

Expat Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

Australian expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

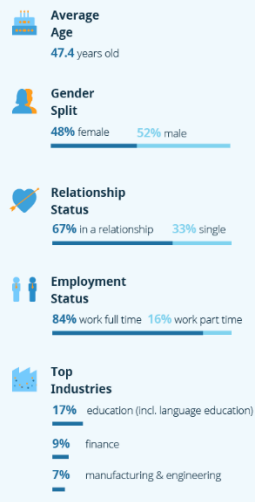
- A good work-life balance is more important to Australian expats than a good compensation and/or good benefits.
- The average Australian expat's dream job is creative, flexible, and reflects their personal values — but it is hard to find in the countries that they typically work in.
- The typical Australian working abroad is older than the global average and more likely to have qualifications from commercial / technical / vocational training as their highest level of education.

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do Australians move abroad? According to the *Expat Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 46% of Australians working abroad name their career as the most important reason for relocating overseas. Most of them found a job on their own (14%), were recruited internationally, or sent by their employer (13% each). Another 5% moved abroad to start their own business, which is more than twice the global average among expats working abroad (2%). Aside from work-related reasons, an above-average share of Australians working abroad (16%) originally relocated because they wanted to live in their partner's home country / for love (vs. 10% globally).

The key focus of this year's *Expat Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

Australian Expats

The Future of Working Abroad



* 14% found a job on their own, 13% were sent by their employer, 13% were recruited internationally, 5% to start their own business

** Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

The Typical Australian Working Abroad

On average, Australian expats working abroad are 47.4 years old, which is significantly older than the global average among working expats (43.1 years). The gender ratio is split more or less evenly between male (52%) and female (48%) expats, and Australians working overseas are more likely to be in a committed relationship than the global average (67% vs. 61% globally). The majority works full time (84%) and spends an average of 40.6 hours per week at work.

Most Australians working abroad have a job in the field of education (17%), followed by finance (9%) and manufacturing & engineering (7%). About three in ten (29%) work in a senior / specialist position, with another 14% being top managers / executives.

Interestingly, 13% say that their highest academic or professional qualifications come from commercial / technical / vocational training, which is more than twice the global average (6%). Close to two in five (39%) have a bachelor's degree (vs. 33% globally), while just 34% hold a master's or other kind of postgraduate degree (vs. 47% globally).

A Good Work-Life Balance Is Everything for Australian Expats

When asked what would be most important for them in an ideal work environment, Australians most frequently mention a good work-life balance (57%). Globally, the most-cited aspect is a good compensation and/or good benefits (54%), while just 49% of working expats choose a good work-life balance. For Australian expats, a good compensation and/or good benefits is only the second-most important aspect of their dream job (52%).

Luckily, most of them already seem to have a good work-life balance, as this is the aspect that Australian expats enjoy the most about their current job (37%). Close to seven in ten (68%) rate their work-life balance positively.

However, just 23% of Australian expats cite a good compensation and/or good benefits among the aspects they like most about their current job. This is interesting as Australians are among the better-paid expats around the globe: 36% have a gross yearly income of 100,000 USD or more — globally, just 23% make as much.

Remote Work — Nice to Have but Not Necessary

A good work-life balance is on par with the opportunity to work remotely / from home, which is another aspect 37% of Australian expats appreciate about their current job. More than three-quarters of Australian expats (76%) are able to work remotely, and 67% actually enjoy doing so. Exactly two in five (40%) work fully remotely, and 23% work remotely for more than 15 days per month.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only had a minor impact on the remote work policies for Australian expats: just 13% say that remote work was newly introduced by their employer and is here to stay, compared to 20% globally. However, 31% are now able to work remotely more often than in pre-pandemic times (vs. 28% globally).

In an ideal work environment, remote work is not that important for Australians working overseas, though: just 16% find this aspect especially important when imagining their dream job, compared to 22% of expats globally.

The Australian Dream Job Is Creative, Flexible, and Reflects Their Values

Aside from a good work-life balance and a good compensation and/or good benefits, 31% of Australian expats say that creative/interesting tasks are especially important for their dream job (vs. 29% globally). This factor is followed by flexible working hours (30% vs. 28% globally) and corporate culture/values (20% vs. 15% globally). All three aspects, but especially the latter, are more important to Australian expats than to the global average.

Unfortunately, these aspects of their ideal work environment are not yet reflected in their current career: while 27% of Australian expats say they enjoy the flexible working hours in their current job, just 21% single out creative/interesting tasks. And just about one in ten (11%) name the corporate culture/values among the aspects they like best about their current job.

“The values that are important to Australian expats are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age”, says InterNations Founder and Co-CEO Malte Zeeck. “As they do not seem to find these aspects in their current career abroad, it will be interesting to see how this will impact their professional future. If Australian expats cannot find those kinds of job in their current host countries, they might choose different destinations or simply move back home.”

Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

1 USA	20 Greece	39 Brazil
2 UAE	21 Czechia	40 Philippines
3 Finland	22 Poland	41 Indonesia
4 Estonia	23 Switzerland	42 Chile
5 Netherlands	24 Luxembourg	43 Romania
6 Bahrain	25 Malta	44 Thailand
7 Australia	26 Kenya	45 Cyprus
8 Canada	27 Taiwan	46 China
9 New Zealand	28 Portugal	47 France
10 Sweden	29 Hungary	48 Spain
11 Ireland	30 Colombia	49 Italy
12 Norway	31 Russia	50 Kuwait
13 Denmark	32 South Africa	51 India
14 Singapore	33 Mexico	52 Turkey
15 United Kingdom	34 Austria	53 South Korea
16 Malaysia	35 Germany	54 Egypt
17 Oman	36 Vietnam	55 Japan
18 Qatar	37 Hong Kong	
19 Saudi Arabia	38 Belgium	

Australians Are Unlikely to Find their Dream Job in their Current Host Countries

In fact, 33% of Australians working overseas say that New Work is less important in the business culture of their host country than in Australia. Globally, just 23% say this about their current country of residence.

This is no surprise when looking at the most common destinations where Australians working abroad live: This list includes Germany, the USA, the UK, China, as well as Japan and Singapore.

When these — and 49 other countries — are compared according to how important New Work is in the local business culture, only the USA (1st out of 55) ranks ahead of Australia (7th). In fact, close to three-quarters of the expats working *in* Australia (74%) think that New Work plays an important role in the business culture of their host country. Globally, just 58% of working expats would say the same about their current country of residence.

While Singapore (14th) and the UK (15th) at least make it into the top 20 worldwide, Germany only comes in 35th place. China (46th), however, lands in the bottom 10, and Japan is voted the worst out of 55 destinations when it comes to the importance of New Work. In fact, 40% of expats in Japan say that New Work is not important in the country's business culture, compared to 18% globally.

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expatriate Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report "The Future of Working Abroad" uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expatriate Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](https://www.internations.org) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust.

InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), [in our company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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