

# Top ten relocation hints and tips

Relocating to a new country takes courage and can certainly be one of life's most exciting opportunities. It can also be one of the most challenging and stressful times for every member of the family writes **Elizabeth Ashley**.

International research shows relocation stress as second only to the death of a loved one on the human stress scale, so understanding this stress and pacing both yourself and all members of the family is critical to a successful relocation.

## FORWARD PLANNING

Access to real local information before you arrive is vital and the Internet provides the perfect tool. Involve every member of the family in researching your new city and finding the neighbourhoods best suited to your housing, budget, transport and lifestyle requirements.

Be realistic about your requirements and budget – if these don't match the neighbourhoods you are looking at, modify your expectations or your search areas to get a better balance. Accurate research is vital and will definitely pay off later on.

## GET ORGANISED

Update your address book making sure you have current email addresses. If these are on your computer, don't forget to back up your system, burn a CD or buy a memory stick to travel with.

Arrange for power of attorney of your affairs in your absence. Are your Wills up to date? Make copies of important or legal documents – passports, birth and marriage certificates, social security certificates, medical records, school records, bank records, insurance certificates – and leave a copy with family or a solicitor, taking the originals with you.

Make the hard decisions early. Decide where your pet will be happiest and if not moving with you,

give yourself plenty of time to find an alternative to suit the whole family.

## THINKING OF THE CHILDREN

For children a move means a confusing mix of excitement and fear. It requires a lot of energy to resettle and establish new friends and support networks and it's hard for children and adolescents. One of the best ways to reduce stressful problems is to always keep children in the loop and get them actively involved in the relocation process.

Let children help researching their new city environment, and what better way than on the Internet?

Before leaving home, have a farewell party as it helps them get closure. Collect addresses and email addresses of friends and family and teach them how to send emails and attach photos.

## MONEY

Transferring money is high on the 'to-do' list and often people are rarely prepared for the complications that can arise with their financial affairs. Explore the various alternatives when transferring money internationally as it could result in thousands of dollars in savings. There are complex risks and potential hidden costs involved so it is important that you deal with a reputable company who can help organise your finances before you leave home and have funds, accounts and credit cards available on arrival to your new destination. Don't forget to get advice on either moving or managing your pension.

## ON ARRIVAL

Usually on arrival you will require short term accommodation till your furniture and shipped goods arrive and you are able to rent or purchase a property. Be careful, as a lengthy stay can often be the most expensive component of your move as well as emotionally unsettling to all. This is where your initial research into

housing and neighbourhoods, prior to leaving home will really pay off and help you concentrate your search. Don't forget you will need those important papers – health, insurance, banking etcetera. when you arrive, so keep them in a safe place away from the packers!

Find an Internet shop where you can access all the information you have been compiling from the Internet - that's the benefit of a CD or memory stick of your research.

## FINDING THE RIGHT HOME

The rental market is smaller than in Britain as traditionally Australians purchase property to live in.

Property search sites will give you an indication of availabilities and prices in your target suburbs, as well as access to the larger agents. Properties come onto the rental market about two weeks prior to being let.

Prioritise your requirements and be prepared to be flexible with expectations and price ranges.

## HEALTH

The primary health insurance scheme is Medicare which is funded through income tax. Australia has a reciprocal healthcare agreement with the UK which will allow you to take advantage of certain Medicare benefits; however you may still not be able to choose your doctor.

To have greater choice and control about who treats you, hospitals and how quickly you can get treatment, you will need to consider taking out private health insurance. Don't forget to take copies of the entire family's medical and dental records with you!

## FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

There is great variety of choices for preschool, primary or secondary education – state, denominational or independent systems. Most of these schools will have websites and early research in your key suburbs is vital, as is finding out the availability of

positions as this could well influence your decision on housing.

Some points to consider are ease of transport, the schools aims and philosophies and academic performance, curriculum and homework policy as well as discipline and behaviour. Teaching techniques and class sizes are important, as is the cultural mix of students.

What facilities are there for music, art and sport as well as extra curricular activities and after school clubs?

Lastly ask about the school's commitment for individual care and support of students.

## SETTLING IN

Allow yourself and your family time to adjust to your new environment. Absorbing so much new information is exhausting! During a major move it is normal to experience a wide range of emotional stages from anxiety and excitement at the beginning to anger and frustration when confronting difficult changes and, at times, homesick, loneliness and discouragement.

The period of adjustment is different for everyone and it takes a lot of patience and understanding by all members of the family. The better prepared you are for this rollercoaster of emotions the more equipped you will be to move through them and get the most out of your new home.

## IN SHORT

We are living at a time of unprecedented global wealth, opportunity, travel and communication. The challenge is to make early decisions, do your research well, adopt a positive attitude and get the very most out of every opportunity.

■ Elizabeth Ashley works for *relocations-made-easy* providing, real local knowledge for informed choices to British emigrants  
[www.relocations-made-easy.com.au](http://www.relocations-made-easy.com.au)

## NEWSFLASH:

A new Internet-based relocation tool has been launched that could be of significant help to those who are not able to make constant research trips back and forth between the UK and Australia before they emigrate.

*Relocations-made-easy* is an on-line, do-it-yourself relocation computer programme designed to help with the process of moving to any Australian city.

It includes information that has been gathered by people who have lived, worked and raised their families in each destination city.

The user logs in via the website and is then provided with information to suit their needs. The programme will then suggest a range of locations most likely to suit housing, education and lifestyle requirements.

The idea is to allow users to get a quick handle on aspects of the city they are moving to that might otherwise take a great deal of time to discover and will hopefully ensure they are adequately prepared with accurate expectations.

The resource should help people make fruitful preliminary research and contact anyone needed for information before they leave home so they can hit-the-ground-running and settle in as quickly and smoothly as possible in their new city.

For more information go to:  
[www.relocations-made-easy.com.au](http://www.relocations-made-easy.com.au)



*Relocations-made-easy* was the brainchild of Shani Alexander



What are you most fearing about your new life in Oz? Which part of the relocation process do you envision causing you most hassles? Whatever your worries you can be sure others are feeling exactly the same way. To share your thoughts with other readers of *Emigrate Australia*, email: [david.fuller@outboundmedia.co.uk](mailto:david.fuller@outboundmedia.co.uk)

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