

# 6



## Migration experiences (1945–present)

**Source 6.1** Many post-war immigrants were displaced people left homeless amid the devastation of war-torn Europe. These people are Germans living in Eastern European countries that had been invaded by Germany. They are awaiting transport to refugee camps in Berlin.

# Before you start

## Main focus

Australia has become one of the most multicultural countries in the world, with 250 ethnicities represented among its people and more than 200 languages spoken, in addition to more than 100 Indigenous languages.

## Why it's relevant today

Post-1945 migration to Australia has changed the social and cultural landscape of the nation.

## Inquiry questions

- What was the White Australia Policy?
- Why and in what ways did migration patterns change after 1945?
- What did 'assimilation' mean?
- What impact did world events such as the Vietnam War have?
- What is 'multiculturalism'?
- What impact has multiculturalism had on Australia's relations with other countries?
- How has multiculturalism contributed to Australian identity today?

## Key terms

- assimilation
- chain migration
- displaced people
- immigration
- emigration
- integration
- multiculturalism
- refugees
- sojourners
- White Australia Policy

## Significant individuals

- Arthur Calwell
- Al Grassby
- Malcolm Fraser
- Bob Hawke
- Paul Keating
- John Howard
- Pauline Hanson

# Let's begin

Migration has long shaped Australian identity. Until World War II, although small numbers of migrants came from other parts of the world, most came from the United Kingdom. After the war, migration patterns began to change as people, many of whom were refugees from war-torn Europe, flooded into Australia from many parts of Europe as well as the United Kingdom and Ireland. Migrants were expected to assimilate into Australian society. In 1973, the White Australia Policy, which restricted 'non-white' migration, was abolished and a new settlement policy – 'multiculturalism' – was introduced. The Vietnam War and subsequent conflicts in various parts of the world resulted in an increased number of refugees coming to Australia from a range of countries. Today, Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world.



Source 6.2 Danish migrants arriving in Port Melbourne, 1967 [NAA: A12111, 1/1967/4/30]



