

Things look up down under

For contractors and professionals, Australia offers almost £200bn of construction work



AUSTRALIA

KARA
SEGEDIN

With growing mineral and mining industries, a booming economy and an increasing population - not to mention the sunshine - it's no wonder Australia is an attractive option for British construction workers and firms.

UK Trade & Investment says Australia was the only developed economy not to slip into formal recession during the 2009 global financial crisis and the first to raise interest rates as the world started to recover.

UKTI communications officer Nikki Williams says Australia boasts an impressive economic track record and offers a dynamic and dependable market in times of economic uncertainty.

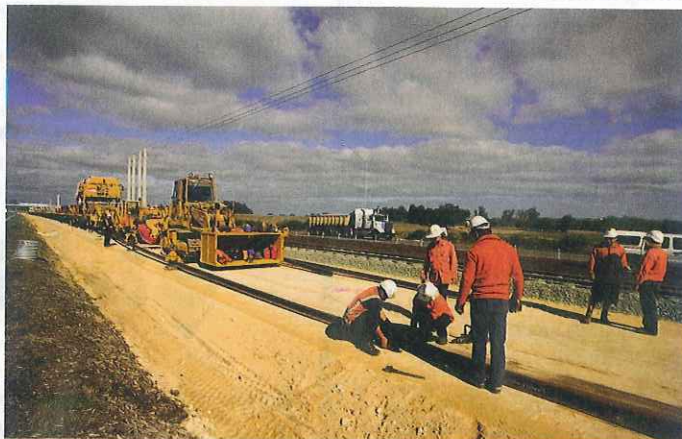
"Add to that a technology-hungry and sophisticated business and consumer base, very similar language, culture, history and business practices, and you have outstanding opportunities," she says.

She says the two largest players in the Australian building and construction sector are Leighton Holdings and Bilfinger Berger, while UK companies working down under range from large firms such as Halcrow, Arup, Laing O'Rourke, Turner & Townsend, Gleeds and Ramboll Whitbybird to smaller players including PA Geotechnical.

Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) business director John Madew says Australia's burgeoning commodity sector is the driving force behind its economic growth.

"That really underpins the long term sustainability of Australia's boom, which feeds into construction."

Just under a third of all construction businesses are in New



Infrastructure is the largest component of the Australian building sector

South Wales, with a further 25 per cent in Queensland and 22 per cent in Victoria.

He says the industry is worth AUD\$293.8 billion (£188bn), made up of 41 per cent engineering construction (non-building infrastructure such as road and rail), 37 per cent residential building and 22 per cent non-residential.

Growth forecast

"It did soften a little bit over the past two years but we're looking at annual growth between now and 2016 of 4.6 per cent," he says.

The Australian Research Group estimates the construction sector will grow 2.8-5.5 per cent each year from 2010/11 to 2015/16 with a predicted revenue growth of \$176bn to \$215bn.

While Western Australia and Queensland are experiencing the highest levels of growth, Mr Madew says large construction projects are under way across the country.

In Victoria, the Office of Water is working on a \$5.7bn desalination plant in Melbourne. It will be the largest of its kind in Australia, supplying 150 billion litres of water each year.

In Western Australia, Chevron is developing the Gorgon gas fields 130 km off the north-west coast in a project worth \$43bn. The Government of Western Australia and Oakajee Port and Rail are working together on the \$4.37bn Oakajee Port and Rail project to develop a deepwater port to meet the needs of the mining industry and developing rail infrastructure

connecting the mines to the port.

In NSW, Sydney's CBD is getting a \$1.2bn redevelopment and the Federal and State Government is funding a new \$1.7bn Hunter Valley Express Way and Rail link.

Partner at DLA Phillips Fox law firm Scott Alden says aside from opportunities in mining and resources, there are many Commonwealth and State government-funded projects in sectors including transport, health, social housing and defence.

"There are also growing opportunities in the water sector, particularly in relation to private sector access to public infrastructure through sewer mining, water treatment and stormwater harvesting projects," he says.

In Queensland, BrisConnections won the \$5.6bn contract to a new tunnelled, motorway grade road to Brisbane airport.

Schools programme

Nationally, the \$16.2bn "Education Revolution" government school building programme aims to modernise schools through the delivery of infrastructure.

Ms Williams says UK companies find success in the Australian market, especially in the areas of infrastructure development

"Infrastructure markets will be supported by major projects in rail, sewerage, drainage and water storage, electricity generation and supply, port productivity and public transport," she says.

