

## *Sacrifices Have to Be Made*



My dad arrived in Australia with a single suitcase, a borrowed laptop, and a dream that felt too big for the life he'd left behind in India. He was still in university, studying and working night shifts to keep up with the rent and his tuition. Most weeks, he didn't sleep more than four or five hours a night. He wasn't used to the cold or the silence of the city. There were moments he thought about going home, but something kept him here.

That "something" became the foundation of everything that came next. After finishing his degree, he saved enough money to fly back to India and marry my mum, who had just completed her nursing studies. She had never travelled out of the country before, and moving to a whole new world was terrifying—but they did it together. He brought her to Melbourne, where they had their first child: me.

Three months after I was born, my mum got a job offer in NSW. She hadn't been able to find work in Melbourne, and they didn't want to keep struggling. So, we packed up everything and started over—again. This time in Westmead.

At three years old, I barely remember the move to Bungarribee, the suburb I now call home. But I do remember our first little apartment, the second-hand furniture, and how hard my parents worked to make sure our home felt warm even when money was tight.

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Now, years later, my dad has everything he once dreamed of—though he doesn't talk about it like that. He just says he's lucky. But I know it wasn't luck. It was sacrifice. It was leaving everything familiar behind to build a life from nothing. It was standing at train platforms at 5 a.m. to get to shifts on time. It was filling out job applications while rocking a newborn to sleep. It was missing home but choosing not to go back, because going forward meant giving his family more.

My dad built more than a life in Australia. He built a home. He gave us a future. Today, we're a happy family of five—my dad, mum, my little sister, younger brother, and me. We laugh loudly in our house, eat together every night, and go on long drives just to explore. Every part of that—the love, the safety, the memories—was made possible because he didn't give up when things got hard.

Some people see success as money or fame. For me, it's my dad, who had nothing and gave us everything.