24%), salary threshold requirements (21.21%), and policy instability or frequent changes (18.18%).
- 18.18% of respondents identified the Skilling Australia Fund (SAF) levy as a challenge, alongside broader compliance obligations (9.09%), highlighting the cumulative regulatory burden on employers.
- Concerns were also raised regarding permanent residence pathways (18.18%) and skills assessments (15.15%), indicating friction across both temporary and permanent migration processes.
- Only 3.03% identified regional migration requirements as a challenge, suggesting these are less impactful relative to other system pressures.
- A notable 32.65% recorded no response, which may reflect differing levels of interaction with the system or awareness of specific regulatory components.

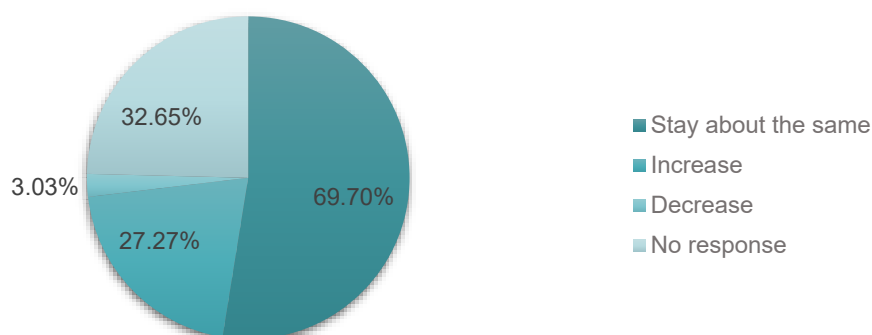
8.3 Level of compliance risk your organisation associates with sponsoring overseas workers



The results indicate that many employers associate at least a moderate level of compliance risk with sponsoring overseas workers.

- 36.36% rated the compliance risk as average, suggesting that sponsorship obligations are generally manageable but still require oversight.
- 30.30% reported high or very high compliance risk, indicating that a significant portion of employers perceive sponsorship as carrying meaningful regulatory exposure.
- 18.18% indicated some level of risk, while only 6.06% reported no compliance risk.
- The low proportion reporting no risk suggests that compliance obligations are widely recognised as an inherent part of sponsorship rather than an exception.
- A notable 34.10% recorded no response, which may reflect that compliance risk is managed by specific internal teams or not consistently assessed across all organisations.

8.4 Over the next 2–3 years, your organisation’s reliance on employer-sponsored visas is expected to



The results suggest that most organisations expect their reliance on employer-sponsored visas to remain relatively stable over the next few years.

- 69.70% expect their reliance on employer-sponsored visas to stay about the same, indicating that skilled migration will likely continue to play a consistent role in workforce planning.
- 27.27% expect their reliance to increase, suggesting that some organisations anticipate continued or growing skill shortages that may require overseas recruitment.
- Only 3.03% expect reliance to decrease, indicating that a reduction in demand for employer sponsorship is unlikely in the near term.

Overall, the responses suggest that employer-sponsored migration is expected to remain an important and stable component of workforce strategy for many organisations over the coming years.

9. Open-Ended Feedback

9.1. What is the most important change you would like government to make to the skilled migration system?

Theme	Key issue raised	Example quote
Processing times	Faster, predictable visa processing	Processing times should be reduced – current applications have been pending for over 4 months with no response.
Administrative burden	Reduce compliance and paperwork	Administrative requirements are extremely burdensome for employers.
Salary thresholds	Lower or adjust thresholds for certain occupations	The minimum salary range is too high and prevents sponsorship of lower-level roles.
Occupation lists	Broaden eligibility for roles and industries	Occupation lists do not reflect the roles we need to fill.
Industry-specific settings	More flexibility for different sectors	Policies should not be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ rule across industries.
Regional workforce needs	Easier access to visas for regional employers	Regional employers need settings that recognise the lack of local candidates.
PR pathways	More certainty and faster permanent residence pathways	Employees need clearer pathways to PR so employers can retain talent.

The open-ended responses reveal several consistent themes regarding how the skilled migration system could better support employers and workforce needs.

