

Moving down under

Introduction

The article deals with the opportunities and difficulties involved when moving to another country and to another culture for work reasons. It specifically introduces vocabulary and phrases useful when talking about employment. There is also a country file which contains information about the people, economy, politics and general situation of New Zealand.

1 Warmer

Discuss these three questions in pairs or in small groups.

1. Have you ever spent time in another country for work purposes?
2. Would you consider moving to another country for work? Why/why not?
3. If you could move anywhere in the world for work purposes, where would you go and why?

2 Skimming for information

Underline all the words in the main article (not the country file) that you consider to be specific to Business English.

Example: In the sentence: *In Germany, my husband had been made redundant for the second time in three years,* you should underline the word redundant.

Moving down under

by Nerida Frost

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Four years ago Nerida Frost decided to move from Germany to New Zealand with her family. In this article she explains how their life has changed.

The four years since we moved to Auckland, New Zealand, have passed quickly. Yet at the same time, it often feels as if we've always lived here. We had been living in Munich for 15 years when a job offer convinced us to take our two children and move down under. In Germany, my husband had been made redundant for the second time in three years. Unemployment was rising. The IT industry hadn't recovered from the dot.com crisis and lean management strategies were reducing middle-management positions. In addition, since the mid-1990s, it was standard practice to put older workers out to pasture. We were not optimistic about him finding another job.

When Navman, a New Zealand manufacturer of navigation and tracking systems, contacted my husband about a position that fitted his profile perfectly, we didn't think twice about moving to the other side of the world. Navman was a New Zealand success story. Like the New Zealand economy, it was booming. This was very encouraging after years of economic depression in Germany. It was also encouraging to see that, in this country desperate for skilled labour, age was not a factor.

We've never looked back. I now realize we had a huge portion of luck. We thought we were making an informed decision, whereas we actually knew very little about everyday life here. Having few expectations meant at least that we had fewer disappointments. Some friends, for example, mistakenly assumed that there would be less bureaucracy here than in Germany. And some South Africans expected the climate to be warmer!

We made good friends very quickly, which undoubtedly helped us to settle in so easily. Most of our friends are also new immigrants. Clearly, being a long, long way from home brings people together.

It has not all been smooth going. Both my husband and I have been made redundant since moving here. Luckily, we found it relatively easy to find new jobs in our fields. My husband is now working for a brand-new telco, and I am working for a publisher again.

Life here is so different from life in Europe. It is a great place for families, because it is very safe. Yet, at the same

time, children can still experience real adventure. Like most Aucklanders, for example, we are only minutes away from a beach where you can surf and sail. Also, because the population is so small, if you are good at something and work hard at it, you can achieve recognition and success more easily. There are many Kiwi entrepreneurs with rags-to-riches stories.

In New Zealand, one can escape many of the things one doesn't like about Europe, such as ageism. But one has to be prepared for other irritations, such as a certain amount of parochialism, particularly when dealing with public institutions. Ambitions to improve the system, much like trying to improve a husband or wife, will prove frustrating. It is far better to take New Zealand for what it is – a country of beautiful landscapes, huge spaces and warm-hearted people. Then you will be pleasantly surprised, again and again.

Did you know?

- Over the past 20 years, New Zealand has changed from being an agricultural economy to being an industrial, free-market, global economy.
- The economy fell into recession in 2008.
- Every New Zealander is descended from an immigrant. The Maoris arrived 600 years ago, followed in the 19th century by immigrants from the UK. Immigrants from the Pacific Islands started to come in the 1960s, and the 1980s saw many immigrants from Asia. New Zealand is now made up of people from over 145 different countries.

Nerida Frost, originally from Canada, lived in Germany for more than 20 years before moving to New Zealand. She works as an author and editor, primarily in children's educational publishing.

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Country file: New Zealand

GENERAL

Official name: New Zealand

Nationality: a New Zealander, a Kiwi (colloquial)

Capital: Wellington 381,900 (June 2008 est.)

Major cities: Auckland 1,313,200, Christchurch 382,200, Hamilton 166,100 (June 2008 est.)

