



Meet the mover

NAME

Martin Bowman, 57

OCCUPATION

In the UK Martin worked as a specialist building façade designer. He now works as a design manager in Australia

MOVED FROM

West Midlands, England

MOVED TO

Baulkham Hills, New South Wales

USEFUL CONTACT

Mary O'Brien at New Zealand Mortgage Solutions: www.newzealandmortgages.com.au



“I have a new outlook on life!”

After heading Down Under, **Martin Bowman** discovered some excellent work and lifestyle opportunities...

I decided, with my former wife, to emigrate to New Zealand in November 1985. To be honest we had become very despondent with England in the 70's and 80's. We saw a decline in moral standards, the decay of inner city life, the out-of-control crime and poor school standards were all major factors behind our decision to move to New Zealand.

We had holidayed in New Zealand the year before we went out there, visiting my ex-wife's sister and her family, who had moved out there. New Zealand seemed so much like the England I grew up in as a young boy. It felt safe and comfortable there.

I was very lucky that I had a pre-arranged job to go to in Auckland although I was a little apprehensive at first about starting all over again, and building a new life without family or friends.

The emigration process felt quite straightforward at the time and

took around nine months in total. We did not have the help of a migration agent but we researched as much as we could, focusing on the process and dealing with challenges as they arose.

There seemed to be an endless series of forms to fill out, but

“I was apprehensive at first about starting all over again”

nothing was difficult, just time-consuming. The staff at New Zealand House were very helpful and nothing was too much trouble.

Our costs were surprisingly very little, probably less than £1,500. With the exception of shipping our personal belongings and coordinating our temporary accommodation on arrival, which was organised by my employer in New Zealand, we organised

Below Sydney's CBD is a short commute away from Baulkham Hills



everything ourselves, including arranging our visas, flights and the selling of our house in England.

The most stressful part about migrating was probably telling my parents, but they were very supportive and understood why we had made the decision.

We settled in Glenfield on the North Shore of Auckland. It was a moderately priced family neighbourhood close to good

“The most stressful part about migrating was telling my parents”

amenities, schools and beaches.

I became eligible for Kiwi citizenship in 1997, but didn't actually apply for it until 2001. Holding New Zealand citizenship gives you one major advantage – if you want to move to Australia you have free right of entry.

The citizenship ceremony made me feel as if I were a part of a giant multi-cultural family.

From day one I felt at ease and at home in New Zealand. As the years rolled by, my connection to England diminished. My home was now New Zealand, my children were born there, I supported the All Blacks and enjoyed the Kiwi lifestyle. The job turned out to be more than I expected, and my employer was great to me and my family. We purchased a house almost straight away, and my ex-



Above Martin and Mary's spacious backyard has a swimming pool

Above right The leafy exterior of nearby Crestwood High School

Below Martin has a passion for going drag racing in his spare time

wife became pregnant with Joanna, our first-born and 18 months later we had twin boys, Alex and Bradley. My job was going well, I was promoted to design manager and life was good for 13 years.

We separated in 1998, however, and I met Mary O'Brien the following year, and she is now my dear wife.

AUSTRALIA-BOUND

In 2001, life was about to change again. I was asked to relocate to Australia with my job and take on a much bigger design role managing design for both Australia based in Sydney. Mary and I chose to live in Baulkham Hills, a suburb north

west of Sydney.

To me, Australia is as different as New Zealand is to England. All three countries are uniquely different. I found England to be chaotic, crowded and cold. New Zealand, on the other hand, is a much quieter place, where the pace of life is more relaxed, not overly populated, clean and green with a comfortable, moderate climate. Australia is also different. It can get very hot in the summer, it has poisonous snakes and spiders that can kill you, and the cost of living is expensive, especially in Sydney.

Confident that we could build a new life again in another country, Mary and I haven't looked back since moving here. Currently, I hold a permanent residency visa for Australia and we are about to apply for Australian citizenship.

Australia has been so good to the both of us and given us many opportunities to grow and eventually form our own unique business opportunities. Mary works as a successful financial specialist helping emigrants purchase their home Down Under (see page 81), while I have developed my passion for design with two design business ventures, Design Directions and Façade Directions.

We own a large home on a big piece of land with a swimming pool, and have a number of investment properties both in New Zealand and Australia. Could we have achieved this in England? I would like to think so, but in reality, I doubt it.

Finally, there's my kids. They have had a wonderful life growing up in New Zealand. Joanna graduated from Auckland University with a double degree in 2010 and is now working for a top accounting firm in Auckland. Alex is a qualified electrician in Sydney and his twin brother Bradley is in his final year of a masters degree at Auckland University.

LIVING THERE

Our home in Baulkham Hills is 25 kilometres away from Sydney's CBD. It is a family orientated area, with many beautiful parks and reserves. All local facilities are within a short drive, and while there are plenty of local transport links, you really need a car to get around easily.

