



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



Life in Australia

by Amaru & Suzanne, May 25th 2008

We realized the other day that we haven't posted a new blog in a while. The reason for that is that we haven't really done any travelling since we got back to Sydney...; then again, everything that we've been through since then could be worth including in a blog.

We knew that the first thing we had to do on return was to start my resident visa application, we just didn't know what a circus it would turn out to be. Before I applied, I needed to be able to show police checks from every country that I've lived in for more than 12 months. Well, the Swedish one was easy, got the form online, signed it, sent funds to Zilia in Sweden to pay for it locally and about 3 weeks later I had the document stating that I've always been a good boy =) The Australian police check was also that easy... and then we had the Irish check.

When I first read about what was needed it sounded great, just send a request to the local Gardai station, stating where I was living while I resided in Ireland. No costs were involved which of course sounded great. Well, in the end I would have preferred to pay for it if that would have meant it would have been quicker.



Sydney Opera House
It's good to be home



Lots of Documents
for us to fill in

Once the applications were sent in I had to get a few other things ready such as a full health check and a load of documents that needed to be filled in.

In the meantime Suz had managed to land herself a fulltime job, working in the city with a view over the harbour. And the best part... they contacted her regarding the position, she hadn't even started looking. She is just such a lucky girl!

3-4 weeks passed and since the Irish police check still hadn't arrived I decided to give Dublin a call. I was told that they had received my application, that my contact person was Larry and that I should have the document within 2-3 weeks.

The days came and went and after 3 weeks I still hadn't received anything. I had called and talked to Larry several times and he advised me that my application was with head office and he would see if he could get hold of it (I also let him know that my residential visa was dependent on this document since we had handed everything else in to my caseworker and this was the only thing they were missing).

While we waited for the Dublin police to get their act together Suz and I joined Harry, Nelly, Tia and the kids, left Sydney and headed south to the small village of Gerroa for a long weekend away. We stayed at this house that we've rented over a weekend before. As soon as we got there Harry and I left the girls and went down to the ocean to do some fishing.



Surrounded by documents



The time to hand our application in has come!

We like to fish with rods and spear gun, taking turns on land and in the water. Last year when we were here, Harry got a deep cut in his foot from a barnacle, this year we had learned our lesson and wore wetsuits, gloves and boots before we even got close to the water. After a few hours we headed back to the house and had a nice lunch with some VERY fresh fish =)

The next morning we went back to the shore for some more fishing but it backfired on us this time. We had had a few drinks the nights before while playing Singstar with the family and boy did we feel the effect of them that morning. It didn't help that the sea was quite rough either.

We barely got into the water before we turned green and had to come back on shore.... after 10-15min we felt fine again, tried to get back in

the water but with the same results.... not fun!

Well, it was a good weekend nonetheless, we got to spend time together, do some fishing, play games, eat good food and just relax in a cute place away from the busy city life... this might just become an annual tradition.

After 3 months of waiting I was getting annoyed and Larry had become a big joke amongst us. People kept asking us if we've heard any news from Larry and we told them that we didn't know since he was always sitting in the pub and was impossible to get hold off.

I also got the impression that Larry didn't want to talk to me anymore, whenever I called and asked for him the person who answered went to check if he was there and then came back to say that Larry was still checking it out for me, I couldn't get him on the phone.... not a good sign.



Our fishing spot In Gerroa



Harry getting ready Let's start fishing!

Finally I was told (through someone else that asked Larry) that the document had been sent on the 20th of December. Well, since Christmas and New Years include quite a few holidays I decided to wait a few weeks and see what happened.

We celebrated Christmas over two days, we were with Suz's family on the 24th, having a "traditional" Swedish Christmas with herring, saffron buns, hot mulled wine (glögg) and ginger bread cookies. The 25th we celebrated with Harry, Nelly and family in a traditional Australian manner with lots of seafood, fresh salads and fruits.... both were great!

After celebrating New Years with some friends I waited until the 5th of January and since my document still hadn't arrived I called Dublin once more and was told by a woman that she had posted it the day before.... WTF?!? Didn't Larry say that "he" posted it on the 20th?!? What an idiot..

