

Australia—Different, But It's Home

From *Deciding to Make Changes* by Guido Linssen



Houses in the Netherlands



Marlies and I grew up in a village in the Netherlands. When we married, we moved to Australia. We had both visited Australia, so we had some idea of the changes we would encounter.

There are more opportunities in Australia. There is also more space and a greater feeling of freedom here. The Netherlands is a small country and so everything is more compact to accommodate the population.

Dutch children learn English at school, but when Marlies attended an English language school in Australia, she found Australia's spoken English quite different from the English she'd learnt.

Something as simple as our names caused confusion. In Europe, most people are given names which are used formally, for example on forms, and they also have "call-names" which are used with friends and relations. In Australia, people are not accustomed to this.



We came from a village of 1800 people where most people knew each other and where our families lived. When we left this close, supportive community to live in Sydney, we often felt isolated within our little family unit.

The surroundings are very different in Australia—the blue sky, golden beaches and the dry, rugged landscape contrast with the grey sky and flat, green, ordered countryside in the Netherlands. We miss the long twilights in summer in the Netherlands when it was still light at 10 p.m., but we enjoy the longer hours of sunshine during the winter in Australia.

Australia is a very “young” country. Just a few years ago, our village in the Netherlands celebrated its 700th birthday, so we have very old traditions.

We are very happy here and feel we have been accepted. Australia is now our home.

Landscapes of Australia

