

Episode six

Karen: [00:00:00] Welcome to The New Life in Australia podcast, hosted by me, Karen Bleakley, founder of Smart Steps to australia.com. Moving to Australia with my family was a life-changing experience, but it wasn't without its challenges. That's why I'm passionate about making the relocation and resettlement process easier for you so you can enjoy this exciting adventure.

Join me and my special guests as we share professional secrets and tips. Learn from people who've made the move and discover businesses that can help you realize your dreams. Now. It's the best time to create the life you've always wanted. This podcast is here to show you what's possible and to inspire you every step of the way. Let's go

Let's take a moment to acknowledge the Gubbi Gubbi people, the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which I live, work, and play. I thank them for the privilege of being able to live in such an incredible part of the world, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present, and emerging. Hey there. My name's Karen Bleakley, and you are listening [00:01:00] to episode six of The New Life in Australia podcast.

In today's episode, I'm going to be sharing 15 simple tips to help you avoid making expensive mistakes when it comes to choosing your migration and relocation services. Now, I know it can be really a stressful time when you are trying to move across the world. You are used to just being able to ask your friends and family for recommendations of different services.

So if you need a plumber or if you need an electrician or whatever the services are. You are usually able to just call out on Facebook and, and ask your friends if they can suggest somebody who they've used before who is reliable. But when it comes to moving across the world to Australia, it's a whole different ballgame 'cause you likely don't know anywhere else who's made the move already.

So it's really difficult to find people that you can trust to ask for advice.

Unfortunately, I get far too many emails and Facebook messages from people who have made mistakes when it comes to appointing [00:02:00] their migration and relocation services. They've sent money to a company that they've found on either Facebook or on Google searches and. Maybe the

company has taken their money and blocked them, or maybe the company's actually gone under, or maybe the company didn't even exist in the first place.

So there's all kinds of problems, and it's something that I hear far too often and it really breaks my heart every time I get those messages because it's just awful, because I know how important it is. To save your money when it comes to moving across the world because it's really expensive to set up a new life over here, and you really want to be making sure that the services that you are booking and paying for are going to deliver the value that you need because it just would be awful to pay the money out and then lose that money and, and not get the service that you were expecting.

So a few weeks ago when somebody messaged me and they were telling me that they'd sent a big chunk of money over to another business that turned out to not [00:03:00] even exist, I decided that I would sit down and I would write a list of tips to help you do your due diligence so that you can . Do as much as is possible to make sure that the businesses that you are sending money to and that you are appointing to help you with your move to Australia, that they are legitimate businesses, that they are trustworthy businesses that are going to be able to deliver the service that you are expecting.

So I created this document into a free download, which is available on my website, and I'll pop a link to it in my show notes as well.

So you don't have to make any notes now.

Just

some of these are really simple things that you can be doing some you might not have thought of, but I think it's just really worthwhile to just go through all of them and just give you some ideas. And we basically wanna make sure that you are . Doing the best that you can to make sure that the services that you are appointing to help you with your move to Australia are real businesses that are gonna just help you on your journey.

Because moving to Australia is challenging enough and you really don't need the headache of [00:04:00] appointing a company to help that ends up not being a real company or that messes you around or doesn't deliver the service that you are expecting.

So let's get started. Number one is a really simple thing. It is just get yourself a new notebook before you get started, and this will be your migration notebook.

Then you've got one single place where you are going to capture. All of the notes that you are making about all of the services that you are considering, you'll be writing lists in there of questions that you want to ask businesses and writing down their answers as well, so that you've got everything on record that you are agreeing to and, and that you know that you are expecting.

You'll be able to list in it. Of staff members who you've spoken to during phone calls and and via emails so that you've got a record of who told you what, and you'll be able to just log anything that you need to do or anything that the company said that they're going to do. You'll be able to use it to.

Create a list of quotes so that you know [00:05:00] how the different services compare with one another when you're trying to compare quote. It's really good. Compare like for like, so if you kind of use a notebook, you can be writing it all down in there.

It really helps to just have one single place to log everything so that you've got somewhere to come back to where all of the details are held. It really does help, and also later on when you've made the move, it's also nice to look back and you can kind of use it to, to see how far you've come and also to see how much you eventually spent on your budget as well.

Tip number two is when it comes to trying to choose these migration services, it's really helpful if you can ask for personal recommendations because just like I say, when you are getting a plumber or or a builder or whatever it is, you want people. To tell you that they've used that service before and that it was reliable and it was done on time, and all of those things.

So if you can get [00:06:00] recommendations, it really does help. So use Facebook groups. You might not know people personally who've made the move to Australia, but you if you are in the Facebook groups, like My Move to Australia group or the migration groups, ask for advice and for recommendations from people.

