

“We feel relaxed and happier!”

In search of a better work-life balance, **Gemma Wrigley** and **Tony Cook** found just what they were looking for in Auckland...



Auckland's Waiwera Beach; and (below) Gemma and Tony at Cathedral Cove on the Coromandel Peninsula

Interview: Liane Voisey

We were looking for a better work-life balance and wanted to live somewhere with a warm climate. Tony suffers badly with Raynaud's disease in the cold weather and it was really hindering his promotion aspects, as well as his general wellbeing.

Tony had always wanted to visit NZ and I've always said I originally did the PGCE instead of ITT (to become a teacher) so I could teach anywhere in the world.

We visited a Down Under Live event in February 2018 armed with our CV's to see if it was feasible and that was it, decision made!

We had open minds about location as it would be about where we could find work. When I got my job offer in July 2018 in Auckland, we started to research places to live and what we really wanted out of life in NZ.

Meet the movers



NAME

Gemma Wrigley (37) and Tony Cook (49)

OCCUPATION

Gemma is a Teacher of Science, which was also her occupation in the UK. In the UK, Tony was an RAF Regiment Gunner. In New Zealand he is a Heavy Truck Driver

MOVED FROM

Clipsham, Rutland

MOVED TO

North Shore, Auckland

USEFUL CONTACT

To find out more information about teaching jobs in New Zealand contact Education Personnel. Web: edperson.co.nz

MIGRATION PROCESS

We had been told a lot of information from the ladies at Education Personnel in our first meeting with them at the Down Under Live expo in February 2018, so we knew there would be a lot of paperwork involved.

I sent off my teaching registration application at the end of March 2018 to get the ball rolling and to show potential employers that I was serious about moving to NZ; and this came back in June 2018.

After a successful interview and secure job offer, we had our medicals at the end of July then >>



The Auckland city skyline



Gemma and Tony in the Waimangu Valley



The couple regularly visit Shakespear Regional Park



Images above: Gemma and Tony hiking on Auckland's Rangitoto Island

“OUR AUCKLAND PROS AND CONS”

- PROS:**
- The great weather
 - The Kiwis relaxed outlook on life
 - The breathtaking scenery
 - The positivity of the locals
- CONS:**
- No Yorkshire Tea (unless you want to pay the Earth for it!)
 - Groceries are more expensive
 - Auckland traffic on Fridays!

collated all the other necessary paperwork needed for our work visa – and Tony’s partnership visa. We officially applied for our visas in October.

We arranged our visas with the help of Paul Goddard at The Down Under Centre NZ. He was great and we tuned into the NZ webinars every month from making our decision. We were told by our immigration agent that we would have no problems getting our visas and so we booked our flights in August!

We do feel it has been a straight forward process – as long as you’re willing to do your own research and be organised with the paperwork side of things!

My Working visa, valid for 36 months, was confirmed in October 2018.

We are now applying for our Skilled Migrant Residence category visas and have just been selected from the pool after a successful Expression of Interest application. We are currently collating all the necessary paperwork to support this application and hope to have this submitted soon.

ARRIVAL SURVIVAL

We arrived in NZ on 4 January 2019. We had booked an AirBNB

in the area we wanted to live so we could access local information about the best places. We didn’t really want to rest until we had sorted a place to live and so hit the ground running. We were viewing places the next day and after seeing 10 properties, we secured a place shortly after in the area we wanted!

Next on the list was to head into the city to sort out our banking

needs. We had opened a bank account before leaving the UK so this process was very straight forward. We then went shopping to buy a car, furniture and essentials as it would be a while before our belongings arrived.

In our second week in New Zealand, we had a little road trip down to Taupo, and stopped in Hamilton en route back to Auckland, just so we felt we had a holiday. Tony also secured employment during this time.

We moved into our rental property on 22 January and I started at my school on 23 January. Tony

started work on 4 February. Since then we have been settling into a working routine here and getting to know the local area.

WORKING LIFE

Teaching in New Zealand has been hard work and it will take some used to not having a half term in the teaching calendar! My colleagues are amazing and have

been really supportive of me, which has helped with the transition from the UK. I have even gained a promotion in my first term and am enjoying seeing what the future holds for me in this line of employment.

On weekdays Tony starts work at 7.30am and I prefer to be in school early to get prepared for the day, so arrive by 7.30am.

After a day of teaching, I sometimes have meetings or an extra-curricular commitment, but I am usually home for 5pm. Tony is usually home at 5.30pm. I go to yoga twice a week in the evening,

and Tony will go for an early morning run on the beach twice a week.

We make an effort to be sat down by 7.30pm to discuss our day, chill out a little and decide what to do at the weekend and read!

LIVING HERE

We have discovered a better work/life balance in Auckland as we spend more time together on the weekend doing the things we enjoy outdoors, as the weather here allows that.

We wanted to live near where we were going to be working and this was a huge factor for us in choosing Browns Bay.

Tony had previously had a 60 minute commute to work in the UK and this is something we wanted to reduce! We also wanted to have good transport links and plenty of amenities close by. Browns Bay ticked all those boxes. We live 10 minutes walk from the shops, bars and restaurants, and also the beach!

We live in a three-bedroom detached house, which has a lot of space and decent sized gardens front and back. The house is on the big side for just the two of us but has plenty of space for when we have visitors from the UK!

There are so many walks we can do from our home, which is ideal. Browns Bay is a diverse community too, and there is a real sense of community here.

Everyone here is very friendly and willing to talk to you. The Kiwis have a very positive can-do attitude and take life in their stride – it’s refreshing.

