



Emigration to Australia has doubled in the past decade

By Emily Dugan

The number of Britons emigrating to Australia more than doubled in the past decade, government figures show. Enticed by the country's natural charms – as well as the more material advantages of a recruitment drive aimed at attracting skilled workers – more than 23,000 Britons moved Down Under between 2006 and 2007.

Paul Arthur, director of The Emigration Group, a company specialising in the relocation of Britons to Australia, said interest in the country had reached new heights. “This January alone we had nearly 20,000 enquiries from people seriously wanting more information about emigration, which is 30 per cent higher than the previous year”,

he said. “There are excellent job opportunities and the economy in Australia is booming; they need skilled traders and professionals and they prefer Brits.”

A further growth in the numbers of UK arrivals is expected this year after the Australian government announced it would be adding a further 6,000 places for skilled migrants, taking the total annual intake to 110,000. A significant proportion of those places is expected to be taken up by British nationals.

“Australia is actively seeking to recruit British skilled workers to move to Australia, particularly in the areas of health, engineering, accounting and trades,” said Steve Davis, regional director for immi-

gration at the Australian High Commission, adding that the desire for an improved lifestyle was still the chief attraction.

“Recent research shows that the main reason British people are migrating to Australia is for the lifestyle, including the climate. They also listed future opportunities for their families and work opportunities as key reasons for moving,” he said.

More than a million Britons live in Australia, making up a sizeable portion of the country's 21 million residents. One of those hoping to make a new start this year is Paul Hulse, a 30-year-old electrician from Cheshire who is in the process of applying for a visa. As an electrician – one of the trades most in de-

mand – he is likely to get it.

Explaining that life in Britain had become harder in recent years, he said: “The gulf between the rich and the middle class is getting bigger here. Everyone in this country's getting fed up because the cost of living is shooting up and if you're an ordinary person it's a struggle to survive.

“I couldn't afford a house in a nice area here, but in Adelaide I've heard you can get a detached house with a pool for £120,000. What can you get here for that?”

As with so many UK residents, it was the weather that clinched it for him. “The sunshine is a huge factor and if you like the outdoors it's great. You can guarantee good weather and have a barbecue out-

side every night – who wouldn't want that?”

Mr Arthur agreed. “I think more and more people are looking for a whole change in lifestyle and they're becoming increasingly unhappy with their lives in the UK,” he said. “For six months of the year, we go to work in the dark and come home in the dark, and it's pretty miserable. We work harder and longer than most other westernised countries, whereas in Australia that work-life balance is much better.”