



Christchurch

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State of the nation

Welcome to the State of the Nation for February 2014. By now all the kids are back at school and the first rush of statutory days (bank holidays) are out of the way! This brings an air of business as usual to the country as things look to get moving. Our weather in Auckland has been sensational with blue skies and 26 degrees, but with hot North Easterlies comes very warm nights, 20 degrees means leaving all the windows open and fans running virtually all night! We are not complaining though, we have seen the weather in the UK over the last few months and wish you all well.

February has been much the same as January with companies getting up to speed with their current workload and starting to plan ahead. As Christchurch experiences the 3rd anniversary of the first quakes there are many who wonder why the rebuild has not progressed faster. In reality everything takes time and so much work has been planned behind the scenes. We are sure that it will all come with a rush as we progress towards the General Election in November.

Civil Sector

In the civil sector there is an air of anticipation over what could be a very big year ahead. Client's fortunate enough to have won future projects are regularly discussing their needs with me. Not all of the roles are immediate but when the time comes we know that those clients will look to us first. Other clients still working hard at tendering don't yet have the luxury of knowing their requirements but remain positive about future work and continue to talk with us about the types of candidates they will likely need. Certainly the start to this year has been the most positive in the sector for a number of years.

Contact Phil.

Construction

Construction in Auckland is the busiest it has been since 2008 with most clients keeping an eye out for talent. Quantity Surveyors, Site Managers and Project Managers are required virtually across the board. The catch is that you really need to be here or very close to arriving – or perhaps coming over for a visit? If you really want to make

it happen – you can, but please speak to me first. Similarly, Christchurch is getting close to breaking point. Plenty of people are arriving each week and are being snapped up. Give it another 4 to 6 months and clients will be much more aggressive in their hiring approach.

Contact Andy.

Engineering Consultants

While clients are much more optimistic about their new projects outlook and recruitment forecasts for 2014, they continue to move forward with a cautious approach. As always they remain interested in hearing about experienced candidates through Catalyst, candidates who have made an informed decision that New Zealand is where they want to be or return home to. In particular those with specialist expertise within the following disciplines; seismic structural engineering, Fire Design Engineers, and civil qualified Geotechnical (design) engineers remain in high demand. If your sector of expertise falls outside of these, but you are an experienced technical specialist (with 8+ years experience) in your chosen discipline and you have been contemplating a move to New Zealand, then please get in contact with Mireille to explore opportunities relevant to you.

Keep your eyes on your email as we'll be sending alerts of vacancies as they come up as well as our usual posts on Linked In, the blog and the catalyst Job Board. As always if you're planning a trip or a move to New Zealand we need to know now so that we can help. Get in touch with us to discuss your plans and we'll do everything we can to assist in the process.





WARNING

Reading this could be dangerous for your current location...

As of Wednesday 19th February 2014, Mercer ranks Auckland as the 3rd best city in the world for quality of life but Auckland is way down the list of most expensive cities – not ranking in the top 50!

Quality of life

3rd best city in the world by Mercer!
Wellington – ranked 12th
Christchurch – too small – but possibly better?

Cost of living

Mercer does not rank any NZ city in the top 50 most expensive.

So – if you are looking for quality of life for you or your family, then use the Mercer study as a guide. With over 40,000 staff, they probably know what they are doing. They use the following criteria to rank each city

Mercer evaluates local living conditions in more than 460 cities it surveys worldwide. Living conditions are analysed according to 39 factors, grouped in 10 categories:

- Political and social environment (political stability, crime, law enforcement, etc.)
- Economic environment (currency exchange regulations, banking services)
- Socio-cultural environment (media availability and censorship, limitations on personal freedom)
- Medical and health considerations (medical supplies and services, infectious diseases, sewage, waste disposal, air pollution, etc)
- Schools and education (standards and availability of international schools)
- Public services and transportation (electricity, water, public transportation, traffic congestion, etc)
- Recreation (restaurants, theatres, cinemas, sports and leisure, etc)
- Consumer goods (availability of food/daily consumption items, cars, etc)

For me it doesn't come as a surprise that my new home of 18 years, Auckland, continues to progress up the rankings. I moved here in 1996 at the age of 26 and have lived through several different phases of life and the place just gets better and better.

In the early stages, I lived through some pretty exciting party years and Auckland passed with flying colours and more recently, it is ticking all of the boxes for my kids health and education (7, 4 and 8 months) and of course most recently – the Health System passed with Flying colours (spine surgery) so I can honestly say that Auckland is right up there in my books.

How does this affect you?

As you can imagine – I speak with an awful lot of people based overseas (I would like to speak to more) and my first question to any aspiring migrant is –

What is the compelling reason for you wanting to move to New Zealand?

