



Christchurch

this issue

State of the nation **P.1**

Auckland the growth giant **P.3**

Derek McDermott: case study on moving to NZ **P.4**

So you've got the job?! **P.5**

State of the nation

Happy New Year and welcome to the first State of the Nation of 2013, a year which is surely poised to be a busy one with the demolition phase of the Christchurch Rebuild coming to an end later next month and which will see a surge in recruitment across all sectors.

The Christmas and January period is an exceptionally quiet time of year in New Zealand, where in essence it is standard practice for companies to enjoy a combined Christmas and summer break. Doors close for business a day or so before Christmas and open again at the start of the second week of January. Even though the doors are reopened, it is usually skeleton staff, with most people with children continuing on leave for another week or two as this is also the 6 week – end of school year break. In later January and early February, those without school aged children disappear off for a break once the kids are back – taking advantage of the ‘bank holidays’. Talk about a slow start to the year!!

So seeing as nothing has happened over the last month – it has provided the Catalyst team with a great opportunity to recharge our batteries for what will be a very, very busy year. Therefore we thought that we would tell you how people living in New Zealand spend their Christmas break to give you something to look forward to for next year?

Andy:

Having just moved to a 2.5 acre lifestyle block in August – my daily routine has changed somewhat. There are not too many major cities in the world where you can live 30kms from the city centre on 2.5 acres and it remains cheaper than living in most parts of the city. The only complication is the commute. The morning is easy enough, but I didn't fancy a 50 minute drive home in the afternoons at 4:30 or 5pm. Therefore – I am up at 5:30am

and leave 20 minutes later. At this time of day – the 28 minute commute is filled with news and sports news on the radio – by that time I arrive. Leaving for home at 3:30pm makes for a 40 minute return trip and I am home just after 4pm to see the kids. The rider is of course that I need to be in bed by 9pm!

So my Christmas break involved building stuff on the property including 8 large wicking beds (which are brilliant), 3 greenhouses, deer fences, sandpits, swings and climbing frames filled in with plenty of trips to the school pool in the afternoons to avoid the heat. The local country school of 220 (which my daughter attends) has an outdoor pool to which you can gain access by buying a key for the year for \$100. Suffice to say – we had a fantastic summer break and my commute to work is a far cry from my old commute from Edgbaston to Wolverhampton which was at best one hour of mayhem.

Phil:

As Andy mentions above that Christmas and the New Year are traditionally quiet times in New Zealand and so it's a great time to take a vacation. This year I did just that but rather than enjoy the sun I took my family back to the UK to catch up with friends and relatives. I know many of you will think me bonkers for leaving a NZ summer for a UK winter but it was the first time we'd been back in four years and I was looking forward to a traditional Christmas! It was the first chance for my two year old daughter to meet her uncles, aunties and cousins but



State of the nation – article continued from page 1

more importantly her first exposure to snow! We didn't get a white Christmas but a week before we were due to come back the snow fell and she enjoyed hours of fun making snowmen and snow angels. It was a fantastic holiday and we all really enjoyed ourselves but it has been nice to get back to the sunshine in Auckland!

Mireille:

Surprise, surprise, I went to my favourite Island in the South Pacific; Rarotonga and enjoyed a relaxing 3 week break. The weather was fantastic; on average 28 degree days (it rained mostly at night) with days spent swimming in the lagoon (which spans the circumference of the island) with no more than a handful of people around at any time, snorkelling, tiki-touring around the Island (a whole 33kms) on our scooter, indulging in wonderful local seafood and other culinary dishes, visiting our favourite bars, and hanging out with our local friends. Highlight of the trip including the most relaxing Christmas day we've ever had consisting of a traditional Island feast held on our friends back lawn overlooking the lagoon, whiling the day away enjoying fantastic local food dishes and plenty of beverages, playing petanque on their private beach and alternating between the pool and the lagoon to cool down when we felt like it. The stars in Rarotonga at night are just amazing! Bliss...

Fran:

Having spent the last three years enjoying Kiwi summers, this year I decided to do a bit of travelling and visited Thailand and Hong Kong.

Firstly if you want to visit Hong Kong, let me say 'welcome' in advance. Hong Kong being Asia's World

City has a whole bunch of interesting things for you to explore. Although I was there mainly to visit friends, I was fortunate enough to visit a number of very cool places including - the Giant Buddha on Lantau Island at the Po Lin Monastery (via cable car over the harbour); Ocean Park and Macau Island where I attended the Human Bodies and Titanic exhibitions. For me what was really spectacular was New Years Eve. Me and my friends hired out a private boat and watched the countdown and fireworks display from the harbour. I had such a fantastic time and would recommend it to everyone.

I also went to Phuket where I met up with an old friend. We spent a few days chilling in the pool at our Villa before Heading to HK.

3 weeks back in and it all feels like a distant memory.....

Sam:

With it being my wife's first proper Christmas back in NZ for 18 years, it was only natural that we spend it with her family in Hamilton. The roads were surprisingly busy on Christmas day, unlike in the UK. Spending my first Christmas in hot weather was a great contrast to the usual dreary and often wet Christmas days in the UK. Because it was hot I didn't miss the huge dinner, it's tradition here to have a glazed ham.

After three days in Hamilton we returned to our new home in Auckland, where we spent the next couple of weeks visiting the multitude of beaches around the city and further afield. Most are only a 15-20 minute drive away but it's a slightly longer trip further north to enjoy sweeping bays and surfable waves. The days we didn't go to the beach we spent in the garden tending to the vege patch!



Creating an accessible and high amenity city centre in Auckland will be critical.
Photo / Brett Phibbs

Auckland the growth giant

Three to four people will arrive in Auckland every hour, based on the next 30 years' population projections.

