

# EXPATLAND RELOCATION



## Introduction

Australia is a popular choice of destination for many expatriate families and even though it has language, cultural and lifestyle similarities to many other countries, moving to Australia is not without its challenges.

Moving home anywhere is widely known to be one of the most stressful experiences in life and so it is particularly important when moving across international borders to get professional assistance from a specialist International Moving company and/or Relocation Service Provider.

Australia is no exception.

First of all, definition. What is an international moving company (or removalist/removal company) and what is a relocation service provider sometimes known as a DSP (Destination Services Provider).



a. **International Moving Company:**

An organisation that specialises in the door to door shipping of household goods and personal effects. This includes packing, freight, Customs clearance, delivery to residence, unpacking and transit insurance options

b. **Relocation Services Provider:**

An organisation that assists with city/area familiarisation, home search, school search, lease negotiation and general settling-in services. In other words, many and most of the services that enables new arrivals to settle into their new destination quickly, with guidance and local knowledge and to help avoid costly mistakes.

This chapter will give you a broad understanding of what happens when you ship household belongings to Australia and what arrival assistance services can be made available to you to help with your local integration and settling in.

### Importing Household Goods and Personal Effects

#### **Australian Border Force (Customs) Process & Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Australian Quarantine) process.**

All household goods and personal effects entering into Australia are subject to Customs and Quarantine inspection prior to clearance. Household goods maybe imported into Australia free of Customs Duty providing they have been owned and used overseas for at least (12) twelve months or more preceding the customers' departure for Australia.

Any items not in this category, which have been owned for less than twelve months, will be subject to duty and Goods and Services Tax (G.S.T). These include but not limited to, alcohol (all alcohol is dutiable and must be declared, even partly used bar stock.), tobacco products. The rates applicable vary and purchase receipts, invoices or the like will be helpful to substantiate values involved.

## **Customs Clearance Process.**

A Customs form B534 Unaccompanied Personal Effects Statement must be signed and completed by the owner of the goods to clear the shipment when it arrives in Australia.

Photocopies of passport pages including Australian entry stamp and VISA together with a full descriptive inventory in English are required to clear Customs. The completed Customs declaration, passport copies and inventory are attached to shipping documents received by your chosen removal company Customs broker prior to arrival of the shipment.

Upon arrival, all shipments must be moved from the wharf or airport, with Customs permission, to a Customs controlled bonded warehouse, normally operated by the international removal company that you have contracted to.

All items are then unloaded from the container into the warehouse in preparation for inspection by Customs (if required) and Quarantine.

Please note The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service inspect every Personal Effects Households Goods shipment prior to delivery to residence. Customs will inspect based on the information in the B534 form and inventory, as well as on a random basis.

Please note, the shipment must be cleared by both Customs and Quarantine before delivery to residence can be arranged.

### **Sea Shipments:**

It generally takes 2-5 days, depending upon which terminal the vessel arrives at, before consignments are available at the wharf and ready for transfer to a bond store.

Once in the bond store the shipment is unloaded into an approved secure area to await inspection.

Quarantine officers will always inspect certain items of interest (details to follow later in this chapter) however items inspected by Quarantine or Customs officers will be normally be re-packed or re-wrapped by your removal company staff.

If items are assessed for duty/GST you will need to make payment to Customs prior to release. If items are ordered for steam cleaning/fumigation/gamma-irradiation or destruction your removal company will arrange this for a fee.

From vessel arrival to the time sea shipments are available for delivery is approximately 10-14 days.

### **Air Shipments:**

Quarantine officers will inspect all air shipments much the same as described above.

The consignment will be moved from the airport under bond to a bonded warehouse for examination. From touchdown to being available for delivery is about 5-7 days.

### **Items of Interest to Quarantine Officers:**

The following list is not exhaustive but represents a general list of items of interest to Quarantine Officers.

Bear in mind that if any form of fumigation or other type of treatment is ordered, costs will be incurred.

- Outdoor furniture, garden tools, bicycles, sports equipment and the like. Before packing, these should be hosed down to remove all loose soil, grass cuttings or seeds etc.
- Lawn mowers. These should be cleaned and have no visible solid or grass residue attached.

- Cartons marked “kitchen misc”, “kitchen items”, “kitchen sundries” or “PBO” (packed by owner). These will be inspected as they may contain foodstuffs, the entry of which in a household goods consignment is prohibited (spices are generally allowed in).
- Christmas decorations, dried flower arrangements, pine cones, twigs, bark etc. As these items may have seeds in them it is highly likely that some form of fumigation treatment or destruction will be ordered.
- Bamboo, rattan or antique furniture will be inspected for borer (worm). If evidence of recent infestation is found then the item(s) will be ordered for fumigation or gamma irradiation.
- Golf clubs (small amounts of soil and grass can accumulate inside the golf bag).
- Vacuum cleaners. The bag may contain dirt and dust. These are generally ordered for treatment or destruction. It is a good idea to remove and clean the suction head and dust compartment before packing.
- Alcohol / tobacco.

Australia is happily free of many of the plant and animal diseases that exist elsewhere in the world and it is the purpose of Quarantine inspection to help prevent the import of such diseases into Australia.

Below is a further list of items that are **strictly prohibited from importation**. These items should not be included in any shipments into Australia.

