



JohnMason
International Movers

"Moving the world for you"

COVID-19

Advice on your move
to Australia



Introduction

Established in 1884 John Mason International Movers has continued to see the world around us change and as a business we continue to evolve to ensure we deliver a first class moving experience. Today we are one of the UK's largest international removals companies, moving around 10,000 people each year.

By undertaking only international removals, we have increased our skill and proficiency in this area. We can therefore give our customers confidence that we are experts in our specialist field and will provide a professional and quality service.

In light of recent advice from the Government and the British Association of Removals (BAR), we can confirm that John Mason International is fully operational. However the safety of our customers and employees is our number one priority, therefore we have introduced a number of new safety measures to ensure we are 'Covid Secure'. These include new working practices, additional risk assessments, introducing additional hygiene procedures, enforcing social distancing where possible and issuing personal protection equipment for crews.

For the time being to ensure extra safety to all, we are only conducting video surveys – FREE OF CHARGE. To arrange one of these please get in touch and we can help provide you with a quote to get your move back on track. It's very straight forward, once our friendly surveyors are connected to you on a video chat all you need to do is face your camera outwards and listen to your surveyors instructions. From here they will be able to make a record of your inventory and provide you with an accurate quotation.

We have put together this booklet to provide you with some insight on how COVID-19 may impact your move. If you have any concerns or questions about moving to Australia, whether it's worries about what you can and can't take with you, questions about quarantine, the packing or delivery process please do not hesitate to speak to your move manager.



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Real life Customer Story: Moving to Australia during COVID-19

In June 2020 one of our customers, Billie Spencer emigrated to Australia below she shares her story of what it is like moving to Australia during a global pandemic.

In early 2019 my husband and I decided to return to live in Adelaide and, with a sense of déjà vu, confidently began making arrangements to ship our house and workshop contents, two small dogs and our 1976 VW camper. It was a little daunting, but we had moved to Australia before, and knew that careful planning would take care of any concerns, or so we thought!

After a couple of glitches with our house sale, by mid-March 2020 our container was packed, dispatched, and heading for Adelaide. Our masterplan meant the dogs would be sent in early April and we would fly a week later. So far, so good.

Aware of the unfolding Covid 19 pandemic we were confident that all would go according to plan.

And then, bit by bit, our carefully made arrangements fell by the wayside. The dogs' flight was cancelled first, just ten days after our shipment left the UK. Our flights were first rescheduled and then cancelled shortly after.

In this new and slightly unnerving uncertainty our one constant was the house sale, which completed in early April. We moved into a rented cottage and, with our belongings well on the way to Australia, and the UK in lockdown, all we could do was wait!

Our shippers and pet relocators were fabulous at keeping us updated, but there were some nail-biting moments. Finally, we left, and so did our dogs, in early June. Travel restrictions mean that we had to fly into Melbourne, rather than our final destination of Adelaide, but we were on our way.

However, bearing in that the UK had been in lockdown since the latter part of March, and how strange that had been, nothing could have prepared us for the actual journey to Melbourne.

Heathrow was almost completely deserted, feeling vaguely post-apocalyptic. We were handed face masks on arrival, check in was swift and efficient and almost everything except Boots and WH Smith was closed up in the departure hall. It was eerily quiet everywhere. We boarded our flight to be met by the cabin crew, dressed in white hazmat suits, goggles, masks and gloves.

Our arrival in Melbourne was no less surreal. We were met at the plane doors, and subsequently through the whole arrivals process, by a raft of mask-wearing officials, including federal police, border force officers, doctors and nurses and other health and government officials. We were informed that the bus that would take us to our quarantine hotel would be escorted by an unmarked police car! Ahead lay 14 days quarantine in a hotel in central Melbourne.

So, we've had a few days to reflect on our journey. Everyone we have come into contact with has been friendly and helpful, and we have had plenty of information from many sources. And, in reality, we have been lucky. Our departure was delayed by a couple of months and we have had to come into Melbourne rather than Adelaide. The real stresses have been caused by the uncertainty of the situation, but we are here, and soon to be reunited with our daughter, already living in Melbourne, and the two dogs.

