

## **POEW Paul Gough**

When I applied for my lateral transfer, I had just over 18 months of my RN service to complete. I was then a CPOCT based in Cyprus with my family. The process was quite a lengthy one with plenty of hoops to jump through. I was offered a position of POEW with 3 years seniority. It is the rule for everyone to drop down a rank. I should be eligible to pick my Chiefs back up next year.

The journey over to Australia was superb. The Australian High Commission handled the move with regard to arranging travel details and removals. They were professional and very helpful. The only thing we had to pay for was the transportation and quarantine of our pet dog. I had to go to Australia House in London to sign the dotted line and take the Oath. We were put up in the Millennium Gloucester Hotel the night before. After signing on, we flew later that evening. The High Commission paid for Business Class and we even had a two day stop over in KL.

On arrival we were met at Canberra Airport by Naval representatives and we were taken to a family apartment hotel, where we could stay until we found suitable defence housing. This process took just two weeks and we moved in just before Christmas. The Defence housing here is superb, so much better than the quarters back in the UK. We are currently living in a 4 bed single storey house, we have 2 living rooms, an en-suite and a double garage.

After Christmas leave I began work at the local Naval establishment here in Canberra. This was a temporary posting until my security clearances could be sorted. During this time I was sent away to HMAS CERBERUS, near Melbourne to complete a 6 week Acquaints course. The course was very easy and enjoyable.

We have been here now for just over 6 months and so far, we have no regrets whatsoever. The lifestyle out here is more relaxed and the environment is so much better than the UK (Plus we have good weather). We still obviously miss our family and friends but they can always come out to us for a holiday.

Our children have settled into school really well. We have bought a large block of land in Adelaide and we will soon begin having our dream house built. All this would not have been possible if we had decided to stay in the UK.