Just a quick tip just to be aware of this is that in many Facebook groups, there are a lot of businesses in there, and they have staff members sort of across all the different Facebook groups. So when somebody comes in and they say, I want a shipping agent, or I want a migration agent, or I want to transfer my currency, can anyone recommend a company?

Sometimes you'll find that not all of the replies are genuinely from people who are happy customers. Sometimes people who work for the company and have a

vested interest will reply with a comment as if they're a happy customer. So you just have to do your due diligence here with this. For any comments that you get recommending services, I really highly recommend [00:07:00] that you just search the group for other comments that, that that person in the group has made.

Just see if they're part of the community. Are they taking part in chats? Are they talking about other things other than that business? If you find that the only time they ever participate in the group is to recommend that business, and quite often they use like a copy and paste exactly the same words to recommend the service.

If you find that, then obviously it does look a bit shady, so you might want to kind of disregard that

and over the years, I've blocked so many businesses who have been in the group pretending that they're happy customers, when actually they're just there to promote the business. So it's just about just doing some simple checks. It's not saying that the business isn't a great business to consider, but I just think that transparency is really important.

So You want genuine recommendations from people who really have used that service. So have a look, [00:08:00] look at the comments that you get and you'll be able to tell, because people will be giving you more information than just like one, a one line answer.

If you're saying that you want these services, you can also comment and ask a few more questions from them before you're making any decisions as well. But it really does help to find people who have actually used the services and see what they think.

Tip number three is something that you might not have thought about doing before, but I think it's really handy to look for the businesses that you are considering across a range of different platforms. So what I mean by that is spend some time doing some Google searches on the business that you are considering.

See where they show up. Now you're gonna get their website coming up and that's fine, but see where else they're listed online. Are there any other services that they partner with or any other businesses? Are they in any other websites that you trust that, that mention this business? Because it really helps to see that they're listed in more places than just their own website.

It really [00:09:00] helps you kind of, if you can find a, a site that you trust that mentions them, then, then that can give you another signifier that they actually can be trusted.

If you find that the service or the business isn't listed anywhere else, then that makes me a little bit worried. Like, are they not in any kind of networks? Do they not get recommended by any other companies? And that might be a bit of a red flag. So it's just something just to start you thinking about things and thinking about what makes a business trust.

. Tip number four is check for reviews. Now you can have a look on Facebook reviews, on Google reviews, on Trustpilot. Just go online and start doing a bit of research because you will get reviews across all the different platforms.

Now, I think it's just also really important to remember that not all negative reviews are genuine, and sometimes people do complain because that's in their nature. And even if a [00:10:00] service goes above and beyond, there are certain people that will never be happy with things. So kind of take the reviews with a bit of a pinch of salt, but you can kind of get a good idea based off what the majority of the view reviews are saying.

Not only that, I think it really, really shows you so much about the customer service on offer from the company. Because if somebody has made a complaint, how are they dealing with it on social media and on these review platforms? Are they responding and do they respond in a kind way that shows that they're actually dealing with the issues?

Because mistakes do happen, problems will happen, and there's no guarantee that even if you do all of these different tips, follow all of these different tips that I'm sharing today, that you will have a smooth trouble free move without any trouble, but what you actually want is to be using businesses.

Have great customer service that are gonna be there to help you if you do have any problems. So having a look on reviews and [00:11:00] seeing how they're dealing with those, those negative reviews specifically is really, really useful.

Tip number five is have a check of business registrations. Now you can look up different business registrations. Various companies will say that they're part of a particular registration body. So for instance migration agents could be Mara registered.

If the company's based in Australia, you can look up their business number, their A b N, to just check that the business really is a legitimate business that actually does exist. You can have a look, as I say, at Mara registration and different services will be appointed to different registration bodies that you can have a look at.

So if the company that you are considering . Says that they, they are part of a particular registration, then you can look that number up online to just check that they actually are. Now, it's just also worth thinking about sometimes businesses will let these registrations lapse. They won't renew them, and [00:12:00] sometimes they'll forget to remove this information from their website.

But I just think it's worth checking that if they say on their website that they've got these business registrations, that you actually just double check and see if they're up to date.

Tip number six is follow the business on social media. Now, I know social media is something that. Some businesses can find difficult to keep up. So you might not find that the business is on there posting every day or, or like five times a day or anything like that. But just follow them on social media.

Keep up with what they're up to. Have a look. See if you can find which accounts they're active on, see how long they've been on there. Just kind of scroll back through their content. If they've been around on social media for a really long time, that's a good sign that they're business that have been around for a long time.

If they've literally posted two posts, then maybe social media isn't something that they prioritize, but it just, it's just an extra thing to consider.

