Trends in Economic Immigrant Selection: Outcomes and Perspectives from British Columbia

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Context – Drivers for Economic Immigration to BC

BC Economic and Labour Market Pressures at a Glance!

- **2.6%+ annual avg. economic growth (GDP),** 2011-2015.
- **1.1 million job openings to fill from 2009 – 2019**
  - **450,000 new jobs:** Employment expected to grow by 1.8 per cent per year.
  - **676,000 additional job openings** through retirements.
- **Need to attract 450,000 workers** from outside the province: Domestic (BC) supply expected to be 650,000**.**
- Nearly all **net labour force growth** in British Columbia now coming **from international migration.**

Source: *BC Budget and Fiscal Plan* Feb. 2011, *BC Labour Market Outlook*, and *Skills for Growth: BC's Labour Market Strategy to 2020*

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Context – Drivers for Economic Immigration to BC

BC Economic and Labour Market Pressures at a Glance II

- 77% of job openings will require post-secondary education.
- Greatest number of job openings remain in Metro Vancouver/Lower Mainland, but highest rates of employment growth expected in BC's regions, particularly in the North.

Sources: *BC Labour Market Outlook*, and *Skills for Growth: BC's Labour Market Strategy to 2020*

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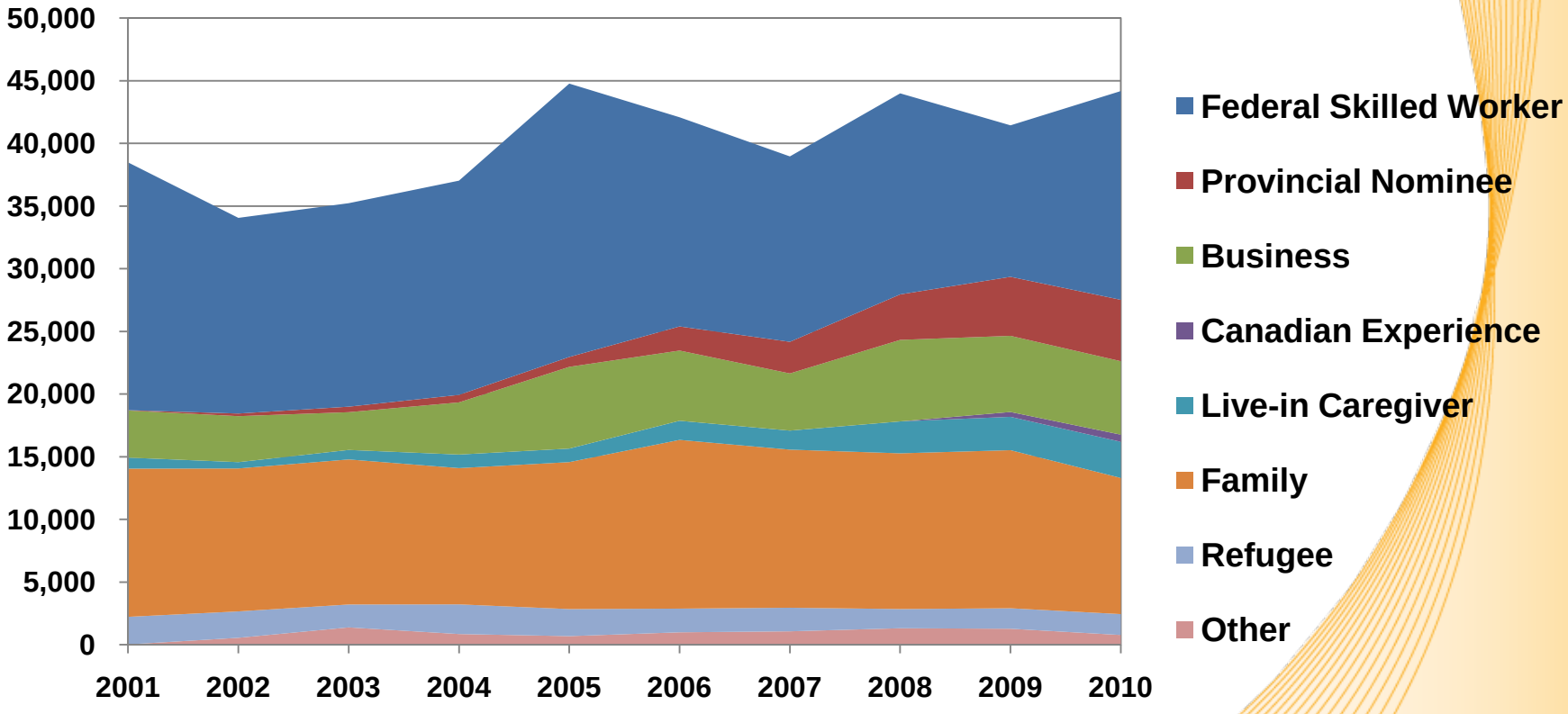
Context – BC Immigration Trends

How is the immigration program responding?

