

A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS



Welcome to our last issue of this newsletter for 2005. Where did this year go to?? We have had the pleasure of moving a wide variety of people to and from all states in Australia and worked with people who are moving either to or from countries as diverse as Chile, Norway and Indonesia. How lucky we are at *Relocation Specialists* to work with people who are undergoing such major changes in their lives and to be part of the positive aspects of their move.

This issue looks at the most southern major city of Hobart, plus a personal relocation story of Dina Zavsski-Makaric who migrated to Australia from Croatia with her young family 17 years ago and has successful hints for newcomers. On the other side we look at repatriation which is as hard if not harder than the original relocation both for the relocatee and the organisation they work for. As always please contact us with any questions you may have.

Enjoy this issue!

Anita Fernandes - Principal, Sydney

Quote of the month

"We are the Borg. Lower your shields and surrender your ships. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt and service us. Resistance is futile."

Star Trek: First Contact, 1996

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**PROFILE OF
THE MONTH:
Peita Pacey**

Peita is a new addition to the Relocation Specialists team. Originally from Sydney, Peita has lived in the USA, Canada, and most recently returned from 6 years working in London. Peita has had much first hand experience with relocation, moving to Florida as a child for 2 years, then remaining in Sydney at the age of 17 to finish school whilst her parents moved to Singapore, and finally heading off herself overseas after completing University. Having now repatriated with her English husband, Peita is able to empathise greatly with new relocatees.

Peita's background is in advertising and media, where she developed consumer focused communications strategies for many global brands. Her client focused role ensured a keen ability to listen and disseminate what her clients needs were and the ability to deliver solutions to their issues. She joined *Relocation Specialists Sydney* earlier this year as Business Director, and her role includes account management and consultancy work.



**Written by
Cultural Trainer**

**Monita Mascitti-
Meuter**

CITY SNAPSHOT: HOBART, TAS

Hobart, the second oldest capital of Australia was established in 1803 and originally functioned as a whaling port and shipbuilding centre prior to becoming the present day administrative and commercial centre of the State of Tasmania.

The city boasts spectacular views and an enviable lifestyle. Most notably, Hobart's rich colonial past and convict heritage are evident in the architecture of some of its buildings (Georgian sandstone buildings, Victorian architecture, warehouses, worker's cottages, other heritage homes) and heritage parks and gardens.

An important annual event for which Hobart is famous is the Sydney-Hobart yacht race which starts on Boxing Day and finishes in Hobart just before New Year's Day.

Population

Tasmania's population counts 456,652 people (224,038 males and 232,614 females) with an average age of 34. About 40 % of Tasmania's population live in and around Hobart.

Cultural Heritage

85% residents are Australian-born with the remaining residents

originating from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Netherlands.

Economy

Agriculture is an important part of Tasmania's economy, which includes mainly beef, sheep dairy cattle, pigs; apples; vegetables (Hops, peas and French beans). Not to be ignored are other sources of income from fishing, timber, minerals and, of course, tourism.

Geography

Separated by the Bass Strait from mainland Australia, Tasmania is a group of islands that lie south of the south-eastern corner of the Australian mainland.

Climate

Tasmania's climate is temperate maritime. The State's enjoys marked variations of climate, particularly of rainfall. (as high as 3600 mm in the west and as low as 500 mm in the east. In the west and north-west).

Housing market

Overall, houses in Hobart can be up to half the price of homes in other Australian Capital cities such as Sydney. Housing prices by the quarter ending September 2005 in the Hobart City area and surrounds varied from \$400,000 - \$500,000 plus. Median house price is: \$316,000 (June 2005) with Sandy Bay and Battery Point at about \$460,000. (REI of Tasmania).

Rental Properties

Median rental prices

flats/units/townhouses-\$150 /week

3 bedroom houses- \$220 /week

This does not reflect typical rents in sought after areas for relocatees. Typical realistic rentals would be about \$200 for apartments and as much as \$400 for houses The rental market is strictly regulated and advice may be needed before signing a lease. One month's rent & bond is required up front to rent a property.

Schooling

In Tasmania, children must attend school between the ages of six and 16. Government primary and secondary schools are free and largely co-educational while primary and secondary education are also available through private or church organisations. Tertiary education is provided by the University of Tasmania at Hobart and Launceston and the Australian Maritime College, Australia's centre for maritime studies. Technical and further education, which includes adult education, is provided at colleges at Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Burnie and Queenstown. Other adult education centres are in Smithton, Scottsdale, Campbell Town, Oatlands and Huonville. Correspondence courses are available for isolated students and others unable to attend regular classes.

Main sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics and www.about-australia.com



Written by

Dina Zavrski-Makaric

WHO AM I IF I'M NOT FROM HERE?

I arrived in Sydney on 13th November 1988. I was 30 years old, with two children, and 5 suitcases. I was greeted by temperatures in the low thirties, humidity close to a 100%, and my husband, who had arrived in Sydney two weeks before, to 'settle us in'. In line with research studies, the first 3 months were a honeymoon: everything was new and exciting; the weather was great, the beaches beautiful... The fact that our apartment was practically unfurnished didn't bother me. It was like an extended budget holiday. Then reality slowly crept in. There were days when feelings of loneliness and isolation caused me physical pain. I missed my parents and friends; I had to hide in the laundry so my kids wouldn't see me crying. I was home-starved, not home-sick. At the time I had no idea what contributed the most to this state of 'it was better at home', 'this place is horrible' and 'what have we done'!

Some years later, it finally became clear that in this move I lost not only my social and safety networks, most of all I lost my identity.

