

ONE WAY TICKET TO AUSTRALIA

Retired down under

Until his retirement, Paul Op de Beeck and his Australian wife Deborah lived both in Flanders and in some foreign countries because of his job. Australia has always been his second home, but after 27 years it was time to switch that around. He would move with his wife to her homeland. An idea that had grown quite naturally. However, no overseas move without a good moving company, Paul and Deborah realized. So they registered at an information day of Flemings in the World (Vlamingen in de Wereld). There they came into contact with Gosselin Moving, who made their international move go off without a hitch.

TEKST KOEN VAN DER SCHAEGHE

IDYLLIC

It sounds almost like a dream: the couple has recently been living in Main Beach, near the town of Gold Coast, about a hundred kilometers south of Brisbane. "It's a nice mix of young and old, and the region is known for its expansive sandy beaches. The wider area is home to about half a million people, which seems like a lot, but it is a very spacious area and most people live in suburbs.

Our move is a step toward a new phase of life, and especially fulfills Deborah's desire to be closer to her mother. Now we're only a half-hour walk away. The idea of ever ending up in a local retirement home in Flanders didn't appeal to us. It's also about quality of life. Especially in the dark days we wouldn't like that. In Australia, older people are generally more active, partly because of the favorable climate. But we absolutely do not want to say a bad word about Belgium."

PROXIMITY

The international move was not a big surprise, since they already had 12 years of experience abroad. What was unexpected was that their daughter along with her Belgian boyfriend decided to make the crossing almost at the same time. By now, she lives near her parents as well - although "near" is relative, because Melbourne is still about two thousand kilometers away. She has dual citizenship and can therefore freely enter the country, which also gave her partner the opportunity to come along. "In fact, the step for them was even bigger: they both gave up their jobs and quickly found work in the financial sector. But professionally, they continue to follow the same path, although their work rhythm and quality of life here are of a different level. Before going to the office, many Australians already work-out. The work-life balance appeals to them tremendously."

DOOR TO DOOR

Practical obstacles sometimes lie between dream and reality. It is already a great challenge to move from one city to another in one's own country. Crossing borders and customs obligations make an international move a lot more difficult. "When we met in May 2023 with Gosselin Moving during the VIW Info Day, we were particularly charmed by their door-to-door approach.





That means that they come and pick up everything at your house and deliver it as well. It's a world you don't know as a novice and you especially don't want to have to negotiate with customs, neither in Antwerp nor in Australia. A price estimate followed and later a final quotation for an estimate of about eight cubic meters. That was all very clearly and correctly handled. As a customer, you have to know especially what you are and are not bringing along. As for our estimation and the final result, we weren't too far off."

THE ACTUAL RELOCATION

Moving house is a great time to clean up. After all, every new start is an opportunity to get rid of some ballast. "It was quickly clear what we wanted to take with us and leave behind. We knew the size of the apartment when we bought it and also deliberately sized down, so the big table for eight would not fit there at all. So a lot didn't get packed, but ended up with friends or at the thrift store. On December 18, 2023, the moving van pulled up in front of the door and we realized it was really going to happen. With wide eyes, we watched as our belongings were packed - that is truly an art, fast and efficient. There were even special boxes for clothes, with a coat rail in them. In the end, we still had sixty boxes, more than I expected. It is amazing how much stuff a person owns without realizing it. A full container was filled and our stuff was shipped in groupage. That means you have to wait until the container is full. Once everything was ready to go, it took another six weeks for the container to arrive in Australia."

CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge was taking care of official business, such as the driver's license, a tax number and Medicare. In Belgium, an ID card is often sufficient, but here many services operate separately and extensive details are required, which makes identification complex. The process is complicated by requirements such as proof of address and payments. You sometimes end up in a chicken-and-egg situation in the system, which sometimes causes frustration. People need to pay extra attention to these administrative aspects. Renting a home is difficult and buying is very expensive, partly due to the general housing shortage which depending on the region is more severe than in Belgium. Buying a house online is possible, but thorough research is crucial. Using tools such as Google Earth helps, as does local knowledge from family or previous visits. We sent my mother-in-law to check if the images online were truthful. Good preparation and research are essential to avoid surprises."

Discover the eight steps for a worry-free move:
gosselin-moving.com/en/your-move-8-steps

All info: gosselin-moving.com

The next Info Day on moving to the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will take place on May 15, 2025. Gosselin Moving will be there again.

All information via viw.be.