



A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS

Welcome to our Winter 2007 newsletter. Some exciting changes are occurring within our organisation. Julie Hanley is the new Principal of Relocation Specialists in NSW taking over from myself as of 9 July. Welcome aboard Julie! I have decided to focus my energies solely on the Cross Cultural Programs our group offers and from now on I will be trading as Crossing Cultures but remaining part of the Relocation Specialists Group. This change reflects the changes that are occurring within the relocation industry and personal preferences within our group.

This newsletter focuses in particular on South East Asia. Theresa Le Duc talks about her recent experience at the ERC conference held in Shanghai and outlines some of the broader issues for organisations and their staff particularly in our Asia Pacific region. Timothy Fernandes (my son) talks about his experience about relocating to Singapore as a 15 year old. I'm glad to report he is now 18, studying at University and survived to tell the tale. Lastly, we also decided to include a look into the changes facing Beijing in 2008.

As always we welcome your feedback.

Anita Fernandes

Contact details:

Sydney

Julie Hanley
julieh@relocationspecialists.com.au
Tel: +61 2 9130 2586

Brisbane

Aysegul Kayahan
Aysegul@relocationspecialists.com.au
Tel: 0419 969 559

Melbourne

Theresa Le Duc
tld@relocationspecialists.com.au
Tel: +61 3 9531 7224

Perth

Donna McCrory
donna@relocationspecialists.com.au
Tel: +61 8 9371 8702

Crossing Cultures

Anita Fernandes
anita@crossingcultures.com.au
Tel: +61 2 9973 2968

FEATURES

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PROFILE OF THE MONTH:

**JULIE HANLEY
PRINCIPAL,
SYDNEY**

Julie Hanley is a new addition to our group and has joined the Relocation Specialists team as the Principal of the NSW office, replacing Anita Fernandes who is concentrating her time on the Cross Cultural programs our group offer. Julie has over 20 years of experience in the field of Human Resources, most recently specialising in the areas of recruitment, training and OH&S practices. She holds a Diploma in Human Resource Management, and has a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment.

Julie has experienced life as an expatriate as she successfully relocated with her family to Italy and London before returning to Sydney. Julies' extensive knowledge of HR practices brings even greater depth to our organisation.

Quote of the month

Television is the first truly democratic culture - the first culture available to everybody and entirely governed by what the people want. The most terrifying thing is what people do want. Clive Barnes

RELOCATION TOPICS



Shanghai
ERC
Conference
–March 6-7,
2007

Written by Theresa Le Duc
Principal, Melbourne

In March I attended the Worldwide Employer Relocation Council (ERC) fifth annual Global Workforce Summit in Shanghai: Focus on the Asia-Pacific welcomed more than 400 delegates and represented over 30 countries worldwide.

The main issues that came out of the conference were:

1. The labour market – which continues to tighten, particularly in China where they believe the local workforce will diminish over the next decade – 1 child policy in China and increasing education of the workforce contributes to this. Experts suggested that the companies will be looking for ways to change or eliminate policies and rules that restrict who can and will work for them. They expect the continued emergence of outsourced, contract and temporary workers. Diversity will continue in the workplace as talent is sourced in all sectors. Companies are moving into countries like Vietnam and India to capture the larger labour market in those locations as the younger Chinese are increasingly educated.

2. Technology advances continue to drive how and where the work gets done. Companies are utilizing more global teams allowing employees to work in non-traditional workplaces like home and hotel work spaces. Short term assignments are on the increase.

3. Companies are looking for ways to build **job security** for current employees as **employee retention** is becoming a challenge – particularly in the younger age groups.

4. Selection and assessment of candidates for international assignments will be increasingly critical in the next few years – very few companies are actively addressing this issue now.

5. Most companies admitted that they do not successfully **capture knowledge** gained from international assignments and repatriation is a growing concern. Expats are reluctant to take up assignments where no guarantee of a job on **repatriation** is provided.

6. There is a **macro-economic power shift away from the US** and toward Asian economic powers resulting in a change to policies and practices with more processes originating in the East. These emerging Asian super powers are aware that they need to increase education on mobility issues. Vietnam is projected to have the most increased Asia Pacific activity. India comes a close second.

7. Cost efficiencies remain an ongoing issue and procurement professionals play an important role in the purchasing of HR services.

8. Short term (3-6 months) and fly in fly out assignments are on the increase with a dramatic increase in **localisation**. Many companies offer a “local plus” policy to the middle level executives and local hire of internationally educated Asian workforce is on the increase.

9. Cost of living is increasing in many Asian countries and the challenges of offering packages to international expats in regional areas and hardship locations are increasing. The Asian workforce is not as willing to move to regional areas due to strong family commitments and less desire to move from their home locations.

Source: Worldwide ERC website.

RELOCATION TOPICS



Relocating to Singapore as a Teenager

Written by **Tim Fernandes**

Relocating is hard. It can be especially hard when you're forced to leave your school, friends, the surf and move overseas, where you know nobody and the beaches are too polluted to swim in.

