

# Episode 9

**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. Welcome [00:01:00] to the New Life in Australia podcast. I'm your podcast host, Karen Bleakley, . Today's episode is all about six tips for living with the extreme conditions in Australia.. Now, I don't think I appreciated how crazy mad the weather can be in Australia before we moved over here. or how dangerous the conditions could be.

But it really can get extreme at times. So it's just about staying safe. And I just wanted to put together this list of tips to help prepare you for when you arrive in Australia. Now when my husband, Matt and I backpacked around Australia in a motor home we had no clue about how extreme the conditions could be here.

We drove to all kinds of really remote places. We had no idea about storm season. We had no awareness of bush fires, just none of it. And it was. Kind of in the early days of kind of having mobile phones and, and mobile internet and things like that. It was quite a long time ago now, so we weren't quite as connected as we are [00:02:00] now.

Whereas now things are so much easier to stay in communication with what's going on around the world and what's happening around you. But back then it wasn't quite so connected. So it's no wonder really that we just kind of went off and our really, really lucky that we weren't impacted. By the extreme weather

here, because I know now that I live here that it can be dangerous at times, and it's just really important to be aware about it.

When we first arrived in Australia, we were driving to the shops and we got stuck out in a massive hailstorm. It was the biggest one that I've ever experienced since moving to Australia nine years ago, and it happened within the first four weeks of us arriving in Australia. We weren't on any of the the alert lists, so we just weren't prepared for it, and it was a really scary experience.

An absolutely insane hailstorm. I've never seen hailstones as big as that. We were really lucky. We were able to take cover [00:03:00] very quickly, but it, it could have been really a nasty experience and it really spurred me into making more of an effort to find out how we should be prepared for next time. So it never happened again.

Then we also had another episode a few weeks later in our new home that we moved into where there was a cyclone. In another part of Australia further north, and we were getting the tail end of it with this really awful heavy rain. And the rental house that we were living in came really close to flooding down the side of the property because the rain was coming down so quickly that the water just didn't have time to go down the drains.

And it was just filling up and up and it was so close to pouring into the house. So that was another real learning curve I decided to keep the kids home from school during that storm because I didn't feel very confident in driving in that really bad weather. And it turned out to be a really good decision because the roads between our house and school, there was just one road there [00:04:00] and it actually flooded really badly and it would've meant our kids were stuck at school and I wouldn't really have.

I had a clue how to be able to get them, because things around here aren't quite as connected. Roads aren't all as connected as they were in England, where there are always back ways you could get to places. This, this is a bit more complex. A lot. There's a lot more places where you can get to places one road.

Or, or it might be a really, really long way to get to it via a back way. So I was really pleased that we decided to keep them home that day. And it also taught me that this particular road to school was a regular road that flooded. So I knew for next time, soon as the weather turned bad to make sure that they weren't going school, or if they had gone to school, make sure that I went there and picked them up early and brought them home while the roads were still open.

So yeah, there's been lots of learning curves about living with Australia's extreme weather. So here are my top six tips based off of my experience really of living in Australia for the last nine years. [00:05:00] Tip one is to be storm ready. Now they say that every year here in Queensland, our storm season is in our summertime.

We can get really heavy storms that can just appear really short notice and be really, really intensive. We've had times where they've. Come down at school and they've literally pulled up a giant big old tree from the roots and moved it across the ground. Literally, storms can do a lot of damage and it, it's been real, really eye-opening living here and experiencing the storms 'cause they're nothing like the storms that we used to have back in the uk.

There's so much more severe at times here. So check your houses all in order. Check your outdoor areas. You wanna make sure everything's secure, that nothing can blow around or cause any damage. Just, just go outside. Make sure things like your gutters are all empty and ready for the water to, to pour into them.

Make sure that you know [00:06:00] how to empty your swimming pool if you have one. This is a key thing that people just don't think about. And I know that I didn't think about it when we bought our, our home here. It had a pool in it and we didn't really think about the maintenance aspect of emptying it. So on our first storm in our home that we own, my husband went off to work.

And overnight the rain came down so heavy and I was on my own with three little kids and the pool was getting more and more full and more and more full. And it was just on the verge of overflowing. And we live on a bit of a hill and obviously if it had overflowed, it would've overflowed into neighbor's gardens and it's kind of chemicals you don't really want.

It's passing down the hill down to your neighbors and it can also cause sort of land slips and all kinds of things as, as water drains down a hill. So it can cause all kinds of problems. So you need to make sure that you, your pool, when the weather gets really [00:07:00] intensive like that You would imagine that pools here would have like an overflow, like the bath used to in our houses in England.

So if you left your tap on by accident, the water would go into the overflow. But no, whether that's something that newer pools have, I don't know, but our pool and most pools that I know of don't have that. It's something you have to go to the pool system and set its drain for a number of minutes and keep an eye on it.

Drain your pool early ahead of time because you don't really wanna have to be going out to your pool system in the middle of a crazy, bad storm and trying to empty it in the pouring rain because I've been there. So incidentally, on that first occasion when I was having a massive panic and I had no idea how to use the pool system, I ended up running next door to our neighbors at about 7:00 AM in a panic asking if they could help.

'cause they had a pool and they were amazing. And they came over and they drained it and they helped me out and they were great. So if everyone are not sure about anything, . Ask somebody else, especially if you've got a pool and someone else in [00:08:00] your street's got a pool, just, just go and knock on the door.

