

# Emigration

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## Why only the brave emigrate without a migration agent!

**Q** Do I really need to use a migration agent to emigrate to Australia from the UK? What are the benefits of using one and what is a typical cost for the whole emigration process?

**SUSIE JONES, CARDIFF**

**A** It is not compulsory to use a registered migration agent to lodge a visa application, however it can be beneficial particularly if your case is complex or you are daunted by the amount of information and documents that are required. If you choose to lodge an application yourself, and it is incomplete or does not include all necessary documents, your application may be delayed or refused. The benefit of using a registered agent is that you will receive expert representation and they will help you in the following ways:

- recommending the best type of visa in accordance with current legislation, policy and procedure, based on your personal circumstances;
- advising the types of documents and forms that are required;
- advising the correct completion of all forms;
- keeping you abreast of any legislative changes policy and/or procedures which could affect your application;
- submitting your application to DIAC on your behalf;
- liaising with DIAC on your behalf throughout the assessment period;
- certifying original documents, saving time and money;
- guiding you through the appeals process, if necessary.

I would advise all potential migrants to make sure they use the services of an Australian registered migration agent. To find out whether the agent you wish to use is registered with the Office of the Migration Agent Registration Authority go to [www.mara.gov.au](http://www.mara.gov.au).

The typical cost of the visa process varies depending on which visa class you apply under and other factors including your occupation, how many applicants are to be included on your application and fluctuations in the Pound/Australian Dollar exchange rate. Be prepared to pay £4,000-£6,000 in total for a whole family, including legal costs for the entire process.



## Shake-up in Oz emigration process

**Q** I've heard the Australian Government has got rid of its Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), and is now looking at changing both the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and potentially the current points-based system which are key indicators on whether we Brits are likely to get a skilled visa for Australia. Do you have further details on this and the overall knock-on effect it will have on Brits wanting to emigrate down under?

**PAUL DETTMEL, BY E-MAIL**

**A** A review of the MODL was conducted due to concerns that it was not supporting the General Skilled Migration (GSM) programme to meet Australia's medium to long-term future skill needs. As a result on the 8th of February 2010 the Australian Government announced the revocation of the MODL to take effect immediately. This change applies to all GSM applicants except those who, at the date of announcement:

- hold a Skilled-Graduate (subclass 485) visa, or had a pending subclass 485 visa application and had not yet lodged an application for a provisional or permanent GSM visa and who make an application by 31 December 2012, or
- have a pending GSM visa application.

The direct effect of this revocation is the loss of 15 points to any new applicants who have not lodged an application with the Department of Immigration & Citizenship (DIAC) who were nominating an occupation which was previously listed on the MODL. This means that potential

applicants may have to find an alternative means of gaining extra points to qualify for a GSM visa.

The Australian Government also announced the replacement of the current SOL in the second half of 2010, with a new list of targeted occupations determined by the independent body, Skills Australia. As the new SOL will be a comprehensive, targeted list, the current Critical Skills List (CSL) will be revoked. The new SOL will come into effect from mid-2010 and will apply to all applicants lodging visa applications made on or after this date.

An even more significant potential change that may have a serious impact on Brits and emigrants from other countries is the review of the current points test that applies to all GSM visas which is currently being undertaken by the DIAC. The purpose of the review is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current points test and to ensure that the points test is selecting high calibre applicants with skills the nation needs.

It is not known if the government will decide to make changes to the GSM points test. If the government decides that changes are necessary, they will determine when they are to take place and who they will apply to. As you can see this is currently a crucial and evolving time for anyone considering migrating to Australia, with lots of changes being announced and more to come. I would advise all readers who are thinking of emigrating to start the process as soon as possible if they qualify now to avoid any disappointment.

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