Of course when so many people reply with "...I want a better work life balance" or "... for quality of life" I drill down further to understand what that statement means for that individual.

Of course you can work through another recruiter who will blindly accept your answer, spread your cv and see what comes back from the same clients we deal with, but we think you deserve a better service than that, we believe that you need to reduce the risk of getting it wrong and costing you a lot of money and a lot of grief.

So – when it comes to it, what do you mean by – Quality of Life?

You can measure it officially like the Mercer study where Auckland is the third best in the world, or you can measure it personally.





Warning: reading this could be dangerous for your current location
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A few examples.

1. One person we assisted was happy to report that they were spending 18 and a half days less per year sitting in their car commuting.
2. One person reported that she and her hubby could take out their motorbike 12 months a year rather than 5 months back home (due to weather in Scotland).
3. One person who loved their skiing and moved to Christchurch reported that they wake up on a Saturday morning – look out of the window at the mountains and decided whether they would go skiing that day – or not.
4. One person reported that he and his wife had so much extra spare time that they really had good fun choosing a new hobby.
5. One candidate reported that his morning commute had changed to a 20 minute drive where he enjoyed the scenery and his morning coffee.
6. And finally, but by no means least, one person reported that they loved their evening trip to the beach with their children. They found that although they worked slightly more hours in NZ, they were able to be home for the after dinner trip to the beach any night of the week.

For me – I live 38 kms from Auckland CBD, which takes me 28 minutes and I live on 2.5 acres. My veges grow like trifids and my kids live an incredible outdoor life. I love closing the gate on a Friday and effectively closing out the outside world. A bit different to suburban Birmingham! NZ has been good to me.

If you want to experience one of the very best lifestyles in the world, but do not want the high cost of living associated with most of the top ten cities, then New Zealand really is your only answer. Whether you choose Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch – or anywhere in between, as long as you know why you are moving here – there is little risk of it not working out.

If you want to discuss further, please feel free to email one of us

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Anchor Projects kicking on in 2014

Minister Gerry Brownlee says construction and development scheduled across 2014 will ensure a high level of confidence in the Christchurch rebuild.

"The Justice and Emergency Services Precinct is one of the first cabs off the rank and today's sod-turning is yet another milestone achievement.

"In fact of the 16 Anchor Projects, nine will start construction in some form this year," Mr Brownlee says.

Those nine projects are:

- The Bus Interchange
- Justice and Emergency Services Precinct
- Retail Precinct
- Health Precinct
- South Frame public realm
- Performing Arts Precinct
- North Frame and Margaret Mahy Family Playground
- Innovation Precinct
- Metro Sports Facility

Proposals from prospective operators and design and development consortia for the Convention Centre Precinct are due back to the Central Christchurch Development Unit (CCDU) team in March for evaluation.

"Roughly three-quarters of the land required for the Convention Centre Precinct has now been purchased by the Crown and the intention is to have that area cleared by August.

"I am confident the project remains on track to open in early 2017," Mr Brownlee says.

Works on the Bus Interchange are well advanced with demolition progressing well. Detailed design plans are being developed and early construction works are expected to start by the second quarter of the year. The end result will be a transport hub complete with accommodation and hospitality options.

Mr Brownlee says there have also been exciting developments with the Retail Precinct, following CCDU's appointment of a consortium led by Athfield Architects to produce a Retail Precinct Plan.

"Good progress has been made to ensure the public areas of the Retail Precinct are complimentary to its private projects," Mr Brownlee says.

The Avon River Precinct progresses further this month with the start of in-river works that will see gravel washing and silt removal carried out as a way of re-generating the river's health.

And the North and East Frames took a big leap forward this month too, with the grassing of five large sites in the CBD.

"This is interim work to ensure we make the most of the Crown-owned space as the next stage of frames gets underway," Mr Brownlee says.

"Having the defined green areas will really give people a visual understanding of what the end result will be.

"In a few years' time these spaces will be interspersed with housing for up to 2000 people, so it will have a feel of an urban park with the Amazing Place playground just a stone's throw away.

"It will be an exciting place to live, work and play," Mr Brownlee says.

Source www.CCDU.govt.nz





Living the good life worth the cost

Proximity to great beaches and parks rates highly in survey in the second of our series on what it is to be a Kiwi.

Back to work to keep beloved lifestyle

Janice Bullen loves her New Zealand lifestyle so much she would not raise her two children in any other country, despite having to go back to work to pay for it.

Originally from Ireland, Mrs Bullen and her Kiwi husband Lance now both work full-time after she returned to work in December.

