

## Open Recruitment Group

Our guide for Optical Professionals relocating to  
Australia or New Zealand.

A world of p**O**Zibilities.



About us: ***Open Down-under.***

***Open*** is a specialist recruitment and practice sales group highly regarded and well established with offices in the UK and Australia. Across Australia and New Zealand we continue our expert reputation by operating solely in 3 core market areas:

- Dental
- Optical
- Veterinary

***Open*** is one of a very few recruitment firms specialising in the optical profession in Australia, we are independent and impartial and our client base across the southern hemisphere is diverse, including most corporate groups right through to small one off practices. We recruit for most occupations within the optical sector.

Our Brisbane office assists not only Australian and New Zealand nationals. We have enjoyed proven success in assisting many UK qualified professionals to realise their dreams of a new life and career downunder. You can read some testimonials from happy candidates that we have helped to make the move in this document and online.

Many optical roles are currently on the official Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), a list drawn up by the Australian government as occupations and specialisations that are in short supply. We work closely with MARA agents who are appointed government migration agents specialising in visa applications, this makes the process as smooth as possible for our candidates and clients.

***Open*** in Australia is currently recruiting for a large number of optical professionals from the UK for our clients in the southern hemisphere. If you are an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist, your occupation is listed on the MODL, but eye care generally is a skills short area and offers many opportunities and some clients are in a position to be able to offer sponsorship options to the right optical applicants.

So, whether it's a working holiday or a permanent move that may be of interest to you we are glad to give our candidates expert help and advice free of charge!

For details on some of our current portfolio of vacancies, please visit our Australian website: [www.openrecruitment.com.au](http://www.openrecruitment.com.au) .

Or for an initial personal confidential discussion, please call our optical relocation expert here in the UK:

Adam Thompson on: 0121 712 7818 or email on: [at@openrecruitment.com](mailto:at@openrecruitment.com)

Or call our team in the Australian office direct on: 07 3112 0217 or email: [info@openrecruitment.com.au](mailto:info@openrecruitment.com.au)

## Why Australia or New Zealand?

Australia has become the dream home for around 1.3 million Brits and about 215,000 British citizens are resident in New Zealand. In 2007 around 65,000 people emigrated down under and 34,635 Brits were granted working holiday visas to work and visit down under, numbers that seems to increase year by year. The lifestyle, climate and the chance to own a larger, better home are often quoted as the main factors of motivation for people to pursue a new life down under.

Australia and New Zealand are stable, culturally diverse, democratic societies with skilled workforces and a strong, competitive economy. Both offer enviable lifestyles and with a population of around 20.6 million in Australia and 4.3 million in New Zealand they are relatively sparsely populated geographic areas. Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent. It is the earth's biggest island and the sixth-largest country in the world.

Australia is made up of six states and two territories (see map below).



## Life in Australia and New Zealand

Life in the Southern Hemisphere is seen as the most enviable in the world. This document has been designed specifically for dental professionals as a helpful guide to understanding an outline of what to expect living and working there.

### Climate

Much of Australia is warm or hot throughout the year, and even along the cooler southern coasts the winters are mild rather than cold. New Zealand has a temperate climate comparable with that of Britain or northwest Europe. In the Southern Hemisphere summer starts in December and winter starts in June. The sun is very strong so caution is advised at all times.

Weather	Mean daily max/min temperature (°C)		Mean monthly rainfall (mm)		Mean daily sunshine hours	
	Jan	Jul	Jan	Jul	Jan	Jul
	Adelaide	29/17	15/7	21	82	10
Brisbane	29/21	21/9	160	62	8	8
Canberra	28/13	11/0	62	42	9	6
Darwin	32/25	30/21	431	1	6	10
Hobart	22/12	12/4	42	47	8	5
Melbourne	26/14	13/6	49	48	9	4
Perth	32/17	18/8	71	63	12	6
Sydney	26/19	16/8	104	99	7	7

### Language

English is the language of Australia and New Zealand. Approximately 17% of the population speak a language other than English at home.

