

Who: Elia's family

From: Australia via the world

When: 1999



Who: Lucy

I'm Elia and I'm 11 years old. Its hard to say where I am from. I was born in Australia but my Mum was born in England and I have a British passport. I'm resident in New Zealand but I am not a citizen. My brother and sister were born here though.

My Dad really likes traveling. When my mum was pregnant with me, we were in Hong Kong and they didn't want me to be born there because it's too dirty. So we left Hong Kong and went sailing. My brother was born in Whangarei.

Then we went away and came back because we got citizenship so we decided we might as well buy a place here because it was very clean. There was a school really close to where we live and there was a marina so we could put the boat there.

Mum likes it here but she preferred Hong Kong for work opportunities . We travel because of us children. Dad really wants us to have new experiences and realise that one place is not the only place in the world and there are other people that are not as fortunate as us.

I was given a knitted monkey by some yachting friends. It's got this T-shirt on it with a pocket that I used to stuff things into, like buttons that I'd say were pizzas. It has cross-stitches for eyes. It used to have buttons but I picked them off. I wasn't very kind to it. I've had it for ten years now.

I'm Lucy, Elia's mother. I was born in England but left when I was three and grew up in Hong Kong. Growing up in Hong Kong Elia's dad and I were able to travel every year. Our fathers worked for the same company in Hong Kong. I think having that background makes you keen to give your kids some of that.

When we got to New Zealand I was very keen to have a base especially when we were on the boat. I really wanted a place to know we could go back to, especially for Noah and Elia. To feel it was home.

Yes, I miss Hong Kong because it's a place with non-stop buzz. Really exciting to go out and eat all the time. The constant energy. You feel like it never closes. As soon as the neon lights are on at night, it feels like a whole new day coming on.

We'd never seen a school like Tahunanui that was open to the road. All the schools we knew in Hong Kong had fences all around them and gates to go through. We were a bit uncomfortable about it at first but it gave us a good feeling too that things could be so open. Education in Hong Kong is so extreme now. It's so difficult for kids to push themselves so hard academically.

When I weigh it up in the long term Nelson is a better base for us. We still feel we have a bit of traveling to do. I think once the kids are in high school it will be much harder to take them out.