Source 6.3 Arthur Calwell welcoming British migrants, c. 1947



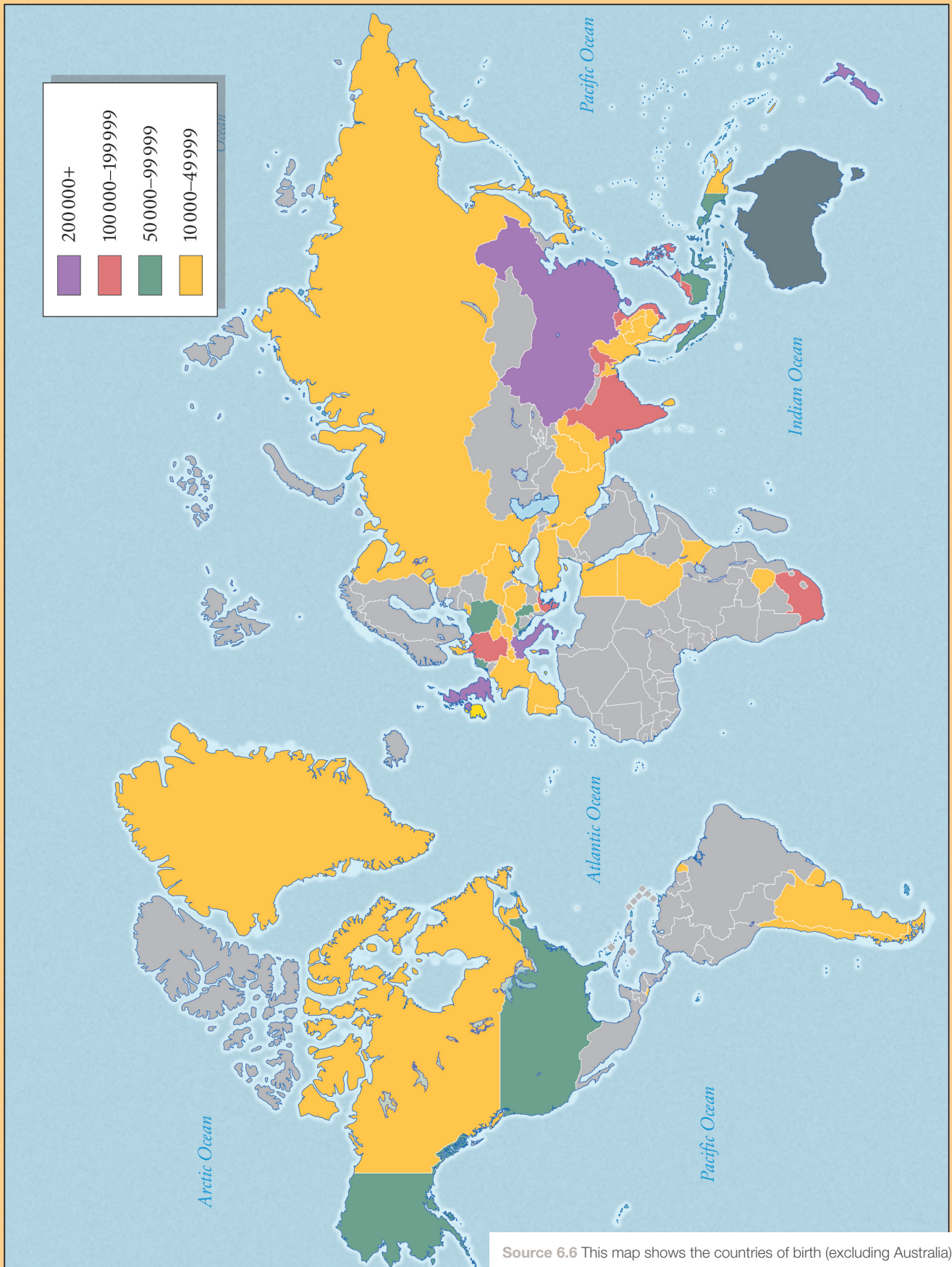
Source 6.4 Refugees aboard the MV Tampa



Source 6.5 Migrants attending an English class, Melbourne

# Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS	↑ WORLD EVENTS
1900 .....	.....
<i>Immigration Restriction Act (White Australia Policy)</i> <b>1901</b>	<b>1914–18</b> World War I <b>1939–45</b> World War II
1940 .....	.....
Commonwealth Department of Immigration established <b>1945</b> Australia signs agreement with International <b>1947</b> Refugee Organisation	<b>1945</b> Millions of people in Europe displaced <b>1948</b> Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN <b>1948–60</b> Malayan emergency
1950 .....	.....
Migration agreements with many European countries <b>1950s</b> Colombo Plan brings Asian students to Australia <b>1950</b> Australia signs UN Convention Relating to the <b>1954</b> Status of Refugees	<b>1950–53</b> Korean War <b>1955–68</b> US Civil Rights Movement <b>1956</b> Soviets crush Hungarian Uprising <b>1955–75</b> Vietnam War
1960 .....	.....
Skilled migration program extended to non-Europeans <b>1966</b>	<b>1960s</b> Peace Movement <b>1961</b> Berlin Wall erected <b>1968</b> Soviet Union invades Czechoslovakia Widespread student and worker protests
1970 .....	.....
White Australia Policy formally abolished <b>1973</b> Australia withdraws from Vietnam War <i>Racial Discrimination Act</i> <b>1975</b> First Vietnamese refugees arrive by boat <b>1976</b> Community refugee scheme begins <b>1979</b>	<b>1973</b> Chilean coup <b>1975</b> Vietnam War ends <b>1975–79</b> Khmer Rouge rules in Cambodia <b>1975–90</b> Civil War in Lebanon
1980 .....	.....
Blainey debate <b>1984</b> Office of Multicultural Affairs established <b>1987</b>	<b>1983–2005</b> Civil War in Sudan <b>1989</b> Berlin Wall demolished Chinese troops storm protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square
1990 .....	.....
Processing Centre at Port Hedland established <b>1991</b> for unauthorised boat arrivals	<b>1990–91</b> Gulf War <b>1991</b> Break-up of Soviet Union <b>1992–95</b> Bosnian War
2000 .....	.....
Amendments to Australia's <i>Migration Act</i> and Border <b>2001</b> Protection legislation Australia joins war in Afghanistan 'Malaysia deal' struck down by High Court <b>2011</b>	<b>2001</b> 'War on terror' begins <b>2003</b> Second Gulf War begins with invasion of Iraq by 'coalition of the willing' (chiefly United States, Britain and Australia)



**Source 6.6** This map shows the countries of birth (excluding Australia) and numbers of people from those countries permanently residing in Australia at the time of the 2006 Census.