Finally, on Friday the 11th of January a small A4 paper arrived stating that I had not broken the law while residing in Ireland. It took Larry and the Irish police 4 months (!!!) to send me that... 4 months, I could have swum over to Ireland and back in that time!

On Monday I handed the document in to my caseworker and on Wednesday my residential visa came though.... now that's efficiency for you! Once that was done it was easy enough to apply for my Drivers licence, sign up to Medicare and to start looking for a job.

After sending 10-15 applications off online I sat down and waited for the calls to begin. A few offers later and I found myself once more working for Xerox, slightly different role than the one I had in Dublin but still the same company =)



With visa and job secured, Suz now didn't have to support the both of us and we could now start looking for a place to live.... thanks to Julia and Michael for giving us a roof over our head during this time.

After what we just went through in getting a visa we thought that an apartment would be easy to find. Well, during our first weekend we realized that wasn't the case. For every apartment there was at least 60 people there to inspect them, some of them came prepared with all the documents needed so that they could hand in an application straight away.

We decided that we needed to do something similar if we wanted to have a chance in getting an apartment so the next weekend we came armed with documents stating where we worked, how much we earned,

references from previous landlords etc....

We arrived on Saturday to inspect an apartment at 9.15 and saw that there was at least 70 people there waiting to see the same place, it's absolutely insane getting a good apartment in Sydney's inner west. Unfortunately the real estate agent didn't show up and at 9.50 we left because we needed to move on to the next place. We arrived at the next inspection and there was no one here.... in the end only 5-6 people showed up. We think that the rest might still have been at the previous apartment waiting for the real estate agent to show.

We loved the apartment from the first moment we saw it and decided straight away that we were going to put in an application for it. While we were walking inside the apartment we heard another couple start a conversation with the real estate agent.



- (Couple) Hi, didn't you and my sister (insert name of your choice here) go to school together?
- (Real Estate Agent) Yeeees, we did, what a great coincidence, how is she doing nowadays?

We heard that and thought that we had lost the apartment, well.... we were not going to give up that easily so we took the application papers, sat down at a Chinese restaurant for some lunch, filled in the papers and handed them in about an hour after they were given to us.



We had a few more places to inspect that day so we moved along. About an hour later we received a call asking us if we were willing to place a deposit on the apartment, we said yes straight away and drove to their office as soon as we could. We arrived and had to wait in the reception area until our real estate agent showed up. While we were sitting there the other couple from the inspection showed up and said that they needed to copy some papers for their application.

While we were sitting down waiting for our turn the receptionist asked us which apartment we were there to hand the deposit for. We told her which one it was and at the same time saw how this other couple turned and looked at each other... Suz and I had to try really hard not to look up or to look overly happy (even though we were).

Well, two days later we got a call telling us that we got the apartment and that we could move in within 3-4 weeks and after a loooong few weeks we were finally home!

It's been a few months filled with lots and lots of bureaucracy, lots of documents to fill in and the stress that follows when you are not sure if you can stay in the country, if you can work and where you're supposed to live. But we have passed that stage and now we just have to plan for our wedding, which we have decided, will take place on the 23rd of November here in Sydney.

And compared to everything else we've just been through... how tough can it be?





Harry, Nelly and Tia
Enjoying the food



Christmas with Suz's family
At her sisters place



The kids are enjoying themselves
Josh and Caitlin being silly



Suz and Aaron playing Singstar
on New Years Eve



The view of the Harbour
from Suz's work



Everyone celebrates
Australia Day



Everyone decorates themselves
in the Australian flag



Suz and Julia
At the Cricket



Michael and I having a few beers
and watching the cricket



The Indians are really
crazy about their cricket



Our new place
We finally found a place we liked



At the cricket... again!
This time with Harry, Nelly and Monica



Harry and I
at the Sydney Cricket Ground



Found my perfect seat
...I'm just not a husband yet!



Anzac Day
Australia celebrates their holiday



Walking around Martin Place
A nice place in the city

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