



A Family Journey

Max and Tara with their newborn, Edward.

The Country Shuffle

Will your move to the coast or the country last?

By Max Waller

Working in my family real estate business in central Victoria 30 years ago, my younger brother and I would make bets on which of our Melbourne buyers would last in the country.

We called it 'The Country Shuffle': buyers would shuffle into the region and buy their 'forever home' and, within a year or two, shuffle back to the city.

A decade later, I moved to Melbourne and after being happily based there for 22 years, my wife Tara and I decided to become tree changers ourselves.

Of course, this decision reminded me of the bets I had with my brother and I had to ask myself - "Will we be doing our own 'country shuffle' in a few years or will our move to the country last?"

To make our tree change even more challenging than most, we decided to buy land and build our dream home in Hepburn Springs in the Central Highlands of Victoria, rather than buy an established property. Oh, and we discovered we were going to have our first child halfway through the whole process.

But today as I write this from the home office at our newly finished country house, Tara and I are successfully juggling 5-month-old Edward, with remotely running our finance brokerage and property advocacy business. And while there are no guarantees in life, we can't imagine shuffling anytime soon.

So, what are the secrets to making a successful move out of the city and more importantly – one that will last?

1. Be prepared for an emotional journey. Take into account that a tree/sea change is one of the biggest and most stressful decisions you will ever make. Throw in the added factors of a new lifestyle, friends, schools, and so on, and you have a recipe for a move back to the city, unless you plan properly and acknowledge what you face.

2. Consistent communication with your partner is vital every step of the way. Changing your home is stressful enough, underpinned by the financial changes it normally entails. Take regular time out to have honest and transparent discussions to avoid making bad judgements and decisions on the fly. Tara saved us so many times from poor decisions and wasted money thanks to our regular check ins.

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3. Treat locals with utmost respect and appreciation. Locals can offer so much support to save you time and make informed decisions. Which tradies to use, local weather secrets, where to get the best coffee, and so on. Taking a humble approach with a local who has

walked the path before you, will typically be repaid two-fold: valuable advice in the present and a friend for the future.

4. Don’t rush the small stuff when building or renovating a home. It’s so tempting to have small victories along the way when the big things are taking time. Be careful. The quick “let’s do this now” approach is often wasted effort and money that you have to change later.

5. Empower your team to deliver. When you find and appoint your core team, let them do their best work for you and show them you trust them in doing so.

6. Have a realistic balance between form and function. The essentials of keeping warm, cool, secure with good spaces to live in should always be top considerations, no matter how beautiful the view or garden may be.

7. Put the time in to make sure your time will last. There’s only one way to know if a town will be the right fit for you and that’s to spend as much time there as you can before you buy. Tara and I spent many weekends getting to know the local area before and after we purchased the land. While at times it was tiring and frustrating as we spent so many weekends travelling to and from Hepburn Springs, we took different routes, sampled the B & Bs, cafes and pubs, and even went to some local events and charity bashes. Learning something new each time, it all helped us concrete the fact that we were on the right track to a long and happy future in the country.

Want to learn more about how you can make your own move to the coast or country?

Give Max and the team a call to discuss or visit www.provincialgroup.com.au



About the writer: Max Waller is a property and finance advisor and commentator. He is a Licensed Estate Agent and Australian Credit License holder, CEO of Provincial Group Property Advocacy and Finance Broking, providing client services throughout VIC, NSW and ACT.