We are renting as we cannot get a mortgage on work visas – you must have a residency class visa to get a mortgage. We are also renting as we want to get to know the local areas properly before committing to a property.

We have found that if you want a decent place (with insulation, double glazing etc) and an area by the beach, then you need to be prepared to pay more money. There are plenty of places for rent and for sale in Auckland, but we feel it is expensive compared to where we lived in the UK; although comparable with prices in London.

We feel a lot more happier with life in general and we spend more quality time together. We always do something on a weekend and not just stay in, like we seemed to in the UK.

“We feel a lot more happier with life in general and we spend more quality time together”

We get up earlier on a weekend as we both want to make the most of our time off together. We have a lot of leisure opportunities on our doorstep, all within a 30 minutes drive.

We try to make an effort to go somewhere or do something and that usually involves walking.

We recently went over to Rangitoto Island for a full day of walking and regularly do the clifftop walk around the Bays area from our house. We have done lots of walking and regularly go to the Shakespear Park area. We have also been to the Coromandel,

which was simply awesome! The downside of living out here is not having family and close friends near, should we need them, but with Skype, video calling and social media, we don’t feel we are missing out in any way.

As for the future we just want to experience everything NZ has to offer and explore the country when we can. There are so many places to see, things to do and tick off our bucket list.

After we have gained residency, we hope to eventually apply for citizenship and continue to make the most of the outdoor lifestyle here.

Our advice for other British people wanting to move to New Zealand is to do your homework on everything and start sorting your paperwork early. If you are a teacher, get your registration application underway as soon as possible as employers take you much more seriously.

Research the areas you want to live to get a better perspective of how close your neighbours will be, the terrain and local amenities. Get an NZ SIM card for your phone on arrival through the airport and register with Trade Me properly, as it

will make sorting out the rental viewing appointment so much easier!

2018 was a very difficult year for us. Tony lost both his parents and we were dealing with that, in addition to sorting out moving to NZ. They were both really happy for us and reminded us to always keep our dream alive. The move kept us focused when times really did get tough.

Tony proposed on Christmas Eve 2018, which was the perfect end to a difficult year and the perfect start to our new life together in New Zealand! >>

WHY MOVE TO...

Auckland

New Zealand's largest city is considered one of the best cities in the world to live...

WHAT IT'S LIKE

Over 1.5 million people live in Auckland, a third of New Zealand's population. This vibrant city is situated near the top of the North Island and is surrounded by stunning beaches, bush clad mountains and farm land.

Set amongst volcanic islands and a multitude of harbours, it's easy to see why this beautiful city is known as the 'City of Sails'.

Auckland is considered one of the world's most liveable cities, ranking third in Mercer's Quality of Living surveys since 2011. It is the region of choice for over half of new migrants. They're drawn here by the job opportunities, good climate and stunning natural environment.

Aucklanders can choose between a sophisticated urban lifestyle, living in the suburbs or moving just a short distance away to the coast, bush or countryside for a more relaxed outdoors-orientated lifestyle.

EMPLOYMENT

Almost half of New Zealand lives and works in or near greater Auckland, so there are jobs in most industries, but particularly in medicine, engineering and IT.

Highly skilled and experienced managers and professionals across a number of areas are in high demand, accounting for about 50 per cent of employment growth.

To find out about the latest job vacancies in Auckland visit www.trademe.co.nz and www.seek.co.nz.



Myers Park Playground in central Auckland is popular with kids

EDUCATION

Auckland has three universities and two technical institutes, as well as a range of private and state secondary and primary schools. Auckland University is ranked 165 in the Times Higher Education's world university rankings.

TRANSPORT

Private cars are the dominant mode of transport in Auckland. Public transport relies on buses, with train services to the south and west of the city and ferry services connecting the city centre to suburbs on the North Shore, in the West, South East and islands.

HOUSING

Auckland is spread out over a large area, with a mix of established and new property, ranging from timber-built standalone houses to city apartments.

The housing market in Auckland is competitive and the cost of renting or buying here is high. Be prepared to look hard and act quickly. You can search for houses at www.trademe.co.nz and www.realestate.co.nz.

Auckland has the country's most expensive housing with an average house price of NZ\$825,000 (£476,534), according to *Global Property Guide*. 

Homes in Auckland



UNIQUE TOWNHOUSE

NZ\$965,000 (£499,684)

With the living and kitchen areas both opening out onto the courtyard this four-bedroom home feels light and open. Located in Hobsonville, this property has two bathrooms, a double garage and two living areas, a study nook and a master bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe, en-suite and views of the palm tree-lined street.

Contact: **Ray White**
Web: rwhobsonville.co.nz



FAMILY HOME

NZ\$849,000 (£439,618)

Tucked at the end of a quiet right of way, is this warm family home in Gulf Harbour. Spacious and elegant, with sea and golf course views, it offers three double bedrooms, master with ensuite, a gourmet kitchen and a nice sized study. Enjoy open plan living and dining with a choice of two outdoor entertaining areas.

Contact: **Barfoot & Thompson**
Web: www.barfoot.co.nz



BAY VIEWS

NZ\$1,495,000 (£774,122)

Expansive views over glistening Onetangi Beach, with a lovely flat section for the sea-legs. This four-bedroom property offers sweeping vistas from sun-kissed decks will captivate everyone who visits or lives in this fantastic property. There are two living areas, four bedrooms and a modern open-plan kitchen and dining space.

Contact: **Barfoot & Thompson**
Web: www.barfoot.co.nz