

Migrant dole queues

JOHN MASANAUSKAS

Thousands of foreign partners unemployed

THOUSANDS of people who migrate to Australia on spouse and partner visas are joining dole queues soon after arrival, a federal government report reveals.

About 46,000 foreign partners of Australian citizens were given visas last year, up from 32,000 a decade earlier.

India, China, the UK, the Philippines and Vietnam were the biggest source countries,

says the Immigration Department report, *Australia's Migration Trends 2012-13*.

The report said that six months after arrival, foreign partners had a jobless rate of 26 per cent, dropping to 16 per cent after a year.

It said most partner arrivals were women, with many not seeking work at all.

"These are more likely to have domestic priorities, such as looking after children and managing the household, while potentially also providing some financial support through part-time work," the report said.

Overall, migrants had an average unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent in the year to June

2013, compared with 5.7 per cent for the Australian-born over the same period.

In 2012-13, Australia brought in 216,000 permanent migrants, including 129,000 skilled arrivals, 60,000 family reunion cases and 20,000 humanitarian arrivals.

Also processed on temporary visas were 259,000 over-

seas students and a similar number of working holiday makers.

As of June last year, there were about 62,700 foreigners illegally in Australia. Most were visitors and students overstaying their visas, with China, Malaysia, the US, UK and India the top nations.

Malaysia had the second-

highest number of overstayers (6420), despite providing only one-third the total number of visitors and about one-fifth the students.

The report said there were about 38,000 visa cancellations last year. More than 13,000 people were forcibly removed or departed voluntarily in 2012-13, including 1654 from China, 1413 from India, 1385 from Sri Lanka, 1302 from Malaysia and 1100 from Indonesia.

john.masanauskas@news.com.au