The 27-year-old had been at home with the Hamilton couple's children Lachlan, 5, and Aoifa, 3, but decided to go back to work early to pay for the lifestyle they had come to love.

"I wanted to go back to work when my daughter was 5 and so you wrestle with this mother's guilt about not being able to stay home and it's horrible, but at the same time I want to be able to visit Ireland every two years, and we want to be able to make more family memories like going to the beach, but it all just costs so much," she said. Life was now a juggle of work, school, daycare, after-school

care and school-holiday care, she said. "It just means that you have to be super organised and on the weekends it's family time and that's it. We don't really have a social life.

"Everything we do is for our family so it's like a catch-22. We want to live in this beautiful amazing place but we have to work our arses off to enjoy it."

Mrs Bullen, who has New Zealand citizenship, said she loved living here even though her family was in Ireland and she wanted to give her children outdoor and sporting opportunities she never had.

"It's a fantastic lifestyle. It's so laid-back, and I love the way Kiwi kids are brought up.

"I find that New Zealand is very outdoorsy, chilled out and relaxed with the weather and I want that for my children."

Source: Natalie Akoorie, NZ Herald



Above: Janice Bullen says she and husband Lance want to give Aoifa and Lachlan the best possible upbringing. Photo / Christine Cornege.



Plans for NZ's tallest skyscraper

Plans for New Zealand's tallest skyscraper, to rise in the heart of Auckland, have been unveiled today. A \$350 million 52-level 209m skyscraper has been announced for a CBD site left vacant since the 1980s when Chase Corporation demolished the Royal International Hotel.

Chinese developer New Development Group is to build the tower, known now as NDG Auckland Centre, on the site of a carpark and bungy jump bounded by Elliot St, Albert St and Victoria St.

Auckland Council has granted resource consent for the giant which will only be dwarfed by the 328 m Sky Tower. A building consent is still pending.

Mayor Len Brown announced details of the tower to the Herald this morning, saying it would be a huge transformation for the city.

"Alongside the SkyTower, this will be a world class development for Auckland that will create hundreds of new jobs, energise the CBD and boost Auckland's GDP, through a more than \$350 million investment by NDG," Brown said.

"It's also an example of the major commercial opportunities created by the City Rail Link project. To date the private sector has confirmed more than a billion dollars of new investments along the proposed route, including Precinct Properties' downtown retail and office development (\$300m+) the NZ International Convention Centre (\$400m+) and Elliott Towers (\$350m+)," he said.

It's not the first time big plans have been announced for the site though, which has been sitting empty since 1987.

Less than a month before that year's stock market crash, a newly formed property firm, Acadia Corp, sent a wrecking ball into the Royal International Hotel.

The hotel was the flagship of beer giant Dominion Breweries. Its interior was decorated by Lady Kelliher, wife of DB managing director Sir Henry Kelliher, and it hosted the Beatles in 1964.

Acadia planned a \$120 million, 32-storey office tower on the site – bordered by Elliott, Victoria and Albert Sts – due to open in 1990.

But after the crash, the site was turned over to carparks as a succession of developers floated and then abandoned their dreams.

Acadia was taken over by Sir Ron Brierley's BIL, which sold the site to Colin Reynolds' Chase Corporation.

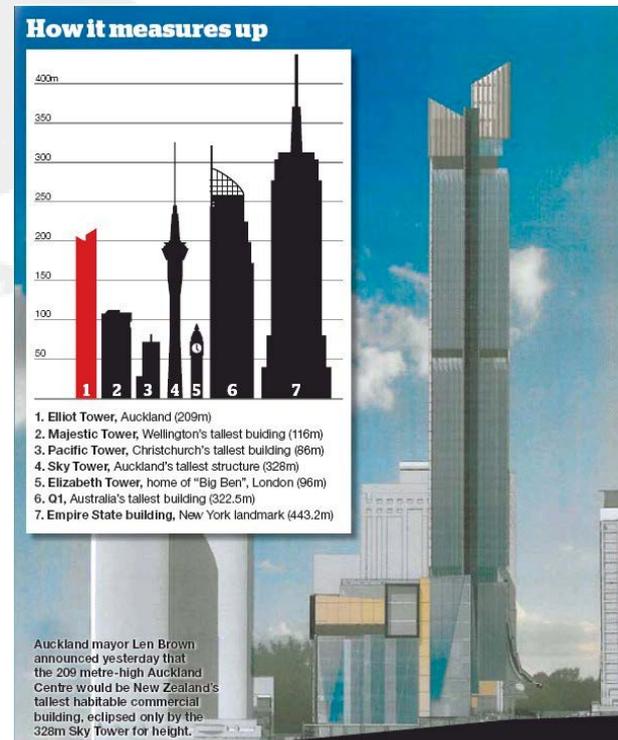
Chase wanted to install its retail subsidiary Farmers Trading Co on the ground floor. Above that it planned an office tower connected to Chase's Finance Centre by a sky-bridge across Victoria St. It was to be New Zealand's version of London's CanaryWharf.