BC welcomes over 40,000 new immigrants (permanent residents) each year.



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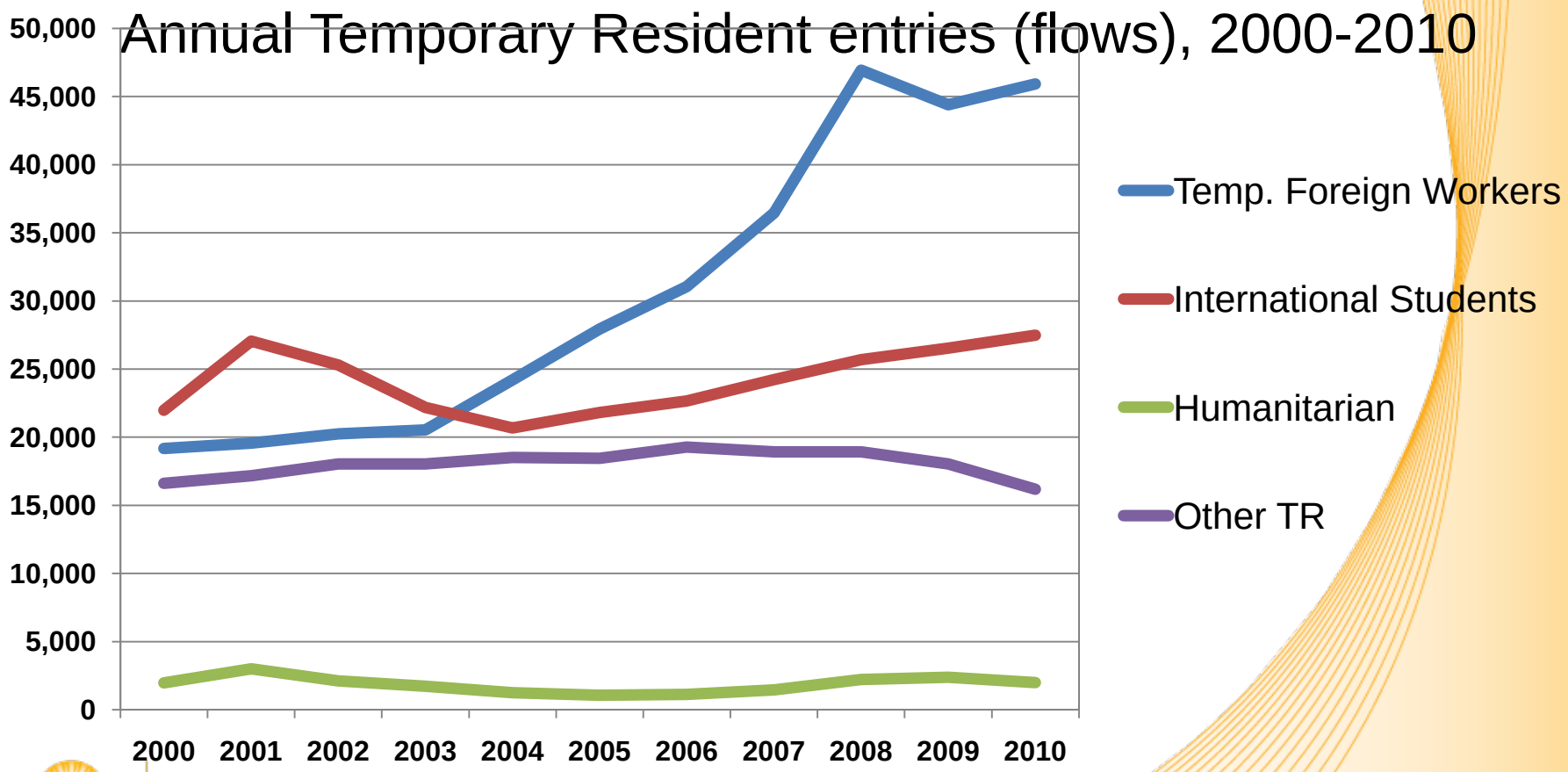
Source: BC analysis of CIC Permanent Resident Database

