

Why I love Australia and Australians.....

In 2009, having decided to relocate to Australia, from Mumbai, I realised that the container carrying household goods - accumulated over 70 years of life, even after discarding many items - would take some 6 to 8 weeks to reach Perth, where we had family members settled earlier.

So, within the first week of landing in Perth, along with my wife's sister in whose house we were initially accommodated, wifey and I went to one of the up-market shops to purchase some personal apparels and other necessities for daily use.....

Wifey picked up a trouser for me to try on. Wearing it, I noticed and - being a typical Veteran (ex-Army) - exclaimed alarmingly: "Yikes! The crease is not sharp!"

The lady at the till heard this, and: "Sirr.... this is **Australia**, nobody bothers about the crease here!"

Getting over that, a few days later I was stepping out of a shop which had, among other stuff, toys. My then 3-year-old granddaughter, who had already moved across to Perth with her parents from Toronto, had her hands on my knees trying to push me back into the shop, when I felt a gentle tapping on my shoulder. Turning around I was surprised to find an elderly lady, a total stranger, looking kindly at me with: "O boy, you seem to be in deep trouble!"

A few days later I was sitting on a couch in a Mall. Across me were 2 guys: one, an Oriental-looking elderly guy, and chatting with him was the arch-typical huge Aussie, who burst out: "Whaaat?!! You have been in Australia for 16 years and you are still wearing long pants and shoes?!!!"

Once I had halted my car in the side lane, with blinker lights on, about to get off to open the house gate, when an Aussie, a total stranger, driving past, halted his car with, "Need help, mate?"

Taking an evening walk with wifey, an Aussie jogging past, even from behind, would pass with a cheerful greeting, and even stop to chat, realising our 'newness'.

I summarise, **after living here for over 14 years**, Aussies:

- Smile
- Talk, and ALWAYS
- Help

The most **endearing** and even **enduring** factor is that wherever I go, I find large groups of folks from home-country. In the meantime, a lot of water keeps flowing down the Swan River in Western Australia, where I reside.....

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