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# Doing Market Research on Australia

a how to guide

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## is this guide for you?

This guide is designed for new exporters or those businesses already exporting, and who need some practical advice about where to start when researching export opportunities in the Australian market. It covers the different types of market research most useful for exporters, and a range of practical and efficient tools you can use to find the information quickly and at little cost. It includes:

- a practical introduction to using internet research and online search engines
- links to online resources specifically relevant to exporting e.g. trade statistics, tax and duty rates, regulatory information, media sources

The information provided in this guide is specific to the Australian market; if you find this document useful, you might want to look at the following NZTE guides which explore related areas of exporting in more depth:

- [\*Guide to Exporting to Australia\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Market Selection\*](#)
- [\*NZTE Legal Checklists for Exporters\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Preparing an Export Plan\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Franchising in Australia\*](#)
- [\*Costs of Setting Up an Office in Sydney\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Virtual Office Facilities in Australia\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Venture Capital in Australia\*](#)
- [\*Australian ICT Guide \(3 volumes\)\*](#)

## introduction

While this guide provides a number of useful sources for doing market research on Australia, it is not an exhaustive list. In addition to the sources listed in the guide, you should use a range of search engines and other resources such as web portals and directories to ensure that you obtain as much relevant information as possible.

One of the most popular search engines is Google, which provides both very good coverage of the web and fast, relevant results. However, you should also use other search engines which will have links to information that may not be available through Google. Hamilton City Libraries has a comprehensive list of search engines, which includes some Australian specific search engines [www.hamiltonlibraries.co.nz/page/pageid/2145833228](http://www.hamiltonlibraries.co.nz/page/pageid/2145833228)

If you are not familiar with using search engines, the University of Canterbury library has developed a quick and easy to use on-line tutorial which will help you understand how search

engines work, and provide you with basic techniques for improving your search results  
<http://library.canterbury.ac.nz/infolit/guides/web/>

Although it is important to use a wide range of sources when undertaking your market research, you also need to ensure that the sources that you use are reliable and up-to-date. In general, it is preferable to use information from official government sources and well-recognised international organisations, such as the World Bank, United Nations and OECD. In addition, industry associations and educational institutions (e.g. universities) are generally also reliable sources of information.

Finally, when you present your research in your business or export plan you should cite the sources of the information that you have used. Firstly, this will demonstrate that you have used relevant and reliable sources. Secondly, if you do need to update the information you will be able to quickly find where you sourced it from.

All links in this document were working at the time of publication, and NZTE will regularly be checking the document for broken links. However, if you find that the link to a particular page or document is not working you can often find it by searching for the name of the page/document in a search engine.

## market overview

Australia is New Zealand's main export market, and is generally the first market tackled by New Zealand businesses venturing into exporting. It is New Zealand's closest market and the two countries have similar cultural and business environments. In addition, CER<sup>1</sup> has played a significant role in reducing the barriers to trade between the two countries.

However, there are a number of challenges to consider when thinking about exporting to Australia. These include the greater size of the Australian market, which means that you are likely to face greater numbers of strong local and international competitors. Also, while the two countries are very similar, there are differences in market regulations and business culture that you will need to investigate.

NZTE has a number of publications on Australia, which provides information on the issues that you will need to consider and investigate before thinking of exporting to Australia, including the Country Brief for Australia and a Guide to Exporting to Australia.  
[www.marketnewzealand.com/australia](http://www.marketnewzealand.com/australia)

NZTE's Offshore Sector Profiles provide more specific information on trends, regulatory issues and opportunities in key sectors in Australia.  
[www.marketnewzealand.com/exporterinfo](http://www.marketnewzealand.com/exporterinfo)

Other good general sources of information about the Australian market are:

- U.S. Commercial Service, Doing Business In Australia: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies [www.buyusainfo.net/teams/index.cfm?load\\_page=asiapacific](http://www.buyusainfo.net/teams/index.cfm?load_page=asiapacific)

The U.S. Commercial Service publishes the country commercial guides annually. They are

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<sup>1</sup> CER is the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement, which was signed by the two countries in 1983. CER established free trade in goods and services between the two countries, subject to certain exceptions.

aimed at U.S. companies but provide useful information on selling products and services in Australia, sector opportunities, trade regulations and standards, and the investment climate. (note: as of Jan 2007, the U.S. Commercial Service page for Australia was still under construction),

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)  
[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The ABS is the Australian government's official statistical agency. The ABS produces a wide range of statistics and publications on Australia's economy, industry, population and people. Some of the most relevant ABS products are highlighted in this guide.

