

ODP's seeking work in Western Australia as Anaesthesia Technicians

I have compiled this information sheet as an aid to ODPs wanting to work in Western Australia. It is based on my experience and information I believe to be factual and true, but I take no responsibility if it is found to be inaccurate in any way.

I emigrated to WA, in the distant past, from London in 1994. Prior to my departure I investigated the many routes available to getting over here to work, and made it with no visa problems. The situation in recent years has been that we could offer no more than 457 visas, which only allowed holders the right to stay for a maximum of eight years. Thankfully, this has now changed and permanent residency (PR) can be applied for through hospital sponsorship.

Perth is a very small city. For example, at a stretch, I could probably name 50% of the Anaesthetic Technician working in the major teaching hospitals in Perth. This is something I would have not found possible in my home city, London.

The work is different in many ways, and varies greatly in the responsibility and roles performed from hospital to hospital. Generally the Anaesthesia Technicians are managed by a Clinical Nurse (Anaesthetics), Senior Anaesthesia Technician or Manager, who answers directly to the Head of Department (Anaesthesia). Nursing grades come under the control of the Theatre Manager as in the UK.

In many ways the Anaesthesia Technician does not have the responsibilities of an ODP. Alternatively, there are many roles performed by the AT not in the ODP remit in the UK. For example, at RPH duties include, Cell Salvage, TEG, purity checking of hospital medical gas supply outlets, to name but a few.

So I suppose my point is, if you think you are coming to Australia to be an ODP, don't bother. If you are willing to accept a change of role, with its own rewards, in a country which is as near paradise as most of us will see, pack your bags. Come to Australia because you want to live in Australia, and be grateful your qualification can immediately earn you a good living as an Anaesthesia Technician. Don't be a whinging Pomm, there are enough of those already. ODPs are well accepted here, and if you are patient, your "good" name gets around town and decent work is easy to find.

Private health insurance is more affordable in Australia than the UK. Private medicine is abundant, and there are opportunities to do extra casual work in the many private hospitals, day surgeries and surgi-centres if you are interested. As a rule, private hospitals pay less than government hospitals - sometimes substantially less.

Agency work is available, though not the volume as in the UK, but can keep you in full-time work all the same. They do not offer the perks, annual leave, sick pay as many of the UK agencies. "Google" ASEPS, one of the larger agencies, who also sponsor ODPs, for more information.

Pay goes further than in the UK. Houses are more affordable and fuel is cheaper, but both as everywhere are on the rise.

Larger Hospitals

Royal Perth Hospital is one of the largest teaching hospitals in the state, employing 32 Anaesthesia Technicians of various grades. Positions come up infrequently and are well sought after. Having said that, there is no insider dealing and the best applicant gets the job. Vacancies are becoming more frequent due to baby boomer retirements. 15 Theatres. RPH specialties include:

- State MH unit
- State major trauma hospital
- Usual other specialties except gynaecology and obstetrics

Telephone: (08) 9224 1026

Contact: Roy Wyatt – Anaesthesia Technician Manager.

Email: roy.wyatt@health.wa.gov.au

GPO Box X2213, Perth WA 6847

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital another large teaching hospital in WA, employing approximately 26 Technicians. 12 Theatres. SCGH Specialties include:

- Cardiac surgery
- Neuro surgery
- General
- Orthopaedics
- State interventional radiology
- State Dental unit
- State Liver transplant unit
- Usual other specialties except obstetrics and gynaecology

Telephone: (08) 9346 9999

Princess Margaret Hospital is the state paediatric hospital with about 15 Technicians. 6 Theatres. New Perth Children's Hospital being built opening 2016. Specialties include:

- All types of surgery including cardiac, burns, and neurosurgery

Senior Technician

Paul Davies (08) 9340 8480

King Edward Hospital is the state women and neonate hospital with 12 Technicians/Anaesthetic Nurses employed. 5 Theatres. Specialties include:

- Obstetrics

- All aspects of women's surgery including major oncology
- Paediatric dental

Telephone: (08) 9340 2222

Contact: Linda Long (Clinical Nurse)

Email: linda.long@health.wa.gov.au

Address: Bagot Street, Subiaco WA 6008

Armadale is a smaller hospital approximately twenty minutes drive south from Perth.

Telephone: (08) 9391 2000

Contact Stuart Marsden (Senior Technician)

Email: stuart.marsden.@health.wa.gov.au

Address: Armadale Health Service, PO Box 460 Armadale 6992

Fiona Stanley Hospital is the newest hospital in Perth

Specialties include:

- Heart/Lung transplant centre
- Adult burns
- Most other usual general hospital specialties including obstetrics

Senior Technician Brenda Borton (08) 6152 6395, M:0421 877 850

The main private hospital group is St John of God (SJOG) who run two large hospitals in Perth. There are numerous smaller hospitals and Surgicentres in and around Perth. SJOG are also managing the next hospital to open in town, Midland, which should be opening later in the year.

Royal Perth is the best of course, but then again I might be biased.

Web

sites

All hospitals have associated websites which may be of interest to you.

<http://www.rph.wa.gov.au>

Association of Operating Theatre Practitioners (AOTP) working out of WA

<http://www.aotp.org.au/aotp>

Australasian Society of Paramedical Officers (ASAPO) currently the national body working out of the eastern states

<http://www.asapo.org.au>

Fiona Stanley Hospital (Under construction – completion 2013)

<http://www.fionastanley.health.wa.gov.au/about/index.cfm>

Myth

Contrary to what some believe there is no mandatory registration required to

work in Australia as an Anaesthesia Technician. The national and state professional bodies are currently working towards this end, but this will definitely not occur before 2018.

Life is a beach.

Australia –all you need to know

The following is by Douglas Adams of "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" fame. It is an amazing insight into Australia - prepare yourself!