Context – BC Temporary Migration

Temporary Migration to BC has increased significantly



Source: BC analysis of CIC Temporary Resident Database

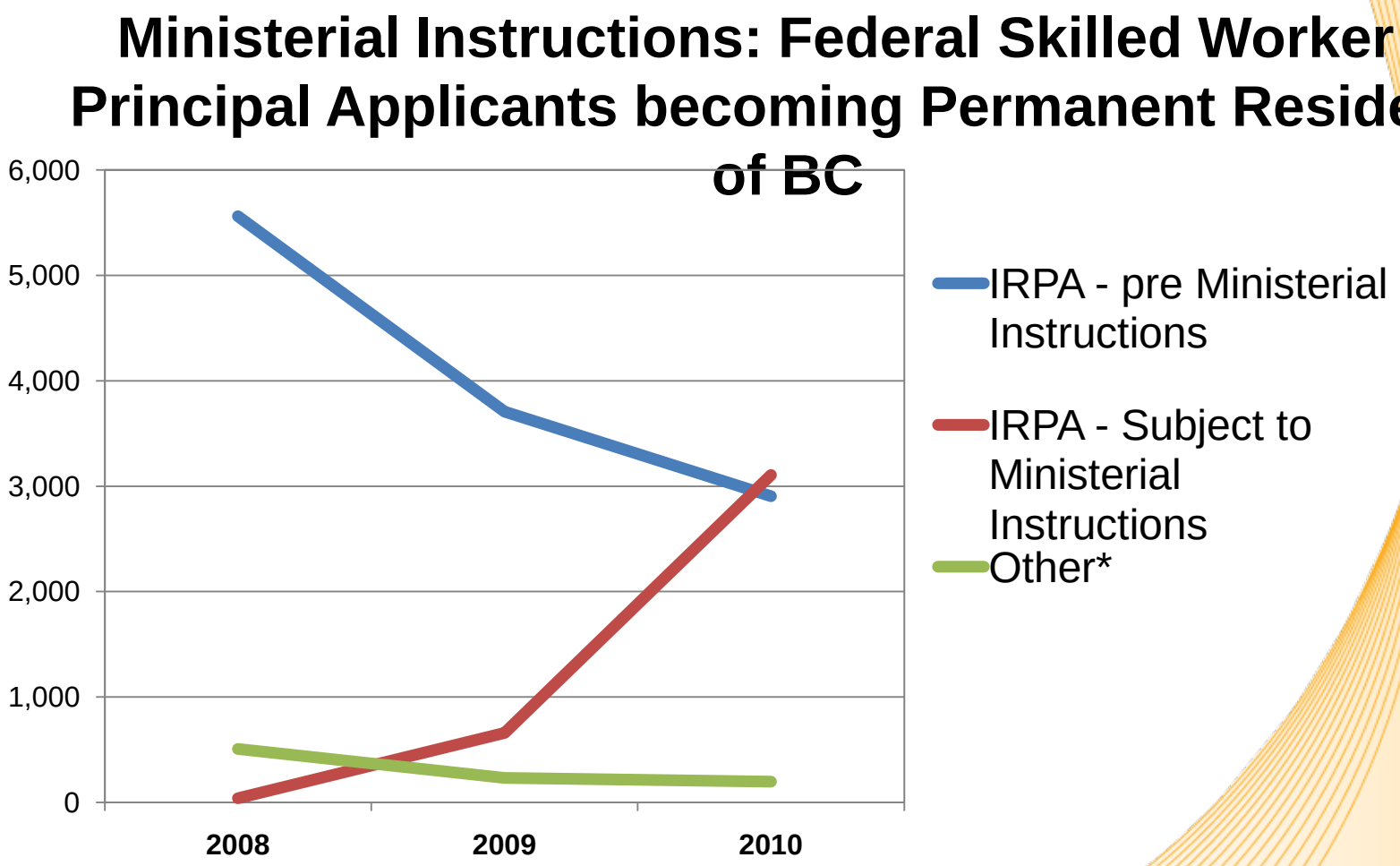
Context – Key National Economic Immigration Policy Shifts