Now all we have to do is get to Adelaide and then, following 14 days of self-isolation in South Australia, we will be reunited with our worldly goods and will finally be able to begin the next part of our adventure.

We couldn't have done any of this without the help and expertise of John Mason International. A special thank you to Billie in the pet relocation department who has worked tirelessly to get our dogs to Australia, keeping us informed and up to date at every stage!

Thank you.



Australia

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Thank you.

Visa impact

How is COVID-19 Impacting my Australian Visa?



Our visa partner, **Visa Go Australia**, explore how COVID-19 is impacting the process and application of Australian visas.

At Visa Go Australia we have been inundated with enquiries around how COVID is affecting Australian visa applications, from eligibility concerns to processing times. Below, we give you an overview of some of the most frequently asked questions about COVID and Australian migration.

Can I enter Australia?

The Australian border is currently closed to most people, including temporary visa holders such as tourists and working holiday makers.

The Department of Home Affairs is allowing entry to the following people:

- Australian citizens
- Australian permanent residents
- New Zealand citizens usually resident in Australia
- Immediate family of an Australian citizen or permanent resident (dependent child, legal guardian or spouse/de- facto)
- Additional exemptions as determined by the Commissioner

You should refer to the Department of Home Affairs [website](#) for full details on entering Australia. Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible to apply for an [exemption](#).

Can I still apply for an Australian visa?

Australian visas continue to be processed, so it is still possible to apply.

It is worth considering the time it will take to prepare your visa application, and the time you are given to activate your visa. Most visas allow 12 months from the date of grant to enter Australia.

It can take months to gather documents for family visas, or months to secure an invitation to apply for a skilled visa. We recommend you allow yourself ample time to complete the visa process, especially as the requirements and processing times are constantly changing.

Following the easing of lockdown, panel physicians in Australia and the UK have begun taking [health examinations](#) bookings once more.

The Department of Home Affairs has also provided advice on [activating your skilled visa](#) before the initial entry date amid COVID.

When will my visa be granted?

While it is impossible to provide an exact date, we can offer an estimated timeframe and guidance on how to avoid processing delays by lodging a 'decision-ready' application.

You can view global visa processing times on [The Department of Home Affairs website](#). Updated monthly, this provides a good indication of how long your visa will take to process after lodgement. We would anticipate an increase in processing times following the COVID lockdown. Skilled visa processing times are currently:

- Skilled Independent (subclass 189) 13-14 months
- Skilled Nomination (subclass 190) 5-7 months
- Skilled Work Regional (provisional) (subclass 491) State 58-76 days
- Skilled Work Regional (provisional) (subclass 491) Family 57-71 days



As the Department implements safe working practice and social distancing measures, we would expect this to temporarily decrease productivity and therefore extend visa processing times.

You can minimise delays by ensuring your visa application is lodged correctly and completely. Working with an experienced migration agent can be of great benefit in this respect, as they will identify industry trends based on their client portfolio and provide you with recommendations.

As the world continues to adjust to the implications of COVID, it is worth noting that this reduction in migration is only temporary, and that visa options are still available. Updates to Australia's immigration and border arrangements during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak can be found on [The Department of Home Affairs website](#).

If you would like to enquire about your visa options, contacting a [Licensed Migration Agent](#) is a good place to start.

Top tips

For remote job interviews



As a team of London based Recruitment Specialists who have lived and worked in Australia, Hays Globalink is uniquely positioned to assist professionals with their career transition from the UK or Ireland to Australia.

Remote interviews have become increasingly used over the past few years, especially in our world of work, assisting people to progress their job search prior to relocating to Australia. Now in this new world of remote working and video meetings, it's safe to say that you will face a remote interview at some point in the future.

Job interviews can feel daunting at the best of times, so we have prepared our top tips to help you on your way to a successful remote interview.

