M: When did you arrive in Australia?

Ay: So I came here in March 2018 – a year from now.

M: Factors for decision.

Ay: I used to stay in the US for 2 years… 4 years. Then on and off I was in the UK. I used to travel. So, I was supposed to go to US but all this visa challenges etc.. So, the alternative I was considering was Canada and Australia. Right, couple of options. Among that the favour in Australia was the weather and also the thing about Australia was the dual options to work in Australia and NZ. NZ is slightly behind from global opportunity standards but still it gives you multiple options. So, and also, if you look from an economy standpoint right, Australia looked like more opportunities available compared to Canada. So, these were more educated guesses from what I could find in research. This made me, and, more than anything, the process also was much more convenient and easier compared to the other parts – Canada or any other countries for that matter. And one more driving factor was when I shortlisted, English was a big factor coz if you try Europe or anything, the language barrier comes in. Australia was a big win and Canada as well when it comes to the local language. I started my career in India. So, pretty much born and brought up in India. Then I went to the US for 4 years, then came back. Then for about 3-4 years we were trying to go back to the visa process, you know with the economy changing, it got rejected again and again. So, then I took a couple of years off to decide what I wanted to do. But then myself and my partner thought it would be maybe good to just explore. Even now we’ve come here – we don’t know what’s gonna happen even 2 years from now. So, we’ve just come here to explore and so far, it’s been good.

M: Do you have children?

Ay: Yes, I have 1 son who is 4.

M: Profession?

Ay: So I am in IT and I’ve been working as a business analyst. So, pretty much work with all the global banks. I’ve worked with US banks, UK banks and how here with Australian banks.

M: How did you Plan your migration?

Ay: So, the reason was not migration. We just wanted to go, and travel new places, just to see different cultures. So, it was US and UK for a while. So, Australia compared – 1 was work visa was an option but compared to that PR was slightly better. At least at the time I decided to apply. It was more like, lets apply and see how it goes. It was not like I want to go king of this. It was more like let’s just give it a shot and see if it works out then we’ll give it a shot. It was more like, baby steps. So, it’s very short. We started our thought process sometime like November 2016, and after a year and half I was here. Nov 2016 was when the idea crept in. One of my friends suggested. So, the thing about Canada – because a couple of my friends stay there – but we thought about Canada. There were a couple of factors – the cold etc. So, when you start talking to your colleagues or close friends, we thought, okay why not Australia. We started to do some research over the net – it was the immiforum, everything. What we found was it was very simple. Whether it’s a right thing or wrong thing, that’s a different thing – but it was very simple. What all they want was very quantifiable. So, it was just – we started addressing one by one, whatever needs to be done. Thankfully, the forums were very (what do you say) very explanative. Immiforum. One of my friends gave me the link. There are people who list A to Z of what needs to be done. So, you don’t need to worry about anything, you just follow. I think Immiforum, I don’t remember. When I started off, one of my friends suggested this forum site. So, you know when you search migration to Australia – one of the first thing that comes up is do you want to go to a migration agent who can help you with things. So, that’s was the call I had to make. Do I want to consult someone? Then I started with this forum. Anybody who knows how to work with computers could do it. It was pretty straight forward. So, I said we don’t need to spend that money. So, then the thing was trying to get into what are the steps we need to do. So, Nov-Dec – December was pretty much trying to understand, alright what do we need? So, a bunch of English tests. So, we gave IELTs. That’s when I realised, I couldn’t write for nuts. So, you for for 10 years, with IELTS its back to basics. It was like school. So, I gave it a shot. Still, I was just getting 60 points. I was like okay this cannot be good enough. So next thing I did was I gave the ACS. That was a big shocker for me because they figured my 6 years of experience was not valid. So, I had close to 12 years of experience at that point, but they deducted 6. So, my points again went down to 55. [Laughs]. Then I decided to take the PTE. One of my friends suggested that. It’s a computer-based test and it was very interesting. I blogged it. I studied for a week or so. During that time there was an emotional turn in my family. My mother in law had a heart attack. I was in the hospital for a week so couldn’t prepare much. Then I called PTE to reschedule and they told me because it was less than 72 hours or something, so can’t reschedule. So, I just went there and took the test just like that and fortunately I got 20 points out of it. It was my first attempt and I did not prepare well for it. I just knew what the pattern was. So, that’s when I realised probably my English was ok. Sometimes it takes a test for you to know what your strengths are. So, 2 IELTS and 1 PTE. So, once I had that, I already had 70 points with me without even my partners points. So, I just went and submitted the EOI in April. That’s when they told me that since I was in the US for 4 years, I had to get the police verification done. That was the biggest thing. So, there again the forum helped me understand what I needed to do. That was the biggest process. So, I submitted the EOI. Had to do all the yards post US. That was the biggest challenge because now I heard you have tracking numbers but in 2017, they didn’t have. So, you had to send it to them, wait for 12 weeks, email them, call them to check if they have received because you have no tracking number, and this was like, you have to hand-write and post it via DHL to them. So, they don’t confirm to you. So, you have to keep on tracking yourself. So, I was more concerned about that police check than anything else. Good story was that within a couple of months I already got the invite. The first round – because I think from April to June was the freeze period, they don’t process the applications. So, one of my friends said you have the state nomination but since then, when I saw the trends, you know the immi trends, it was very quick. You know, the first round, I got the invite. So, I got all the other documentations in place but I was still waiting for the police clearance from the US because they gave us 2 months. Then I realise that when they sent the post to India, it gets lost. So, then I called them to change the address to post to my friend who lives locally in the US. So, when I started reading, people were saying that usually for India, it gets lost. So, they gave me an option to fill a form and submit change of address. So, I gave my friends address who stays in the US because you don’t need a physical copy. You just snap. So, as soon as he got it, he just sent me the snap through Whatsapp. So, using all that I was able to initiate my visa. So, once the visa was applied there was nothing to do, just waiting for it. So, they told it takes 9 months. So, I put it at the backburner and just continued to work, whatever I was doing. And the the CO gets assigned. I was checking every 15 days or so, nothing happened. But just, after the 30th day or 45th day I got the letter directly. I didn’t get any CO or anything. I got the PR grant straight forward. It was very smooth. So, I think I did something right. [Laughs]. So, the thing I was saying is that on the forums its pretty elaborate. So, since you work in the IT field you know how to name the documents and stuff. So, I made sure I have my own check list, you know, what I need, and do the forms etc. in parallel. So, it’s very quick from the time of initiation in April to receiving it. October 31st my letter was in hand. In India I had a 3 months’ notice period. So, you can’t move before 3 months. The good news was that I had 1 years’ time. So, it came in Oct, and I had until next year September (to move). So the 2 schools of thought were either continue working, bring your wife here, put a port up and go back. Then we decided it would be too much hassle. I was okay, what the hell, I’ll come here first, try for couple of months to get a job. So, decided okay, lets one of us go, while she can continue working there. So, see how it goes and then.