Key Economic Immigration program/policy changes

- Bill C-50 and Ministerial Instructions on the Federal Skilled Worker Class
- Introduction of the Canadian Experience Class
- Major expansion of Provincial Nominee Programs
- Broadening and growth of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program

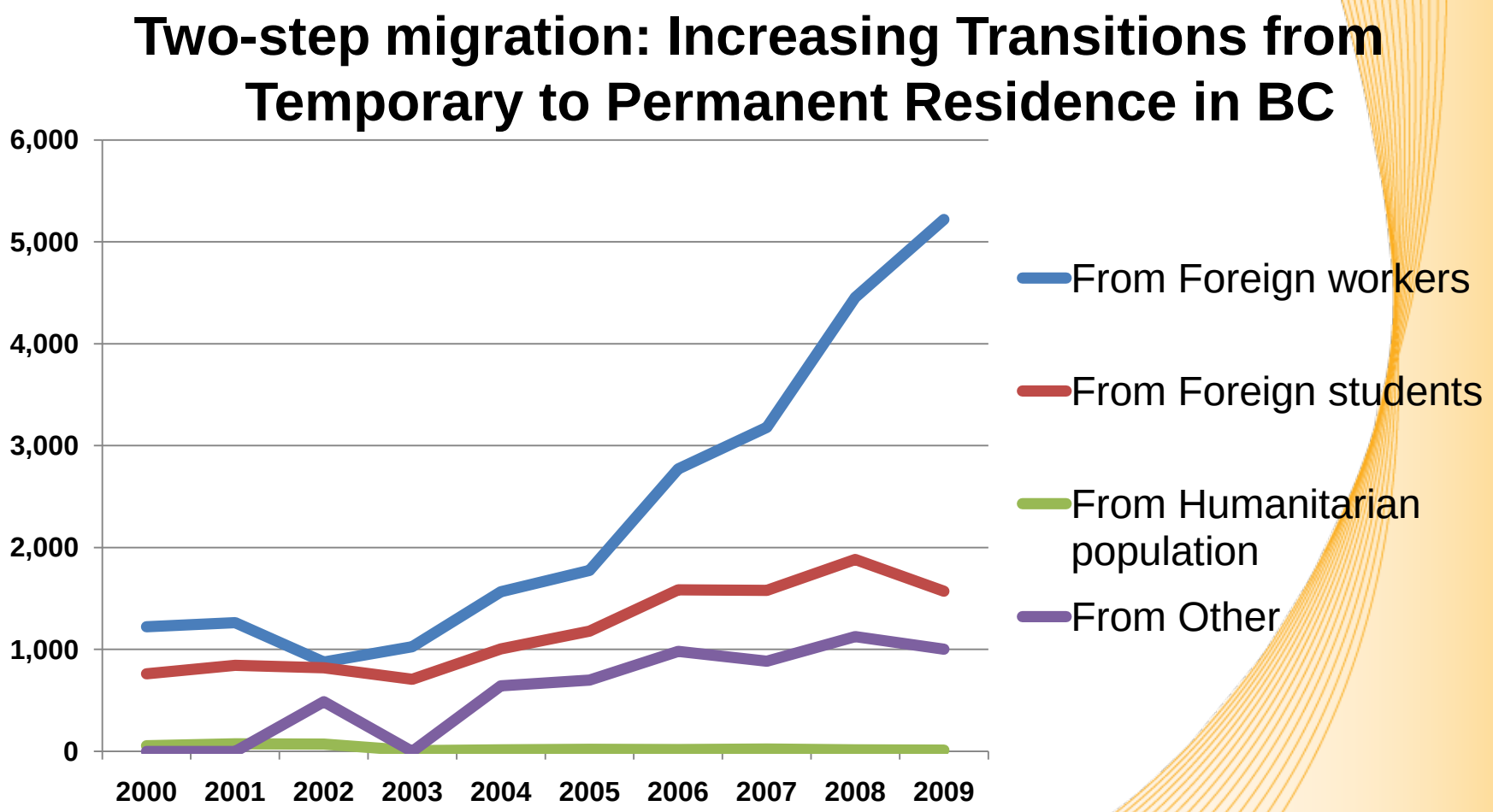
Cumulative effect: More two-step migration, increased prominence of direct labour market selection factors, strengthened application intake management

