

As published on www.familycapers.com.au 23 April 2011

Finding work in Australia – tips for newcomers

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Getting a job in Australia can seem very daunting. Being well prepared can help.

International students and skilled migrants have the skills to work but are often unsure on how to find work. Typically newcomers to Australia find it difficult to find work because they have left behind their contacts/ networks, are pressured to start earning, are unsure what an Australian resume should look like and are unfamiliar with Australian workplace etiquette and culture. Adding to their woes is the fact that employers can often overlook or are not confident in employing someone that is 'different'.

Here are a few simple tips newcomers can follow to prepare themselves:

- Have your resume / CV reviewed to ensure it meets Australian standards
- Register with popular job search websites:
 - www.seek.com.au
 - www.careerone.com.au
 - www.mycareer.com.au
 - www.skilledmigrantjobs.com
 - <http://www.familycapers.com.au/The-Employment-Hub/>
- Have a job search strategy that complies with Australian etiquette/ lingo and can tap into the hidden job market
- Be prepared and open to change
- Contact the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to understand Australian visa requirements
- Contact the Australian Tax Office to understand your tax obligations
- Have official documents certified so they are readily available
- Have English speaking references readily available
- Set realistic and achievable expectations, for example time to find a job

Most newcomers don't realise that most of the above actions can be done before coming to Australia.

International students and skilled migrants are a growing source of employees in Australia. In 2010 there were 182,000 skilled migrants that moved to Australia with their families and Australia and New Zealand were host to more than 600,000 international students, of which up to 80% seek work while studying (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Furthermore, the Federal Government recognises that no less than 120,000 new migrants are needed every year for 20 years in order to avoid a contraction in the size of the labour force in 2025 (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Sadly, most skilled new comers will not initially be employed in a similar occupation or level of remuneration to what they are accustomed to. However, successful entry in to Australia's job market is possible if newcomers seek help, do their research and are flexible and open to change.

About the Author

Kerina Alter is the founder/ director of Altered Career, a career marketing and employment services consultancy. She has over 10 years experience working across government, education, charity, science/ technology and corporate sectors in marketing, communication and career counselling roles. During this time, Kerina has consulted with hiring managers, recruiters, participated on numerous recruiting panels, worked with university career service areas and been a board member at Monash University for seven years.

A few valuable years spent in the corporate communications field taught Kerina the value of being able to network, market oneself and write to an audience and a brief.

Kerina is a qualified career counsellor and a member of Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA). Her website is: www.alteredcareer.com.au