

A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS

Welcome to our second edition of Relocation Topics for 2008.

This newsletter covers a variety of topics that I am sure you will enjoy:

Firstly Jacinta from Hamilton Watts Migration Services provides an update on the Business Skills Visa (457). It appears as though the process will be much shorter in the future - hurrah, I hear you all say.

Secondly, Vongai Nzenza talks about her return to her home country of Zimbabwe. This country has been so much in the news lately, it is terrific to hear first hand what her experiences are. Additionally, Vongai works for World Vision and so has a real understanding of working in an underprivileged environment.

Finally, our own Monita has recently spent some extended time in Canada and reflects on her return to a familiar and often unfamiliar culture. Give the girl some real coffee!!

As always we welcome your feedback and comments.

Happy Reading!

Anita Fernandes

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Topics

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FEATURES

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Do you work in a *cross cultural* or *virtual* team?

If so, then talk to us about a new program we offer to increase the effectiveness and productivity of that team.

Call Anita Fernandes or your local office to discuss.

Quote of the month

"Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life." Octavio Paz

Relocation Topics

Current Developments in Australian Visas



Written by Jacinta
Tangey, Senior Consultant
Hamilton Watts Migration
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With the new Labour Government taking office in November 2007, there have been a number of changes to Australia's immigration processes. With business in mind, The Department of Immigration & Citizenship (DIAC) has implemented changes to the Long Stay Business Visa (Subclass 457) program that will make sponsoring temporary staff faster for larger corporate clients and more straight forward for smaller companies jumping into the visa system for the first time by providing clearer guidelines on documentation requirements.

DIAC has indicated that new 'Centres of Excellence' will be introduced in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to process 457 visas in 48 hours (a marked improvement on the standard 4+ weeks and this is already being encountered by some long established clients). In addition, DIAC has indicated that it plans to clear the backlog of unprocessed

applications and is again encouraging sponsors and visa applicants to lodge complete applications via its e-Visa system.

As a result of the 457-visa overhaul DIAC will request additional documentation and give sponsors and visa applicants 28 days to provide outstanding material. Requests for extensions of time will need justification and DIAC may decide cases based on documents presented without further inquiry. This is a much more arbitrary system and may lead to an increase in the number of rejections. In addition to the above, DIAC also increased the minimum salary for temporary workers on 1 August 2008 and set harsher penalties for unscrupulous employers who breach their sponsorship undertakings.

On the Skilled Migration front, the Migration Institute of Australia has been informed that DIAC is likely to establish a second Skilled Processing Centre to process General Skilled Migration visa applications. While no official details are available, it is believed that this centre will be opened in Brisbane to alleviate the backlog and reduce the 12-15 month processing time on skilled applications.

*For professional advice on
visa matters we
recommend businesses
engage a registered
migration agent.*

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Relocation Topics

Living in Africa

Written by Vongai Nzenza

After living many years in Australia it was always my wish to go back and work in Zimbabwe, where I was born. When the chance came to go back to Harare last year I was very optimistic that everything would be easy once I got there. Especially getting a cheap home, help, family support and not having to do my own garden if I did not want to but still have a garden well maintained!

As you would have expected, the adjustment period brought out a few positive things, and a few negative ones as well. Beside all the good things that expatriate life in Africa brings, not everything is a breeze. I started getting visitors without appointments, for instance, as life here is about getting together. During my first months of coming back to Africa, I felt people were invading my space, and, thinking like an Australian, I felt they needed appointments! After a while I've had to get used to this though....people just keep coming by anyway.

In addition, living in Zimbabwe in particular has its shortfalls: while you might save money as an expatriate, some of life's luxuries and conveniences are just not easily obtained.

Zimbabwe's infrastructure has deteriorated quite a bit over the years, and sometimes we have no electricity for up to 12 hours. Also, one has to go through a lot of trouble just to be able to get the commodity one likes or



needs. The strange thing is that once you do get it, you enjoy it so much more unlike when just going to a Safeway or Coles in Australia. Who would have thought that getting fresh bread would bring so much joy in one's life?

This used to be hard to cope with in the beginning, but it is amazing how quickly one adjusts. One might not like it, but if you want to work in a foreign country like Zimbabwe you just have to figure out whether it is worthwhile or not to get upset about minor inconveniences, and what this means in the greater scope of things.

