

HOW SOON TO START YOUR NEW LIFE?

The migration process is not as straightforward as putting in an application and getting accepted, writes **Karen Bleakley**



“How long does it take to emigrate?” is a question I’m often asked. There’s no easy answer – it depends on how much time you have to dedicate to the application, what type of visa you’re applying for, whether you need to take the IELTS test, how many other applications are in the system at the time and probably lots more.

Unfortunately it’s not as straightforward as putting in an application and getting accepted – there are different phases that drag the process out.

HERE’S OUR TIMELINE:

June 2013 – We decided to move to Australia. Straight after this we found out that my husband Matt’s occupation had just been removed from the Skilled Occupation List.

July 2013 – We spoke to different migration agents for advice and ended up depressed. Just as I was losing heart I discovered Sort Out My Visa and they gave us hope that we could apply for a

Skilled Independent Visa under a slightly different occupation.

August/September 2013 – We spent time pulling together Matt’s certificates, proof of employment and writing a detailed statutory declaration. We also got his work to provide updated job descriptions and a reference that showed he fitted the criteria for the occupation.

Our agents reviewed the paperwork and helped us tweak the statutory declaration until they were confident we’d provided a solid application.

October 2013 – A pack of evidence was submitted by our agent to the Trade Recognition Authority (TRA). We kept everything crossed.

November 2013 – The TRA accepted Matt’s skills. He started revising hard for the IELTS exam. We also completed all of the paperwork our agent needed for our Expression of Interest (EOI), so we were ready for the next phase.

December 2013 – Matt took the IELTS test after a month of revising. After an agonising wait, we found out he’d passed



Enjoying the beach at Coolangatta



Evangeline helping to feed a kangaroo



The family visited Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary soon after they arrived in Brisbane

with the scores we needed. Our agent was waiting to hear his results over the Christmas holidays and submitted our EOI on 31 December 2014. We went into the pool with 60 points.

January 2014 – Four weeks after our EOI was submitted, we received our invitation to apply for our visa. Our agent had the paperwork ready so was able to submit our application straight away. We started to redecorate our house and began de-cluttering. We invited three shipping companies in to give us quotes.

February 2014 – We were assigned a case officer and three weeks after

June 2014 – We invited our preferred shipping company back to give us a final quote as we’d got rid of more things.

June – August 2014 – We de-cluttered, cleaned everything ready for the shippers and started planning our move.

August 2014 – The shippers came and packed up our house, our house sale completed and Matt resigned from his job all in the same week. We spent a final month visiting family while we sorted out the massive amount of moving administration.

September 2014 – We finally moved to Australia!

Using an agent helped keep us on track – they really were worth their weight in gold. We were busy with work, kids and house renovations, so having somebody to organise us and make sure the paperwork was completed correctly was a relief.

It’s not essential though – I have a friend who applied for her Skilled Independent Visa (without using an agent) and was living the dream in 16 weeks from start to finish! I couldn’t even begin to think how stressful that must have for her.

Although we had itchy feet and wanted to start our new life as soon as possible, I’m pleased we allowed ourselves enough time to get things done. There’s a lot of admin to do before you go, not to mention the packing, decluttering, cleaning and shipping. It also gave our family and friends time to get used to the idea of us leaving.

If you’re working through the application process, be patient and accept you aren’t in control of the timeline. Frustrating as it is, in no time at all this will be a distant memory and you’ll be enjoying that barbie on your deck with a beer in your hand. How long does it take to emigrate? As long as it takes. 🇺🇸

“I’M PLEASED WE ALLOWED OURSELVES ENOUGH TIME TO GET THINGS DONE”

submitting our application, we were asked to get our medicals and police checks. The police checks took two weeks to arrive, and we found a medical centre in London to do our medicals. The results took a couple of days to be submitted.

March 2014 – We were granted our Skilled Independent Visa!

April 2014 – We finished renovating the house and met with estate agents.

May 2014 – Our house went on the market. Three days later we accepted an offer.

GIVE YOURSELF TIME

Although the visa application only took six months, the whole process took 15 months. As a family, we needed that extra time to pull the plan together, to sort out our things and sell our house.



■ 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.