

Climate and careers are enticing New Zealanders to emigrate across The Ditch

Kiwis take a shine to life in our state



TASTES OF HOME: Linda Walls has made a living selling Kiwi goods since emigrating
Picture: Jono Searle

Daryl Passmore

FOR decades they were cast as Kiwi dole bludgers soaking up our sun and social security, or sporting rivals to be gloated over — or suffered in silence, depending on the result.

But today, migrants from across the Tasman are playing a crucial role in powering Queensland's growth.

And it's thanks to young entrepreneurs like former Dunedin schoolmates Robbie McIlraith and Shaun McCambridge, who last year set up a Brisbane-based agency recruiting employees for the mining, resources and infrastructure sectors.

They have found their homeland a good source of willing workers to help solve the skills shortage in the Sun-

FLOCKING HERE LIKE SHEEP

- Latest Australia figures show more than 23,096 New Zealanders migrated to Australia last year, with nearly half coming to Queensland.
- New Zealand figures put the exodus at just over 40,000 in the year to October.

● A better lifestyle and the weather are given as the main reasons for a move to Queensland.

● Relocated Kiwis can expect to earn up to \$20,000 a year more than they did for the same job in New Zealand.

shine State, enticing about 200 people a year across The Ditch.

"The projects, opportunities and remuneration are greater here, the cost of living is similar and the lifestyle is wonderful," said Mr McCambridge, 28, who came to Australia as a freshly qualified human resources/management graduate in 2001.

Kiwi recruits can expect to

earn \$10,000-\$20,000 a year more here and Brisbane houses are still cheaper than in Auckland, Mr McIlraith says.

Steve Sloan, who moved to the Gold Coast from Wellington in 2002 with wife Linda and their three teenage children, runs a series of internet-based insurance brokerages and other businesses.



KIWI CONNECTIONS: Robbie McIlraith and Shaun McCambridge recruit staff from back home; and Harry Poutapu



"I could do this from anywhere and I travel throughout the world for work, but there's nowhere I'd rather be," he said. Lifestyle and the weather are among the big pluses, and with the Gold Coast home to one of Australia's biggest concentrations of NZ migrants there's no shortage of Kiwi company.

Linda and Ted Walls came for a 10-day holiday 19 years ago, bought a house at Carindale in Brisbane while they were here, went home for their two children and shifted six weeks later. They now have four businesses and four investment properties, and topped it off last year by buying Kiwi Fine Foods, a bay-side store specialising in importing favourite food and confection-

ery, jewellery, clothing and other NZ goods.

"It's been hard work, but we've built a good life here," Mrs Walls says.

Australia is now home to more than 400,000 Kiwis, more than a third of them in Queensland.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship figures show that 23,096 NZ migrants arrived in Australia in the 2006-07 financial year — overtaking Brits as the largest group for the first time.

Nearly half — 11,278 — came to Queensland.

But the true scale of the trans-Tasman influx is even greater. Statistics New Zealand recorded just over 40,000 permanent and long-term

migrants leaving for Australia in the year to October.

The likely explanation for the difference in the figures is that the New Zealand stats include residents of other nationalities, such as Pacific Islanders and British, leaving the Shaky Isles for Oz.

New Zealanders also accounted for one in five of the 2.2 million international visitors to Queensland in the year to June, many coming to holiday with relatives.

After a taste of the Sunshine State, many decide to relocate.

The Poutapu family is a classic case. Widower Haritau (Harry) Poutapu moved to Brisbane nine years ago when he was made redundant from his job as an electrician at the

Kinleith Pulp and Paper Mill. He was followed by his five children and their partners, their in-laws, brothers and sisters, aunt, uncles and cousins.

Today, there are more than 30 members of the extended Poutapu family living in Brisbane's southern suburbs, and Harry's skills are in demand at mines around the country.

A study last year by then-Bond University academic Dr Alison Green, herself a New Zealand migrant, questioned more than 300 Kiwis about their reasons for migrating and experiences.

Three-quarters (73 per cent) said they were "extremely" or "very" satisfied with their lives in Australia.



SUN-LOVING: Steve Sloan and his daughter Jacinta, 13, love their new lives in Australia
Picture: Tim Marsden