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G'DAY BRUMMIERS

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Record numbers of Midlanders moving Down Under

RECORD numbers of Midlanders are cutting the region for a life of sun and adventure Down Under. And experts have described Birmingham as an emigration hotspot as thousands look to get away from the city and start afresh.

The UK has seen the greatest exodus of its city nationals in recent years, with Australia as the most favoured destination.

In 2008 alone, 427,000 people decamped from the country - one person every three minutes.

In the past six months Birmingham residents spearheaded the highest number of emigration to one of the country's leading migration companies.

Paco Arthur, director of the migration firm, said: "The number of people who have emigrated from Birmingham has increased by 10% in the last six months. This is due to the fact that the UK economy has remained more buoyant than the UK, with Australia seeing accelerated growth over the last quarter which is fueling demand for skilled labour."

Adrian and Louise Warner have not looked back since leaving Salton, Cambridgeshire in 2006 with their two young sons. The couple set up home in the Bay-side area of Victoria and now run a traditional British fish and chip shop.

Louise said: "We didn't take a holiday for the first few years as we felt we were on a permanent one. Each time we take the kids to a park which overlooks the bay we say: 'We live here, we're not on holiday, we actually live here!'"

As well as Australia, New Zealand is becoming increasingly popular because there are no waiting lists for visas.

Teacher Sharon and civil servant Dean Smith from Soudley, are planning to relocate there in a few months.

The couple, who have a young daughter, first thought about taking the plunge two years ago. Sharon, 40 said: "We have a lovely house with a nice garden and good jobs but the area has really changed."

"Many people have passed on, a bit of the properties are being bought and rented out and a lot of immigrants have moved into the area. There is not the same community spirit there used to be."

"We looked at moving home but we would need a bigger mortgage for a smaller home."

"When we were thinking of moving away we wanted it to be an English speaking country, we looked at jobs, the location, the climate and decided on New Zealand."

"We are excited about the move."



HAPPY: Adrian Warner