Official languages: English (spoken by 98% of the population), Maori (4.3%), New Zealand Sign Language (0.6%)

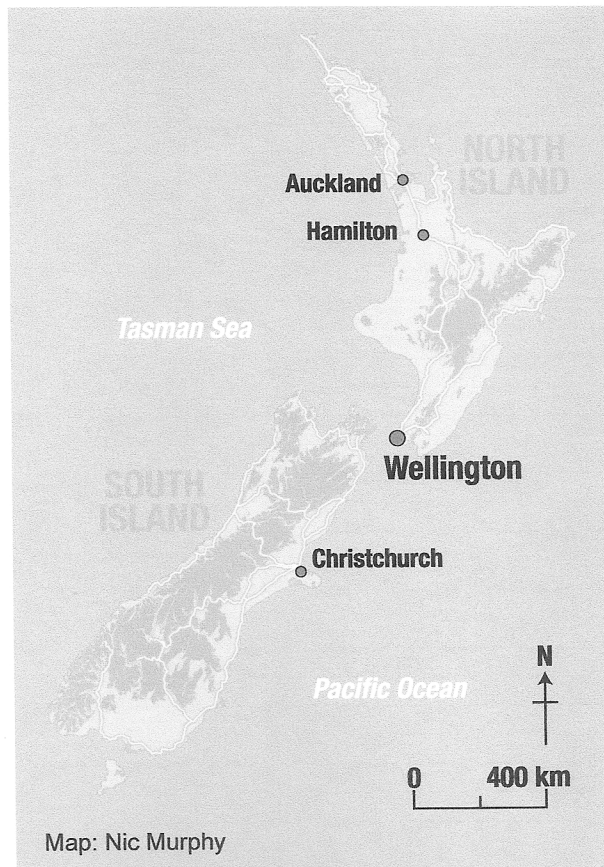
Country telephone code: +64

Time zone: New Zealand Standard Time (NZST) = Central European Time (CET) +10 hours

Currency: 1 New Zealand dollar = 100 cents (€1.00 = NZD2.23)

For general information:

www.immigration.govt.nz



Map: Nic Murphy

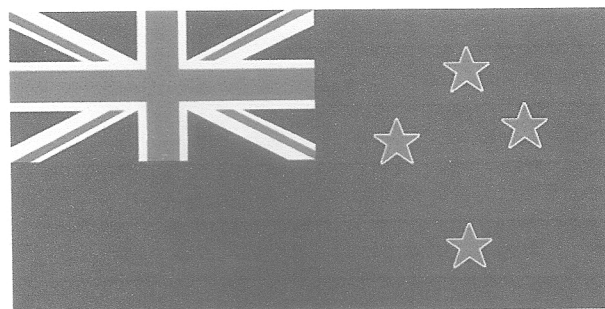
POLITICS

Head of state: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Governor-General Sir Anand Satyanand

Head of government: Prime Minister John Key, National Party (since November 2008)

Type of government: parliamentary democracy and member of the Commonwealth
Official government website:

<http://newzealand.govt.nz>



ECONOMY

GDP: US \$116.6 billion (2008 est. at PPP)

GDP per head: US \$27,900 (2008 est., at PPP)

GDP real annual growth: 0.2% (2008 est.)

Inflation (consumer prices): 4.3% (2008 est.)

Unemployment rate: 4% (2008 est.)

Import partners: Australia 20.7%, China 13.4%, US 9.7%, Japan 9.5%, Singapore 4.9%, Germany 4.7% (2007)

Export partners: Australia 22%, US 11.5%, Japan 9.2%, China 5.3%, UK 4.6% (2007)

PEOPLE

Population: 4,213,418 (2009 est.)

Population growth per year: 0.93% (2009 est.)

Population mix: European 69.8%, Maori 7.9%, Asian 5.7%, Pacific Islander 4.4% (2001 census)

Age structure: 0–14 years: 20.7%; 15–64 years: 66.5%; 65 years and over: 12.8% (2009 est.)

Main religions: Anglican 14.9%, Roman Catholic 12.4%, Presbyterian 10.9%, Methodist 2.9%, Pentecostal 1.7%, Baptist 1.3%, other Christian groups 9.4% (2001 census)

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3 Summarizing

Answer the questions to summarize the article.

1. Where did the author and her husband move from and where did they move to? Name the cities and the countries.
2. In which fields do Nerida and her husband work?
3. Which chain of events led the Frosts to decide to move to New Zealand?
4. What factors made settling into their new lives easy?
5. What factors made settling into their new lives difficult?
6. Which *-ism* has the author not experienced in NZ?
7. Which new *-ism* does she find annoying in NZ?
8. What advice does Nerida give to anyone who might be considering moving to NZ?

4 Language

Match the collocations to make useful Business English word pairs from the article. Then write a sentence of your own for at least five of the collocations.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| job | redundant |
| make | economy |
| rising | labour |
| middle-management | story |
| standard | offer |
| economic | positions |
| booming | institutions |
| skilled | practice |
| rags-to-riches | depression |
| public | unemployment |

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5 Writing

Read through the country file on New Zealand. Work alone or with other students and produce a similar file for your own country.

6 Presenting

Present your country file to the rest of your class.