### Law

Australia is an independent state within the British Commonwealth, with Queen Elizabeth II represented by the Governor General. Australian law is based on the English model of common law.

The New Zealand legal system is also derived from the English one and comes from two main sources:

- The common law, which is a body of law built up from decisions made in the United Kingdom and in New Zealand. Developments made by New Zealand courts mean that New Zealand now differs from the United Kingdom on some aspects of the common law.
- Statute law, which is all the law made by Parliament.

For further information please visit - [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au) or [www.justice.govt.nz](http://www.justice.govt.nz)

### **Social Security**

The Australian and New Zealand Governments will provide help for people whose source of income has ceased. They offer a wide range of Pensions, Allowances and benefits. These are non-contributory and usually paid directly to the recipient, based on need. However, new settlers are not eligible to claim benefits, for the first two years of residence.

### **Health Care**

Health care in Australia relies on private and public facilities, with a predominantly private medical profession, private and public hospitals, and private and public health financing. Medicare, the national health care system, is funded through progressive income tax and an income related levy.

New Zealand's healthcare system is funded mainly through general taxation. Treatments are usually free or subsidised. Medical treatment is generally very good. Private healthcare is also available.

For more information visit: [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au) or [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)

### **Education**

Preschool and school education has a similar structure across Australia and New Zealand.

School education is compulsory until a child reaches the appropriate school leaving for their state or territory of residence and divided into preparatory, primary and secondary schooling.

Preschool starts at around five years of age and is not compulsory. Primary school begins at age six and provides a general elementary programme lasting for six or seven years. Students enter secondary education in Year 7 or 8.

Around 68% of children attend free, government-funded schools. A parallel fee-paying sector also exists, including independent schools and schools run by various religious institutions.

Tertiary education programmes can be divided into two main types; those offered by the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, and higher education programmes offered by universities and higher education institutions.

Each State/Territory has its own guide to schooling. For further details please follow the links below:

Queensland - <http://education.qld.gov.au>

Victoria - [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

South Australia - [www.decs.sa.gov.au](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au)

New South Wales - [www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au)

Tasmania - [www.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.education.tas.gov.au)

Western Australia - [www.det.wa.edu.au/education](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education)

Northern Territories - [www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca)

New Zealand – [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)

## **Driving**

Driving is on the left. Every state or territory has a separate authority responsible for issuing driver's licences, which are then valid Australia wide.

It is recommended that you apply for an Australian licence as soon as you take up permanent residence. Holders of a current UK licence or an International Driving Permit may be required to pass a written test on the local road rules, a practical driving test and in some states it is also often necessary to undergo a sight test. Driving licences are issued for a set period of time and a fee is payable for each renewal.

For the exact criteria of each state or territory and information on the fees involved, please visit - [www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/to-do-first/apply-drivers.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/to-do-first/apply-drivers.htm)

For details about driving requirements for New Zealand please visit – [www.landtransport.govt.nz/factsheets56.html](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/factsheets56.html)

## **Transport, Communications, Media**

The vast geographical area of Australia has led to a significant role for transport and communications links. Private travel for individuals accounts for almost half of all

road use. There are good rail links between major cities and domestic air transport is frequently used, the two main domestic airlines are Qantas and Virgin Blue. Coastal shipping remains mainly used for transporting freight.

Australia has one of the highest proportions of personal computer and mobile telephone ownership in the world and the Internet take up rate is second only to the USA. There are about 400 radio stations in Australia, over half of them commercial. There are also a large number of television channels, many programmes are imported from the UK and USA and Foxtel provides further satellite pay TV choices.

## Housing

In Australia approximately 70% of people own their own home. The average home consists of three/four bedrooms, combined lounge/dining room, kitchen, bathroom, toilet and separate laundry room. The greatest proportions of Australians live in detached bungalows standing in their own gardens, often with a backyard swimming pool. A combination of both timber and brick dwellings provides character and individuality in most neighbourhoods.