- [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au)  
[www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au)

This is an Australian government website which provides a wide range of information, covering topics such as intellectual property, registration and licences, labelling, and taxation.

## trade statistics

Examining a country's trade statistics helps you to find out what products a country imports, and where the products are being imported from. Also, examining the statistics over a period of several years will help you determine whether the market for a particular product is growing or shrinking.

The ABS provides detailed monthly statistics on what goods Australia is exporting and importing. The most recent summary data can be downloaded as a PDF. More detailed Excel tables, which breakdown the imports by state and product category, are also available:

- 5368.0 - International Trade in Goods and Services  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/5368.0Nov%202006?OpenDocument>

It is also important to gather information about the goods and services that are produced or manufactured in Australia. The ABS produces a quarterly series which provides information on sales of goods and services, and inventories. It also has statistics on company profits and wages and salaries.

- 5676.0 - Business Indicators, Australia, Jun 2006  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/5676.0Sep%202006?OpenDocument>

## demographic information

Demographic information can provide valuable information about potential customers and their

spending patterns. For example, statistics such as the population make-up, per capita income and spending patterns can be important indicators of the market potential for your product or service.

The entry for Australia in the CIA World Factbook provides an overview of the Australian population, age structure, ethnicity and religion

[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/as.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/as.html)

More detailed demographic information is available in the following ABS publications:

- 6530.0 - Household Expenditure Survey 2003-04  
[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6530.02003-04%20\(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6530.02003-04%20(Reissue)?OpenDocument)
- 6523.0 - Household Income and Income Distribution  
[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6523.02003-04?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6523.02003-04?OpenDocument)
- 8501 - Retail Trade  
[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/8501.0](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/8501.0)
- 3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2006  
[www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3101.0Jun%202006?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3101.0Jun%202006?OpenDocument)
- Data from the 2001 Census<sup>2</sup>  
[www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/Census%20data](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/Census%20data)

## regional information

While Australia can be seen as a single market, in many ways its states and territories are distinct and independent markets. It is worthwhile investigating these regional differences if you are thinking of exporting to more than one Australian state.

For example, payroll taxes, land taxes and stamp duties are the responsibility of the state and territory governments, and they do vary from state to state. Information about the state-specific taxes can be found on the websites of the state revenue offices. There is a link to them on the Australian Tax Office website

[www.ato.gov.au/corporate/content.asp?doc=/content/8792.htm](http://www.ato.gov.au/corporate/content.asp?doc=/content/8792.htm)

business.gov.au provides links to ABS statistical publications on the states and territories. The page also provides links to information produced by the state and territory governments

[www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/Business+Topics/Market+research+statistics/Market+research+in+your+state+or+territory.htm](http://www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/Business+Topics/Market+research+statistics/Market+research+in+your+state+or+territory.htm)

<sup>2</sup> The 2006 Census is being conducted in August 2006. Results will be available in 2007.

## competitor information

Another issue worth investigating is the number of competitors selling similar products or services in the market you are interested in. Business directories are a useful way of finding information about the number of competitors operating in a particular market, and who they are.

Some general business directories include:

- Australian Yellow Pages. You can search for companies by business type, or the product, service and brand that they sell. You can also restrict your searches to a specific location [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au)
- Australian Business Directory [www.abd.com.au/home.php](http://www.abd.com.au/home.php)
- Nationwide Business Directory of Australia [www.nationwide.com.au](http://www.nationwide.com.au)
- Australia Business Directory [www.streetdirectory.com.au/sd\\_new/business.cgi?UrlSD=Australia/BusinessDirectory](http://www.streetdirectory.com.au/sd_new/business.cgi?UrlSD=Australia/BusinessDirectory)

Directories targeted at specific types of businesses include:

- Australian Suppliers Database, maintained by the Australian Trade Commission [www.austrade.gov.au/overseas/layout/0,,0\\_S3-1\\_-2\\_-3\\_PWB110407841-4\\_-5\\_-6\\_-7\\_.00.html](http://www.austrade.gov.au/overseas/layout/0,,0_S3-1_-2_-3_PWB110407841-4_-5_-6_-7_.00.html)
- Australian Manufacturers Guide [www.ausmanufacturers.com.au](http://www.ausmanufacturers.com.au)
- Australian Wholesalers Guide [www.auswholesalers.com.au](http://www.auswholesalers.com.au)

### Competitor analysis

It is also worthwhile researching more detailed information about your potential competitors, not just how many there are and who they are.

