

Already a destination of choice for many in terms of emigration, the recent global economic events and Australia's relative resilience through it has seen a continued influx from overseas applicants looking to come to Australia. With emails, Skype and other resources making applying from overseas far easier process employers have been bombarded by overseas applicants. While in general Australia continues to suffer a lack of local candidates in technical roles it is now far more important to have a considered and structured process when applying from overseas.

### **Recent Graduates –**

Typically you will find it close to impossible to get a job in Australia by applying while in your home country. Simply put there is not enough differentiation between you and recent graduates that they can pick up from the Australian Universities to make it worth an employer's time and effort jumping through hoops to sponsor you - especially when the locally trained graduates will have better knowledge of legislation, standards and codes in Australia.

A lot of graduates will have the option of being able to pick up a Working Holiday Visa (417), which means that you can enter the country with the right to work for any employer for 6 months. This gives you the opportunity to be available at short notice to employers and look at contract work as an option. It also means that you can "sell" yourself on your personality and not just a dry cv.

As a general rule, you will still be bottom of the pile of preferred candidates as you'll still suffer from the lack of local knowledge that local graduates have for short-term contracts while for longer term roles the local graduates are not limited by only being able to work for 6 months. The more open you are to what you do/where you do it the better your chances are of picking up work, for example places like rural councils struggle to find local applicants as most local graduates want to work close to home where their friends and family are. The rural locations though will typically mean that you're not having the same level of "backpacker" experience as others who may be doing this and is therefore something to consider. On the plus side once you have the first 3-6 month contract under your belt, typically it is a lot easier to pick up your second contract as you have overcome both the lack of experience and lack of local experience.

As a graduate we would advise the following – ask yourself: "What is my primary reason for applying to Australia?" – if it is for the backpacking experience with the hope of picking up some work experience on the way then come now. If you have a genuine passion for wanting to work/live overseas on a long term (4+ years), then you are better off trying to look locally for some experience for 1-2 years before committing to using the 417 visa prior to you turning 30.

#### Key points

1. Consider your reasons for wanting to come to Australia before applying
2. Look into possibility of Working Holiday – 417 visa
3. Realise that any experience is good experience

### **2-5 years' experience -**

While as a rule you will still lack enough experience for employers to want to sponsor you if applying from back home, (depending upon your area of specialisation), you have developed some strong basic skills which can be adapted to another country, and while you may need some assistance and training to convert this to the Australian system – this can be a relatively minor thing especially when considered against your skills and the fact that you recognise you need training meaning that you won't be chasing promotion in the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months.

If possible you are still better to look at working holiday (417) visa as an initial entry option. As well as giving you the opportunity to persuade people to hire you in person rather than through the phone or Skype, it also vastly opens up the number of clients that you can work for as you're not limited to only looking at companies who will sponsor you but enables you to work and prove yourself to any potential employer for a period of 6 months – typically in our experience once employers have got used to a potential employer and had them working for them for a while, they are far more agreeable to looking at permanent sponsorship (which is a fairly easy process anyway). We appreciate that a "working holiday" is not always a viable option, especially if currently ensconced in permanent

employment, but would be worth talking to your current employer about a possible sabbatical (its not like you're looking to leave because of them, the company or the job its more a lifestyle decision), or talk to a recruiter as to what the marketplace over here is like and what your realistic employment chances are before you take the plunge.

Target your approach. Overseas applications on email are that common now they are almost regarded as spam – if you have obtained a visa, hold off applying until you're physically in the country – while it would be nice to have a job lined up before arriving, the chances are you won't, or at best have fluked an interview for the week you arrive – at the cost of having sent your resume round 50 places and being regarded from then on as spam – as they say, "You only get one chance to make a 1<sup>st</sup> impression".

Remember the 1<sup>st</sup> job is a stepping stone. It's likely to be contract, and as such possibly be a lesser level than you are used to (eg drafting rather than designing, team member rather than project manager, small applications rather than the bigger ones. It is simply a way to get into the Australian system and "Australian-ise" your cv. Worry about job description and haggle for the extra dollar on the second contract not the first.

#### Key Points

1. Look at a Working Holiday Visa if possible
2. The initial 3-6 month contract just gets you basic experience, worry about role/money etc on the next one not 1<sup>st</sup> one.
3. Target your applications

## **5-10 years' experience**

Typically by now the Working Holiday visa is no longer an option for you, and you are likely to have other considerations/commitments in your personal life. As such you will need to find an employer who is willing to sponsor you and who feels that your personal circumstances won't hold you back from being able to commit to a career in Australia. An employer will therefore want to satisfy themselves that:

### **The applicant committed enough in the process to make it worth their time and effort?**

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have put forethought into the process and that the employer isn't going to go through the whole sponsorship process only to find out that you weren't totally committed/thought through the move. This will include questions like – Have you looked into the sponsorship issue and do you understand what the process involves? Have you consulted other family members about your decision? Have you considered what you will do with your house if offered a job sell/rent? Have you already spoken to other people in the decision making process and have they considered the implications of you getting a job in Australia such as what they will do for employment, where the kids will go to school, who will look after aging parents? What notice period will you need before you can start? (From experience candidates that start saying that they need 3 months+ notice period (unless in their current employment contract) typically aren't engaged in the process and will renege on potential job offers..