On top of this, the institutional market, which includes hospitals, schools and prisons, is estimated to grow at an average of 4 per cent to 2012-13.

Another factor in Australia's construction boom is the growth in immigration. Ms Williams says since 2000 the population has grown by about 4,000 a week, which means increased local government spending on large scale infrastructure. The Australian

TOP AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION FIRMS

Leighton Holdings

Engineering and infrastructure construction, infrastructure development, property development and building construction (residential and non-residential), contract mining, telecommunications and operations and maintenance.

Brookfield Holdco

Construction management,

development management, design services, engineering, facilities and property management.

Downer EDI

Water, transport - roads, rail, airports and ports, resources - coal, iron ore, industrial minerals and metals, energy, building - including public buildings and social infrastructure, urban development, industrial, communications.

Federal Treasury forecasts the country's population will rise from 22m currently to 38m by 2050.

The Australian Construction Forecasting Council says the residential building industry has started its comeback. Underlying demand for housing and the general economic recovery is expected to fuel the recovery.

Office building has been through a downturn, but the council says a sharp recovery is likely to follow. It forecasts a rise of 15 per cent in 2011/12, followed by a further 32 per cent in the following 12 months.

Its other predictions include that transport, bridge, railway and harbour construction will remain

stable at a high level, owing to ongoing demand for infrastructure as the population continues to expand. Electricity and pipeline construction is set to continue steadily.

Telecommunications construction activity is forecast to rise to a very high level as the National Broadband Network (NBN) is

rolled out for an estimated cost of \$43bn over approximately eight years.

Mr Madew cites a good education system and health care as high factors in Australia's favour.

"Brits usually have a good impression of Australia," he says. "There are unparalleled lifestyle benefits that are very attractive."

WANT TO WORK IN AUSTRALIA? YOU'LL NEED A VISA

Brits can apply through either the points-based system as a skilled migrant, or they can be sponsored by an Australian based employer.

Several construction-related roles are on the current skilled occupation list from construction project managers and project builders to stonemasons and bricklayers.

For further information contact:
Australian Department of

Immigration and Citizenship

www.immi.gov.au

London Contact Centre

0906 5508900

Australia Visa Bureau

www.visabureau.com/australia



Robert Bird Group

Robert Bird Group is an international structural and civil engineering design consultancy with over 350 staff across offices throughout Australia, Europe, UAE, India and South East Asia. The practice has developed a reputation for the intelligent application of engineering science and innovative approaches towards designing for construction undertaking major projects worldwide including commercial, residential, mixed use, sporting facilities, marine and foreshore developments, transportation and heritage projects together with specialist structural engineering commissions throughout the world. Our global offices are currently seeking highly skilled professionals for the following roles:

Associates, Senior Structural Engineers & Structural Engineers

Specialist Senior Engineer – London, UK

Associates & Senior Civil Engineers

Site Engineers – Sydney only

Senior Structural Draughtspersons & Draughtspersons

Civil Drafter with 12D Experience

Successful applicants for all vacancies will have high ethical standards with proven experience and be familiar with the relevant codes, standards and regulations as well as a high level of technical expertise.

For further information on each of these roles please visit
www.robertbird.com.

PILING CONTRACTORS

At Piling Contractors we pride ourselves on our position of industry leaders in our field. We provide foundation engineering solutions to civil, commercial, government and domestic projects within Australia and New Zealand. We are seeking a variety of people to join our team and help us continue in our success. We have opportunities in Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and Auckland -New Zealand.

New Zealand Operations Manager

We are seeking an experienced operations manager to assist in all aspects of our joint venture operation running multiple projects.

Construction Manager

An exciting role to oversee the construction of major projects – you will be planning and co-ordinating all activities on site and mentoring your team.

Senior Project Manager

As a Senior Project Manager you will be managing some of our largest and most prestigious projects.

Other roles we have available:-

- Bauer, Soilmec or Mait trained Hydraulic and Mechanical Fitters/technicians
- Project Managers – seeking those with 3 years plus experience in piling project management
- Engineers – with extensive piling experience

Piling Contractors offers a rewarding and challenging environment. We offer a great remuneration package, a generous relocation package and sponsorship for the right candidate.

If you require further information please call Tanya Cope on 0011 61 7 3285 5900 or send through your resume to employment@pilingcontractors.com.au.