- Dairy, eggs and egg products including whole, dried and powdered egg and some products with egg as an ingredient (infant formula accompanying an infant is allowed).
- Live animals. (includes birds, birds' eggs, fish, reptiles and insects).
- Meat and meat products. Includes all un-canned or fresh, dried, frozen, smoked or salted meat.
- Seeds and nuts. Includes raw unroasted nuts, raw peanuts, chestnuts and popping corn.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables. Includes all fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables.
- Live plants. Includes cuttings, roots, bulbs, corns, rhizomes and stems.
- Handicrafts and souvenirs that contain or are made from seeds. Salmon and trout products -ask about special import conditions (canned salmon is allowed).
- Biological materials. includes human/animal vaccines and therapeutic goods (ask about special import conditions).
- Deer horn/velvet, edible birds nest packaged products -deer horn and/or antler from NZ are allowed (with certification).
- Soil and sand. Includes items filled with soil or sand (rocks free of soil and sand are allowed).

Quarantine will charge the importer for the destruction of any prohibited items.

## **Importing motor vehicles, including cars, motorcycles / scooters, trailers and caravans**

When importing a motor vehicle, motorcycle, trailer, or caravan (new or second hand), an import permit must be obtained from the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities **PRIOR** to shipping.

If a vehicle is shipped without a permit having been issued the owner/importer will run the risk of the importation being rejected and will need to bear the re export costs and possible fines too. Importing vehicles can be complex and costly depending on the situation.

We recommend that you take advice from your international moving company who will be able to assist you with the most appropriate and up to date information on the options available to you.

### **Transit Insurance Cover**

All reputable moving companies are able to provide you with transit insurance options. Insurance is normally an optional addition but is recommended because of the inherent risks involved when moving. Taking the precaution of arranging insurance coverage will also provide peace of mind while your belongings are in transit or in storage.

### **Relocation Services (DSP)**

Although the internet and the various travel guides available can be helpful resources for gathering information, neither can compare to the depth of knowledge and level of support provided by a professional relocation specialist.

A relocation company has in depth local knowledge of suburbs, housing in general, schools and are an excellent source of community knowledge and lifestyle. Engaging them can minimise costly mistakes that may only become obvious later down the track. Relocation service packages vary from company to company and can normally be tailored to your specific needs.

Below are typical services that are on offer:

- Temporary Accommodation
- Property Search and Selection
- School Search and Placement
- Tenancy Negotiations
- Furniture and Appliance Rental
- Inventory Check-in/out
- City Orientation

Most packages would include a familiarization element (orientation) where you would be picked up from your hotel or serviced apartment and guided around the city and suburbs.

You will be provided with unbiased answers to your questions together with valuable information allowing you to make a decision on where you and your family will call home.

A typical Area Orientation will include:

- Housing Styles
- Local Amenities
- Sports and Leisure Facilities
- Hospital & Health Service Facilities
- Shopping Amenities
- School and Educational Facilities
- Local transport Facilities
- School and Education Package

Finding the right school for your children is of paramount importance and this can often be the most challenging aspect of the relocation process.

The schooling system, location, historical results (not available in all States) and “the right fit” are all to be considered when choosing a school suited to your children.

As many schools have catchments as it is often necessary to choose the school before the home if a particular school is of interest to you.

Settling in services are available too and may incorporate the following:

- In going property report

- Rental furniture / purchase

- Opening a bank account

- Registering for Tax File Number (TFN)

- Familiarisation of local shopping / markets

- Utility connections eg: electricity and gas car hire / purchase

- On going help line

Relocation service providers generally conduct an in depth needs analysis with a client before they arrive in Australia.

This is an important starting point as it provides an opportunity to discuss the ‘wants and needs’ of the family on the move and the ability for the Relocation provider to set the right expectations.

Any special concerns and requirements can be highlighted right from the start.

## Summary

Naturally these services come at a cost but factoring that into the bigger picture and the money that can be saved by making informed rather than rash decisions, demonstrates why these services are increasingly popular and, in some cases, fundamental to a successful relocation across the globe.

The process of relocating internationally is complex and challenging and that is why even the most seasoned global nomads engage the services of an International Moving Company and more often than not, a Relocation Service Provider.

Both play a fundamental role in making your move overseas far less stressful and making your new destination really feel like home, which of course it is!

# AT A GLANCE

- Relocating internationally is challenging and stressful. The professional assistance of a Specialist International Moving Company and/or Relocation Service Provider will help guide, advise and support you not only with the move, but also transitioning into your new location.
- Your chosen Specialist Moving Company will help you navigate through the paperwork and permits required. They will also highlight the Australian Customs and Quarantine regulations.
- Australia is the largest island on the planet, so be aware, it's Quarantine laws are extremely strict to protect the country from plant and animal diseases that could be imported on or with household items or personal belongings.
- Be aware that your shipment must be cleared by both Customs and Quarantine before delivery can be arranged.
- Keep in mind any household goods or personal items owned for less than 12 months prior to moving may be subject to Duty /Service tax (GST). It's advisable to keep receipts and invoices to show values involved.

- Items assessed for duty/GST, payment must be made to Customs prior to the release of your belongings.
- It's worth noting, any household or personal items deemed to be contaminated, will be fumigated, steam-cleaned, gamma-irradiated or destroyed. This will incur a fee.
- If you plan to bring the family car, new or second-hand, a permit will be needed and paperwork must be completed prior to shipping. Otherwise it may be rejected, whereby you will need to cover the re-export costs and possible fines.
- Knowing the facts about the do's and don't's will help reduce the delay in delivery of your belongings to your new home.
- It's worth bearing in mind the importance of considering Transit Insurance. There are inherent risks involved when moving. Having that coverage will provide peace of mind while your belongings are in transit or in storage.