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State of the nation

Welcome to the December edition of the Catalyst newsletter and the state of the nation. With only a few days till Christmas I'm sure many of you are being dragged from shop to shop searching for those last elusive presents or if you're lucky, making the most of Christmas cheer down the pub with clients and colleagues! We're winding down to the Christmas break but I still haven't become accustomed to the fact that it is the summer holidays!

Schools are closing throughout the country and the pupils won't return until the start of February. Most clients we're talking to are looking forward to a three or four week holiday after a very tough year. One client has already stated he's unlikely to get much chance for a break in 2013 as Christchurch kicks off and I don't think he's alone; certainly we at Catalyst are anticipating a very busy year ahead.

Of course we've experienced the manic last few working weeks of the year as clients try to tie up loose ends and even now projects for 2013 are being awarded resulting in resourcing issues! The result has been a lot of running around and some last minute interviews but more importantly it's given us a good indication of what's ahead when we return from the Christmas break.

In the civil sector one client won 6 projects this week, the smallest valued at \$5 million, and more interestingly all 6 were outside of Christchurch and not connected with the earthquake recovery. Subsequently they're looking for a significant number of site/project engineers, site managers, project managers and senior project managers with water, road and general civil experience for the first quarter of next year. The construction sector is also making the right noises in the run up to the break with requirements for design managers, team leaders and project managers to take on new projects starting in the New Year (primarily Christchurch but a few roles now in Auckland). Andy is working closely with a scaffolding client at the moment that has a significant need for scaffolders and senior scaffolders in Christchurch. The roles are for the New Year and the workload down there is increasing dramatically as the rebuild starts to take shape.

Sam has been busy with the PQS companies as the demand for Intermediate and Senior PQS or construction experienced Quantity Surveyors continues to rise. The roles are in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Mireille's requirements remain the same, geotechnical engineers and intermediate/senior structural engineers with seismic experience. However, with new clients getting in touch the demand is higher than ever with vacancies now across the country so please get in touch to discuss your options.

It's fair to say that things are looking a lot brighter as we end 2012 and go into 2013. We still anticipate January being a little slow with so many clients on leave but we're hoping we're wrong! If any of the roles I've mentioned appeal to you, or if you're looking at making a trip over here, please get in touch with us. Due to the time difference our window for calls with UK candidates is still fairly small so please be patient if we don't ring you back ASAP but do keep pestering us and we'll get there. We'll be keeping an eye on things over the break and the blog will be updated regularly in preparation for 2013. It just leaves me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the team at Catalyst and we look forward to working with you in 2013.

Quality of living:

Top 5 cities by region:

Americas:

(5th) Vancouver (23rd) Montreal
(14th) Ottawa (28th) Honolulu
(15th) Toronto

Asia-Pacific:

(3rd) Auckland (17th) Melbourne
(10th) Sydney (21st) Perth
(13th) Wellington

Europe:

(1st) Vienna (6th) Düsseldorf
(2nd) Zurich (7th) Frankfurt
(4th) Munich

Middle East & Africa:

(73rd) Dubai (89th) Cape Town
(78th) Abu Dhabi (94th) Johannesburg
(82nd) Port Louis

Top 5 cities: Quality of Living:

(1st) Vienna, Austria
(2nd) Zurich, Switzerland
(3rd) Auckland, New Zealand
(4th) Munich, Germany
(5th) Vancouver, Canada

Quality of Living: Other cities:

(35th) Dublin, Ireland
(38th) London, UK
(44th) Tokyo
(44th) New York, USA
(221st – last) Baghdad, Iraq

Top 5 cities: Infrastructure:

(1st) Singapore, Singapore
(2nd) Frankfurt, Germany
(3rd) Munich, Germany
(4th) Copenhagen, Denmark
(5th) Düsseldorf, Germany

Cost of living:

Top 5 cities: Cost of Living:

(1st) Tokyo, Japan
(2nd) Luanda, Angola
(3rd) Osaka, Japan
(4th) Moscow, Russia
(5th) Geneva, Switzerland

Cost of Living: Other Cities:

(18th) London, UK
(72nd) Dublin, Ireland
(56th) Auckland, New Zealand
(74th) Wellington
(214th- least expensive) Karachi, Pakistan

Americas:

(12th) São Paulo, Brazil
(13th) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
(29th) Caracas, Venezuela
(45th) Brasília, Brazil
(99th) Havana, Cuba

Asia-Pacific:

(1st) Tokyo, Japan
(3rd) Osaka, Japan
(6th) Singapore, Singapore
(9th) Hong Kong, Hong Kong
(10th) Nagoya, Japan

Europe:

(4th) Moscow, Russia
(5th) Geneva, Switzerland
(6th) Zurich, Switzerland
(14th) Bern, Switzerland
(18th) Oslo, Norway

Middle East & Africa

(2nd) Luanda, Angola
(8th) Ndjamena, Chad
(20th) Libreville, Gabon
(26th) Khartoum, Sudan
(31st) Tel Aviv, Israel



Quality of Living Survey Worldwide City Rankings 2012

People perceive many different things when they speak of quality of living. While everyone agrees that a high crime rate is undesirable and the air we breathe, the house, the environment we live in should be clean, there is great diversity in ideas about quality of living, thus reflecting the different use of the term and different understanding depending on age, gender, social position, etc. of the person.

