

FINDING THAT DREAM JOB

Finding work was vital to making the move Down Under a success for **Karen Bleakley** and husband Matt...



“**T**hat all sounds great, but have you got a job yet?” asked yet another family member in reply to our excited update on our visa application.

We were riding high after my husband Matt’s skills had been accepted by the TRA and he got the marks he needed in his IELTS test; yet everyone around us just seemed to want to drag us down.

Migrating is daunting and the only way we could tackle it was to face the hurdles in stages and celebrate each milestone of the journey. Some people around us could only see the final stage – did we have a job lined up or didn’t we?

I knew how important a job was to making the move a success, but I also knew we were doing everything we could to find one. And better than that – I had faith we’d find one, so I didn’t want to waste more time or energy than was needed by panicking about it.

Jobs played a huge part in our decision about where to move in Australia. We wanted to move to Perth, but decided on Brisbane because there were more work opportunities in the area. We factored in other things too, but work was our number one priority.

RESEARCHING JOBS

Friends that had made the move told us we’d need to be in the country before anyone would take our job applications seriously in Matt’s industry (aviation). That didn’t stop us from sending out our résumés (as CVs are known in Australia) and applying for jobs, but we were prepared for the rejections (or to be ignored, which mostly happened).

We used the time before we left the UK to research potential employers. We bookmarked careers pages, set up job alerts and made sure we checked in regularly so we didn’t miss any adverts for



Karen and Matt have tried to keep positive and proactive throughout their migration journey

Image: Karen Bleakley

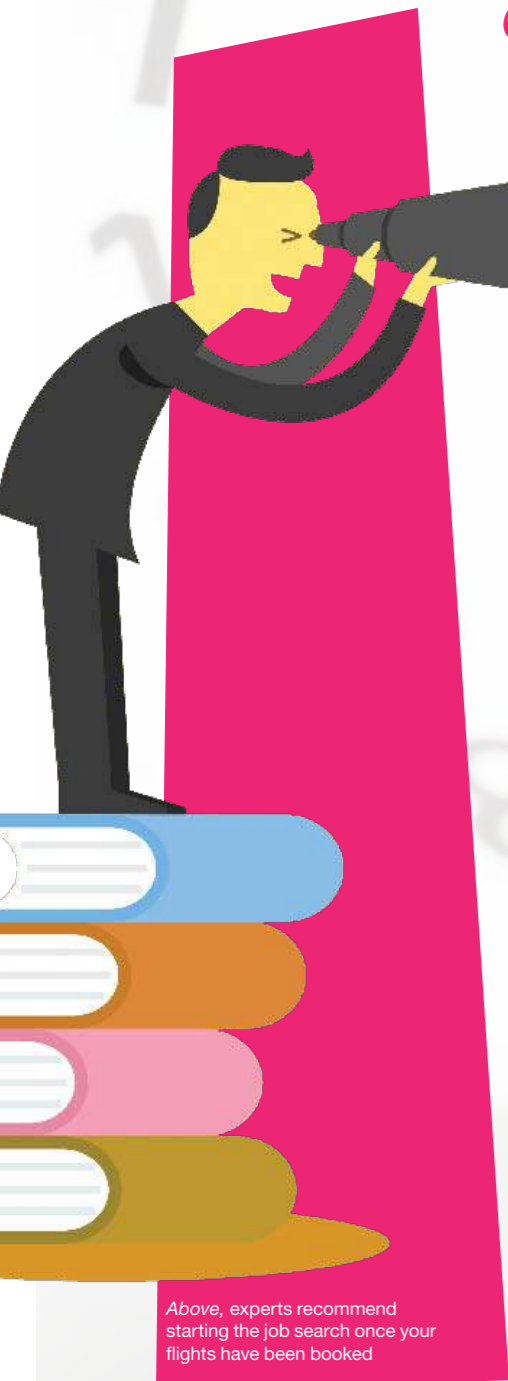
EXPERT TIP GETTING YOUR SKILLS ASSESSED

If you are a tradie wishing to migrate to Australia on a skilled migration pathway then you will need to have your skills and knowledge assessed against the relevant Australian Trade with the intent of being successful in achieving an AQF III trade qualification.

