

# SHOULD YOU SELL UP?

As well as being an emotional issue, there are also important financial implications to think about when selling your home prior to your move Down Under, writes **Karen Bleakley**



**M**oving abroad is a massive decision. When we told our family and friends we had decided to move to Australia, quite a few of them assumed we'd be keeping our house, so we "had somewhere to come back to if it didn't work out."

Moving to the other side of the world is a big thing, and I think the people who were going to miss us secretly hoped it was just a mini adventure and we'd want to come back to reality in a few years.

We hadn't been happy in our home for quite some time. It was too small for us, in a built up area that was too cramped and we knew we wanted something different for our kids' future. Permanently. Okay, there are no guarantees with any move, but we felt sure that we didn't want to come back to where we were, even if Australia didn't work out for us.

We spent a year renovating the house, painting over the sticky handprints the kids had made, sprucing up the outside to

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give it kerb appeal and getting the garden neat and tidy. The hard work paid off as we sold it for the asking price after it had been on the market for a few days.

### NEEDING THE EQUITY

Wanting to make a break from our old life wasn't the real reason we sold the house though. We needed the equity from it to fund our move and to set up a



new home in Australia. We didn't have any savings as we'd returned from a gap year of travelling expecting twins a few years earlier and had been struggling to get our finances back in shape ever since.

Moving a family of five to the other side of the world isn't cheap – the visas, flights, shipping, agents, cars and rental bonds all add up. We would love to own a rental property one day, but as we are

both project managers by trade (and by nature) we would like to be close to the house so we could take a hands-on role and at least be in the same time zone as our real estate agent.

We know there is a chance that the move won't work out – you can never say never – but we are going into our migration with the intention that it will be a move for life. If anything is going to

Choosing to move the family abroad is a big decision



work out, I believe you need to throw yourself into it fully. We don't intend to live our lives looking backwards when there is an exciting future waiting for us.

### TRANSFERRING MONEY

If you don't have to sell your house in the UK and are struggling to decide what to do with it, here are a few words from Geraint Davies, director of Montfort International, to add more thought to your decision.

He explains that as well as understanding the tax you will need to pay on your investments, you also need to

make sure you aren't missing out on any tax breaks. Says Geraint: "The decision to sell or rent the family home can swivel back and forth on the time of year, the rental income, the equity in the home as well as the foreign exchange rate and where you store your money."


"It is not cut and dry and one really needs to take a clinical look at what the costs of a mistake can be by missing out a key factor, such as Australia being able, in certain situations, to assess your cash proceeds in your tax calculations if you choose to park your cash waiting for the currency exchange rate to rise.

"Choosing to go DIY can be dangerous if you don't acknowledge or understand the terms "certain situations" and "assess". Put another way, tax doesn't have to be taxing, as someone once said, as you could even end up with some hidden tax advantages if you take quality advice.

"It never ceases to amaze me that migrants will often limit their tax and financial advice just to pensions when their primary residence may deliver just as many tax issues.

"Buying, selling or renting a house when migrating is far more technical than the pure emotional decision and back-of-a-fag-packet calculation. The secret is to always factor in all of the issues, then make your decision. Never use just an out and out pension transfer salesman."

### SO, SHOULD YOU SELL UP?

It sounds like, as well as being an emotional issue, there are also important financial implications to think about. We had no choice with our move, but if you do then it's definitely worth speaking to an expert. After all, every penny you can save or earn is a little extra towards your new life abroad. 



■ Karen is a freelance travel writer and blogger. You can read about her migration journey on her family, travel and lifestyle blog at [www.talesofatwinmum.com](http://www.talesofatwinmum.com) or on Twitter @TalesofaTwinMum.