In addition to my name, that nobody could pronounce anyway, I was lacking a definition of who was behind the name. Everything I used to define myself with – a good friend, funny, friendly, passionate reader, music lover... had no meaning in this new country. Everything that my family and friends used to define me and know me as, also meant nothing to all these people whom I was seeing every day at work, at the bus stop, in the shops.

About the author

Dina is a professional and personal development coach and facilitator. In the last 17 years she created a successful corporate career with an international company. In 2003 she formed her coaching practice *Challenging Directions*. Her clients include executives, middle-managers and small business owners. Dina's articles have been published in The Australian News UK, and on a numerous global expatriate websites.

All my years of education and work experience were reduced to a few lines on my resume. I myself – a 30 year old mother of two children, daughter, wife, friend, neighbour, professional – was reduced to a name that meant nothing.

Re-building my identity and becoming a known name and face took years of hard work, successes and disappointments. My self-esteem and confidence over the years had many highs and lows, at times due to other people, and sometimes due to my own doing or not-doing. The first time I visited my home country I realized that I will always be both – Croatian and Australian. An expatriate and a re-patriate. There will always be a gap that I will have to learn how to bridge; in Croatia by defining my years of living in Australia; in Australia by defining my past. I made a breakthrough when I realized that the key of being who I am wasn't in choosing one and letting go of the other, but in learning how to be both.

Looking back from where I am today, I have come to realize that there were 7 basic skills that enabled me to re-create myself, look after my family and keep my sanity through it all:

7 basic skills for expatriates in Australia

Language – you don't have to speak fluent English, but it helps in completing basic day-to-day tasks and building new social networks.

Sense of adventure – look at your new experiences and environment as an adventure.

Open mind – don't hang on to what you know and think is right. You will only make things worse for yourself. With an open mind, you will be more accepting of things and people which in turn helps you to be satisfied with more.

Sense of humour – the Aussie greeting 'How are you?' requires a good sense of humour! It is not a question that requires an answer, just the way Aussies say 'Hello'!

Acceptance – Acceptance is an essential part of change. Accept your new surroundings and look for the benefits it has to offer: opportunities to learn, meet new people, strengthen old ties, improve relationships, and grow as a person.

Understanding – it is important to understand what is happening to you and your family when you move countries. What is happening to you is happening to everyone who goes through a huge change of moving countries. Talk to other people and exchange experiences - you will be more accepting of the change.

Stay what you are, and become the best you can be – never let-go of who you were when you came to your new country. It is important to retain your values and beliefs as long as they empower you. Australia is made up of people from many different cultures. Diversity will enrich you and those around you.

This article has also been published on the following websites:

www.expatexchange.com;

www.thetrailingspouse.com;

www.newcomersnetwork.com.au.

Beyond Cultural Briefings: Repatriation Briefings



Written by
Cultural
trainer

Monita Mascitti-
Meuter

Aside from the many cross cultural training briefings *Relocation Specialists* is asked to do every year, we are increasingly also being approached for Repatriation briefings. The importance of repatriation briefings are interestingly often undervalued, as many clients often assume that their employee should be able to manage to settle in quickly in the cultural environment he or she originates from. Unfortunately it does not always work that way.

In many cases repatriation proves to be a difficult and complex experience, with more than 50% of returnees citing re-entry problems upon repatriation. In fact, if the company does not accommodate a repatriation program in its system, the following statistics as cited by Craig Storti ring true:

- ☐ 25% of returnees leave their parent companies within one year of coming home
- ☐ 26% of returnees are actively looking for other jobs
- ☐ 45% of companies surveyed reporter “problems with attrition” among returnees.

☐ 74% of returnees did not expect to be working for the same company a year later

☐ two thirds of returning professionals complained of suffering from the “out of sight, out of mind” syndrome upon re-entry.

Much of the dissatisfaction is owing to the following factors:

☐ Returning home can be anti-climatic. You are returning to the familiar, but after an exciting stint overseas, is could almost feel boring: been there done that: I want to see more new and exciting things.

☐ There can be a decrease or significant change in the returnees responsibilities. Usually returnee goes back to his/her original job, which, more often than not is at a lower rank than the overseas posting. In the worse case scenario: the company has no actual posting available, as the old job is now being done by someone else. Also, qualifying the overseas experience can prove to be a challenge for the HR department.

☐ There's a lack of interest by friends and colleagues in the expatriate experience (no-one is really interested in experiences they didn't share or cannot relate to).

☐ It is likely that returning home means a reduced salary and benefits. This can translate to a reduced standard of living (also because of a likely increase in cost of living), less intense social lifestyle, reduced or no domestic help.

☐ The technological and organisational environment has changed in the 2/3 year absence, thus making the repatriate feel slightly isolated.

☐ The repatriate is able to see things quite differently from work colleagues, thus being out of sink with the rest of the team. A broader perspective on the company's workings can be a good thing on an international scope, but on occasion detrimental on a local level.

On a more personal level the adjustment is complicated by:

- ☐ change in environment (e.g. going from a big city back to a small town)
- ☐ loss of friends/colleagues due to the absence
- ☐ difficulty in fitting in again
- ☐ need to compromise again
- ☐ realisation of the negative aspects of one's own culture
- ☐ idealisation of home country can be disappointing

To be successful when returning home, it is imperative that all family members have an understanding of the knowledge and skills they have gained whilst living overseas. Achieving this, the empowerment will allow the employee to take charge, and in the weeks preceding the move back accommodate similar arrangements too the move overseas both at a personal and professional level. Repatriation workshops at *Relocation Specialists* are specifically designed to assist expatriate staff and their families, re enter their own culture, with an understanding of the changes that have taken place within their culture and within themselves. Whilst cultural briefings assist with the commencement of the secondment, repatriation briefings assure a successful conclusion.