If companies are listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) they are required to publish regular reports and financial information. As well as providing details of a company's financial performance, these reports can provide you with a wealth of other information which may include the company's market share, its strategies and objectives, and plans for expansion and/or new products.

There is a directory of the listed companies on the ASX website [www.asx.com.au/asx/research/CompanyListed.jsp](http://www.asx.com.au/asx/research/CompanyListed.jsp)

While companies that are not listed on the ASX are not required to publish as much information about what they are doing, you can often find out information about them by regularly checking for coverage of the companies in newspapers and journals.

As well as the news sources listed at the end of this guide, the following websites also provide business and company news -

- Yahoo Finance Australia  
<http://au.biz.yahoo.com/financenews/>
- Ninemsn business  
<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/business>
- Tradingroom -  
<http://tradingroom.com.au>

## Company and potential partner checks

As well as researching your potential competitors, it is just as important to research any companies you are considering doing business with to ensure that they are reliable.

The Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) is the Australian Government's corporate regulator.<sup>3</sup> The ASIC has a free National Names Index database, where you can find basic information about a company, such as when it was first registered and its current status - [www.search.asic.gov.au/gns001.html](http://www.search.asic.gov.au/gns001.html)

The ASIC also maintains a database of people who have been disqualified from involvement in the management of a corporation, or banned from practising in the financial services industry - [www.search.asic.gov.au/ban.html](http://www.search.asic.gov.au/ban.html)

You can purchase more detailed information about companies and individuals, such as background and credit checks, from ASIC authorised information brokers [www.asic.gov.au/asic/asic\\_srchlodg.nsf/byheadline/Information+brokers?openDocument](http://www.asic.gov.au/asic/asic_srchlodg.nsf/byheadline/Information+brokers?openDocument)

As with your potential competitors, it is also worth checking the Australian news sources for any coverage of companies you are considering dealing with. Another useful news source is the Google News search engine <http://news.google.com.au/nwshp?hl=en&tab=wn&q=>

## taxes and duties

### Taxes

While CER has significantly helped to reduce barriers to trans-Tasman business the two countries maintain direct control over their respective tax systems, and there are significant differences between Australian and New Zealand tax regulations.

NZTE's Guide to Exporting to Australia contains information about the Australian taxation system, including a chapter on GST [www.marketnewzealand.co.nz/MNZ/services/?SectionID=14426&ContentID=14497](http://www.marketnewzealand.co.nz/MNZ/services/?SectionID=14426&ContentID=14497)

The business.gov.au website also has a section on tax [www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/Business+Topics/Taxation/](http://www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/Business+Topics/Taxation/)

The Australian Taxation Office produces a range of information about tax issues related to doing business in Australia, some of which is specifically aimed at New Zealand businesses:

- Doing business in Australia: overview  
[www.ato.gov.au/large/content.asp?doc=/content/64191.htm&pc=001/009/041/001/001&mnu=&mfp=&st=&cy=1](http://www.ato.gov.au/large/content.asp?doc=/content/64191.htm&pc=001/009/041/001/001&mnu=&mfp=&st=&cy=1)
- Providing Services in Australia  
[www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/content/50675.htm&pc=001/003/074/001/001](http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/content/50675.htm&pc=001/003/074/001/001)

<sup>3</sup> The ASIC has a similar role to the New Zealand Companies Office.

[&mnu=&mfp=&st=&cy=1](#)

- Business between Australia and New Zealand  
[www.ato.gov.au/businesses/pathway.asp?pc=001/003/074](http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses/pathway.asp?pc=001/003/074)

## Duties

Under CER New Zealand goods are given preferential treatment or duty-free entry to Australia, provided that they meet specific rules which ensure that they come only from New Zealand. The Australian Customs Service produces a number of publications which explain the rules of origin in more detail –

[www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=5339](http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=5339)

## regulatory information

It is important to ensure that products comply with Australian regulations. Three key compliance areas are:

- labelling
- warranties and refund policies
- product safety and liability.

Chapter 11 of the NZTE Guide to Exporting to Australia gives an overview of these areas, and provides links to more detailed information

[www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/services/?SectionID=14426&ContentID=14422](http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/services/?SectionID=14426&ContentID=14422)

## Quarantine restrictions

Australia takes its quarantine regulations and controls seriously, and restrictions apply to a number of product categories including food and beverage, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

You can check whether your product is subject to quarantine conditions by referring to the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) import conditions ICON database

[www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex\\_querycontent.asp](http://www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex_querycontent.asp)

## other information sources

Australia.gov.au  
[www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au)

This is the main Australian government portal, which provides links to information and services on over 700 Australian federal government websites as well as selected state and territory resources.