1. Test your tech

Whether it be Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams, the added element of technology means it is more important than ever to be prepared. Testing the chosen platform the day before with a family member or friend will reduce the risk of a technical issue on the day.

2. Create an interview appropriate space

When setting up your interview space, be mindful of what the interviewer will see behind you. A tidy space ideally in a closed off room to shut out noise and distractions is best. If you can, sit at a desk or table with your device at a suitable height to ensure good posture and easy eye contact with the interviewer.

3. Essential interview preparation

Like with any face to face interview it is important to put in the time to prepare, ideally the day before.

Read over your CV to refresh your memory as it is surprisingly easy to forget what is in there from a few jobs ago.

If you have a job description use it to cross-reference the key responsibilities with your own experience, bringing front of mind relevant examples. Familiarise yourself with behavioural questions and practice answering a few using the STAR method below. Behavioural questions are designed to understand how you reacted to and dealt with past situations, so it is important that your answers are tangible and concise, leaving no stone unturned for the interviewer.

- Situation - Describe the situation you were faced with.
- Task - What did you have to do?
- Action - What action did you take and why? Were there any challenges along the way and how did you overcome them?
- Results - Highlight the outcome.

Research the company's website, read up on their vision, core values, careers page etc. It's likely the interviewer will ask a question to see if you have done your homework.

If you are asked 'do you have any questions' during the interview, having a few meaningful questions prepared will demonstrate that you have put thought into the opportunity and are engaged in the process.

4. First impressions

The saying 'first impressions are lasting impressions' is especially true when it comes to interviews. In the first few seconds the interviewer will start to form an opinion of you based on punctuality, presentation and body language.

Log on to the chosen platform with plenty of time spare to ensure you are ready to go when the interviewer logs in.

Dress professionally or to suit the business you are interviewing for as you would in a face to face scenario. Dressing professionally can make you feel more confident too and this will certainly come across even in a remote interview.

Body language often says more than words, so it is important to demonstrate positive body language in your interview. Most people don't enjoy being on camera or talking to a screen, but try not let this affect the way you come across. Maintaining eye contact with the webcam and good posture will show that you are confident and engaged. Natural expressiveness such as hand movements, nods and smiles throughout will demonstrate that you are listening and interested. Overall, it is important not to look frozen or lifeless on the interviewer's screen.

If you are planning a move to Australia and would like to discuss your job search and the local market prior to departing the UK, please get in touch with our team at globalinkteam@hays.com

The team has expertise in recruiting across a range of sectors including, Accountancy & Finance, HR, Office Support, Marketing & Digital, IT, Engineering, Trades, Construction, Healthcare and Property.

5. What to have with you during your interview

While it's important to ensure that there is nothing distracting around you, there is still a few things you will need close by.

- ✓ Copy of your CV
- ✓ Copy of the job description or the advertisement
- ✓ If you need prompts to help you remember key talking points or examples of relevant experience, write a few in easy to read bullet points and stick to one side of the screen or on the wall in front of you
- ✓ Pad and pen to make notes
- ✓ The questions you have prepared

After your interview we recommend following up with your Recruiter to provide feedback. Let them know that you enjoyed meeting the interviewer, learning about the role and company, confirm your interest in the position and state that you look forward to hearing back.

We hope that you found these tips useful. For more helpful information about remote working please visit <https://www.hays.com.au/work-from-home>

Covid-19

Just when is the right time to convert your money?

"Unprecedented times...."

A phrase we have no doubt heard more in the last few months than in most of our lifetimes. We are indeed living through and experiencing unprecedented times, sadly, not for great reasons.

Just when we thought the news (and life in general) would start to become a bit more interesting following the formal announcement that Britain will be definitely leaving the EU, Covid-19 came along and turned everything upside down again.

With this came increased volatility in the currency markets which threw a lot of people's moves overseas into serious doubt. Cancelled flights and shipments as well as disruption to living circumstances and house completions all played havoc. Thankfully, as things have started to ease, the majority are still very much on course to begin their new dream life in their chosen part of the world, albeit slightly later than they may have planned.