M: Community?

Ay: So, first part was here I knew no one. Absolutely no one. So, at that point I didn’t even have people to tell me there were FB groups – the Indian groups in Sydney. When I researched on Sydney, random groups were coming. I did not even know they were people – Gumtree was something. Thankfully, I had a very close friend of mine from my previous company who had a very close friend here. So, probably a month before I decided to come, he just connected us. He said yeah just come and you can stay at my place. So, accommodation was settled but overall it was a challenge because, you also know, there’s still a little bit of bias. So, people, the agents who was supposed to give.. like.. you don’t get any opportunity. So, I was getting interviews on and off but still I came here March. So, Easter was April and pretty much April was pretty slow. So, not getting much done. Coincidentally there was a guy who worked for me in India. So, he used to work for HCL. So, he just told me, you just share with me your profile. So, I sent it to him. He sent it to someone, and the 3rd day someone called me and said that there’s an interview, would you like to attend. I said ok and that’s how I got this job. So, from what it looks like from here is not that bad. But at that time 3 months was pretty frustrating. Nothing much to do. To be precise, exactly, I got my offer in 2 months. Then the background verification took about 2 weeks. So, less than 3 months I was in a job.

M: Family?

Ay: [Laughs]. Wife was pretty supportive – so, no worries at all. Son, was 2.5 years old so, couldn’t say anything. So, what are the driving factors – one, environment – from India you know, there is so much pollution. So, my son was falling pretty sick there. We are from the South – Chennai. We were not really sure why my son was falling very sick but from all my friends who were abroad, they would say, the probability is slightly lesser. So, we were like let’s give it a shot and see how he adapts. So, we felt it could work out better because he had this case. Its call febrile fits, its seizures, febrile seizures and theres no reason for it. So, he had these, little bit if health issues. So, we thought let’s go abroad and see how it will work. So, I came here and my wife was still back. So, the initial idea was I’ll come, get a job, work for 3 months, get some income and then I’ll bring my wife and son along. But, it so happened in the 3 months, my son was missing me so much. There was so much pressure on me for them to come here soon. So, the day I got the job, the 15th day I found a place – whichever place they gave me coz then I learnt a little bit about the rental history as well. Its not just the job. They don’t give you for first, like first time rental is not easy. Apparently, I was blessed, there was this one guy, this one agent who trusted me. He said, it you want it you can take it. I just want 12-month lease. But that was a hell. There was one day I saw 15 houses on a Saturday. I didn’t have a car and I walked 13 km that day starting from… so I had a calendar with me where I was listing from Rhodes till Westmead. I saw Rhodes, Denniston, Parramatta, Westmead – so I saw close to 15 houses in that day. So, the houses which were good had 50 people looking. So, I stand no chance. Houses which had no one, I didn’t like those places. So, after that finally one house was okay, not an issue. The agent said okay. So, that worked out. So, the day the rental was sorted, the same day I booked my flight back home. So, the first salary, I just booked a flight. I went over there for 3 days because I didn’t get a holiday. So, I went home, brought them. Prior to that, first month salary, I just went to IKEA, bought few stuff, went for the electronics, and a friend in Melbourne put it on some card she had that gives you 5 years interest free of something. and one more friend lent me some money and said just keep it. Give it to me after 2 months. And, so with all said and done, in a matter of one month from the time I joined, I had my family here. That’s what happened.

M: Option for work visa?

Ay: Work visa, the company I worked for was not based from Australia. So, I had to switch work there. So, when I compare that, PR gave me more flexibility. Its in my hands what I want.