



# Expert answers

Our panel of experts and advisors offer their crucial tips on tackling your migration Down Under in the light of the current economic crisis

**H**ow will the 'Credit Crunch' impact upon the New Zealand and Australian economies? What will the effect be on property markets? Will there still be jobs for migrants? And how is the change in the global economy affecting those keen to move Down Under? We polled top financial and migration experts to get the lowdown on these crucial questions.

"It's actually a great time for Brits to migrate to Australia, as the stronger pound means you are getting more for your money," says Maryanne Gruar, director of True Blue Migration. "This spans everything from visa fees and reconnaissance trips Down Under to exchanging your savings. And with the heat now out of the housing market and home loan

interest rates dropping steadily, the time is ripe to buy real estate too."

Geraint Davies, director of Montfort International, adds that those who plan ahead financially stand to reap the benefits. In a feature on pensions, published in *Australia & New Zealand* magazine, the company advised migrants to look into UK Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs) schemes, which allow investors to benefit from a favourable exchange rate.

"When the Reserve Bank of Australia dropped their interest rate at the beginning of October, exchange rates rose from around A\$2.20 to the pound to a peak of

**Below** The stronger pound means you get more for your money Down Under

A\$2.71 per pound. Those who sought financial advice early will have done very well."

Mike Cole, of BritsNZ agrees: "In New Zealand we will continue to see interest rates fall, and volatility means this is an awesome time to have some 'market orders' in place – meaning that if the NZ dollar gets to [say] NZ\$2.95 to the pound, your currency specialist should buy you a certain amount of currency. The key is to take a rate when it hits – do not be greedy."

"The swing in exchange rates also means migration agents are able to secure cheaper health care policies in the UK, rather than upon arrival in

Australia," Tony Mooney, of Southern Cross Settlement Services points out.

**"Those who had sought financial advice early will have done very well"**

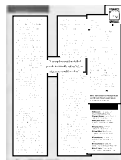
## JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT

The outlook is also positive when it comes to jobs. "Despite the global credit crunch, the demand for skilled workers in Australia is still high. The 2008–2009 Migration Program has been set at 190,300 places, a 19.8 per cent increase on the 2007–2008 program," says Maryanne Gruar. Aussie PM, Kevin Rudd, has voiced Australia's need "to meet employer demands for more skilled workers."

Immigration Minister Chris Evans is holding off for mid-year financial data before deciding on whether to cut immigration numbers. "If parameters are changing, the government will take a sober look at those issues and make a decision when we have got proper information," he said.

But even if cuts are made, it is unlikely that the steady increase in immigration numbers (from just 93,080 in 2001–2002 to more than double that number of places in 2009) will drastically diminish. >>





“Businesses still need skilled staff,” says Gruar. “The Migration Occupation Demand List (MODL) indicates that tradespeople, accountants, engineers and IT professionals are still urgently sought, with many of these job holders able to obtain permanent residency immediately”

Emma Roberts, of Next Step Australia agrees: “The employment market in Australia is still far more buoyant than in the UK, although employers have become far more specific about the qualifications and experience they need.”

Although the jobs market in New Zealand is relatively tougher, there are still plenty of opportunities: “Unemployment for skilled people is virtually nil in NZ, so migrants should be okay,” says Geoff Taylor, of the Emigration Group.

“Even with an economic downturn, jobs are still there, but may not be so abundant as previously. The secret is knowing how to market yourself to an overseas company. Don’t rely on the jobs advertised in the papers as this puts you in direct competition with locals. It’s better to try and tap into the unadvertised job market, one reason The Emigration Group has been so successful in finding jobs for migrants over the years.”

#### THE BIG ISSUE

The biggest problem for would-be migrants is the difficulty in selling their property in the UK.

“Many have reduced their asking prices in an attempt to create interest in this difficult market,” says Andrew Hains of Montfort International. But, as he points out, “there are other options available.” “Those that price their property realistically are now faring better, and for many, renting their UK property may be the answer.” (see Property Special, *Australia & New Zealand* magazine, October issue).

Craig Millard of Kiwi Emigration agrees: “Even would-be migrants who need to release at least part of the equity in their house, should not put off their plans as a result of the current climate,” he says. “While the

challenges in the housing market are well documented, there are options for people who are prepared to be more flexible.

“Renting their UK house out and re-mortgaging to release some equity puts the migrant back in control of their move, rather than letting their house control them.”

Tony Mooney, of Southern Cross Resettlement, even points out some unexpected benefits: “Clients who choose to rent out their house can move quicker, and start work sooner with their new employer”, he says.

And Geoff Taylor, of the Emigration Group, has this to add:

### “Unemployment for skilled people is virtually nil in NZ, so migrants should be okay”

“Many people have up to five years (Australia) and three years (NZ) in which to emigrate.

“So my advice is, if you’re eligible, secure your visa now, then concern yourself with the timing of your move.” As for property, with bargains to be had Down Under, even if migrants make a “paper loss” on the sale of their home, they can make up for this on what they buy. They can also look forward to an increasingly favourable exchange rate as the Aussie and Kiwi dollar finally slide against the pound.

But how are these countries’ economies likely to fare in comparison to the UK?

“The NZ economy is predicted to come through recession better than most,” says Geoff Taylor. “The Reserve Bank is fortunate in that it has plenty of flexibility to reduce interest rates, to help business and domestic demand. It has already cut rates and there are more cuts to come. On top of this, recent tax cuts will put more cash in peoples’ pockets over the coming months. Industry too is now benefiting from the falling Kiwi dollar, easing the burden on exporters who have suffered immensely over the last few years given the widely

acknowledged over-valued NZ dollar.”

Craig Millard agrees. “Economies around the world are suffering, however, the peaks and troughs of the NZ economy are not as severe as in the UK. While the job market has tightened a bit, there are still good opportunities for migrants.”

#### HOT TO TROT!

Australia’s immigration minister, Chris Evans, recently said: “The downturn in Great Britain over the last year or two has seen a renewed interest in people looking to migrate, either temporarily or permanently.”

“The credit crunch is proving unexpectedly beneficial for the migration market,” confirms Andrew Hains, of Montfort International. Geoff Taylor, agrees: “It seems half the UK want to leave. The Emigration Group is receiving record number of enquiries.”

“Numbers are going up!” confirms Maryanne Gruar. “As one of our English clients said: “If things are tough everywhere, you might as well be in the sun!”

■ **For more advice from the experts see our full Credit Crunch expert tips on [www.getmedownunder.com](http://www.getmedownunder.com)**



#### Expert panel

- **Mike Cole**, financial advisor, BritsNZ, [www.britsnz.co.nz](http://www.britsnz.co.nz)
- **Geraint Davies**, director, Montfort International, [www.miplc.co.uk](http://www.miplc.co.uk)
- **Maryanne Gruar**, True Blue Migration, [www.truebluemigration.com](http://www.truebluemigration.com)
- **Andrew Hains**, Montfort International, [www.miplc.co.uk](http://www.miplc.co.uk)
- **Craig Millard**, director, Kiwi Emigration, [www.kiwi-emigration.co.uk](http://www.kiwi-emigration.co.uk)
- **Tony Mooney**, Southern Cross Settlement Services, [www.go2aus.com](http://www.go2aus.com)
- **Emma Roberts**, Next Step Australia, [www.nextstepaustralia.com](http://www.nextstepaustralia.com)
- **Geoff Taylor**, The Emigration Group, [www.emigrationgroup.co.uk](http://www.emigrationgroup.co.uk)