Living Down Under, I feel like I have a different outlook on life. There's a laidback 'can do' attitude here. People are so friendly and accept you for who you are, with



no questions asked. Both New Zealand and Australia have given me some great opportunities.

The climate is great here, and, as you would expect, most of the leisure activities are focused around the outdoors. We enjoy trips to the beach, barbeques, sailing, surfing, fishing, walking and cycling.

In the future, when Mary and I are retired, we intend to live in three countries, spending five months of the year in Australia, five months in New Zealand and two months back in the UK.

My advice for other British people wanting to move Down Under is to be committed and give it 100 per cent. Try to focus on the benefits, not the obstacles, and consider the pulling power of family. If you or your wife are very close to your family and friends think carefully about the move. Finally, try not to let events determine your future, take control and act on your instincts! 🇦🇺

“My Australia pros and cons”

Pros

- ✓ Fabulous outdoor lifestyle
- ✓ Great, friendly people
- ✓ Excellent work opportunities
- ✓ Warm and sunny weather
- ✓ Good schools and universities
- ✓ Being able to drive a V8 muscle car as my daily driver!

Cons

- ✗ Isolation from the rest of the world
- ✗ Expensive house prices
- ✗ The higher cost of living
- ✗ Australian summers can be uncomfortably hot
- ✗ Australia has some deadly snakes and spiders





There are plenty of great parks in Baulkham Hills

WHY MOVE TO...

Baulkham Hills

This leafy suburb north-west of Sydney offer some excellent amenities...

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Situated 31 kilometres north-west from Sydney's CBD, Baulkham Hills is a vibrant suburb with close proximity to the M2 Hills Motorway, providing a rapid link to the city and the international airport. Baulkham Hills offers great value for money with plenty of sports and leisure facilities, shopping centres, restaurants, parks, reserves, schools and plenty of good transport links. The majority of residents use their own motor vehicles but you can catch the M2 Express Bus to the CBD within an hour from here.

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOLS LIKE?

With its excellent local amenities, Baulkham Hills is an ideal setting for young growing families, and indeed these are the main demographic group here. There are approximately nine schools and 18 childcare centres within the area; making the suburb a very convenient option for working families.

WHAT IS THE HOUSING MARKET LIKE?

Baulkham Hills can be broken down into several different estates, which all have different home types. These include Crestwood Estate (north of Merinda Road), Astoria Park Estate (south of Seven Hills Road), North Baulkham Hills (north of Windsor Road), Roxbrough Park Estate (south of Excelsior Avenue), and Model Farms Area (south of Baulkham Hills).

Housing in and around Sydney is not cheap, but Baulkham Hills still represents good value to home buyers compared to other suburbs in the Hills District. Strong growth and a shortage in rental supply in the last few years has made the area popular with investors. The average price for a house is A\$600,000 (£379,669), and A\$455,000 (£287,916) for a unit.

Baulkham homes



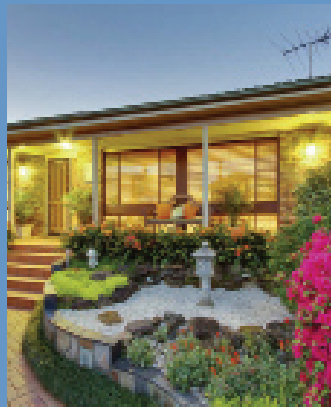
FAMILY HOME

To be auctioned

This contemporary four-bedroom family home offers spacious interiors that open to pristine outdoor spaces, including a level grassed backyard and covered entertaining area. A casual dining area adjoins the sleek kitchen and there is also a generous open plan formal lounge and dining room. The master bedroom is on the ground floor and benefits from an ensuite and built-in wardrobe.

CONTACT: Belle Property

TEL: 0061 2 9899 7997; **WEB:** www.belleproperty.com



PRETTY GARDENS

A\$799,000 (£504,670)

Immaculately presented home located on a quiet cul-de-sac, with beautifully gardens. Features include a renovated kitchen with lots of bench space, new appliances and a large breakfast bar. The four bedrooms, all have built-in wardrobes, while the master bedroom has a renovated ensuite. Raked ceilings in the lounge and dining rooms contribute to the light and airy feel of this property.

CONTACT: LJ Hooker

TEL: 0061 2 9639 8400; **WEB:** www.ljhooker.com.au



HILLTOP VIEWS

A\$700,000 (£442,034)

High on top of a hill, with views of the surrounding district, this property features four-bedrooms and two bathrooms. Downstairs, there is a generous-sized lounge, a bedroom with a built-in wardrobe and a lounge. Upstairs is another spacious lounge, as well as a dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms with built-in wardrobes and a large bathroom. There is a huge pergola area and backyard outside.

CONTACT: Response Real Estate

TEL: 0061 2 9674 5111; **WEB:** www.responsere.com