

# Fluffy four-legged Australians emigrate to South Africa



Left to right: Gavin Lindhorst, Justin Weaver of Halcyon Alpaca Farm in Victoria and Helen Fitzgerald

A group of over 50, unusual Australians left Oz recently to travel to Johannesburg and take up residence in South Africa.

The 53 emigrants are high pedigree alpacas - a cute, smaller relative of the camel and llama - which are bred for their superior quality fleeces and can be worth over R100 000 each.

South African Dr Gavin Lindhorst, of African Alpacas, first imported 60 alpacas to South Africa from Chile in 2000. After successfully breeding two generations, finding new quality bloodlines became a priority.

'I decided to select Australian alpacas for their superior Peruvian genetics and fleece qualities,' said Lindhorst. 'Their bloodlines are respected globally, even winning championship

awards in the UK.'

Lindhorst viewed over 600 animals in Australia, to select 53 for breeders in Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape.

The alpacas travel in pallets containing up to 14 animals. Three pallets are from New South Wales, mainly from Coolaroo and Starline Alpaca Studs, and one from River-gum Rise Alpacas in Western Australia. Quarantine is one month in Australia and one month in the Kempton Park Quarantine Station on arrival.

'These easy to handle animals are ideally suited to smallholdings, either in small breeding groups, or merely for the pleasure of ownership, as farm pets,' said Lindhorst. 'Alpacas produce a soft, high quality fleece, like cashmere, which is spun for



knitwear or for weaving. These products are durable and display excellent thermal properties,' he said.

'A thriving cottage industry is taking off in South Africa and, with the new import of Australian alpacas, we hope to take the business to the next level and to encourage more people, who are looking for a low-maintenance, high return investment, to get involved.'

Lindhorst added that he hoped the import would be the first of many and that other opportunities could be explored between Australian and South African alpaca farmers.

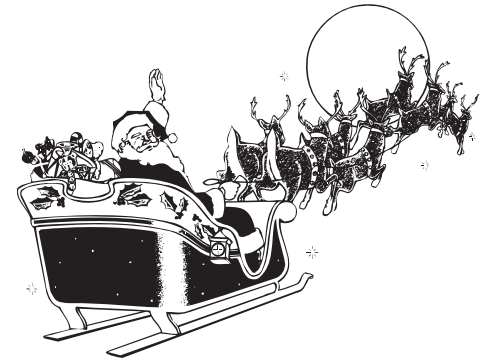
Christine Skinner



SA  
Southern Africans Down Under  
Independent



We at SA Independent  
wish you a Merry and  
safe Christmas and a  
Happy, prosperous  
New Year!



## Do you want to receive your tax refund before the end of the tax year?

Many individual taxpayers receive a tax refund after lodging their income tax returns. The reason for this is that these employees have high tax deductible expenses i.e. motor vehicle expenses or a loss from a negatively geared rental property. Taxpayers are allowed to apply to the Australian Taxation Office ("ATO") to have the PAYG Withholding tax on their salaries reduced to take into account the deductible expenses that they will have in their income tax returns.

### Example

John is an employee with an

annual gross salary of \$45,000. John owns a negatively geared rental property and estimates that his rental property loss will be \$15,000. Therefore his estimated taxable income will be \$30,000 (\$45,000 - \$15,000). John can apply to have his PAYG Withholding rate calculated based on his estimated taxable income of \$30,000. This will result in him receiving a higher monthly net salary instead of waiting until he lodges his income tax return to claim his refund.

### Important Points

The ATO will process your appli-

cation based on the information provided. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information provided is not false or misleading - this could result in prosecution and a penalty. If your application is approved, you are still required to lodge an income tax return. Applications need to be made annually for each tax year and you are required to submit a new application during the year if your circumstances change i.e. your estimated taxable income changes. The ATO will not process your application if you have outstanding tax returns or



Jared Balkin (l) and Stuart Boyers (r) of SME Business Solutions

an overdue tax debt.

### How to Apply

2004 applications can be submitted electronically or by paper form. Both these methods are available at:

<http://www.ato.gov.au/content/31199.htm>

If this situation applies to your circumstances then why not take advantage and receive a higher monthly income instead of waiting until tax returns are due?

## South Africa helps to save albatrosses and petrels



South Africa and Australia help save these magnificent birds

On 6 November 2003 South Africa signed the International Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) in Canberra, Australia. By this action South Africa became the fifth country to ratify the Agreement, following Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador and Spain.

ACAP aims to reduce the threat of extinction for the 28 species of albatrosses and larger petrels covered by the Agreement. These birds are killed as by-catch in longline fishing operations. They attempt to snatch baited hooks and are then dragged beneath the sea surface and drowned. Simple effective by-catch mitigation measures such as bird-scaring streamers and line setting at night need to be widely adopted if these magnificent birds are to be saved from extinction.

The Agreement, which includes an Action Plan, describes a number of conservation measures to be implemented. Apart from reducing seabird by-catch from longline fishing, these include research and monitoring, eradication at breeding sites of introduced species such as rats and feral cats, reduction of disturbance and habitat loss, and reduction of marine pollution.

South Africa is particularly important for the conservation of albatrosses and petrels. It is the range state to 15 of the 28 species covered under ACAP. South Africa's sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands are an important breeding site for nine of these species, most of which have a formal threatened conservation status. The Prince Edward Islands are particularly important to the Wandering Alba-

tross, hosting more than 40% of the world's population of this species. The Wandering Albatross is the largest of all albatrosses, with a wingspan of up to 3.5 metres. By joining ACAP it is expected that South Africa will boost conservation related research on the Prince Edward Islands, allowing for the best management of these important populations of threatened species.

(The text of the Agreement and its Action Plan, along with the first three issues of 'ACAP News' produced by the Interim Secretariat, may be found at [www.ea.gov.au/coasts/species/seabirds/albatross](http://www.ea.gov.au/coasts/species/seabirds/albatross))

South African High Commission,  
Canberra