I know for me that when I see a company who's online and active online, it [00:13:00] just gives me some confidence that they'll be able to respond to me quickly if I've got any issues.

Tip number seven is have a click around their website. Just spend some time exploring their website. Is the content on there up to date? Again, not everyone prioritizes their website, so there might be some content on there that is out of date, but how out of date is it? Can you get a feel for who's behind the brand?

Can you see anything about their customer service policy and how they treat customers? And does it feel professional?

If as part of the process, you actually need to go through the process of buying the product or the service online, it's worth just checking that it feels like a secure website to be putting in your payment details.

Tip number eight is sign up to their email list. You never know what information you're gonna receive. If you get on their email list, it can be really helpful to communicate with them. It helps you stay in touch. You may get access to some special offers. And you may get up to date information, it may [00:14:00] just be really, really useful for you.

So I think it's really helpful, and if you are not in the position right at that moment to go ahead and use the service, it also keeps you connected to them so that you remember to come back to them later on when you are in a position that you need their service.

Tip number nine is Google and search for any online discounts the business might have. Now, I love doing this. I do it all the time whenever I'm about to buy anything. I never do it without searching for voucher codes or discount codes. You might find something that's not available listed on their website you might like.

There's all kinds of voucher websites out there where they troll the internet and they collate all of the special offers for you. So just type in the company name and voucher code or discount code and see what you can find. Also you can look on sites like my Move to Australia directory and we have money off discounts and links and codes on there as well for some of the products.

So have a look and see if you can save any money anywhere because as I said, I know moving to Australia is [00:15:00] expensive and anywhere you can save the odd 5% is so worth it.

Tip number 10 is get more than one quote. Now I always try and get at least three quotes. I know it takes time and I know it can feel like a hassle, and you might make a decision instantly on the first company that you speak, but it's still really, really helpful because getting more than one quote helps you.

See, obviously, which is the right one for you. Usually one of them will usually stand out. You usually get a better feel for one of the companies, or the price is better, or the inclusions are more suited to what you need. So when you get multiple quotes, it really helps.

Tip number 11, following on from the quotes is to make sure that you are asking the same questions to every business that you are getting the quotes from. So for some services, it's gonna be really straightforward and easy, like one way insurance or bank accounts and things. You're just gonna do your research online and then buy those things or book those things or open those accounts.

But for others, you might have. To [00:16:00] speak to them to get more information like shipping quotes and migration agents and pet shippers, so they're more likely to be the companies that you are gonna be speaking to and chatting to and emailing with, and it's really good if you can have a standard list of questions that you're going to ask all of them so that you really can compare those quotes and the services that are available like for like

it all helps you make that informed decision.

That leads on to point 12 now about comparing quotes and making sure that you are comparing like for like, because some brands out there do package up.

Things into a bigger bundle, and they might include things in their quote that you don't actually need, and that actually put the price up massively. So make sure that you are asking and being really clear on exactly what it is that you want to be quoted for. And when the quotes come through, make sure that you go through them in detail to make sure that the quotes that you're getting are actually accurate and they are based [00:17:00] on the things that you actually need, not on the things that the business is trying to sell You.

I always remember speaking to somebody like 10 years ago before we decided to move to Australia, and she was telling me using a migration agent cost like 10,000 pounds, something really astronomical. And I was really scared. I was really shocked. And she, she said, really determined, she said it was 10,000 pounds.

She'd had a quote from a migration agent and it was gonna be too much money for her, so they weren't gonna make the move to Australia. And it really did scare me because we didn't really have a huge amount of money stored to pay for our move. And the idea of spending 10,000 pounds of that money on the migration agent alone was a lot.

But when I actually came round to doing my own research, I realized that migration agents don't anywhere near that, but the migration agent that gave her a quote packaged together a big. And that's why it came out so expensive. Now.

We used a migration [00:18:00] agent. It really wasn't that expensive and it was money really, really well spent.

And I'm really happy that we spent the money on that. And I'm really glad that it didn't cost 10,000 pounds. So, yeah, just make sure that you are doing your due diligence with your quotes and your, that your understanding what the quotes cover, what they include, and making sure that if you don't need all of the things that are on the list that you ask them to requ without those things.

Also, when you're looking at the quotes, make sure you're looking at the payment terms as well. Are payments due in stages? Are they due so many days ahead of you taking on the service? Are they due at the point of booking the service? Like how . Are you committed to those fees if things change later or if you delay your move date or, or if anything changes in your circumstances and you can no longer move?

Like how committed are you? So understand what the payment terms are, really help you understand what you're getting into.

Tip 13. let cost be the decision making factor in your choice. As I mentioned before, really important cost [00:19:00] is useful to compare. It is one of the points that you're gonna be comparing, but I think you really need to be thinking about who you can trust more. Who is gonna be the most reliable company.

