

THINKING OF MOVING TO AUSTRALIA?

There are plenty of options for healthcare professionals wanting to progress their career and experience a new lifestyle Down Under, writes *Katherine Van Greuning*

Many healthcare professionals have the opportunity to work in Australia and continue their career pathway whilst enjoying the enviable weather and balanced lifestyle Australia has to offer.

In most cases, in order to practice your profession you will need to hold the relevant license to practice with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

AHPRA is responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia on behalf of 14 National Health Practitioner boards in Australia, including registration of Australian practitioners and for those applicants holding overseas qualifications – these include doctors, registered nurses and midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dentists and pharmacists. For the full list of occupations visit www.ahpra.gov.au/national-boards.aspx.

GETTING ASSESSED

Depending on your occupation you may be assessed purely by documentary evidence and evidence of competency in English language ability or you may be given conditional/limited registration >>

requiring you to complete a period of competency-related supervised practice in Australia before being granted full registration by AHPRA after you have completed an agreed contract and achieved the learning outcomes. Or you may be required to sit an exam in Australia.

For example, occupational therapists go through a lengthy two-stage skills assessment process, initially a paper based 'desktop' assessment with the Occupational Therapy Council (OTC) followed by a period of practical supervised practice in Australia meeting agreed learning outcomes at three-monthly intervals prior to gaining full general registration with AHPRA.

Physiotherapists, assuming they have a relevant four-year degree in physiotherapy, a two-year master's degree or three-year PhD can apply via the Equivalence of Qualification Pathway to meet requirements to apply for registration to practice via AHPRA.

If you hold a three-year Physiotherapy degree you will need to apply via the Standard Pathway and undergo a written and clinical assessment with limited registration under supervision, prior to gaining full registration with AHPRA.

In the case of community workers although registration is not required to practice in Australia you will need a minimum of a relevant Diploma level qualification.

Many UK community workers have a degree in Health and Social care surpassing the minimum Australian standard skill level required to gain a positive skills assessment, which is essential when considering emigrating under the skilled visa pathway.

The Northern Territory (NT) and Tasmania are currently nominating community workers. It is worth noting that the whole of these three states are classed as regional areas.

Depending on your circumstances, your occupation, age, English language competency, and your chosen visa pathway, you may also need to have your skills assessed as comparable to the Australian standard of the same occupation, by the approved skill assessing authority in order to be eligible to be considered to apply for a skilled visa.

The authorised assessing bodies are listed next to your identified occupation



Anaesthetic technicians need to be licensed

on the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) website in the relevant occupation lists being either, the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MTSSL), the Short-term Skilled Occupation List (STOL) or the Regional Occupations List (ROL).

ANMAC (www.anmac.org.au), the skill assessing body for Registered Nurses

To find out who the skill assessing body is for your occupation visit the DHA website (www.border.gov.au).

SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Nurses in Australia typically earn a base salary between A\$60,00 and A\$100,000 per annum depending on their qualifications and level of experience. See

“DEPENDING ON YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU MAY NEED TO HAVE YOUR SKILLS ASSESSED”

now have three pathways to obtain a positive skills assessment, Full Assessment, Modified, and Modified Plus, depending if you are registered in Australia or New Zealand or registered outside Australia.

Those applicants looking to apply for permanent residency as an independent skilled migrant or wishing to be sponsored by an eligible family member living in a designated area; must have their occupation listed on the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MTSSL) or listed on the Short-term Skilled Occupation List (STOL), or the (ROL) list if they require state nomination to support a permanent residency or provisional residency visa application.

the table on page 8 for a guide to typical salaries.

The Australian government's Job Outlook website (joboutlook.gov.au) has very useful statistics about typical job salaries, as do some recruitment agencies, such as Hays (www.hays.com.au/salary-guide).

VISA OPTIONS

So you want to work in healthcare Down Under, what visa pathway should you take? Here is a brief rundown of the main visa types...

The Working Holiday temporary visa is available if you are aged between 18-30 years with no dependent children. If you are looking to work and travel, then this

temporary visa may suit your needs. You must be outside Australia to apply for this visa and hold an eligible UK passport. This visa is valid for 12 months from date of entry into Australia and is a multiple entry visa so you can leave and re-enter as you wish within the 12 months.

You can work for one employer for up to six months including agency work, but remember to have some holiday time too. If you undertake three months (88 days) of paid specified work in regional Australia and have evidence to support this, while you were the holder of your first working holiday visa and apply while still under 31 years of age, you can apply for a second working holiday visa. You can apply for this inside or outside of Australia.

For detailed explanations of accepted specified regional work visit the DHA website. Work demands and skill shortages fluctuate, as they do in any country and this has an impact on the opportunities available.

Health Care Australia (HCA), the leading nursing healthcare agency in Australia, with offices in London and locations throughout Australia, are well placed to offer qualified and experienced nurses a variety of Aussie work experiences. Visit www.healthcareaustralia.com.au or call 0207 861 8943 to speak to a nurse advisor.

HCA also offer permanent placement

“WORK DEMANDS AND SKILL SHORTAGES FLUCTUATE – THIS IMPACTS ON THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE”

opportunities for nurses and for doctors and other allied healthcare workers also. Whilst working in Australia on a WHV you may be fortunate to be offered sponsorship by an employer for either temporary or permanent residency.

