

A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS

Welcome to the first issue of *Relocation Topics* for 2006. As always packed with useful and informative information for those of us who work in our industry. This issue we have an article by Trevor Phillis discussing *The Changing Landscape of Risks when Travelling* to help organisations plan for risks as part of their internal policies. We also have the second part of an article on Repatriation by our Cross Cultural Researcher and Trainer Monita Mascitti-Meuter

We would also like to welcome back Aysegul Kayahan our Brisbane based Principal who has returned from a year in Vanuatu. Aysegul is keen to talk with anyone who is in Brisbane and has many wonderful stories of her recent challenges of moving a family with three young children to an exotic island and back again. Please contact her on the number below if she can assist in any way.

Additionally, our new website has just been launched. We think it tells a better story of what *Relocation Specialists* is all about. Have a look at www.relocationspecialists.com.au. We hope you like it and please let us know what you think.

Happy Reading!

Anita Fernandes, Principal, Sydney

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Quote of the month

Many people with different backgrounds, cultures, languages, and creeds combine to make a nation. But that nation is greater than the sum total of the individual skills and talents of its people. Something more grows out of their unity than can be calculated by adding the assets of individual contributions. That intangible additional quantity is often due to the differences which make the texture of the nation rich. Therefore, we must never wipe out or deride the differences amongst us-for where there is no difference, there is only indifference.

Louis Nizer, American lawyer, author, speaker, born in London



**Written by
Cultural Trainer**

**Monita Mascitti-
Meuter**

CITY SNAPSHOT: DARWIN, NT

Originally known as Palmerston after its foundation in 1869, the city of Darwin was renamed Port Darwin in 1911 after British evolutionist Charles Darwin. Early discoveries of gold in 1871, Japanese air raids in World War II and cyclones have shaped the physical and psychological landscape of this remarkable city and its people. Cyclone Tracy's aftermath on Christmas Day 1974 in particular was devastating: it killed 64 people and injured thousands more; more than 30,000 of the city's then 43,000 people were evacuated to cities and towns all over Australia. Somehow many returned and rebuilt their lives and the city.

The Darwin of today is seen as a cosmopolitan city with a multicultural society, and a sophistication akin to its sister cities in the south.

Economy

The two largest economic sectors are mining and tourism. The mining and energy industry production exceeds \$2.8 billion per annum. Tourism employs 8% of Darwin residents, and is expected to grow.

Geography

Darwin is situated in the Northern Territory, on the coast of the Timor Sea at geographic coordinates 12°27'S 130°50'E.

Climate

Between May to September Darwin experiences the Dry season, with mild days and cool nights. Most rain falls between December and March (Wet season). Darwin averages 8.5 hours of sunshine a day, an annual rainfall of 1,669mm, 110 rain days (over 0.2mm or more), a mean temperature for the hottest month of 29.2 degrees and a mean temperature for the coldest month of 24.8 degrees.

Housing market

Housing prices have continued to rise in Darwin, as it has in other cities. Notably, median house prices in Darwin recorded very strong growth of 9.3% over the December quarter of 2005 to reach a median price of \$328,000. Growth over the year to December 2005 shows that Darwin went up 26.2%. Meanwhile median prices for other dwellings (flats/units/townhouses) also grew strongly. The median of \$242,000 for Darwin was up 7.6% over the quarter and 38.3% over the year.

Rental Properties

Median rental house price is \$280 a week (up 3.7% from last year). 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 Darwin, children must attend school between the ages of six and 16. Territory schools provide high-quality education, in line with nationally recognised standards. Student-teacher ratios are among the lowest in Australia. The Territory's diverse population including the high number of Indigenous students provides a multicultural learning environment. Most schools in the city are secular, but there are a small number of Christian, Catholic and Lutheran institutions.

Students who continue their education until Year 12 can complete the Northern Territory Certificate of Education. The NTCE is the equivalent of senior secondary certificates across Australia.

Government primary and secondary schools are free and largely co-educational while primary and secondary education are also available through private or church organisations.

Main sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics; Real Estate Institute of Australia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darwin,_Northern_Territory#Economy



Written by
Trevor Phillis,
Principal of
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The Changing Landscape of Risks when Travelling.

When we travel, be it the subway to work, the family holiday to the Gold Coast or the business trip to Sri Lanka, there are always inherent risks present. Until recently, these risks were, in the main, identifiable, predictable and relatively straightforward to manage. However, the world of risks is changing.

Many external factors including the impact of terrorism, tsunamis, tornados, floods, Avian flu, tougher immigration and the like are having a significant impact on an organisation's ability to maintain continuity of business. In particular, those events over which an organisation has no control places enormous pressure on the people resources of an organisation. Additional crisis events are occurring in locations that previously were not considered high risk.

Although these events may be perceived more as community issues, organisations increasingly understand that they must also have contingencies in place to manage the impact of these events. Therefore, they are turning to their HR professionals to provide solutions. Whilst HR in the past has had a role in contingency actions resulting from internally related "disasters" it is now only of recent times, they are now expected to have a role in contingency actions resulting from external "disasters".

