

Hello from Anver

Something that might be of interest to you - especially if you are not employed at the moment, or are able to take paid or unpaid leave for a period of time that can be as short as three weeks.

A way of seeing central Australia, doing dentistry, getting paid and feeling good about it.

I've tried it and can recommend it.

Eligible personnel are dental nurses, therapists and dentists. U.K recipients your qualifications are recognised in Australia. South African recipients, you can't work in private practice but there is some dispensation to allow you to work in remote areas. The two ophthalmologists ...you are receiving this because there is a scheme in your field that I saw on TV whilst here.

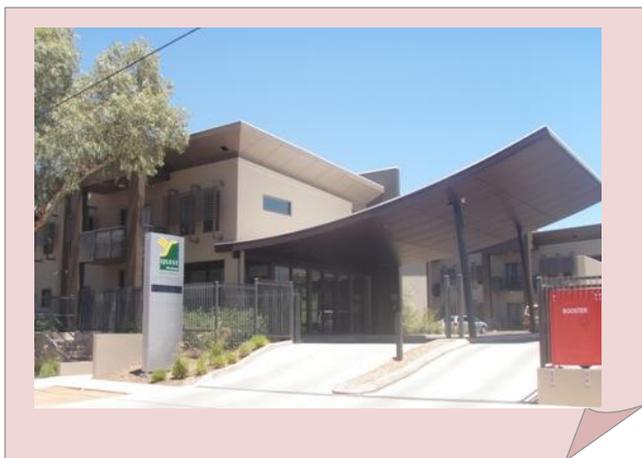


For the bare details do a Google search of *"Helping hands northern territories"*.

Basically, whilst funding lasts, Northern Territory Health services will pay for return air flights, to and from your home in Australia, accommodation while away and pay you a salary. In return, you treat Aborigine children for a minimum of three weeks in the bush. Depending on location, weekends will be spent in a main town.

The exact locality of each trip can vary. Per chance it adds something to the official web site here is my digital description. Other folks on the same scheme will have a different tale. This is my story.

Our base was at Alice Springs. We were accommodated at The Quest Hotel. My wife Bilkish was able to come with. I had my Qantas ticket paid for. Her flight was self funded. She was allowed to share the accommodation. Flights direct from Brisbane are only at weekends. The rest of the week you have to go via Sydney. There is a two day orientation course. You get a short introduction to driving a four wheel drive - in this instance across the dry Todd River. Remember to



bring your manual driving licence.



This is the driest place on earth. When it rains however, it does so Noah style. The river bed the four wheel is driving across is a raging torrent. Just after rain flies breed big time.

Now, these are not like polite British flies that leave you alone with one wave of the hand. They are Kamikaze Australian flies. Like their sportsman compatriots they are persistent buggers that dive bomb any exposed wet orifice you have ...eyes, nose, earswhatever, repeated attacks, as your futile arms flap around ineffectively. If you are here just after a rainy period you need one of the hats pictured. Available Woolworths, Alice Springs.



The flies are prejudiced. They like black...so don't wear it.

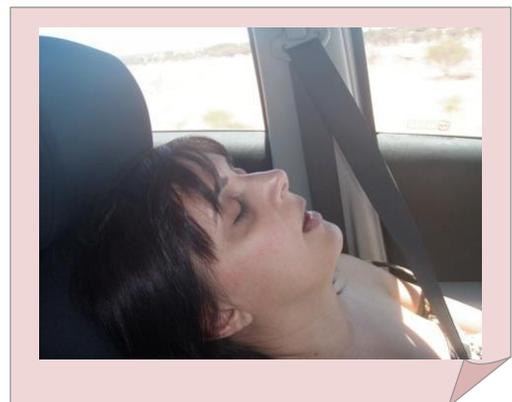
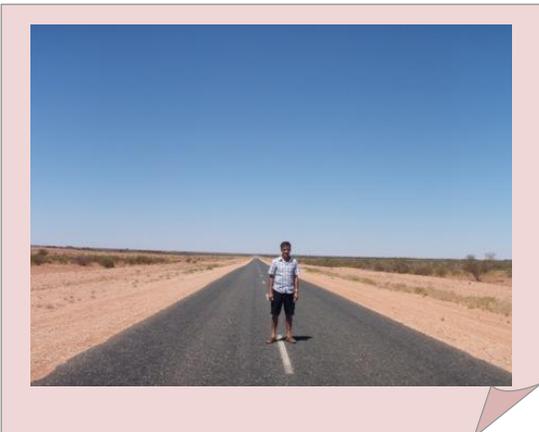
I seemed to attract a lot. Bilkish reckons it's because I smell of hot Nandos sauce and my skin colour is similar to a material that they like to settle in.