Quality of Life is about a person's emotional state and personal life. One may live in the highest ranked city in terms of quality of living and still have a very bad quality of life because of unfortunate personal circumstances (illness, unemployment or loneliness, etc).

Indeed, definition of Quality of Life may differ according to levels of income, social status, health and/or weather conditions. For the purposes of the Mercer report, quality of living assesses the degree to which expatriates enjoy the potential standard of living in the host location. Quality of living also reflects the interaction of political, socio-economic and environmental factors in the host location.

Mercer's annual quality of living city rankings for 2012 have just been released and are based on Mercer's Quality of Living Survey and incorporates over 460 locations globally.

Vienna remains at number 1, with Auckland jumping to 3rd place only being pipped to the post by last year's number 2; Zurich. Auckland being the highest ranking city for quality of living in the Asia-Pacific Region. Wellington came in at 13th.

Australian cities featuring in the top 50 rankings are as follows:

Sydney (10th), Melbourne (17th), Perth (21st), Canberra (26th), Adelaide (29th), Brisbane (37th)

London came in at 38th and is the only UK city to feature in the top 50, while Honolulu is the highest ranking city in the US at 28th.

Article source:

Mercer 2012 Quality of Living survey highlights – Global
<http://www.mercer.com/qualityofliving>

Cost of Living Survey Worldwide City Rankings 2012

The survey covers 214 cities across five continents and measures the comparative cost of over 200 items in each location, including housing, transport, food, clothing, household goods and entertainment. It is the world's most comprehensive cost of living survey and is used to help multinational companies and governments determine compensation allowance for their expatriate employees.

New York is used as the base city for the index and all cities are compared against New York. Currency movements are measured against the US dollar. The cost of housing – often the biggest expense for expats - plays an important part in determining where cities are ranked.

Natalie Constantin-Métral (Principal at Mercer) is responsible for compiling the ranking each year. She commented: "When compared to New York, our benchmark city, most European cities have witnessed a decline in cost of living. Some exceptions exist where accommodation prices have increased or additional VAT taxes have pushed the cost of living up" furthermore "cities in Australia and New Zealand witnessed some

of the biggest jumps, as their currencies strengthened significantly against the US dollar."

Auckland and Wellington having risen significantly in terms of their positions; both jumping up 62 places to 56th and 74th respectively, while Australia now has 3 cities (Sydney (11th), Melbourne (15th), and Perth (19th)) in the top 20 most expensive cities to live, with a further 3 cities featuring in the top 30 (Canberra (23rd), Brisbane (24th) and Adelaide (27th)).

Article source: Mercer 2012 Cost of Living survey highlights - Global
<http://www.mercer.com/costofliving>



GBPensions

UK pension transfer specialists

Why should you consider transferring a UK pension scheme to an NZ pension scheme?

UK legislation dictates how much of your accumulated UK fund(s) can be withdrawn and when. Furthermore, all pension benefits are taxable with up to 55% tax levied in the event of death. In contrast, NZ schemes can pay out larger lump sums (up to 100%) with no tax liability on pension or death benefits!

How is it possible to transfer?

In 2006 HMRC in the UK introduced the Qualifying Recognised Overseas Pension Scheme (QROPS) regime. If an overseas pension scheme satisfies certain criteria, HMRC can acknowledge it as a QROPS, allowing it to legitimately receive transferred funds from UK pension schemes.

Who can benefit?

Almost anyone with a UK pension scheme can transfer to a QROPS, but the greatest advantages are available to those who are also non UK tax resident (at pre or post retirement age).

Which QROPS should I transfer to?

There are numerous different products on the market, each with different criteria to compare, such as investment selection and performance, exit fees, foreign exchange facilities, charges, financial strength etc.

When is a good time to transfer?

Because the transfer process can take over a year to complete, it is advisable to determine the options as quickly as possible, even if you take no action initially. The main reasons for this are;

- 1) Recent NZ Inland Revenue proposals imply that UK pension schemes not transferred within four years of arriving in NZ may generate subsequent tax consequences in the future.

- 2) If, as has happened in the past, HMRC decide to change the QROPS rules at very short notice, there may not be enough time to transfer and benefit from current, beneficial opportunities.

- 3) Delaying a transfer due to the exchange rate is a flawed rationale as it is possible to hold funds in Sterling within some NZ schemes indefinitely, ready to convert at very short notice.

What about GBPensions?

GBPensions are the only truly independent (and British) UK Pension Transfer Specialists in NZ, with relevant qualifications to operate under the regulatory regimes of both the UK and NZ. We have no allegiance to any particular product provider enabling us to access the entire market and provide completely impartial advice to clients.