People are generally really willing to help you, and especially during storms, people are really ready to help. I know that when the rental started to nearly flood I called a new friend that I just made and she sent her husband straight over to come and check things out for me to see if there was anything more we could be doing to help with the drainage.

Just speak to people, stay in touch with people. It really does help. So number two is make smart choices with the extreme weather that we have in Australia. So that comes to, like I said, things like sending your kids to school or just deciding the weather's so bad that they may as well just stay home, which I do a few times every year when the weather gets really bad, it's about staying off the roads during really bad weather.

If the roads are getting really dangerous, you don't wanna be out there. And if, especially if you can work from home or if you can avoid going into work, then do it. I know it's not always possible because my husband, Matt works at the airport and he still has to go in, even in really, really bad weather.

[00:09:00] And I hate having him going out on the roads in that weather. But if you can avoid staying off the roads, do it If the, the roads are flooded, Don't drive through it. Just keep an eye on your phone so that you can see where the flood zones are, which roads are closed, and do not try, even if the road hasn't officially closed yet, but there's flood water on there, turn around and get away.

And also make smart choices when it comes to choosing your home. So try and be aware and do a bit of research into what areas might have problems. So you might find that you are in an area that's previously been impacted by bush fires or that you are in an area where there has been floods in the past.

So try and do some research so that you are thinking about that, and also just as I say, I live up a slight bit of a hill. And the houses that are at the bottom of the hill get so inundated with water during bad weather. And we sometimes have the water gurgling [00:10:00] on under from under the house, like in the drains.

So we have in our bathrooms here in Australia, we have a plug in the middle of the floor in the bathroom, and. You often hear in really bad weather gurgling, like the water's almost getting ready to bubble up through that plug hole. And it, it is a bit scary. And I know that some neighbors at the bottom of the hill actually had that water from the drains coming up through that plug hole and flooding their whole house.

So it's a really horrible thing. So I would personally not choose to live. At the bottom of a hill or a slope, I would much prefer to be somewhere up a hill if that's an opportunity. Just look around at what types of drainage are in the areas so that you know that there's plenty of places for the water to run off because when it does rain, it really does rain.

It comes down really heavy. Quite often places like the drains can get inundated with all the water and it can be overwhelmed, and then it goes into houses and [00:11:00] into streets and, and all over the place. So just do a bit of research. Try to find out if your home's been impacted before, before you move into your rental or your home that you are buying.

Try and ask in suburbs of which areas you should avoid. Just try and do a bit more research. So you are making smart choices. Tip number three is to be sun safe. Now, I won't go into this too much because I've already done a whole podcast all about staying sun safe.

That was in episode five, so I'll link that in the show notes. Sustain sun safe is really important. Australia has the highest number of people suffering with skin cancer in the world, so it's not a joke. Be sun safe. It's really important. So I've got this episode with lots of tips to help you with that.

Tip number four is a really obvious one, but maybe not so obvious. Just remember and make sure your kids remember the emergency number. In Australia, it's triple zero, so 0 0, 0. Not 9, 9 [00:12:00] 9 and not 9 1 1. And I know it can take a bit of getting used to and a bit of remembering when you've lived your whole life thinking of 9, 9, 9 or 9 1 1.

But it's, it's triple zero here in Australia. So knowing the emergency number and also knowing your address and your location for your kids is really important so

that they can call in the event of any, any major disaster happening or anything going on.

Tip number five, really important one, register for updates from your local council. Now, your local council usually has some kind of emergency update list where they inform you about any storms that are coming. Or any bush fires that are happening, or even any planned fire burns that are happening, they just keep you up to date with anything that's going on that you need to know about.

So you can go online and you can subscribe to text updates, and then they send it through and it really makes a difference when you know in advance a storm is going to be coming. You can log online then and have a look at where the weather system is and how far away it is, and [00:13:00] make your plans about are you gonna go to school early to pick the kids up or.

Are you gonna just cancel what you were gonna do and stay in? Quite often these storms are really big and they can come in really quickly and go off again really quickly. So storms don't always have to kind of get in the way of you living your life, but just having that information really puts you back in control.

Tip number six is about the conditions in Australia rather than the weather. And this tip is to learn basic beach safety. Now the oceans are a, an amazing part of living in Australia. I love going to the beach. I love the ocean here. It is so beautiful, but you need to respect it and you need to understand it. And so learning a bit. Basic beach safety goes a long way when you move to Australia, especially when you've got kids as well, because you want them to be safe at the beach too.

So it's things like learning to swim between the flags so that you know you are in a safe area, how to avoid rips and some basic first aid so that even if it's not you, that comes into trouble at the beach. If somebody else [00:14:00] does your position to be. It really helped all of us gain a bit of confidence by sending our kids to the Nippers Surf Club on a Sunday morning we first arrived.

We did that for our first couple of years in Australia. It's a great way to meet people and it's also a really good way to give your kids some beach confidence as well.

So that's my six tips for living with extreme weather in Australia. Be storm ready. Make smart choices be sun safe. Remember the emergency number, register for updates from your local council and learn basic beach safety. So I

hope this list of six ways has really helped prepare you for the unusual and extreme and sometimes chaotic weather that we can have in Australia.

Don't be scared of it. It's just about being aware and being prepared, and I really hope that this podcast helped you get there.. If you enjoyed it, I would really appreciate it if you'd spend a moment leaving a positive review.

'cause it really does help spread the word about the podcast and I really, really do appreciate it. So tune in again as we build Your New Life in [00:15:00] Australia, one episode at a time.