Halfway through 2003 my parents told me we'd be moving to Singapore for a second time, and that I'd be spending tenth grade at the Australian International School. Being fourteen I obviously thought this was the absolute end of the world and did all I could to whinge, annoy and persuade my folks to not go.

For me I couldn't see the bright side of leaving. If school and all my friends lived here, how could I possibly enjoy moving away?

My parents ensured the transition would be as smooth as possible: I would be attending a school with Australian and New Zealand expats, was staying in an apartment similar to a 5 star resort and promised at least one return trip home to see everybody. Even so, when it came to start school at the beginning of 2004 I wasn't too happy.

The first term took a lot of time to adjust, mainly due to the vast differences between Sydney and Singapore that I had forgotten about. The large crowds, bad traffic, constant sweating and the fact that it's illegal to chew bubblegum takes time to get used to. In my grade of 80 students there were 25 new kids coming to the school, and so friendships formed quickly throughout our peers. For our school camp we visited Thailand and later in the year we had an opportunity to build houses in a village in Cambodia: very different locations to where most schools go in Australia.

The following 3 terms went like a blur as I adapted to the lifestyle of a teenager living in Singapore, catching taxis everywhere, eating at hawker stands and the huge popularity of underage clubbing were all things I had never done in Sydney.

I had several friends from Sydney visit and was able to share with them my new life and to keep surf fit I swam for two hours, three times a week.

Reflecting on that year I am now grateful we moved away to experience a different culture, meet new people and form lifelong friendships. It wasn't always fun and games, and although I was extremely reluctant to leave Sydney, the experiences I gained were ones that could be only achieved from relocating overseas.

RELOCATION TOPICS



The Changes Facing Beijing by 2008

Written by Cultural trainer
Monita Mascitti-Meuter

In the looming shadow of the fast approaching Olympic Games of 2008, Beijing, and China by extension, have been transformed in the last few years. Many promises were made, and a lot of hard work is being put into keeping them.

So how has Beijing changed?

One change reported by Jim Yardley of the *New York Times* on April 17 this year concerns local habits in that "Beijing officials have launched citywide campaign to try to curb public spitting, discourage public cursing and littering and also promote lining up. The city is even holding monthly 'Queuing Day'; some Communist Party officials recommend heavy fines for those who spit, cut ahead in line or use foul language."

Beijing is also reported to invest more than 25 billion yuan (about 3.29 billion US dollars) in pollution control in 2007. Beijing vice mayor Ji Lin said Beijing had invested a total of 120 billion in the past 10 years to protect environment. Temporary ban of cars during the games is one measure that will be enforced. Recycling gas vapour by gas stations is another avenue that is being explored.

Beijing also lifted the bar for emission standards for all cars in Beijing and is eliminating disqualified cars. Ji also said that the government is going to eliminate 2,580 buses and over 5,000 taxi cabs this year. (Source: Xinhua, 31/5/2007)

And will tap water be safe to drink? According to Bi Xiaogang, the vice-director of the Beijing Water Authority, this will certainly be the case: "Facilities to provide safe drinking water within a 2.91-sq-km area, encompassing the Bird's Nest and the Olympic Green, will be completed in the first half of next year." He further commented that "There is nothing wrong with the water coming out of the plants," Bi said. "It is the distance it has to travel through old pipes to get to people's homes that affects the quality." (Source: *China Daily*, 10/5/2007)

China has also stepped up efforts to eradicate pests in Olympic cities: The National Committee for the Patriotic Public Health Campaign is in charge of training 160 health workers in the scientific means to kill pests, thereby also hopefully improving the cities' rapid response capacities to animal-carrying diseases during the Olympics. (Source: Xinhua, May 21, 2007)

On the technology side, a digital television system has been installed on two of Beijing's subway lines in preparation of live broadcasts of the Olympic Games: "Passengers will be able

to watch the Games, get news reports and traffic updates on 56 trains on the Batong Line and 24 trains on Line 13. Each carriage will have six screens, according to Beijing Mobile TV - the company in charge of the project." Since 2004 about 5,000 buses have been equipped with digital television, and 12,000 more buses and 30,000 taxis will have it before next year. (Source: *China Daily*, 29/5/2007)

The best (and most exciting) changes yet are in the architectural landscape concerning the National Stadium in Beijing. The bowl-shaped stands of the National Stadium, dubbed the "Bird's Nest" have been completed recently after an eight-month installation process. The stands are composed of a total of 14,700 slabs in different size and form, with the biggest piece weighing 18 tons and being 11-meter long.

Lastly, in April, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission gave the state of preparations for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games a positive review. "Commission members reported witnessing a true sense of the enormous efforts and ambition in work completed since their previous visit, and also an early hint of the emotion that will bring venues alive when the Games begin." (Source: www.olympics.com.au, 20/4/2007)