Business.gov.au

[www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/GB+Directory/](http://www.business.gov.au/Business+Entry+Point/GB+Directory/)

A directory providing details for federal, state, territory and local governments and for business associations.

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

[www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au)

Includes links to state based, industry based and bilateral business councils, and industry associations.

New Zealand Companies Office

[www.companies.govt.nz/cms/how-do-i-do-business-in-australia](http://www.companies.govt.nz/cms/how-do-i-do-business-in-australia)

Information about doing business in Australia, including a fact sheet on Company Searching and Registration in Australia.

ACNielsen Australia

<http://au.acnielsen.com/site/index.shtml>

The website has regular news and press releases, and there are also some reports and publications available to download for free. Examples of these include:

- MarketPlace Quarterly (for FMCG retailers and manufacturers)
- Top 100 Brands Report (Annual)
- Convenience Report (Annual)

IBISWorld

[www.ibisworld.com.au](http://www.ibisworld.com.au)

IBISWorld is an Australian-based market research company. It publishes a free monthly newsletter which generally focuses on a specific industry in Australia

[www.ibisworld.com.au/newsletter/default.aspx](http://www.ibisworld.com.au/newsletter/default.aspx)

Google Australia

[www.google.com.au](http://www.google.com.au)

Using Google Australia will allow you to restrict your searches to websites and information from Australia.

## Australian news sources

Australian Financial Review

<http://afr.com>

Sydney Morning Herald

[www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au)

The Age (Melbourne)

[www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)

The Canberra Times

<http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/home.asp>

The Adelaide Advertiser

[www.theadvertiser.news.com.au](http://www.theadvertiser.news.com.au)

The West Australian

[www.thewest.com.au](http://www.thewest.com.au)

The Australian

[www.theaustralian.news.com.au](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au)

## how New Zealand Trade and Enterprise can help

To assess your readiness to export, we recommend you score yourself using the Export Assessment Guide within the NZTE how to guide [Are You Ready to Export?](#), or use the interactive self-assessment guide on the MarketNewZealand website:

[www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Services/Survey.aspx](http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Services/Survey.aspx)

For businesses that are thinking about export, or that require further export preparation (scores below 70), we recommend the following programmes:

- Workshops and free online courses through the Exporter Education Programme designed to provide advice and practical skills for new and existing exporters ([www.exported.co.nz](http://www.exported.co.nz)). The following workshops are particularly relevant to topics covered in this guide:
  - [Exporter Education Workshop: Effective Market Research](#)
  - [Exporter Education Workshop: Exporting to Australia](#)
  - [Educator Education Workshop: Planning for Export Success](#)
  - [Exporter Education Workshop: Tax Issues for Exporters to Australia](#)
  - [Online Workshop: Researching International Markets](#)
  
- The fully funded Enterprise Training Programme designed to help develop and grow your business, complemented by one-on-one follow-up coaching with the course presenter ([www.nzte.govt.nz/etp](http://www.nzte.govt.nz/etp)).
  
- Additional Guides are available on [www.marketnewzealand.com](http://www.marketnewzealand.com)
  - [Guide to Exporting to Australia](#)
  - [NZTE Legal Checklists for Exporters](#)
  - [Guide to Market Selection](#)

- [Guide to Preparing an Export Plan](#)
- [Guide to Franchising in Australia](#)
- [Costs of Setting Up an Office in Sydney](#)
- [Guide to Virtual Office Facilities in Australia](#)
- [Guide to Venture Capital in Australia](#)
- [Australian ICT Guide \(3 volumes\)](#)

For businesses that are well under way in their preparation for export (scores of 70 or more), we recommend any of the above the programmes as well as:

- NZTE Enterprise Development Grant – Market Development component. This grant can be used for marketing-related expenditure related to entering or promoting a better position in an international market. For more details refer to [www.nzte.govt.nz/section/14187.aspx](http://www.nzte.govt.nz/section/14187.aspx).

**Please note any market development activity in Australia is ineligible in respect of grants.**

For businesses that are advanced in their preparation for export (scores of 90 or more), we recommend any of the above programmes. In addition we may be able to offer services and market intelligence to help you succeed in export, including:

- assistance with market selection and market entry
- valuable business contacts worldwide
- advice on export procedures and regulations
- overseas market research

For further guidance or clarification please call NZTE on 0800 555 888, email us at [info@nzte.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzte.govt.nz) or visit [www.marketnewzealand.com](http://www.marketnewzealand.com).

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