Australia is a very confusing place, taking up a large amount of the bottom half of the planet. It is recognizable from orbit because of many unusual features, including what at first looks like an enormous bite taken out of its southern edge; a wall of sheer cliffs which plunge deep into the girding sea. Geologists assure us that this is simply an accident of geomorphology and plate tectonics, but they still call it the "Great Australian Bight" proving that not only are they covering up a more frightening theory but they can't spell either!

The first of the confusing things about Australia is the status of the place. Where other landmasses and sovereign lands are classified as either continent, island, or country, Australia is considered all three. Typically, it is unique in this.

The second confusing thing about Australia is the animals. They can be divided into three categories: Poisonous, Odd, and Sheep. It is true that of the 10 most poisonous arachnids on the planet, Australia has 9 of them. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that of the 9 most poisonous arachnids, Australia has all of them. However there are curiously few snakes, possible because the spiders have killed them all.

But even the spiders won't go near the sea. Any visitors should be careful to check inside boots (before putting them on), under toilet seats (before sitting down) and generally everywhere else. A stick is very useful for this task.

At this point, we would like to mention the Platypus - estranged relative of the mammal, which has a duck-bill, otter's tail, webbed feet, lays eggs, detects its aquatic prey in the same way as the electric eel and has venomous barbs attached to its hind legs, thus combining all 'typical' Australian attributes into a single improbable creature.

The last confusing thing about Australia is the inhabitants.

First, a short history:

Sometime around 40,000 years ago, some people arrived in boats from the north (actually Indonesians from Medan - so Australia really belongs to Indonesia). They ate all the available food, and a lot of them died. The ones who survived learned respect for the balance of nature, man's proper place in the scheme of things and spiders. They settled in and spent a lot of the intervening time making up strange stories.

Then, around 200 years ago, Europeans arrived in boats from the north. More accurately, European convicts were sent, with a few deranged and stupid people in charge. They tried to plant their crops in Autumn (failing to take account of the reversal of the seasons when moving from the top half of the planet to the bottom), ate all their food, and a lot of them died.

About then the sheep arrived, and have been treasured ever since. It is interesting to note here that the Europeans always consider themselves vastly superior to any other race they encounter, since they can lie, cheat, steal, and litigate (marks of a civilised culture they say) - whereas all the Aborigines can do is happily survive being left in the middle of a vast red-hot desert, equipped with a stick.

Eventually, the new lot of people stopped being Europeans on Extended Holiday and became Australians. The changes are subtle, but deep, caused by the mind-stretching expanses of nothingness and eerie quiet, where a person can sit perfectly still and look deep inside themselves to the core of their essence, their reasons for being, and the necessity of checking inside your boots every morning for fatal surprises. They also picked up the most finely tuned sense of irony in the world, and the Aboriginal gift for making up stories. Be warned.

There is also the matter of the beaches. Australian beaches are simply the nicest and best in the entire world. Although anyone actually venturing into the sea will have to contend with sharks, stinging jellyfish, stonefish (a fish which sits on the bottom of the sea, pretends to be a rock and has venomous barbs sticking out of its back that will kill just from the pain) and surfboarders.

However, watching a beach sunset is worth the risk. As a result of all this hardship, dirt, thirst and wombats, you would expect Australians to be a dour lot. Instead, they are genial, jolly, cheerful and always willing to share a kind word with a stranger.

Faced with insurmountable odds and impossible problems, they smile disarmingly and look for a stick. Major engineering feats have been performed with sheets of corrugated iron, string, and mud. Alone of all the races on earth, they seem to be free from the 'Grass is Greener on the other side of the fence' syndrome, and roundly proclaim that Australia is, in fact, the other side of that fence. They call the land "Oz", "Godzone" (a verbal contraction of "God's Own Country") and "Best bloody place on earth, bar none, strewth." The irritating thing about this is they may be right.

There are some traps for the unsuspecting traveller, though. Do not, under any circumstances, suggest that the beer is imperfect, unless you are comparing it to another kind of Australian beer. Do not wear a Hawaiian shirt.

Religion and Politics are fairly safe topics of conversation, (Australians don't care too much about either) but Sport is a minefield. The only correct answer to "So, howdya' like our country, eh?" is "Best (insert your own regional swear word here) country in the world!". It is very likely that, on arriving, some cheerful Australians will 'adopt' you on your first night, and take you to a pub where Australian Beer is served.

Despite the obvious danger, do not refuse. It is a form of initiation rite. You will wake up late the next day with an astonishing hangover, a foul taste in your mouth, and wearing strange clothes. Your hosts will usually make sure you get home, and waive off any legal difficulties with "It's his first time in Australia, so we took him to the pub", to which the policeman will sagely nod and close his notebook. Be sure to tell the story of these events to every other Australian you encounter, adding new embellishments at every stage and noting how strong the beer was. Thus you will be accepted into this unique culture.

Most Australians are now urban dwellers, having discovered the primary use of electricity, which is air-conditioning and refrigerators.

Typical Australian sayings:-

*"G'Day!"

* "She'll be right mate."

Tips to Surviving Australia:

* Don't ever put your hand down a hole for any reason WHATSOEVER.

* The beer is stronger than you think, regardless of how strong you think it is.

* Always carry a stick.

* Air-conditioning is imperative.

* Do not attempt to use Australian slang, unless you are a trained linguist and extremely good in a fist-fight.

* Wear thick socks.

* Take good maps. Stopping to ask directions only works when there are people nearby.

* If you leave the urban areas, carry several litres of water with you at all times, or you will die.

* Even in the most embellished stories told by Australians, there is always a core of truth that it is unwise to ignore.

Learn more about Perth at:

http://www.thisperthlife.com/2006/07/finding_short_t.html