The extreme swings in currency valuation caused by the virus have been astonishing. For example, before the global panic struck at the start of March, the Pound was trading at around 1.30 – 1.32 against the USD, and in just 10 days the rate had fallen to a 35 year low at around 1.15. To give you an idea of the financial cost of such a fall, if you were sending £200,000.00 to the US this would have resulted in you receiving \$34,000 less for your Sterling. A potentially

life changing amount and one that could have had serious consequences if you were in the process of buying a home to move to in the USA. At the same time, the AUD and NZD spiked to multi year highs at 2.0450 and 2.0950 respectively, meaning that if you had an order in the market to take advantage of the volatility you could have benefitted hugely.

The normal market moving economic data has been broadly ignored for a long time now because of Brexit and Covid-19, so you just need to be proactive and prepared for unexpected movements as opposed to hoping for the best.

The same rule applies across other major currencies. Here are the highs and lows of a select few currency pairs from the start of March 2020 to the start of June 2020 with the difference in value based on £200,000.00 being exchanged:

- GBP AUD High 2.0450 Low 1.8120 (AUD 46,600.00 difference)
- GBP NZD High 2.0950 low 1.9390 (NZD 31,200.00 difference)
- GBP CAD High 1.7855 Low 1.6650 (CAD 24,100.00 difference)
- GBP ZAR High 23.6000 Low 19.8550 (ZAR 749,000.00 difference)
- GBP EUR High 1.1720 Low 1.0603 (EUR 22,400.00 difference)

John Mason FX has tools and products to help you mitigate the risks in the currency markets. For example, a Market Order helps you to target a specific rate you would like to exchange at with the added security of being able to put a safety net in place called a Stop Loss to prevent it from free falling past your absolute bottom line figure when you are not looking. So, should the market move to a point where the currency can be exchanged at your desired rate it will automatically trigger the order, taking the stress out of the situation for you.

Also, and our most popular product for people who do not need the funds right away but are concerned about the rates moving against them, you have the Forward Contract. This enables you to secure 'today's' rate of exchange for a date in future, meaning you can relax knowing exactly what you have in your pocket when you step off the plane to start your new life.

A small deposit is payable at the time of securing the rate of exchange, and the balance is paid at the date you secure to in future. Regardless of where the rate goes in that time, you have your price fixed enabling you to budget accurately and plan accordingly. This peace of mind is worth its weight in gold and 99% of clients using the forward tell us they felt better for knowing where they stood from day one regardless of what the rate did after they had done their deal.

The long-term effects of Covid-19 on the economy are still yet to be felt, and whilst nobody has a crystal ball one thing can be guaranteed; the currency markets will experience significant volatility meaning the value of your Sterling will fluctuate wildly. Each day around \$6 trillion US Dollars' worth of currency flows through the market making it the most volatile commodity globally. We are here to help you mitigate the risks you are exposed to by that volatility and ultimately help you to make a more informed decision when it comes to exchanging your funds. Being proactive and securing a rate is never a bad thing. Quite often if you choose to sit on your hands and see what happens, it is too late by the time you react to adverse rate movement and the damage is done meaning your costs can spiral.

We want to ensure every penny counts, so get in touch with our team of specialists to discuss your transfer today on +44 (0) 161 960 0273 or by email at currency@johnmason.com.

We look forward to helping you!





JohnMason

International Movers

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London Office

Unit 2, Cubic Building
Eastman Way
Hemel Hempstead
London, HP2 7DU

Tel: +44 (0)20 8667 1133
Fax: 0800 374998
Freephone: 0800 093 2623
sales@johnmason.com

Liverpool Office

International House
35 Wilson Road
Huyton Business Park
Liverpool, L36 6AE

Tel: +44 (0)151 449 3938
Fax: 0800 374998
Freephone: 0800 093 2623
sales@johnmason.com

www.johnmason.com

Our credentials