Who can give you the customer who is going be the most reliable out there? Do what it,

sometimes paying more is so worth it. There's been lots of times in my life when I've chosen things that actually cost quite a bit more, and actually I've ended up with a much better service because of it, and I've really appreciated paying that little bit extra just to have that peace of mind.

Tip number 14 is what are the company's values? What's their mission and how do they align with your values? There's a lot to be said about choosing brands that you feel connected with and where you are gonna be treated like an individual and not just a number. So just spend some time getting to know who's behind the brand, read their blog content.

I think that's really useful. Find follow them on social and all of those things. You want to choose a brand that you feel [00:20:00] like you can trust that is there to help you realize your dream of moving to Australia, rather than just

being there to take your money and, and tick things off a list. But looking into what their values and their mission are all about really is worthwhile.

Just spend some time getting to know them , and then you'll know whether they're a brand that you actually feel like you can trust.

Finally tip number 15 is don't overthink it and don't rush it either. So I know that that kind of contradicts itself, but come up with a list of three different businesses that you could use for each category that you need them in. Do research, make the effort to do that research and then choose one and move on.

I know it can be really daunting and overwhelming, and I know my husband and I get a bit down a rabbit hole when it comes to doing research. , you really do get a bit obsessive with it and spend a bit too much time looking at it all, but just know that you don't need to get bogged down with it. You can just spend some time on it.

[00:21:00] Do your research, pick and then move on.

So hopefully with the research that you've done, you have found companies that are there to help you out if things don't go perfectly, so that they're there to offer you great customer service and resolve any problems that you're gonna have. There's no guarantee that your shipping of your belongings is gonna go perfectly smoothly or that you won't have breakages, or that there might not be an issue somewhere along the line.

You just want to minimize those risks as much as you can and do what you can to research it and then be able to choose a business that you feel like you can trust will resolve any problems if and when they happen.

So that's my list of 15 tips, which will help you assemble your relocation dream team. Number one, get yourself a new notebook so that you can use it as your migration notebook and pull everything together. Number two, ask people in migration Facebook groups for recommendations. Number three. Search for [00:22:00] businesses across a range of different platforms to see if you can find them listed in various places.

Number four, check reviews on Facebook, Google, and Trustpilot, and have a look at how they respond to negative and positive reviews. Number five, check business registrations to see if they're registered, to see if they're up to date. Number six, follow the business on social media. Number seven, click around

their website to just see how that all comes together and is it up to date and, and does it feel like a reliable website and a reliable business?

Number eight, sign up to that email list so you can stay connected. Number nine, search online for any discounts so that you can try and save yourself a little bit of money for the move. Number 10. Get more than one quote. Number 11, ask the same questions to every business. Number 12, compare quotes like for like number 13, don't let cost be the only decision making factor in your choice.

Number 14, what are the company's [00:23:00] values and do they align with yours? Number 15, don't overthink it, but don't rush it either.

I wish I could say that we made all perfect choices when we were making the move to Australia, but there were mistakes along the way that we made. We did try our best to do our due diligence with researching things.

Facebook groups weren't as big back then when we were making the move, so we didn't really have the opportunity to ask people in groups about recommendations. And I think things have really exploded online in terms of reviews and things in the last few years.

So There were definitely services that we used that I really, really wouldn't recommend to other people, . So part of the reason why I created Smart Steps to Australia was to help connect people with reliable migration services that could help you make the move to Australia.

Because I know that we found it really tricky when we were trying to go through the process and pick businesses without having any recommendations.

So you can click into my Move to Australia [00:24:00] directory. You'll find it at smart steps to australia.com. At in the top navigation. You can have a look in there. There's lots of different migration services listed in there, so you can have a little look and browse around if you are looking for car hire and one way insurance and bank accounts and all of those things.

And I'm really looking forward to growing the directory and adding lots more businesses over the coming months.

One final thing worth mentioning is just to consider how you are paying for these services. If you are using services like PayPal, that gives you a bit of coverage or also credit cards as well, rather than transferring cash from your

bank to their bank account. If that's an option, I think it's always worth paying by credit card or by PayPal, just so that you've got that extra level of coverage.

. So choosing the migration services that you need to move to Australia, I know can feel like a big challenging experience. But take it step by step.

Go through these tips that I've listed today and hopefully you'll make a great decision. You'll find some brilliant services and I'll take good care of you. And [00:25:00] before you know it, you will be living your life in Australia. So thanks so much for listening. . I hope you enjoyed today's show. I hope it was useful for you. If you enjoyed it, please do leave a positive review. Please subscribe for future episodes so that you don't miss any of the amazing guests that I've got coming up. And let's start building your New Life in Australia, one episode at a time.