So, after the two day orientation course, mobile dental van and four wheel drive keys in hand, we are dispatched to the bush. In our case, to Ti Tree, 2 hours north of Alice.



The roads are long and straight.

My travelling partner listens attentively as I wax lyrical on the attributes of the passing countryside.



We get to Ti Tree, park our mobile van in front of the local health centre, plug in water and electrics and hay presto we are ready to work. Bilkish and Renee my dental nurse from Tasmania round up some patients from the school just a few doors away.



You could read a magazine while waiting for your turn.....alternatively.....



The kids are great. They pretty much dive into the chair (or your hair).

There's a fair amount of ethnic and cultural mix...half way round the world as a Tottenham supporter, I am still ethically obliged to treat a lad in a Manchester United shirt.





Speaking of cultural mixes , ask most Australians where they are from and the usual reply is England, Ireland, Germany, Russia, first second or third generation or similar. Renee the nurse insists her racial background was Pakistani. I was gob smacked. Turns out her dad's roots hail from that far off land. She's pretty much diluted as far as that hereditary line goes...we saw her devour a ham sandwich. (I have her permission to tell the tale).

Work is pretty much routine cavities on deciduous molars. We get the occasional adult requesting a fix of hypoplastic incisors. Lady pictured tooth 11 with a composite just placed with contouring of incisal edge still to be done. Tooth 21 was completed later at the same visit. Conversely, I am told that as part of a boy's passage to manhood (known as "men's business") the adolescents front tooth is knocked out with a chiselled stone. Apparently a lad can come to the surgery and ask to have to this done more conventionally. That's a dilemma that I haven't had to deal with yet...extract a sound tooth or wait for the possible complications of a tooth extracted with a stone in the bush?



Most of the adults just want symptomatic relief of pain as simply as possible. We took this chaps abscessed molar out but he didn't want a fix of the front teeth. I'm told extracted teeth are sometimes buried in the place of birth...or if a long way from home the teeth are thrown in that direction..a take away was



requested hence the packet.



So, what's there to do besides dentistry? Fridays, we head back to Alice for the weekend and only leave for Ti Tree again Monday morning. There's a fortnightly market in Alice.

Aborigine art galleries to visit. Each of these works pictured cost AUD 10,000.



There are numerous

Or, try the local cuisine. The Kangaroo tail shown is wrapped in a packet with the heart foundation symbol on it...low fat....low cholesterol. Unfortunately, no halal version so we stuck to Fish and chips, Mc Donald's and an Indian restaurant.

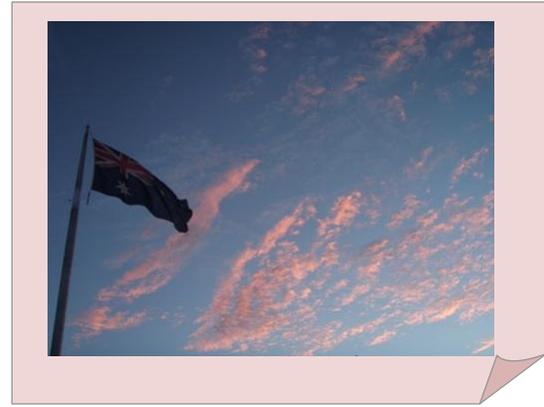


For me, it's the natural sites that appeal. If you arrive a few days earlier than your contract or stay a little later, hire a car to Uluru (Ayers Rock) and climb it. Fly net in hand because they just about leave you alone near the top. For day trips, The McDonnell mountain ranges around Alice are a convenient drive away.

The sunsets are magnificent.

Even better.....the night sky when moonless. The stars are awe inspiring without the pollution of city lights. The Milky Way is visible in its full glory.

Did you know that there are more stars than grains of sand on all the beaches on planet earth? (Google "stars sand")



If you have a temperament that can extract a tooth with a fly landing in your ear, can be culturally sensitive to patients who turn up at your door without an appointment, keep cool in an older dental van (we did not have the new ones that are shortly being rolled out), are patient with kids and tolerate being out of your comfort zone, this is an experience I can recommend. I'd write more but I'm at the limit of emailability (file size). I don't know how to compress this file and there isn't a computer savvy offspring to help me with this.

Next, off to Cairns for 4 weeks for a private job, then to South Africa for the "Two Oceans Marathon" and "Comrades" thereafter.

If you want to contact me, email me anveromar@aol.com and I'll be pleased to further discuss details. Feel free to forward this to anyone dental you may think may be interested.

Anver