## Early migrations to Australia

Australia has been a migrant society ever since early European colonisation. Australia's immigration history has been characterised by peaks and troughs reflecting both economic and policy considerations.

Despite considerable migrant intake, for much of the twentieth century Australians regarded their nation as a 'white' place, made up of a single people, with a single language and a single culture. Migrants who were not white were seen as different.

### Before World War I

As the British Empire extended into the Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the frontier of white settlement expanded. New colonies were established, and Indigenous people were dispossessed. Britain was overpopulated, while the Australian colonies needed labour to develop. An assisted passage scheme, first established in 1830 to attract migrants from Britain to Australia, was the basis for similar schemes over the next 150 years.

The gold rushes in the eastern colonies in the mid-nineteenth century also attracted thousands of newcomers to Australia in search of their fortune. Migrants from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland predominated, but people (mainly men) also arrived from Italy, Germany, France,

Poland, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Mozambique, the United States, India and China.

The Chinese were the largest non-British group on the goldfields. They were seen as a threat to the Australian (British) way of life because they were culturally different. Fear of the Chinese resulted in the introduction of legislation to regulate their arrival in most Australian colonies.

When the Australian colonies federated in 1901 to become a single nation, one of the first acts that the new parliament passed was designed to regulate and control migration. The *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)* was the basis of the 'White Australia Policy', designed to prevent feared 'Asian hordes' from coming into Australia.

Migrants were still wanted, but it was believed that they should be primarily British, and that non-Europeans should not be accepted into Australia. In 1911, a decade after Federation when the total population of the nation was only 3 774 000, the birthplace of people living in Australia reflected this view. The vast majority were born in Australia: 18 per cent were born in Britain; only 2 per cent were born in another European country (predominantly Germany, Italy, Sweden and Norway); and only 1.5 per cent were born in an Asian or Pacific nation.

To encourage continued migration from Britain, in 1912 the Australian state premiers agreed to provide half the minimum cost of a passage to Australia – £6 for an adult – as the standard maximum assistance to British migrants. One year later, the Commonwealth Government started an advertising campaign in Britain, using the cinema, the press, lectures and posters, to attract

## HISTORICAL FACT

### HISTORICAL FACT

The term 'emigrate' means to leave one country or region and settle in another. Emigration refers to the act of *leaving*. We can remember this by thinking of the E as standing for *Exit*. The term 'immigrate' means to come into and settle in another country from somewhere else. Immigration refers to the act of *entering*. We can remember this by thinking of the I as standing for *Into*.

These days, in Australia, we often use the term 'migrant' to refer to all immigrants, and 'migration' to refer to the movement of people between countries of settlement, whether exiting or entering.

## Activity 6.1

Find out where your parents and grandparents were born.

1 Did they or any of your ancestors come to Australia from another country?

If yes:

2 When did they come?

3 Does your family know the reason for their migration to Australia?

4 How did they get here?

5 Where did they live when they first arrived?

migrants. Migration boomed until interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914, and then virtually ceased until shipping resumed in 1919.

World War I strengthened British imperial ties. It reinforced the ideas that Australia's population should be predominantly British, and that non-Europeans, or 'darker' Europeans, should be denied entry to Australia. Australia would continue to be a 'white nation'.

## The inter-war years

After the war, Britain was overcrowded, and policies were developed to encourage the migration of its people to other parts of the British Empire. The British Government offered

ex-servicemen free passage to any of its **dominions**, and church and community organisations were encouraged to sponsor migrants. Many British migrants preferred

**dominions** the colonies of the British Empire, which included Australia, New Zealand and Canada, among others

to travel the shorter distance across the Atlantic Ocean to North America rather than the vast distance to Australia.