As we move about the globe in the course of our business (or pleasure) we experience many positives at the same as we come in contact with many potential and increasingly unpredictable risks.

About the author

Trevor is the principal of **TwP CONSULTING** who provide a consulting and advisory service to private, government & institutional organisations in the areas of Employee Relocation (International & Domestic), Remuneration, HR Planning & Development, HR policy, HR process operation and effective project management.

These risks, if not managed can expose both the traveller and their employer (if business travel) to potential damages and losses. In the extreme an employee may lose their life or an organisation may be banned from operating in a particular country. The experienced traveller may or may not be aware of these, but the inexperienced traveller most likely will not be aware of these. Similarly, for an organisation, compliance with any legislation in the destinations being visited (for example corporate tax, immigration requirements and the like) is also necessary, it is the proof of compliance that is of paramount importance.

To appropriately equip the individual prior to, during and after their travels they need to undertake a range of activities and be made aware of a mountain of knowledge and need to know how to access assistance when they require it.

Fortunately, there are many tools and resources available to assist in reducing the risks associated with travel, whilst at the same time giving individuals the skills, knowledge and desire to take responsibility for themselves when they travel. These tools and resources usually involve a multitude of providers and internal departments and sections.

To ensure that all responsibilities are discharged and employee well being is addressed an integrated consideration is required by the employer to achieve a smooth and seamless outcome creating synergy and integration of all activities and elements.

To do this all, activities and stakeholders need to come together in a structured manner against a predetermined set of standards to produce the desired outcomes. *(similar to the construction of a building)*

Through the use of an independent subject matter expert as the architect to design and integrate the elements most suited to an individual organisation, a comprehensive program can be formulated for an organisation utilising appropriate management systems, processes and providers.

On top of these traditional "travel related" risks come those risks associated with resourcing our organisations. In this Newsletter in 2005, I wrote of the growing trend of organisations having to manage attraction and retention of key talent and the "hot talent market". To many organisations these key people resources concerns are now considered to be an integral element of an organisation's risk management strategies.

For the Human Resources Professional there is a growing expectation by their organisations to play a more active and strategic role in managing crises that impact an organisation's continuity.

Traditionally emergency plans have been in place associated with the more common risks caused by political situations or medical emergencies, but the nature of risks to employees and operations are changing.

The landscape of risks to business continuity is changing, particularly those risks over which organisations have little or no control (eg a pandemic) – policies must be able to accommodate this shift, as too do those who provide services to them.

Beyond Cultural Briefings: Repatriation Briefings II



Written by
Cultural
trainer

Monita Mascitti-
Meuter

In our last newsletter I explored the issues and challenges surrounding repatriation. This time around we will look at the first steps in facing these challenges to convert them into a positive experience. I will briefly address two questions (basic as they are) you should ask yourself when your secondment is coming to an end. The list is by no means limited to the questions below, but it is a place to start.

Am I ready to go home?

A strange question, I know, but whether or not you had any say in the matter does determine your level of happiness and ability to adjust when you return home. Power of choice is a powerful thing. Sometimes you do not have much say in the matter. Sometimes all you want is to return home to the familiar because of bad experiences working overseas (unfortunately setting ourselves up for disappointment) or because it is just time to settle down with the familiar again. And sometimes there is an innate need to travel that bit more, or look for work

elsewhere, not home as yet, but going home is the easier option. Going home can, for some, feel like a step backwards. The trick is to be at peace with whatever motivation or decision you made to return home and be ready to work through the consequences: both the positive and negative. You may not have been in charge of the decision to move back, but you can be in charge of all the decisions that follow to make the transition a positive experience.

How do I re-establish friendships, or if everyone seems to have moved on: how do I initiate new ones?

The friendship question is one that comes up time and time again both in cross cultural briefings and repatriation briefings, and unfortunately there is no fantastic formula that can be handed out to each client to send them on their merry way. Establishing friendships takes time. If you did not maintain friendships while overseas and find you have been abandoned upon return, it was to be expected. Sometimes you can also be unlucky enough that everyone seems to have moved on, moved away or moved out of the country. The important thing is to maintain a positive attitude, and be patient. Reestablishing friendships can be as easy as making sure to catch up regularly with old friends (a note of warning: you will have to be the main initiator for a while). Meeting new people and starting friendships is also totally dependant on you. *You* have to make those calls, *you* have to get

people together, *you* have to initiate conversations with perfect strangers that you feel you may have something in common with. It's primary school all over again, but it works. Join clubs, gyms, short courses, socialise with colleagues at work. The hardest hurdle is being proactive .

In the end, returning home is in many ways very similar to arriving in a new country, other than the fact that you may have a few contacts or family there and, if you're lucky you (still) speak the language. (A few Australians acquire an unfortunate 'neutrality' to their enunciation (because no one understood the Aussie accent overseas to begin with). For many, the tools of adjustment they learnt overseas come in handy again, allowing them to search and find commonalities again, and seek that part of their identity they may have had to suppress during their absence from what they considered a normal life.