### **If I jump through the hoops involved in sponsorship – what is to say the person will not leave after 6 months?**

When an employer goes through the time and effort to sponsor you they typically want to know you are a long term prospect for them. While most sponsorship incorporates some form of commitment to certain tenure by the employee to the employer to stop you from jumping to work for another employer. The employer will want to satisfy themselves that you will be comfy enough in your new surroundings to not want to go back home after 6 months.

They will do this by asking if you've been to Australia for holidays previously so you're aware of what you're getting yourself into from a culture perspective, if you have a network of friends and family here to help you settle into your new environment, what your main motivators in moving are (those who move for a lifestyle change are more likely to adapt to their surroundings than those who move for career. It may also be worth suggesting to them that if you leave prior to the end of an agreed period (say 1-2 years) that you will sign a contract to reimburse them for any sponsorship/relocation costs they have incurred.

**Will the applicant fit into our team culture?**

While personality tests and alike are possible options the fact remains that unless you physically meet someone face-face there will be some reservations into who you are as a personality. This can be overcome by a targeted approach at the beginning – ideally can you combine a holiday with 1<sup>st</sup> round interviews – if so work with a recruitment agent who knows your local market and specialisation – this will help in terms of making sure you cover the whole market including smaller players you may not be aware of, allow you to benchmark one job with another, and have someone on the ground at all times to coordinate your schedule. Work with one agent so you get an honest reflection of the interviews/potential offers you have and how they best fit you rather than multiple agents all bound to represent “their role” as the best option. If done in an organised manner and you give the agent sufficient time you will be able to specify things like – “I will do phone interviews if only 1-2 interviews, if there are 3-4 then I will fly out for them.

**10+ years’ experience**

Requires you to take a good hard look at your skills to work out what you have become over your 10 years...

Are you a Technical expert, a great project manager, a great people manager, a work winner or just someone whose been doing their job for the last 10 years? Do you have a strong area of knowledge/specialisation? Or have you worked on significant/unusual projects that will stand you out from the crowd?

Depending upon your answers to the above you formulate your best approach on who to approach and how – for example a technical expert with expertise in Tunnel Engineering, Rail Engineering or Environmental Remediation projects are in high demand by a number of the larger multidisciplinary engineering consultancies where you will be hired for your technical skills and so need to demonstrate previous projects you’ve worked on. A “work winning” town planner for a consultancy on the other hand has to realise that they will lack immediate contacts/networks to bring in money to a company – but by flying over and meeting with consultancies to demonstrate the “work winning personality” along with indicating fees brought into their current firm, combined with a willingness to take a short-term backwards step in terms of the career they are offering savvy employers the chance to get someone who will bring them in revenue to their firm in the medium-long term. Even if you feel there is nothing exceptional about your career to date there may well be opportunities if you talk to the right people with an understanding of your market sector over here.

Work with a recruiter who understands your sector – at a senior level it’s as much about the hidden job market as it is the advertised jobs, larger clients have almost standing orders for hard to find technical specialists and will create a role for the right person, strategic business growth plans mean that some key roles are on recruiters radars but may not be actively advertised by the company, while a good recruiter should understand your skills and be able to recognise and correctly represent you to organisations who your skills fit that you may not be aware of.

Feel free to question/interview recruiters before you chose who to go with: Do they understand what you do, the role you want, and the marketplace they need to represent you to? Have they got sufficient experience working within their sector so that their comments will be taken on board by potential employers? Do they have experience of dealing with candidates needing sponsorship/relocation so that they can potentially hold clients hands through the process? Will you get quick, honest feedback from them about your application? (it’s a one shot process so if you’re doing something wrong you need to know quickly!)

At your level it is more likely that initial conversations can be done over the phone that for more junior candidates, although again we would stress that there is nothing better than meeting potential employers face-face not only from their perspective but also to give you a sense of who you would be working for.

**Key Points**

1. Identify and Focus on your Strengths
2. Look at the “hidden’ job market
3. Chose and work with a recruiter you trust

**PLEASE NOTE – PLANNED RESOURCES ARE NOT A REGISTERED MIGRATION AGENT OR IMMIGRATION LAWYER, WHILE WE HAVE EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN PLACING CANDIATES FROM OVERSEAS - YOU NEED TO DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH INTO VISA’S AND SPONSORSHIP. A GOOD STARTING POINT IS DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATIONS WEBSITE [WWW.IMMI.GOV.AU](http://WWW.IMMI.GOV.AU)**