In order to entice migrants from Britain to take the long journey to Australia, new assisted passage schemes were established. During the 1920s, immigration agreements were developed between the British and Australian Governments, between Australia's State and Commonwealth Governments, and between government and non-government organisations.

A Joint Commonwealth and States Immigration Scheme in 1921, and Britain's *Empire Settlement Act (1922)*, which encouraged many thousands of Britons to migrate to Australia and other parts of the empire, were landmarks in the history of migration. As a result of these initiatives, Britain and Australia shared the costs of migrant passages, settlement schemes and associated public works. The Commonwealth selected and provided for the medical examination and transport of prospective

## HISTORICAL FACT

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Under the *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)*, chosen migrants had to complete a 50-word dictation test in any European language that officials chose. It was a way for officials to selectively discriminate against certain races. People who failed were refused entry or deported. The dictation test was administered 805 times in 1902–03, with 46 people passing; and 554 times in 1904–09, with only six people passing.

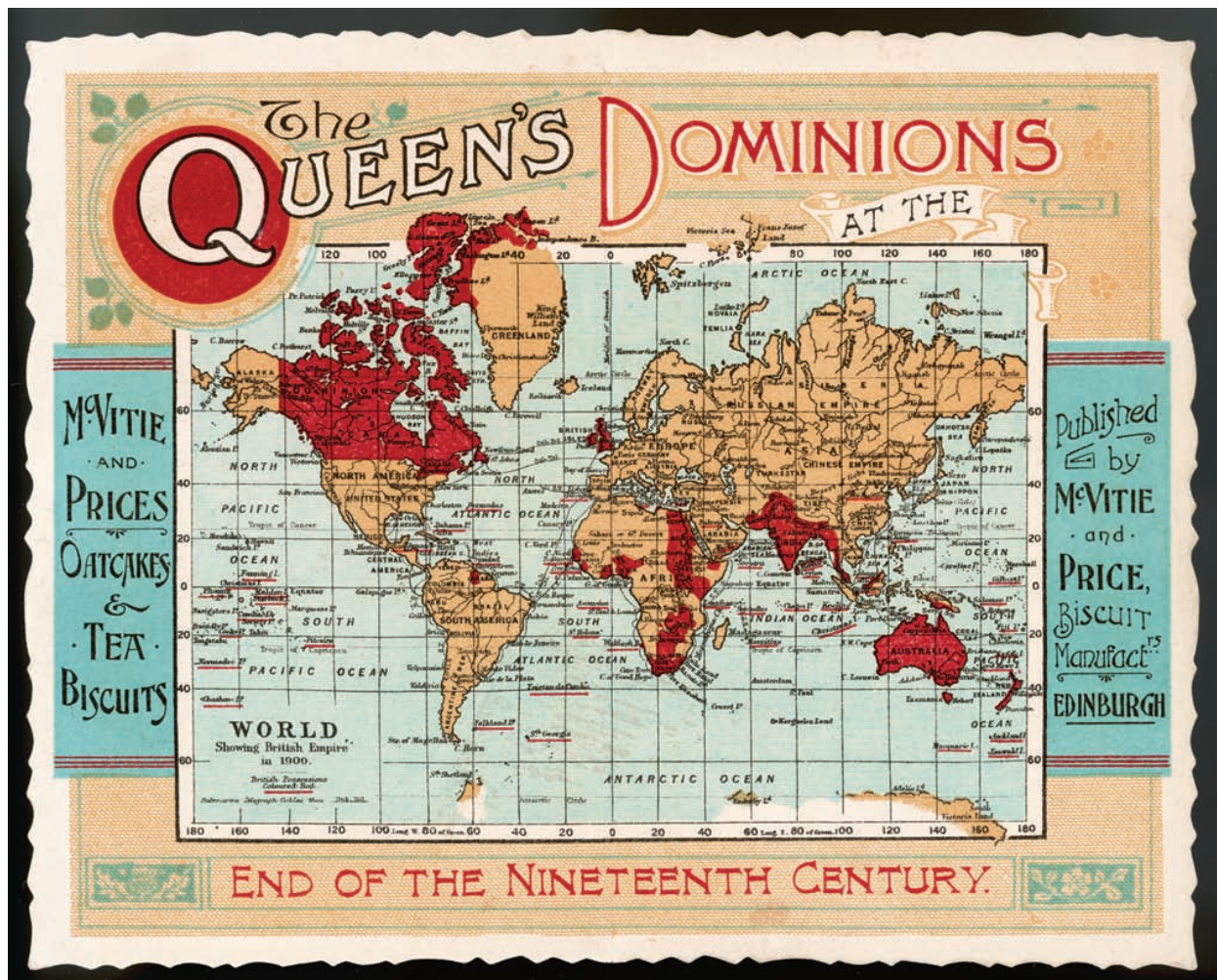
migrants, while the states specified the numbers and categories of migrants that they needed, and arranged for settlement.