- **Processing times and system efficiency:** The most common issue raised by respondents was visa processing delays. Many employers reported that long and unpredictable processing times are directly affecting business operations, project delivery and workforce planning.

Several respondents noted that applications which previously took weeks are now taking many months, creating uncertainty for both employers and visa applicants. Regional employers in particular emphasised that delays are placing additional strain on existing staff and limiting their ability to maintain operations.

- **Administrative burden and compliance complexity:** Another recurring theme was the administrative burden associated with sponsorship requirements. Respondents highlighted labour market testing requirements, compliance obligations and complex documentation processes as areas that could be simplified.

Some employers suggested that large, established sponsors should face reduced administrative requirements, particularly where they already have a demonstrated history of compliance.

- **Salary thresholds and occupation eligibility:** A number of respondents raised concerns about salary threshold settings and occupation lists. Employers noted that current thresholds can make it difficult to sponsor workers in industries such as hospitality, trades and aged care, particularly where wages are below threshold levels despite genuine labour shortages.

Others suggested that thresholds should vary by occupation, sector or region, rather than applying a single national benchmark across all roles.

- **Pathways and workforce pipeline challenges:** Several responses highlighted challenges related to long-term workforce pathways, particularly for graduates and workers transitioning from temporary visas. Employers indicated that restrictions on graduate visa settings and permanent residence pathways can disrupt workforce planning and limit their ability to retain skilled workers already in Australia.
- **Regional workforce pressures:** Regional businesses emphasised that skilled migration remains critical for maintaining essential services and business continuity in areas where local labour shortages are particularly acute. Some respondents recommended stronger regional pathways and improved access to sponsorship programs.

9.2. Employer perspectives on changes to the skilled migration system

Employers also shared examples of how the system has affected their organisations. Many respondents noted that employer-sponsored visas allow them to fill roles where suitable local workers are not available, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, construction, hospitality and technology.

However, several organisations reported that processing delays, policy changes and administrative complexity are undermining the effectiveness of the system, making it difficult to respond to workforce needs quickly.

One regional employer described visa processing delays of more than 17 months for a subclass 482 application, which they said had placed significant pressure on their workforce and business operations.

Other employers highlighted the positive impact of skilled migration in supporting business growth, delivering infrastructure projects, and filling critical healthcare and technical roles.

The open-ended responses suggest that employers broadly support the skilled migration system and rely on it to address labour shortages. However, respondents consistently emphasised the need for faster processing times, reduced administrative complexity, and more flexible policy settings to ensure the system can effectively support Australia's workforce needs.

Conclusion

The findings from this survey reinforce the central role that skilled migration continues to play in supporting workforce capability, service delivery, and business continuity across Australian industries. Employers across sectors and organisation sizes consistently reported that overseas workers are not a substitute for local hiring, but a necessary complement where genuine skill, experience, and labour supply gaps persist.

The Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) remains the cornerstone of employer workforce strategies, particularly for filling specialist, operational, and project-based roles that cannot be sourced locally. While most organisations prioritise domestic recruitment, the survey clearly demonstrates that when local labour markets fall short, access to timely and effective employer-sponsored migration pathways is critical to maintaining operations, meeting contractual obligations, and supporting growth.

At the same time, the results highlight ongoing system challenges that are constraining employer confidence and responsiveness. Processing delays, administrative complexity, costs, salary threshold settings, and policy instability were repeatedly identified as barriers that reduce the effectiveness of the skilled migration system. These challenges are particularly acute for regional employers and industries facing persistent labour shortages, where delays and inflexibility can have disproportionate operational impacts.

Looking ahead, most organisations expect their reliance on employer-sponsored migration to remain stable or increase over the next few years, underscoring the need for a skilled migration framework that is predictable, efficient, and responsive to labour market realities. Employers broadly support the objectives of integrity, compliance, and fair wages, but the survey indicates strong support for reforms that improve processing efficiency, reduce unnecessary administrative burden, and introduce greater flexibility in salary thresholds and occupation settings.

Overall, the survey findings provide clear evidence that employer-sponsored skilled migration remains an essential component of Australia's workforce strategy. Ensuring the system functions effectively will be critical to supporting economic growth, sustaining essential services, and enabling employers to plan confidently in an increasingly competitive global labour market.