I gladly opt for this life. I do. Different to my experience in Australia I found the greatest blessing of African society to be its sense of community where everyone looks after each other: everyone is family. It gives you peace of mind that the children are in a caring community. A passer-by will easily reprimand your child if it is misbehaving. I find this very comforting as the African saying, "children should be brought up by the community and not only by

two people" rings very true to me. Before and after school care is not a service I need anymore, as my neighbours treat my children as if they were their own, and will therefore gladly look after them if I happen to work late or have to go on a business trip.

The bottom line is, life in a developing country may have a few drawbacks as far as life's conveniences is concerned, but it teaches you to care for others rather than just yourself and to be an active and positive part of a community, which, in the end, is the way life should be.

Born in Zimbabwe in the late sixties in a family of 11., Vongai grew up in reserved areas for blacks in the then Rhodesia. Educated in missionary schools she then went to Australia in the early 90s for her university education where she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Town Planning at University of Victoria followed by a Masters in Development Studies at Monash University. Vongai has worked in third world development work in different social non governmental organisations in Australia as well as Africa. She is currently working in Project Management Information Systems for the World Vision International Global Centre. Vongai is married to Colin Grant and they have 2 children, a son Tavonga, 9 and a girl Anesu turning 7. They will be moving back to Australia soon.

Relocation Topics

Canada Revisited

Written by

Monita Mascitti-Meuter

Vongai Nzenza's article on African culture not only denotes the cultural differences that she experienced having lived in Australia and Zimbabwe, but also aspects of reverse culture shock as she realised there were certain aspects of Australian culture she herself had adopted over the years. Reverse culture shock can be worse than culture shock itself, because it is unexpected. You didn't plan for things to be unfamiliar. You didn't expect cultural norms to be unfamiliar. Therefore you didn't prepare, and the conflict or misunderstandings that ensue can be very frustrating.

Just recently I went back to Canada after a very long absence. Canada is not my home country, but I did spend about 8 years of my life there, so whenever I go back it does feel like coming home. The more time I spend in Australia, however, the more I find myself being confronted and made uncomfortable by differences between the two cultures. It's the subtlety of difference that gets me every time. It first sneaks up to me in the language: the different vowels, and 'r's, replacing chips with fries, biscuits with cookies, tomato sauce with ketchup (and when you have kids, this comes up quite frequently during the



holidays); chemist with drug store. And then there's the *Caffeey*, as my children now happily chant. Don't let me start on this one: everyone seems to carry a Tim Hortons coffee, like a statement of solidarity in this egalitarian society. Unfortunately for me it is not to my liking. I was there a month and I wasn't been able to find decent coffee. Admittedly, I did have better luck in Toronto, but it was still not the same. One is clearly spoiled in Melbourne.

I also popped into Roots, but didn't buy anything...again. After all these years I still can't get used to the idea that you can actually walk around in Canada with the word emblazoned on your chest, and no-one will look at you twice. Do I sound slightly off the planet? I guess I'm just caffeine deprived.

But on a more serious note, from a cultural perspective it was really interesting to actually witness behaviour I could not notice whilst living within the culture so many years ago. Take for example the way stressful situations are dealt with in public in Canada. The main aim is too keep everything friendly. Not to offend. To show as little aggression as possible. You will very seldom hear a mother yell at her children. (I think I was the only one...and boy did I get some looks at times.) On one occasion

Visiting Ottawa, Canada
June 2008

I observed a manager in a local store, visibly stressed addressing a number of issues at the same time. Very dryly did he say to one of his staff: "Now Tim, Jennifer doesn't know how to work the cash register yet, so I had better see to these nice people here. You had better go upstairs to the bikes department. They will not know what to do with the phone call she just diverted to them."

I think a similar situation in Australia would have gone a very different way, and humour would have crept in there somewhere as well, to diffuse some of the stress. I left the store feeling utterly stressed on behalf of the manager. I hope Tim knew what he was doing. Even if he didn't, though, I'm sure his manager would inform him calmly that he was fired, after which Tim would drown his sorrows in a coffee from his namesake.

It took a few weeks, but things quickly got back to normal. I slowly found my Canadian accent, and cultural habits. Too bad we had to go back to Melbourne: I had to go through the whole process in reverse again though at least with a good cup of coffee in my hand, eh?