Various related schemes were set up in each state of Australia. Under a scheme set up by the Western Australian, Commonwealth and British Governments, for example, thousands of British migrants were brought in to develop farms on uncleared, heavily timbered land in the south-west of the state. It was known as the Group Settlement Scheme. Settlers were to work in groups of 20 to develop dairy farms and were to be paid for their work until they could take over the farm when it was operational.

However, few of the migrants had farming experience. They were attracted by the promise

of fertile land, fruit trees to establish orchards, and healthy herds of cattle, but the reality was poor soil, inferior stock, primitive conditions and back-breaking work. Many walked off their land; fewer than 2500 farms out of a proposed 6000 were ever developed. The scheme was ultimately abandoned.

Many British children came to Australia in the inter-war years as part of child migration schemes. Between 6500 and 10000 children are thought to have been sent to Australia at this time. The major destinations were New South Wales and Western Australia. The Big Brother Movement aimed to bring country boys from England to work on farms in the Australian outback. Charitable organisations such as Barnardo's and Fairbridge,



Source 6.7 Maps such as this, showing the member countries of the British Empire in red, were common in Australian schools during the early twentieth century.



**Source 6.8** Shipping routes to Australia via the Suez Canal and the Cape of Good Hope. By the late nineteenth century, most ships took the shorter route through the Suez Canal, which had been opened in 1869 to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.

as well as the Catholic Church, sent to Australia thousands of abandoned, illegitimate or orphaned children who had been placed in institutions in Britain. Most were less than 12 years of age. In some cases, they were sent to Australia without the knowledge of their parents. In other cases, parents in desperate poverty believed that the emigration of one or two of their children would enable the rest of the family to survive.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, government assistance to migrants stopped, except for a few special cases. Some child migrant schemes continued.

The net overseas migration to Australia (including those who arrived and those who left) between 1901 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939 was almost 600 000. More than 471 000 of those who had migrated to Australia had been assisted.

## Activity 6.2

- 1 Locate Britain, Australia and North America in the map in Source 6.8.
- 2 Identify the two shipping routes from Britain to Australia.
- 3 Why did many British people prefer to migrate to North America?





Source 6.9 British migrants near the huts they built on a Group Settlement, Western Australia, 1924 [State Library of Western Australia, 005250D]



Source 6.10 A child migrant on board a ship bound for Melbourne [NAA: 12111, 1/1956/4/138]



## Waves of post-World War II migration

### Refugees from Europe: displaced people

Millions of people in Europe were left homeless as a result of World War II and became **refugees**.

**refugee** a person who, due to a well-founded fear of persecution, is outside their country of nationality and is unable or (due to such fear) unwilling to return to that country

During the war the Nazis had taken many people from Eastern and Central Europe and put them to work as forced labourers in German factories and farms.

After the war, some of these people began the journey home to the east, though many were unwilling or unable to return. Other people were moving west: ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Eastern Europe; and others who feared the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe.

