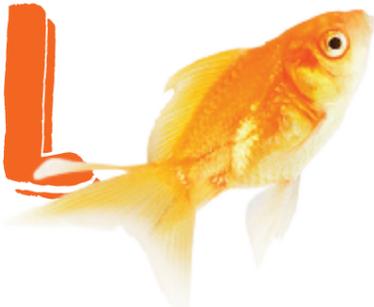


10 STEPS TO ARRIVAL SURVIVAL



Ensure you survive the first stage of your new life Down Under with these handy tips from relocation experts *Sarah Tester* and *Sally Crawford*

So your visa has been granted, furniture on route and your flights booked. Any day now you will be starting your new life down under. Even though a lot of the hard work has been done there are still a few procedures you will have to do on arrival. Our top tips will ensure you survive the first stage of your migration making the process as smooth as possible. Be prepared before you leave.

1. SET UP YOUR BANK ACCOUNT

You can have your Australian bank accounts set up and ready to go up to three months before you arrive. Start transferring money to Australia straight away so you're ready to access as soon as you land. Commonwealth Bank have a quick and easy system which only takes a few minutes to set up. When you arrive in Perth you just head to a branch of your choice to verify your ID and collect your cards. You can find out all the information you need on the Banking in Australia page on www.apieceofperth.com

2. SAVES ON YOUR CURRENCY TRANSFERS

The whole migration process is a pretty

Consider setting up a bank account before you arrive



costly process so saving a few pounds where possible is always handy. Using a currency transfer expert can actually save you hundreds as they can offer the best rates, possible giving you more dollars in your pocket. A Piece of Perth have worked with Moneycorp for over five years now and they offer our readers fee free transfers saving you up to £45 per transfer.

3. ORGANISE YOUR PAPERWORK

Make sure you pack all your essential paperwork in your luggage and not your container. Birth certificates, references, bank statements and a record of your child's immunisation record are all essential. These will be needed when applying for your first rental, enrolling in school and applying for Medicare.

4. APPLY FOR A TAX FILE NUMBER

Tax file numbers (TFNs) are issued by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and this specific number is used to identify your tax records.

It is not compulsory to have a TFN. However, without it your employer will not be able to tax you at the correct rate and will withhold 45-47 per cent of your wages. You also may not be entitled to certain allowances.

The process of applying for a TFN is best done online at www.ato.gov.au once you arrive.

If you plan to work on a self employed basis within Australia you will need to apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN).

When an organisation applies for and receives their ABN, the business details from their application are recorded in the Australian Business Register (ABR).

You can apply for an ABN at the Australian Business Register by visiting the website www.abr.gov.au. >>



5. REGISTER AT CENTRELINK

Centrelink is the government agency where you can apply for Medicare and any relevant benefits such as Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Family Tax Benefit. Medicare gives you access to free or subsidised treatment from health care professionals such as doctors, specialists, optometrists and dentists. Medicare also gets you free treatment and accommodation as a public (Medicare) patient in a public hospital. To register for Medicare head to your nearest Centrelink branch. Visit www.centrelink.gov.au to find your nearest.

6. FIND EMPLOYMENT

Most migrants would love to have employment sorted before they arrive but it's not always possible. Don't be disheartened if you have contacted agencies before your arrival and haven't heard back, many companies will only be interested in you once you have arrived.

When starting your search for employment there are a number of avenues to look at. Most commonly, people use large job search sites such as www.seek.com and www.jobfinder.com.au. Check out the newspapers also. The *West Australian* newspaper, for instance, is the biggest newspaper in WA and companies, especially trades, regularly advertise job positions here.

It's also worth registering with some of the many employment agencies who offer employment services for sales/marketing, construction, engineering, teaching and much more.

Also, get talking to everyone and anyone, as a lot of the time it's about who you know and not what you know.

7. FINDING THE RIGHT SUBURB

Until you actually live in Australia it will be impossible to know about every suburb on offer. Research on this subject can take hours of time on the internet and can give you no more of a perspective just more of a headache!

Firstly, make a list of the important things to you, such as distance to beach, access to public transport, access to CBD, good schools, and most importantly, budget. There will be some things you may have to forfeit, so be clear on what things you are not prepared to move on. If



Find work by logging on to one of the large job search sites

you're moving to Western Australia visit www.apieceofperth.com to view suburb profiles all conveniently located on an interactive map so you have an idea on where about's these suburbs are situated and what they have to offer. You will find that all the research has already been done for you!

Sites such as www.realestate.com.au will give you an idea of what is on the market for renting and buying.

8. FIND SCHOOLS

Finding the right schools for your children the first time is very important. It's a vital part of your relocation that the children settle quickly, make new friends and embrace the new way of schooling they will encounter.

All government schools work on a boundary system so make sure you research these first. This may even be the decider on what suburb you settle in.

Some schools offer specialist programs that are available to out-of-area students and a handful offer gifted and talented programmes.

Private schooling can be an affordable option in Australia too with fees starting from approximately A\$2,000 up to A\$20,000. For more information on private schools visit www.privateschoolsdirectory.com.au.

9. TAKE YOUR TIME

Arrive with an open mind and don't put pressure on yourself. Yes, there are key tasks that you need to get sorted first but take time to drive around the suburbs and visit the city to familiarise yourself with your new home and surroundings.

Making friends is such an important part of migrating and will take some effort. You will probably need to step outside your comfort zone and get talking to everyone! Remember that all migrants are or have been in the same position!

10. GET INVOLVED!

Why not adapt the Australian lifestyle and join the local surf club! Surfing offers great fun and fitness for all ages.

Australia has some of the most incredible coastlines in the world, so get out there and enjoy them with fishing, cycling and walking.

Australian Football League (AFL) is massive in Australia so get yourself and the kids involved by going to a local game or joining the local footie club.

Introduce yourself to the neighbours, and if you have children of school age, do try and make the effort to talk to parents in the playground and organise play dates for the children. Many a lasting friendship has been made on the school playground for children, as well as adults. 

■ Sally Crawford and Sarah Tester are directors of A Piece of Perth, who assist migrants relocating to Western Australia. A Piece of Perth's new revamped website is a hub of information designed specifically for migrants. You can also sign up its newsletter and download a free relocation survival pack which includes a cost of living comparison. Web: www.apieceofperth.com