

**RELOCATING TO AUSTRALIA**  
**By**  
**Margaret McCartney, CEO, Expat International**

***If you are contemplating an assignment to Australia – there's every chance you won't want to leave when bidden!***

The relatively peaceful and high standards of living, education and business are very appealing to most of the expatriates Expat International settles. I know from first hand - my husband and children, all non-Australians, did not want to depart at the end of our assignment, and the family decision to remain here has led us to continue our wonderful life and opportunities in Australia ... with no regrets!

Australia is the largest island and the smallest continent on the planet -- no wonder we can joke about fitting Texas, America's largest state into *our* largest state, Western Australia - three and a half times over!

Of all this continental space, only 10% of the land mass is populated; the interior being mainly desert. The population of 22 million resides mainly on the coastal fringes of the eastern and south western seaboard, in the capital cities, and the rural areas adjoining these locations.

Six states and two territories comprise this vast land; Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, plus Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory, the latter being the seat of government and politics. Sydney and Melbourne are the business and banking centres with respective populations of 4.5 and 4 million.

Our enormous mineral wealth is a driving economic force, and from the sheep population of around 140 million(!) we supply more than 70% of the world's wool purchases. Large, well equipped sea ports service all capital, and many rural cities.

The climate ranges from temperate to tropical and snow in our cities, with exception of Hobart, is unheard of. Many of us spend Christmas on a favorite part of the thousands of miles of wonderful beaches, and we ski in July and August.

And for your trivia fix --- in Queensland we have the world's longest fence! running roughly north and south for 5,531 kilometres! It is 1.8 metres high and has been designed to restrain native dogs (dingoes) from migrating from the desert to pastoral lands, and built up areas.

Captain James Cook discovered Sydney Cove in 1778; claiming it for the British, but because of the 4 to 6 months' sea voyage from England, white settlement thereafter, was very slow. Prior to this important date, the native aborigines had been here for millions of years.

For the first 75 years expatriate(!) settlers were comprised principally of British convicts; it is this legacy that has spawned our pioneering and determined spirit, and moulded our distinctive and almost-cockney-like accent and vernacular which causes amusement and bewilderment for modern-day expatriates.

More than two and a quarter centuries on, Australia has a large and diverse ethnic population hailing from practically every country of the world; we embrace this diversity and revel in its resultant culture, festivals and foods. We love sports – many of which have been introduced by the varying cultures - and enjoy a high degree of participation. Australian Rules Football as distinct from soccer, rugby or gridiron has a passionate following in winter and cricket is our game for summer. In 2010, Melbourne has been voted “The Sporting Capital of the World” by Mercer Research

Because of our climate, Australians like to live casually and enjoy outdoor recreation, with the barbeque rating a favorite form of entertainment. We have wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables and our meat and seafood are second to none. Eating out is an established way of life with many, many ethnic restaurants representing as many countries as we have cultures.

Australians have a strong sense of curiosity and innovation and are always willing to “give it a go”. They benefit from, and contribute to, the excellent education system, thriving research institutions and cutting-edge primary and secondary industries.

As a member of the British Commonwealth, Australia is governed under the Westminster parliamentary and legal systems. Both politics and the economy are stable, which is appealing to foreign investment and many multinationals are well-established such as Nike, Thomson Reuters, Ford, GM, Boeing, Hewlett Packard, prominent pharmaceutical companies and the world’s major oil companies who both drill for, and process the raw product.

Recognizing that our nearest neighbours are our largest trading partners, business and trade are largely focused on Asia Pacific.

Australians’ casual nature seems at odds with our formal business atmosphere. Whilst some countries are turning away from formal office attire, the norm remains for business suits to be worn by both men and women. Equality of the sexes is officially recognized and about 75% of women are employed during their working life. Working hours like many other countries can be long - as a rule most of us work between 40-50 hours per week, although 38 hours constitute an official work week.

### **Education**

Primary, secondary and tertiary education is world-class and offered at all levels through government-run or private institutions.

Private schools in most cases are the choice of expatriate families; they are generally single sex in secondary, although some co-ed options are available. About 30% offer the International Baccalaureate. Very few international schools exist in Australia, with

exception of a few European national schools, as well as Japanese, and an American school in Sydney.

### **Health**

The high standards of medical care and research are world-renowned, and transferees can be assured of excellent attention in all disciplines of health care.

### **Security and Safety**

The crime rate is relatively low, and adults and children can move freely without constant regard to extreme care. Motor accident injuries and death are amongst the world's lowest, as road rules are strictly enforced.

### **Ranking our Cities \***

Sydney and Melbourne costs of living are lower in comparison to the majority of cities in western countries, while Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane rank even lower.

In 2009 Sydney's ranking worldwide for Quality of Living (based on political, social, economic, environmental factors, personal safety, education, transportation and public services) was 10<sup>th</sup>. Melbourne ranked 18<sup>th</sup>. and Perth 21.

\* source: Wm. M. Mercer

We hope you will adopt Australia as a safe, secure and stable location to maintain or extend your business and /or family interests, and we at Expat International look forward to extending you a warm and informative welcome.

***Expat International is an independent full-service relocation consultancy established in 1983, and headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. The company operates in all capital and major cities, and regional areas throughout Australia and also in New Zealand and London.***

***We provide consulting and practical services to support corporate relocation needs via five distinct streams:***

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International Visa Division***

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