Analysis – Two Step Migration and Labour Market Selection I



Source: BC analysis of CIC Permanent Resident Database

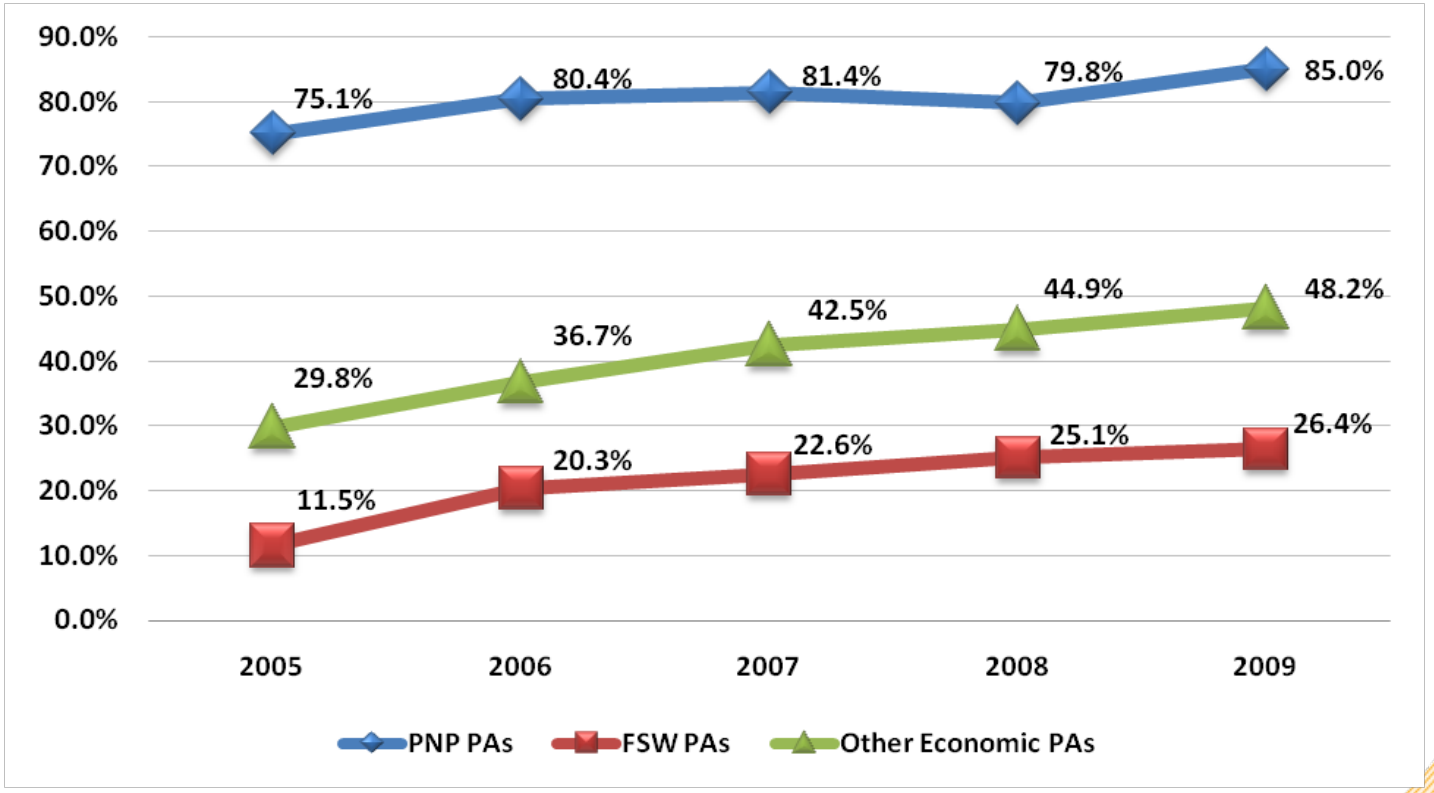
Analysis – Two Step Migration and Labour Market Selection II



