

PhD Vlog Week 1: Andy Pearson Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
0:00:01		[MUSIC/TITLES].
0:00:07	Andy Pearson	Hi, and welcome to my second blog, where I'll be talking about why I decided to move to New Zealand. I'll be talking about how I actually applied for my PhD in New Zealand, and I'll also be talking about how my PhD was funded, and the whole process of moving here, and general life for a PhD student. So, you might be wondering why I decided to move to New Zealand. And, well New Zealand is a country that has always appealed to me for years.
0:00:37		I always envisaged that I would come travelling in New Zealand, because it's a beautiful country, there are great beaches, great cities like Wellington and Auckland, as well. Lots of places to go hiking, and better weather than the UK, obviously, and just more of an outdoor, laid back lifestyle. So it was always a country that really appealed to me. So, when I applied for my PhD, I wasn't particularly looking for one in New Zealand, I just found a PhD project, that I really like the look of.
0:01:07		And the fact that it was in New Zealand was a pretty nice bonus on top of that. As well as that, I wanted to gain some independent, and I thought that moving to New Zealand would be a great way to do that. Previously, I'd only studied at two universities, and both of them were in Liverpool. And I thought it would be a great way to diversify, and show potential future employers that I can work independently, and I can move to different countries for work purposes.
0:01:37		I also wanted to see how different universities work in different countries as well. So, how did I apply for my PhD. Well, I actually found my PhD advertised through Twitter. It was being advertised by Geo Earthworks, and they have a Twitter account, and it was circulated online by them. And at that stage, I was searching all over the internet for PhD projects, and I think I'd searched the #climatechange, or #environment, PhD, or something. And that project came up.

0:02:07		<p>And I thought it sounded really interesting, and it really appealed to me. So I sent the principal investigator, who's now my supervisor, an email, describing my academic background - excuse the ducks there! Describing my academic background, and we arranged a couple of Skype interviews, where we just talked about things that I studied in my undergrad BSc, and in my Masters dissertation, specifically.</p>
0:02:37		<p>And my previous experience in lab work, and things like that. So, after a couple of Skype chats, I sent across my transcripts, and two references from my previous institutions. And after around a week or two, Adam replied, and offered me the position. And then I began the formal application process. So, once I'd been offered the PhD scholarship,</p>
0:03:07		<p>it was a big case of getting the ball rolling, in terms of applying for my student visa. So I had to fill in a lot of forms for the university, online, and I also had to get cracking with my student visa, and filling in forms for immigration to New Zealand as well. A couple of other things that I had to included getting a full medical, which I did in the UK, at a private hospital. It probably cost around £300 or £400.</p>
0:03:37		<p>The other thing that I had to was get a formal police check, which again, cost around £50, and I think that was pretty easy as well, I just sent something in the post to them. So, once I'd been granted my student visa, after that process, which took about six weeks, I could then move to New Zealand. And when I arrived, the university has guaranteed accommodation for all international students, so I was never gonna end up living on the street, or anything.</p>
0:04:07		<p>So I ended up staying for a few weeks in the student accommodation here, until I found a flat of my own. And the prices of rental accommodation in New Zealand are actually relatively cheap, or in Hamilton, anyway. And especially compared to the UK. So there's room to get a pretty nice place to live, at a pretty decent cost. So, also, I should mention that my project is actually funded by the</p>

		Marsden Fund.
0:04:38		Which is derived from the Royal Society of New Zealand, which is a government funded grant. So, I actually get a stipend of \$25,000 New Zealand, which is tax free. And that works pretty well for me, with my relatively cheap accommodation as well, and it's definitely enough for me to live off. And I'm quite comfortable with that.
0:05:07		So, some of the things I like about living in New Zealand are that there's plenty of opportunity to do sport. There's plenty of opportunity for playing rugby, obviously, but also, a lot of people here actually play football, which was quite surprising to me. So, that's really good as well. As well as that, people seem to be able to enjoy their weekends more here, than in the UK.
0:05:28		And I think that's probably because the weather's better, for one, and people, rather than, you know, going to the cinema, or going shopping, which is what I'd quite often do back home, here, you can go and climb a mountain, or go to the beach. Or, even climb up a volcano, people go skiing quite often, in winter as well.
0:05:50		And all of that stuff is in pretty close proximity to Hamilton, you can do all those things pretty easily. As for downsides, I don't really think there are that many. Probably the biggest one is being 26 hours, or whatever, flight time, away from the UK. And that's pretty bad if miss home, which, luckily for me, I haven't really. But yeah, that's a bit of a downside.
0:06:20		But if you're British, it's actually quite easy to not miss home, because there are plenty of Brits here, and it's pretty easy to fit in, and the culture isn't too dissimilar. So you don't actually ever feel as far away as you are, geographically. You can always feel a little bit at home here, it's a really comfortable place to spend some time.
0:06:43		[MUSIC/CREDITS].

END OF TRANSCRIPT