Prices of houses vary considerably depending on factors such as locality, distance from the city and availability of services. Rental accommodation sought through real estate agents is usually for a fixed period of time. A bond equivalent to one month's rent and two weeks rent in advance is usual.

### Median House Prices

June 2007	(A\$)
Sydney	\$528,000
Melbourne	\$392,000
Brisbane	\$388,000
Canberra	\$488,000
Darwin	\$421,000
Perth	\$413,000
Adelaide	\$344,000
Hobart	\$258,000

Source: Real Estate Institute of Australia

Most families in New Zealand live in detached homes set on their own plot of land. A quarter-acre is the standard plot size in New Zealand. Most New Zealand properties are single-storey bungalows as in Australia, although two-storey houses are becoming more popular. Prices vary hugely across New Zealand if you are considering living in Auckland the average house price is approximately NZ\$339,000 however purchasing a similar property in Southland is only approximately NZ \$125,500.

There are a number of excellent websites for up to date information on property sales and rentals throughout Australia and New Zealand.

## **Banking**

Australia has an advanced banking system, with various types of institution:

There are four main banking groups across Australia and New Zealand:

- ANZ Bank
- Commonwealth Bank
- National Australia Bank
- Westpac Banking Corporation

There are also smaller state-specific banks, a number of credit societies/credit unions and other financial organisations, such as insurance companies who have diversified into banking. Each bank offers their own mix of accounts and facilities with different fees and interest rates.

There are facilities available for migrants to open a bank account before leaving their home country. Typically, you can download an application form and if you know where you'll be living in Australia or New Zealand, you can choose to open your account at a local branch, or central branch in your destination city.

Within six weeks of your arrival, you will need to go into your branch with your passport as identification and provide your contact address.

For further information on specific banking facilities please visit the individual bank websites.

## **Income Tax**

Australia has a tiered income tax system, where the more you earn, the higher the tax rate you pay.

Example guide of taxable rates - 2007-2008:

Taxable Income	Tax Rate	Tax Amount Due
\$0 - \$6,000	0%	\$0
\$6,001 - \$30,000	15%	15¢ for each \$1 over \$6,000
\$30,001 - \$75,000	30%	\$3,600 plus 30¢ for each \$1 over \$30,000
\$75,001 - \$150,000	40%	\$17,100 plus 40¢ for each \$1 over \$75,000
\$150,000 and over	45%	\$47,100 plus 45¢ for each \$1 over \$150,000

For a comprehensive guide to the taxation system in New Zealand visit:  
[www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)

### **The cost of living down-under.**

A Mercer survey Article from Aug 2007 identified that overall Australia and New Zealand are cheaper places to live than the UK and the quality of living is better.

While Britain had the second most expensive city surveyed (London), Australia's major city, Sydney, didn't appear on the list until number 21.

In spite of the average cost of living in cities being less than in the UK, there are some aspects of life in Australia which may be more expensive. One of these is the purchase of manufactured goods, especially cars, mobile phones and clothes.

On the other hand, food is generally cheaper than the UK. House prices and rents are steadily rising in Australia and New Zealand but are still a good deal cheaper than in most areas of the UK. However, as in any other country, there is a large discrepancy between different areas.

### **Spiders, Snakes and other wildlife**

One of the worries of prospective migrants to Australia and New Zealand seems to be "*How will I cope with all the spiders and snakes?*" or we are often asked about "*the dangers of sharks or crocodiles*". Not surprising, really, as the media seems to have been devoted to "Australia's Deadliest" over the years. Fortunately, in this case, you really do not have too much to worry about these.... there are many challenges involved in emigrating and settling in Australia, but snakes, bugs and sharks will probably not be a major factor in your Aussie life.

Australia and New Zealand are rich in wildlife and boast a wonderful collection of flora and fauna that is unique to the rest of the world.

### **Working as an Optical Professional in Australia**

The optical industry in Australia and New Zealand is a very respected and rewarding profession. It is an exciting time to be involved in the optical industry there as it is currently undergoing many changes with the recent arrival of Spec savers and optical professionals from the UK are becoming a popular choice for many employers.