Source: BC analysis of CIC transitions data

Analysis – Two Step Migration and Labour Market Selection III

Transitions among BC Economic Class Principal Applicants

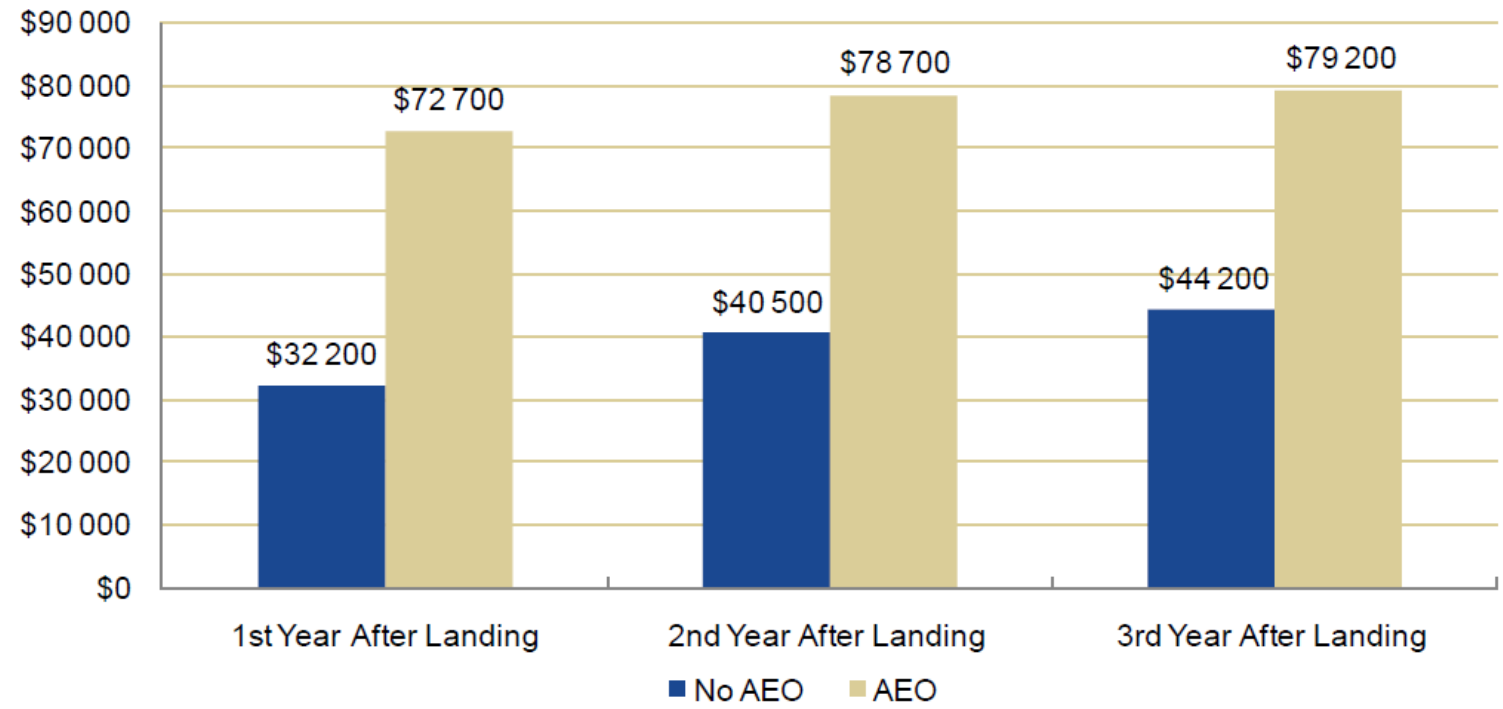


Source: BC analysis of CIC transitions data

Outcomes Findings I

Prior Canadian experience and direct Labour Market selection factors associated with much stronger outcomes, <u>nationally</u>