In almost all instances this assessment needs to be completed prior to a migration application as the AQF III trade qualification is required as part of your visa application.

Your skills assessment can be facilitated through the Down Under Centre as it has a number of the leading TRA-approved assessing authorities working from the Centre, such as Australian Construction Training Services who are happy to provide these Assessments for Construction and Engineering Trades in a friendly and efficient manner.

■ For assistance with your skills assessment as well as many other services pertaining to your move to Australia or New Zealand, contact the Down Under Centre. www.downundercentre.com



Above, experts recommend starting the job search once your flights have been booked



Meeting recruiters face-to-face will boost your chances of finding work

jobs or expressions of interest for potential jobs that were coming up. We also got in the habit of checking Seek (www.seek.com.au) and Indeed daily (au.indeed.com) to see what sort of work was around. We wanted to be ready to hit the ground running.

contacts, which proves that networking is so important. In the aviation industry, many roles begin as casual so they can try you out before they commit. In fact, so many jobs (in all industries) don’t get advertised as positions are often filled through recommendation, so making

“SHOWING UP IN PERSON SEEMS TO BE A BIG DEAL OVER HERE – PEOPLE TAKE NOTICE”

When we landed, finding a job became a priority task. Each day we had to make time – in-between the admin, house hunting and car buying – to apply for jobs, send out emails, ring agencies and drop résumés in to companies by hand. Showing up in person seems to be a big deal over here – people can ignore your emails or phone calls but when you turn up on the doorstep people take notice.

The position that came through for Matt in the end (a casual, ad hoc position) was via our one of our existing work

connections is key.

If you don’t have any contacts this can be scary, but you can send emails to introduce yourself (we sent lots!) knock on doors and try to follow up contacts by making LinkedIn connections. You just never know where the lucky break will come from.

Five months in and we’re a long way from being settled. Matt has just accepted a second casual job (gained by turning up on the doorstep of an employment agency that had ignored his many emails) to >>

EXPERT TIP

HOW TO START JOB SEARCHING

It's unlikely you've secured the dream job offer prior to departure. Realistically, only start a serious job search once your flight is booked and three months before your arrival.

Put yourself in the shoes of the employer; your chance of an offer prior to this are probably unrealistic. Research jobs matching your skillset, gauge the salary benchmark so expectations are realistic and strategically target companies you're interested to work for. Use LinkedIn to showcase your professional achievements and network with people in your industry.

Where possible ask for recommendations to strengthen your profile and appeal to potential employers. Follow companies and groups of interest.

Take part in topical conversations to get noticed and interact with influential people who might be able to help with introductions and opportunities. Try and line up some appointments for when you land and don't be scared to go that extra mile in picking up the phone to make contact.

■ **ISA Group are emigration and employment experts helping you live and work Down Under; providing advice, visa services and job vacancies.**
www.isagroupuk.co.uk

Try to interact with influential people



Try and line up appointments with recruiters before you head out

run alongside his first one to keep his hours up. We're hoping that one of them will turn permanent eventually, but even if they don't he will now have two Australian work references to use for future job applications.

STICK AT IT!

My biggest advice is whatever happens to stay positive. Don't let the reality of job hunting get you down – stick at it, keep working hard at making contacts and networking.

I know lots of friends here in other industries that were offered jobs while based in the UK. They are on sponsored visas and had some of their fees paid to make the move over, which made the decision of moving easier for them as it took some of the risk out of it.

It's still worth speaking to a migration agent about the pros and cons of sponsored

visas if that option is open to you, so you understand any restrictions and hidden costs involved.

There's every chance you'll get that lucky break before you arrive in the country if you work at it – don't give up on that thought – but if it doesn't happen you just need to be prepared to put in the effort when you land. Don't let fear of the unknown hold you back.

Matt had only ever worked for one company before we left the UK. Leaving that job was totally out of his comfort zone. Moving here has challenged him in ways he never expected, it has taken his career in a completely new direction. And he's loving it!

We may not know what job he'll be doing this time next year (or maybe even next month!) but I know that somehow we'll make it work. A little positivity goes a long way. 🇦🇺



■ **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 or on Twitter @TalesofaTwinMum.**