Just a few months after Chase revealed its plans, the Government placed the firm's property arm under statutory management, a move that marked the start of its spectacular demise.

After Chase, the site fell into the hands of an Indonesian firm before it was bought by the present owner – Korea's DaeJu – for \$25.5 million in 2003.

DaeJu's planned a 67-storey, \$450 million retail and apartment complex known as the Elliott Tower.

In a 2006 story privately owned DaeJu, which has interests as diverse as finance, shipbuilding, media, and property, had applied for resource consents to build its skyscraper.





Plans for New Zealand's tallest sky scraper article continued from page 6

The story said it "had yet to decide how it will pay for the development, who will build it and when work will start. But it insists the project will go ahead."

DaeJu was aiming at the top end of the market. The cheapest apartment of that planned building was to have been about \$320,000 and the most expensive tipped to go for as much as \$7 million.

That tower was designed by Auckland architect Gordon Moller, who also designed the Sky Tower.

"You get views on both sides, instead of having dark rooms at the back of the apartment and no view," said Moller at the time. "On the west will be the upper harbour view and the afternoon sun and on the east the prospect out to Rangitoto.

Source: Anne Gibson, NZ Herald

Wellington expressway gets green light

A 16km expressway north of Wellington has had resource consent granted by a Board of Inquiry. New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) had proposed the expressway be built from McKays Crossing (Raumati South) to Peka Peka, north of Waikanae.

The road was part of the Wellington Northern Corridor, a development considered to be of national significance, so was referred to the board by Environment Minister Amy Adams last April.

The decision followed the Board's consideration of the application, submissions, evidence and a two week hearing.

Its decision could be appealed to the High Court on points of law only, and it could not be overturned by ministers.

[Read the full report here.](#)

NZTA's state highway manager Rod James earlier said the road was expected to be open by mid- to late-2017.

The expressway would not only provide an improved highway

route through the Kapiti district but would also increase safety, reduce travel times and improve journey time reliability between the Kapiti Coast and Wellington, he said.

Six other roads of national significance (from north to south):

- Puhoi to Wellsford;
- Waterview Connection (Auckland);
- Victoria Park Tunnel (Auckland);
- Waikato Expressway;
- Tauranga Eastern Link; and
- Christchurch motorways.



Image: nzta.govt.nz



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Antonio Apone

Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: TM Consultants

Antonio originally from Italy, initially made contact with Mireille via LinkedIn. From the first conversation it was apparent that Antonio and his then Fiancé (they were literally weeks away from getting married) Vittoria had been researching moving to New Zealand for some time and had made an informed decision that this is where they wanted to begin their married life and eventually raise their future children. Although nearing the Christmas shut-down period at that time, Catalyst was able to secure an interview with TM Consultants who within 2 days of interview made Antonio an offer to join their Fire Engineering team in Christchurch. Antonio was extremely organised in terms of the visa application process which involved him having to submit his application to the London branch of Immigration New Zealand. Upon job offer he immediately organised the translation for all of his qualifications and other required documentation, got straight on to medicals and arranging police checks from Italy, Ireland and Bahrain (including asking the assistance of a former colleague to liaise with local police), managed to fit in his wedding, work within the constraints of the NZ Immigration London branch's Christmas shut down period and still managed to arrive here within 90 days of job offer acceptance.

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

The perspective of moving to a country with a high standard of living and with less concerns (compared to Europe) about safety, pollution, traffic, crime, etc.

Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

Yes, overall it did. The only thing I miss from time to time is the social life style that I had in Europe. I can see there have been some little improvements since I moved here, so hopefully social lifestyle in Chch will improve in the future with the EQ rebuild still underway.

How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

Since I moved here I've been having a more relaxed and quiet life-style. Also I've been really enjoying working in a stress-free environment.

What one thing would you have done differently?

Not much really.

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

Nothing specifically

What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

In general, gather as much information as possible about NZ from the web. Work wise: get in touch with a recruitment agency and modify your CV to make it more suitable for the NZ market

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

I definitely did. I reckon that NZ is one of the best places in the world for raising children.

Useful Facts:

1 st contact to interview:	12 days
1 st interview to offer:	2 days
Offer to arrival:	89 days
Time since arrival:	345 days