Tony Chamberlain

Principal

T (ex-NZ): +64 (0)9 414 2089

T (NZ): 0800 (GBP NZD) / 0800 427 693

E: transfers@gbpensions.co.nz

W: www.gbpensions.co.nz

A Disclosure Statement is available without charge or obligation.



Craig Cooley

Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: URS

Craig first made contact with Catalyst in September of 2010 – at which stage he was at the very early stages of researching a potential move. Encouraged by the conversation held with Andrew Hopkins; Craig and his partner Sarah stepped up their research and came to the informed conclusion that a move to New Zealand is what they wanted to achieve. They were so committed to making a move happen that they chose to go down the EOI (expression of interest) path to go about obtaining (and obtained) residency visas ahead of any interviews. In June of this year, Craig and Sarah visited New Zealand to activate their visas and hopefully to attend face to face interviews with potential employers. Craig was made an offer to join URS in the capacity of Wellington Branch Manager; which he accepted. Craig returned to the UK to complete his notice period before starting his new role on the 17th of September 2012.

What inspired you to consider moving with your family to New Zealand?

When looking at an international move we considered the 'big three' Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It was the outdoor lifestyle combined with the easy going laid back approach of the kiwis that started us looking at New Zealand and from that point on the more we found out the more we wanted to move.

Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

Very much so. Everything we had read, watched and talked to people about has been realised as we expected – if not more so.

How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

The weather, whilst not being that much different to the UK in temperature terms, is far more consistent providing confidence to go out more. The beaches are within easy reach – closer and significantly less traffic – and are combined with stunning views. Overall we are more relaxed, spend more time outdoors and more importantly feel far better for the experience. Evenings are now available to do something with and weekends now seem to last a lot longer than they did in the UK, fitting far more in without ever feeling as though we are rushing to achieve things.

What one thing would you have done differently?

Nothing, without the ability to change economics! It would have been nice to have spent a month (or three) being able to explore the country before starting work, however, there are plenty of holidays to do that in the future.

What one thing do you wish you had known about before moving?

We had looked into living in New Zealand in depth and there was nothing that took us by surprise. The only thing we wished we had known before moving is how we would have felt being here. Having known that we would have been looking to make the move far sooner than we did.

What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

Approach the move with an open and inquisitive mind. There is an abundance of information on the internet, a surprising amount of people who have spent time in NZ or know people who live there. Do your homework and make sure it is the right fit – if you do you will not look back.

Looking back with hindsight, do think you have made the right move for your family?

Very much so. The cleaner, outdoor lifestyle, friendly easy going people and the options to be on the beach one day and skiing the next are fantastic.

Useful Facts:

1st Contact to arrival	741 days
1st Interview to offer	1 day
Offer to arrival	81 days
Time since arrival	81 days

The Catalyst Team



Andy Hopkins

ahopkins@catalystjobs.co.nz



Phil Ponder

pponder@catalystjobs.co.nz



Mireille Verdonkschot

mverdon@catalystjobs.co.nz



Fran Stevenson

fstevenson@catalystrecruitment.co.nz



Sam Phillips

sphillips@catalystrecruitment.co.nz

Address:

PO Box 17405
Green Lane
Auckland 1546

Level 2
642 Great South Road
Ellerslie
Auckland 1051

Phone:

+64 9 307 6111

UK freephone:

0808 234 3587

Fax:

+64 9 307 6110

Website:

www.catalystjobs.co.nz

Are you considering a trip to NZ?

We anticipate a big lift in recruitment activity in 2013 as the rebuild of Christchurch really gets under way and the rest of New Zealand starts to get busier. A lot of recruitment will take place via telephone and Skype but if you're planning a visit to New Zealand we want to talk to you!

Visiting isn't a must but if your circumstances allow you to visit for interviews and/or a holiday, please let us know. If you simply turn up and call us a couple of days after you've been here, it's unlikely we'll be able to get anything arranged for you so we need to hear from you in advance. A visit might have to fit in with your holiday entitlement (if you are currently working) but our clients have told us that from March/April 2013 onwards recruitment will increase. We've had experience of people coming on holiday; for weddings; to visit family or simply to come and check the place out and see which city might be most suitable to live in.

We've worked with a number of candidates in this way and have an 87% success rate in securing jobs for them (we are sure this figure will rise next year as the Rebuild gains momentum and more jobs are available). We are not suggesting that this is a definitive course of action that everyone must take to secure work here in NZ; there is an element of risk involved and no guarantee whatsoever that you will find work or even get interviews, but it will increase your chances.

Some candidates have neglected to inform us that they are coming over until they arrive and as a result it has

been very difficult to help them at such short notice. This may sound obvious but we need at least 2 weeks notice to contact companies and inform them of people's plans and movements. We will not make any false promises and cannot guarantee to find work for you as each company we recruit for has their own priorities and requirements, but we can assist those who are fully prepared and have fully researched a move to NZ and are planning a visit.

If a visit in 2013 is an option for you, or at this stage you just want to know more, then get in touch and we'll talk through the process