Figure 3-9: Employment earnings of AEO FSWs and other FSWs

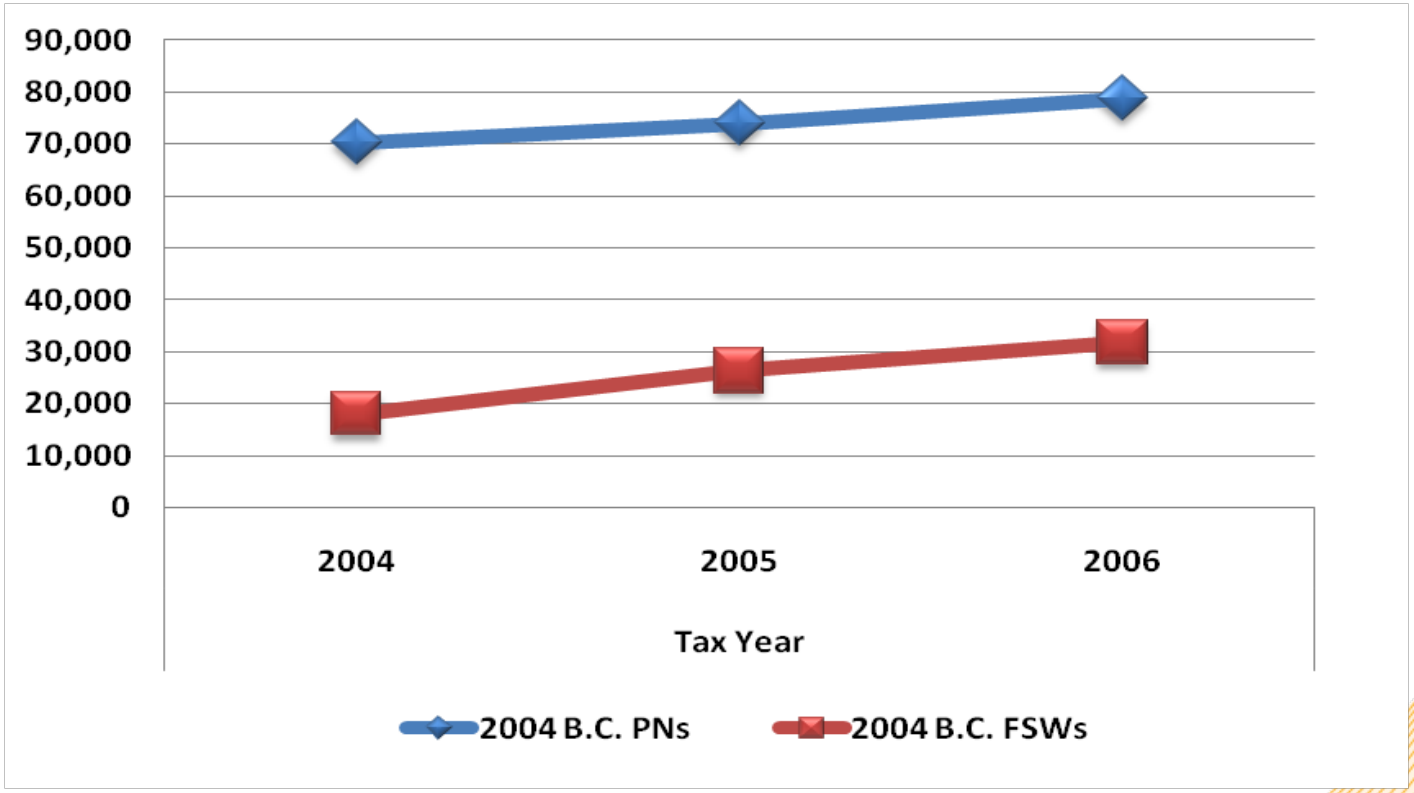


Source: IMDB. Earnings are in constant dollars. Base: 2006.

Source: CIC Evaluation of the Federal Skilled Worker Program, 2010

Outcomes Findings II

<u>In BC</u>, PNP immigrants showing very strong economic integration outcomes.



Source: IMDB – 2004 Cohorts, Principal Applicants only

Outcomes Findings III

In brief, other indicators of effectiveness of the BC PNP

- High levels of program satisfaction from Provincial Nominees and employers
- Fills critical, ongoing labour shortages (difficult to fill vacancies)
- High retention rates in BC and in nominating occupations
- Higher rates of regional immigration than other economic immigration programs
- Direct business investment and measureable job creation in BC

Conclusions

- **Generally, seeing much stronger outcomes from immigrants with Canadian experience, or where applicants have a job offer in Canada.**
- **Recognition of this has meant a move away from 'general skilled migration' in policy and program changes.**
- **In BC, preference for pursuing Provincial Nominee Program growth based on strong outcomes and feedback, ability to shape immigration flows more closely to provincial and regional needs – selection process is much closer to local actors.**
- **Same dynamics playing out in other jurisdictions.**

Discussion Questions and Research Directions

Discussion Questions:

- **In this context: What is the future of general skilled migration, what is the appropriate mix (in terms of levels and composition)?**
- **Is there a false distinction between long-term labour market development and short-term responsiveness?**

Future Research Directions:

- **Much more robust data available in years ahead – IMBD, evaluations, transitions.**
- **Social effects of two-step migration need study.**