Auckland Council chief economist Geoff Cooper says the city's growth is far outstripping the rest of New Zealand.

"Auckland will add a person to its population every 19 minutes. This compares to one person every two hours for Christchurch and one person every 2.5 hours for Wellington," he says.

With that rate of growth will come big challenges, especially on infrastructure, particularly tunnels, tarmac and bridges.

As the only chief economist employed by a territorial authority in New Zealand, Cooper says he is in a unique position, able to provide a level of data beyond many other councils' resources.

Auckland is a powerhouse for the national economy, Cooper says, and average labour productivity for firms in the CBD is 139 per cent higher than outside the Auckland region, according to a Motu study.

"This shows just how important the central city is, not just for Auckland, but for New Zealand as a whole.

"Auckland firms are prepared to pay a high rental premium because of these returns. Creating an accessible and high-amenity city centre will be critical in allowing more firms to take advantage of these returns and generate a high performing business district," he says.

In October, he began producing the new four-page Auckland Economic Quarterly, giving a comprehensive update of the city's economy, an economic scorecard

including job growth, migration, retail and housing sales and other vital statistics.

That inaugural issue carried a guest editorial by NZIER principal economist Shamubeel Eaqub on the effects of the Christchurch earthquakes on the city's economy, which examined migration, skills injection and construction sector changes.

Eaqub found a mixed bag of forces, saying the net impact of changes was still unclear.

The second quarterly overview will be published this month.

Cooper trumpeted the strength of cities generally in his first issue.

"As Harvard professor and urban economist Edward Glaeser notes, 'despite the technological breakthroughs that have caused the death of distance, it turns out the world isn't flat, it's paved. The city has triumphed'," Cooper wrote.

The Auckland economy grew by 2.1 per cent in the past 12 months.

"While this is not particularly glamorous in its own right - Auckland's 10-year average is 2.5 per cent - against the backdrop of a European sovereign debt crisis, a double-dip recession for Britain, stuttering growth for Germany and a reduced growth outlook for China, it looks rather more attractive," Cooper said.

Source: The New Zealand Herald, Anne Gibson

“...the people are warm and friendly, the weather is great in summer and the work environment is relaxed and team focused.”

Derek McDermott

Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: Macdow

Derek made contact with Catalyst regarding his desire to be involved in the rebuild of Christchurch. The market in Ireland was on the decline and Derek was keen to further develop his career as a contractor and saw Christchurch as the ideal environment to do so. Determined to make a move happen, Derek had already secured a working holiday visa so that when the time was right he was able to move quickly. Derek interviewed with Macdow for a position in Christchurch on June 11th and was made a job offer the following day - which he accepted. Derek started in his role as Site Engineer on July 2nd of last year.

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

Due to the continued economic downturn in Ireland and the rest of Europe I decided to travel to New Zealand to find suitable employment as it was too competitive at home in terms of salary and job openings.

Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

I talked to friends and family that had lived and worked in New Zealand for information on the country, lifestyle and culture. I was advised NZ was very similar to Ireland and the UK in these regards which is what I have found as the people are warm and friendly, the weather is great in summer and the work environment is relaxed and team focused.

How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

I now have the employment position I was after and I have settled into my new home and role within MacDow. I miss my friends and family in Ireland but I have gained many benefits and new friends in moving to New Zealand.

What one thing would you have done differently?

I would have moved to New Zealand sooner. I spend six months in Ireland looking for a Job in a market which is in a deep recession.

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

How similar NZ is to Ireland, the only surprise I have found in the last six months is how similar both countries are.

What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

Do it as soon as possible, I spent too long looking for Jobs in Ireland that I would not have been happy to do even if I was given the role.

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

Yes, moving here has been a very good move for me as it has allowed me to travel and find suitable employment.

Useful Facts:

1st Contact to 1st interview	166 days
1st Interview to offer	1 day
Offer to arrival	20 days
Time since arrival	204 days

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So you've got the job?! Hurray! But what about transferring your funds?

If you plan on making the move to New Zealand, the chances are you will need to transfer money in to New Zealand Dollars at some point. Whether that's a few thousand pounds or a large lump sum, your transaction will be affected by the exchange rate market.

Catalyst Recruitment's Foreign Exchange partner TorFX, is one of Europe's leading FSA Authorised Currency Brokers, offering clients a bank-beating Currency Exchange service. They are an established award-winning firm with a reputation for excellent rates and personal client-care.

TorFX provide an unrivalled personal service, along with their market leading rates of exchange, which helps to make a significant financial saving and therefore gives you more Dollars in your pocket when you get here!

As a registered client of TorFX, you will have direct access to your own personal currency specialist who will work with you to achieve the best rate within your timescale. They will also advise on what options you may be able to utilise to reduce the risk of losing out to negative rate movements.

Registration is free and carries no obligation.

Some examples of situations in which TorFX can assist:

- Transfer of savings / house sale.
- Pension / QROPS transfers.
- Sending money to friends or family.
- Regular payments to cover a mortgage or bills on property retained in the UK.
- Inheritance / Trust funds transfers.

The Key benefits of using TorFX:

- Commercial exchange rates saving up to 5% on large currency transfers.
- Free, fast international transfer of funds.
- Direct access to a dedicated personal trader
- Total Security of funds. TorFX is fully authorised and regulated by the FSA with all client transactions conducted through segregated accounts held at Barclays Bank Plc.
- Free market updates and analysis from MST A qualified currency analysts, as featured on Google News, CNBC, The Daily Telegraph and Economy News.

If you would like more information on TorFX Services, contact Will on will.hewitson@torfx.com or +44 1736 335270 or [click here](#) to complete a quick on-line enquiry form and one of the TorFX Team will call you back.