

Working in Papua New Guinea: Employment of Expats – Missionaries, Mercenaries and Misfits

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Introduction

This article is intended as a general guide offering some practical advice to those expats intending to work and live in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and for companies wanting to employ expats in PNG.



There's a saying that there are three types of expats working in PNG: missionaries, mercenaries and misfits (Note: not official categories!). As a rule, it doesn't matter which category you fall into; you will usually need to obtain a valid work permit and visa before landing in PNG. There are some general exceptions, for example, where a non-citizen is employed by a recognised aid donor organisation which has been formally recognised by the PNG Government.

All non-citizens and their employers need to comply with PNG employment legislation. The principal legislation concerning expats is the Employment of Non-citizens Act 2007, the Migration Act 1978, and associated regulations.

Before making an application for a work permit, the non-citizen must be outside of the country (unless of course they already have a valid work permit and an application for another work permit has been made).

Typically, there are two stages before a non-citizen can start working in PNG.

Stage 1 – Work Permit

(a) Complete Form 1- Application for New Work Permit

Note: you will also need to attach:

- (i) National Police Clearance checks;
- (ii) Certificate of Good Health;
- (iii) X-ray report and HIV blood test results;
- (iv) Letter from employer;
- (v) Employment contract;
- (vi) Current Resume.

(b) Lodge completed form and payment of the prescribed fees with the PNG Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

Note: Stage 1 can take 8 weeks or more. Payment of the prescribed fee must be made at the time of lodgement.

Prescribed fee

- General Long Term Work Permit: K1,000 per year (about AUD\$500)
- General Short Term Work Permit: K500 (about AUD\$250)
- Volunteer Long Term Work Permit: K100 per year (about AUD\$50)
- Volunteer Short Term Work Permit: K50 (about AUD\$25)

Practical hints

- You should obtain National Police checks as soon as possible. This process can take a number of weeks to be processed. Your application will not be processed without this document.
- Use an immigration agent based in PNG to facilitate the work permit and visa process.
- Keep a copy of the completed Form 1 application and all supporting documentation for your records
- Make sure that all supporting document (other than originals) are certified true and correct.

Stage 2 – Entry Permit (Visa)

Once the work permit has been issued you must apply to PNG Immigration for the appropriate visa.

When a non-citizen has been issued with a work permit they will be issued with a specific visa called the 'Working Resident Entry Permit'. The term of the visa will reflect the term of the work permit.

Note: Immigration also issues other types of visas such as: visitor visa, business visa and student visa.

Term

Short term work permit - up to 6 months from the date it is granted.

Long term work permit - from 6 months up to 5 years from the date it is granted.

Prescribed Fee

If application is made overseas K1000 (about AUD\$500) [Note: prescribed fees was increased at the end of September 2013 from PGK550 to PGK1000)].

If renewed in PNG the current prescribed fee is K2000 (about AUD\$1000).

Contact

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