



WORKING IN AUSTRALIA OR NEW ZEALAND AS A CA(SA)



A practical guide to qualification,
employment, visas and relocation



WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR



Chartered Accountants who are
exploring employment opportunities
in Australia or New Zealand.



WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- ✓ Qualification recognition
- ✓ Visa and work authorisation
- ✓ Employers and opportunities
- ✓ Salary expectations
- ✓ Relocation considerations
- ✓ Action plan and next steps



TOPIC

Working Overseas



DIFFICULTY

Intermediate



ESTIMATED READING TIME

20 minutes



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Ask any questions on this Research Pack in the myCAhub CA(SA) FAQ Centre here: myCAhub.co.za/faq

So you want to move to Australia or New Zealand...

CA(SA) is one of the **most portable accounting qualifications** in the world.

South African chartered accountants have a **real advantage** when it comes to **Australia and New Zealand** but the pathway differs meaningfully between the two countries and between "**getting your qualification recognised**" and "**getting a visa.**"

This guide separates those two tracks and walks through both, plus the practical side of actually making the move.

This guide reflects publicly available rules as at **July 2026**.

Immigration and professional body rules change frequently, always confirm current requirements directly with SAICA, CA ANZ, and the relevant immigration authority before making decisions..

PART 1: Professional Qualification Recognition

SAICA and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) have a long-standing **Reciprocal Membership Agreement (RMA)**

This means **NO further professional exams, additional education, or extra practical experience** are required for a CA(SA) in good standing to apply for full CA ANZ membership.

This is a **major point of difference** from CAs converting from many other jurisdictions, who often need to sit bridging exams. \

As a CA(SA), you are essentially **trading one full membership** for another.

Steps to convert CA(SA) to CA ANZ membership

1. Confirm you are a **member in good standing** with SAICA (no disciplinary matters, fees paid, CPD up to date).
2. Obtain a **certified Letter of Good Standing** from SAICA via the SAICA member portal (my.saica.co.za)

Go to your profile, member management and then confirm membership details.
3. **Provide two professional references**, ideally from CA ANZ members, or members of another Global Accounting Alliance (GAA) body if you can't source two CA ANZ referees.
4. Complete the CA ANZ reciprocal **membership application form** and pay the applicable membership fee.
5. Once approved, you **become a full CA ANZ member** with the right to use the "CA" designation in Australia and New Zealand.

What this membership does and doesn't give you

You get **full professional membership**, use of the CA designation, access to CA ANZ's CPD, job boards, and networks.

Counts as **evidence of a comparable qualification** for Australian **skilled migration purposes** (CA ANZ is a recognised body for skills assessment).

Does NOT automatically grant a work visa, membership and immigration are two separate processes

Does NOT automatically grant audit rights.

If you want to sign off audits in Australia, you need separate registration as a Registered Company Auditor ("RCA") with ASIC, which has its own experience and exam requirements. Most CA(SA)s moving into commercial, advisory, or non-audit roles won't need this.

If you don't yet hold full SAICA membership

If you're **still an ITC / APC candidate**, or your training contract isn't complete, the RMA route doesn't apply yet.

You **need to complete your CA(SA) qualification first** or pursue CA ANZ's own CA Program from scratch (which does require their exams and a Mentored Practical Experience component, and can take 3+ years alongside work).

A note on New Zealand specifically

CA ANZ operates as one combined body across both countries, so once you're a CA ANZ member, that status is recognised in **BOTH Australia and New Zealand**.

You DON'T need a separate conversion for NZ.

Historically, **New Zealand's immigration rules** have leaned more heavily on Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand or CPA Australia membership as proof of accounting competence.

From 24 August 2026, the rules are being widened further to recognise accountants who can perform Qualified Statutory Accountant work and hold CPA Australia membership too.

PART 2: Visa Pathways

Getting your **qualification recognised** and getting **permission to live and work** in the country are **two different processes**.

Below is a breakdown of the main immigration routes for each country.

Australia: Skilled Migration

Accountants are a **well-established skilled occupation** in Australia (occupation codes under ANZSCO, General Accountant, Management Accountant, Taxation Accountant, External Auditor).

The main routes are **all points-tested**.

Visa	Type	How it works
Subclass 189: Skilled Independent	Permanent, no sponsorship	Points-tested; live and work anywhere in Australia. Most competitive route for accountants, invitations in 2026 mostly go to 85+ points as accounting sits in a lower-priority occupation tier.
Subclass 190: Skilled Nominated	Permanent, state nomination	A state or territory nominates you (adds 5 points) in exchange for a 2-year commitment to live/work there.
Subclass 491: Skilled Work Regional	Provisional (5 years), state or family sponsored	Adds 15 points, often the fastest realistic route for accountants. After 3 years of regional living/working, you can move to permanent residence via subclass 191.

What the points test looks at

- **Age** (highest points 25 to 32), **English proficiency**, **skilled work experience** (overseas and Australian), **qualifications**, **partner skills**, and **state/regional nomination bonuses**.
- **Minimum threshold** to submit an **Expression of Interest (EOI)** is **65 points** but in practice, accounting is a competitive occupation, and most successful applicants in 2026 are scoring 85 to 95+.
- A **positive skills assessment** from the relevant assessing authority (CA ANZ, CPA Australia, or the Institute of Public Accountants) is required before you can be invited.
- Given how competitive the 189 is for accountants right now, most migration advisers recommend **running a dual-track strategy**: keep a 189 EOI active while also pursuing 190 state nomination or the 491 regional visa, since the regional 15-point bonus can be the difference between qualifying and not.