The most common visa used to sponsor overseas workers to fill the employers temporary employment needs is the Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) Visa, (subclass 482) this has replaced the 457 visa.

Your occupation will need to be listed on either the MLTSSL or the STSOL list. This visa has three streams, a short term two-year stream which will not lead to permanent residency but has the option to renew the visa on shore as a once only

option and a medium term stream for up to four years with the capacity for visa renewal onshore and a permanent residence pathway after three years for those whose occupation is on the MLTSSL list.

You can be any age to apply for the TSS visa and will need a minimum of two years' work experience to qualify. However if you then want to transition to permanent residency and you are aged over 45 at this stage this will not be possible.

A labour agreement stream exists for employers with a separate negotiated agreement with the Department of Home Affairs. Some labour agreements may have an age exemption, and in this case you would need to discuss the details with the employer. You may be fortunate if you are highly experienced and specialized and the employer needs your expertise.

With visa changes taking place, often with little warning, it would be wise to seek the advice of a registered migration agent to assist you in this complex area of immigration law. It is dependent on you being employed in the nominated position.

Some employers may offer to sponsor you for permanent residency once you have worked for the qualifying period, as stated above, and provided you meet all

Radiologists continue to be in demand in Australia



located in Regional Australia, under the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) subclass 187.

This is provided you are under 45 years of age at the time of application if applying under the Direct Entry stream or under the Temporary Residence Transition stream for those who hold a TSS visa. A labour agreement also exists with some healthcare employers. A Registered Migration Agent will be able to advise you about which visa stream applies to you.

STATE NOMINATION

For those applicants with a point's score of 50 or 55 whose occupation is listed in the STOL, applying for State Nomination is a way to boost your point score to at least 60 points, enabling you to be eligible for a skilled visa.

State and territory governments have their own state migration plans and update their list of occupations in demand in their particular state as their needs change. They also have their own criteria regarding the level of work experience and/or language competency required.

If five points are required the visa will generally be offered for permanent residency and if 10 points are required, the visa will be a provisional regional skilled visa valid for four years with a >>>

pathway to permanent residency after a qualifying period of two years, provided you and any accompanying family members have met all other criteria at the time of application for the permanent visa.

Hiring the services of a registered migration agent with experience in the healthcare sector at the outset may save you a lot of stress and heartache. You need to ensure that you are fully aware of meeting the visa conditions if securing a permanent visa is your end goal.

189 SKILLED INDEPENDENT PERMANENT VISA

For those applicants with a points score of 60 or more, whose occupation is listed in the MLTSSL list and who also meet all other eligibility criteria, you may be able to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI)

through Skill Select and wait for an invitation to apply for a Skilled Independent Visa from the DHA. This gives you free choice as to where you live and work Australia wide.

Those with the highest scores will be invited before others.

It is worth keeping a close eye on the invitation rounds in Skill Select to see the current number of invites being issued and the current point score being selected as currently invitations are being received by applicants with scores of 70 and above.

With the exception of the first WHV you can be in or outside Australia when you apply. If you are in Australia, you must hold a valid qualifying visa. All applicants will need to meet health and character requirements.

If you follow the correct pathway you can enjoy all the best Australia has to offer and continue to progress your chosen career within a great work-life balance. This, after all, is one of the major reasons cited by numerous applicants as to why they choose to relocate to Australia. 🇺🇸



■ Katherine Van Greuning is an Australian Registered Migration agent, a UK Registered Nurse and the director of getme2oz.com. For more information and to discuss your specific visa options call 01227 732434. You can also e-mail katherine@getme2oz.com or visit www.getme2oz.com.

NURSING PAY GUIDE

See below for a rough guide of the average salaries in Australia's states and territories...

Role	Level	State							
		NSW (A\$)	VIC (A\$)	QLD (A\$)	SA (A\$)	WA (A\$)	TAS (A\$)	ACT (A\$)	NT (A\$)
Assistant in Nursing	Entry	42,681	n/a	50,955	47,322	n/a	48,997	47,545	n/a
	Max	46,831	n/a	55,787	48,723	n/a	53,838	49,060	n/a
Enrolled Nurse	Entry	52,380	46,972	55,137	51,242	51,411	53,817	55,944	55,766
	Max	59,956	62,275	63,932	61,043	61,219	59,600	60,728	63,039
Registered Nurse/Midwife	Entry	59,394	53,783	61,195	59,923	63,770	59,600	61,683	63,039
	Max	83,309	71,198	82,158	81,763	83,916	76,249	82,398	83,401
Clinical Nurse/ Midwives	Entry	86,793	73,238	83,564	69,163	86,555	83,839	85,659	86,882
	Max	93,236	86,470	89,481	88,484	91,962	86,689	90,789	92,838
Nurse Practitioner	Entry	114,997	98,659	115,531	105,854	107,279	101,586	118,893	106,466
	Max	121,103	98,659	118,404	110,325	114,277	124,434	118,893	110,934
Nurse Unit Manger	Entry	104,629	90,734	102,609	100,245	103,943	94,866	98,207	106,466
	Max	112,538	113,578	111,399	110,325	117,946	101,586	126,755	121,721
Director of Nursing	Max	168,214	139,516	193,513	169,127	158,431	155,095	167,224	146,376

Source: Health Times