If you are an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist, your occupation is listed on the MODL, but eye care generally is a skills short area and offers many opportunities. We work with a diverse range of Optical employers from corporate groups, regional organisations through to independent practices in locations across Australia and New Zealand.

All optometrists trained outside of Australia and New Zealand are required to successfully complete a Competency in Optometry Examination before being eligible to apply for registration with any of the registration boards across Australia or in New Zealand.

The two part test is governed by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) and consists of written multiple choice questions. The exam can be taken on various dates in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom (London), South Africa (Johannesburg) and the USA (Washington).

For information on the exams, costs and dates visit: [www.ocanz.org](http://www.ocanz.org).

To help prepare for the tests there are now preparatory courses available in the UK through CET providers. Exam papers from past years can also be downloaded from the OCANZ website (as above).

For details on preparatory courses, costs and dates visit: [www.replaylearning.com](http://www.replaylearning.com)

It may be of interest to find out about current optical thinking, news and issues by referring to one of the trade publications. Insight magazine is the leading ophthalmic newspaper and has been published since 1975. *Open* contributes a regular monthly recruitment article to Insight magazine, providing hints and tips specific to Optical recruitment issues.

To find out more about current optical news visit: [www.insightnews.com.au](http://www.insightnews.com.au)

*Open* are one of only a very few independent and impartial specialist optical recruiters working in Australia and New Zealand. We work with our many clients to help them find the right optical staff. There are numerous opportunities for UK qualified applicants who wish to experience the enviable lifestyle down under either for short term working holidays, longer term or permanent relocation. Many of our clients are in a position to be able to offer sponsorship options to the right candidate.

To view a selection of current vacancies, please visit: [www.openrecruitment.com.au](http://www.openrecruitment.com.au).

To find out about future opportunities, please contact our optical relocation expert based in our UK office, for an initial confidential discussion:

Adam Thompson on: 0121 712 7818 email: [at@openrecruitment.com](mailto:at@openrecruitment.com)

or call our Brisbane office on: 07 3112 0217 email: [info@openrecruitment.com.au](mailto:info@openrecruitment.com.au).

## **Visas**

There are a wide variety of visas available and this can be an area of confusion, some of our optical clients are fully approved to be able to offer visas, become sponsors and employ optical professionals from the UK who have recognised qualifications and skills/or experience required in Australia.

At *Open* we also work very closely with recognised MARA agents. MARA agents are Government appointed visa specialists to help streamline the process. For more details on visa options or further assistance, please contact our optical relocation expert here in the UK, Adam Thompson on: 0121 712 7818. Email:

[at@openrecruitment.com](mailto:info@openrecruitment.com.au) or contact our team in the Brisbane office direct on: 07 3112 0217. Email: [info@openrecruitment.com.au](mailto:info@openrecruitment.com.au).

## Testimonials

We take pride in our work and the service that we provide, we regularly receive commendations from people ( both candidates and clients) that we have helped and thought you may be interested to share in the thoughts of a fellow professional who has already successfully made the move downunder.



*Hi,*

*First of all, thank you very, very much for all of your efforts in helping me find this job, it is lovely. The staff are all very friendly and keen to help me settle in.*

*Although I have lived and worked in a number of countries, this is by far the best of all! Not only am in a place that feels just as at home as if I was in the UK (most of the tv is the same even!)I am recognised for my profession and the helping of my patients and not purely by how much money that I can make in the rat race that is the UK! (In saying that, my salary is better than in the UK but don't tell my boss!)*

*Life suddenly becomes a pleasure instead of a grind here. The fantastic weather and scenery also help I hasten to say. My only real regret is that I didn't come here 20 years ago and missed out on that time!*

*None of it would have been at all possible without Open's constant help and attention to detail in every aspect of the move, it has been such a seamless move that I can barely believe it. Thank you again!*

*Cheers;*

*James*

*Relocation to: Townsville, QLD*

Further testimonials can be viewed online.

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