Employer-sponsored alternative

If you have (or can secure) a job offer from an Australian employer, the **Skills in Demand** (subclass 482) visa is a **faster, non-points-tested route** tied to that employer, with a pathway to permanent residence after a qualifying period.

This is **worth pursuing in parallel** if you're job-hunting rather than relying solely on the points system.

New Zealand: Skilled Migrant Category & Work Visas

New Zealand's system is **currently in transition**. The core mechanics as of **mid-2026** are as follows:

Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)

The **standard route** into skilled work in NZ.

You **need a job offer** from an **Immigration NZ–accredited employer**.

The employer must complete a "**Job Check**" (proving the role is genuinely skilled and, in most cases, that they tried to hire locally first) before you can apply.

Green List pathway

A shortlist of **in-demand roles** that come with a **fast-tracked route** to residence:

- **Tier 1 roles: Straight to Residence Visa** (apply for residence almost immediately once employed).
- **Tier 2 roles: Work to Residence Visa** (residence after 2 years in the role).
- **Accountant roles** are **not consistently on the Green List**, so check the current list for your specific specialisation before assuming eligibility.

Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) Resident Visa

- The **main general residence pathway**, using a simplified points system (you need at least 6 "skilled resident points" from a mix of NZ occupational registration, qualifications, or income level, plus points for skilled NZ work experience).
- **Significant SMC changes** take effect **24 August 2026**, including **new qualification-points weighting** (NZ-completed qualifications score higher).
- Notably for accountants, there will be a **new pathway recognising CPA Australia members** who can perform Qualified Statutory Accountant work.
- If you're planning an NZ move around that date, **check Immigration New Zealand's site** for the finalised settings before applying.

PART 3: Practical tips for making the move

1. Sequence your applications sensibly

- Start the **CA ANZ reciprocal membership application early**, it's the one step with no real downside to doing in advance since it doesn't commit you to migrating.
- **Get your skills assessment done** before you build your Expression of Interest; it can take 2–6 months and is often the long pole in the process.
- **Don't wait for a job offer** to start the points-based EOI process for Australia but do pursue job hunting in parallel, since an employer-sponsored route can be faster.

2. English language testing

- Even as a native or fluent English speaker, you'll **need a recognised test** (IELTS, PTE Academic, TOEFL iBT, or equivalent) for both the **migration skills assessment** and the **points test**
- **Book this early** as slots can be limited and scores need to meet specific thresholds for maximum points.

3. Get your documents in order early

- **Certified copies** of your CA(SA) certificate, SAICA letter of good standing, degree certificates, and a SAQA evaluation if requested.
- A **detailed CV** mapped to ANZSCO duties for your nominated occupation, assessing authorities and case officers look for alignment between your actual work history and the occupation description.
- **Reference letters** that clearly state hours worked per week, dates, duties, and remuneration (vague references are one of the most common causes of delay).

4. Money and logistics

- **Budget for a variety of fees** such as: visa application charges (currently several thousand AUD/NZD per applicant, more for family members), skills assessment fees, English test fees, and migration agent fees if you use one.
- Factor in the **cost of shipping or selling belongings**, temporary **accommodation on arrival**, and a **buffer of 3 to 6 months' living expenses** while you find permanent work, even with a visa in hand.
- **Look into superannuation** (Australia) or **KiwiSaver** (NZ) early, as a CA, you'll want to understand tax residency rules and any South African exit tax implications with a cross-border tax adviser before you move.

5. Job hunting from South Africa

- **LinkedIn is heavily used** in both markets, a locally-styled CV (2 pages, no photo, achievement-led) will land better than a South African-style CV.
- **Recruitment agencies** specialising in accounting/finance (e.g. Robert Half, Hays, Michael Page) are active in both countries and often more responsive to candidates who already hold a visa or are close to one.
- **Big Four and mid-tier firms** in both countries regularly hire CA(SA)s directly and are familiar with the RMA (this can simplify conversations with recruiters considerably).

6. Settling in

- **Join local CA ANZ member events** and industry meet-ups early, **networking matters more** in small markets like NZ than it does in larger South African cities.
- **Keep your SAICA membership active** if you plan to retain the CA(SA), check current CPD requirements for both bodies so you're not caught short at renewal time.

- **Give yourself grace** in the first 6 to 12 months, workplace norms, communication styles, and even accounting terminology (e.g. GST vs VAT, differences in tax and super/KiwiSaver treatment) take some adjustment.

PART 4: Quick Reference Summary

Question	Answer
Do I need extra exams to be recognised as a CA in Australia/NZ?	No, the SAICA-CA ANZ Reciprocal Membership Agreement means no further exams for CA(SA)s in good standing.
Does CA ANZ membership grant audit rights?	No, audit sign-off in Australia needs separate ASIC Registered Company Auditor status.
What's the main Australian visa route?	Points-tested skilled migration: subclass 189 (independent), 190 (state nominated), or 491 (regional), most accountants need 85+ points for 189.
What's the main NZ visa route?	Accredited Employer Work Visa, potentially leading to Green List or Skilled Migrant Category residence, NZ rules are changing from 24 August 2026.
What should I do first?	Apply for your CA ANZ reciprocal membership and start your skills assessment (both can be done well before you have a job offer or firm moving date)

- > **No extra professional exams** - CA(SA)s in good standing can obtain full CA ANZ membership without further exams, education or practical experience.
- > **Recognition and visas are separate** - CA ANZ membership confirms professional recognition but does not automatically grant work or residence rights.
- > **Multiple migration pathways** - Australia offers points-tested and employer-sponsored routes; New Zealand uses accredited-employer and skilled-residence routes.
- > **Strong advantage for CA(SA)s** - the qualification is portable, recognised in both countries and familiar to employers across Australia and New Zealand.



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