



All set for her Aussie adventure in the Sunshine State, **Vicky Gray** was ready to start suburb-hunting in Brisbane



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We chose Queensland as our place to settle as we found the climate

agreeable, and although the humidity can be an issue, this can be tempered by the cooler sea breezes in coastal areas. With 300 days a year of sun and an economy beginning to boom, we were heading for the Sunshine State. It had just what we were looking for in our Aussie adventure.

We had researched well into where to stay in Brisbane before we had left England. The thought of staying in one motel room with children, although maybe a slightly cheaper option, really didn't appeal to us. During our investigations, we stumbled upon a helpful couple, Rob and Lesley, who set up a company to help us Brits have a slightly less worry-free start to the world of emigrating. Having made the move to Australia several years earlier, they knew all too well about the tribulations a short-term stay in a new country can have. Not only do they arm you with information, but they have a couple of houses on offer for you to rent too.

We chose a three-bedroom townhouse in a new complex, with a community swimming pool, in a suburb called Hendra, about 10 minutes from the airport and very centrally located to all the areas we wanted to seriously look. It was a

A home to roost


great start! And so the search was on. There were many suburbs of Brisbane we wanted to check out, all for different reasons. Some were new areas, where they had developed new communities, with their own schools, shopping centres and resources all sensibly built in beautiful leafy surroundings. These were spacious family homes built with privacy in mind, unlike in Essex, where even in the most exclusive of developments you could smell your next door neighbours' washing on the line.

So every day, we would pack up a large hamper of delicious picnic food and stick a pin in the map to choose the destination of the day, and everyday we would come home weary and confused as to where to set up home. All these places seemed so attractive, but there was something missing that I couldn't quite put my finger on.

It had become apparent to me that as we had made such a huge decision to emigrate, we wanted to get it right first time, and for me that meant living near one of the glorious Queensland beaches. For some reason, I assumed that Brisbane had beaches, but this doesn't appear to be the case.

Above Queensland has many gorgeous beaches – just not in Brisbane!

It claims to have beaches, with places so aptly named as 'Nudgee Beach' but unfortunately I found Nudgee Beach to have an eerie, desolate feel and it was occupied mainly by peculiar looking fisherman standing alone along the edge of mud-flats. I felt just like I was standing on the beach at Southend On Sea, only feeling hotter and more disturbed.

The only token piece of beach is a man-made sandy swimming area in Southbank, right in the heart of the city. Hats off to them for putting a little segment of tranquillity amongst the hustle and bustle of the city, but if you ever decide to go there on a Sunday afternoon for a family outing, expecting a pleasurable swim and the making of sandcastles, you are quickly faced with a different picture! Hoards of crowds desperately trying to secure their own four square foot of sand, by way of laying down over-sized beach towels and screwing in vibrantly coloured sun parasols are too similar to any of the British seaside towns, minus the kiss-me-quick hats, novelty lollipops and the overpowering aroma of fish and chips... 

■ This extract is taken from *Didgeridoos & Didgeridon'ts – A Brit's guide to moving your life Down Under* by Vicky Gray, priced £14.97 and available from Amazon.