The situation was confused. Displaced people (DPs) – some with children and/or elderly relatives to care for – were traumatised. They had experienced great hardship and had been in constant fear for their lives. Many were ill or malnourished and there were grave shortages of food. The refugee crisis was desperate. Allied troops from Britain, France and the United States



**Source 6.11** A long line of refugees, some walking, some with their possessions loaded on horse-drawn carts, trekking through Danzig in Germany, winter 1945



**Source 6.12** Refugees from Pomerania, West and East Prussia arrive in Berlin in 1945. Note the exhaustion or despair of the woman on the left and the nurses moving through the crowd.

assisted them, until responsibility was transferred to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). This organisation had to find temporary accommodation and countries that would accept these people. But even two years after the end of the war, approximately 850 000 people were still living in DP camps in Western Europe.

The Australian Government was under pressure from the **United Nations (UN)** to accept large numbers of DPs. In 1947, the government made an agreement with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) to include DPs in its migration program. This was a major policy shift for a country

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**United Nations (UN)** an international organisation founded in 1945 to work towards world peace and cooperation

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whose immigration policies had always prioritised people of Anglo-Celtic heritage.

Under the terms of the agreement, the IRO provided the means of shipping the displaced persons, while the Australian Government made a £10 contribution to each refugee's fare. Australia could also require that refugees be of a particular race, of an adequate standard of health and physical development, and be prepared to be placed in a job of the Commonwealth's choice for two years.

In these years, the 'White Australia Policy' was still in full force, and fear of non-white people was paramount. As a result, the government requested refugees from the Baltic region – people who were fair-skinned and fair-haired.



**Source 6.13** Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, greets newly arrived displaced people who had travelled to Australia aboard the *SS Misr* in 1947. It was a voyage that had begun amid scenes of chaos, as hundreds of thousands of displaced people zigzagged across Europe, scrambling for a berth on any ship.

In 1947 Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, toured Britain and Europe to inspect Australian migration offices, visit refugee camps, speed up selection procedures and help to organise shipping. He also helped to arrange passages for survivors of the **Holocaust**.

**Holocaust** a word derived from the Greek, meaning 'completely burnt'; refers to the extermination of Jews in Europe during World War II

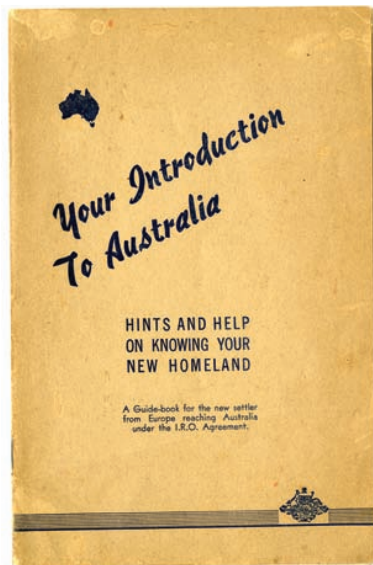
Only two years earlier, in 1945, the UN had been founded. Australia's Dr H.V. Evatt was President of the General Assembly of the UN in 1948 and 1949. The only Australian ever to hold this post, he was outspoken and brilliant, and a champion of civil liberties and rights. He led the adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Australia had been one of only eight nations involved in drafting the declaration.

### Bonegilla

The first displaced people from Europe who arrived in Australia were accommodated at



**Source 6.14** The Australian Government requested European refugees from the Baltic region, such as fair-haired, blue-eyed Maira Kalnins (second from the left), shown here with her parents and little brother on board the *Fairsea* in 1949. They had fled from Latvia during the Soviet occupation. [NAA: A434, 1949/3/16408]



**Source 6.15** Books such as this were provided to refugees: *Your Introduction to Australia: Hints and Help on Knowing Your New Homeland* (A guide book for the new settler from Europe reaching Australia under the IRO Agreement)

the Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre in Victoria. Bonegilla accommodated or processed more than half of the more than 170 000 displaced people who came to Australia from war-torn Europe between 1947 and 1953. Most were dispossessed or homeless Poles, Yugoslavs, Latvians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Czechoslovaks, Estonians, Russians, Germans and Romanians.

### Northam

Many displaced persons also went to Northam Reception and Training Centre (Northam Camp) in Western Australia, which had previously been used as an army camp. During the peak migration period, Northam was the third largest of the migrant-receiving facilities in Australia. It accommodated approximately 15 000 displaced persons in the immediate post-war years.

## HISTORICAL FACT

HISTORICAL  
FACT

Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, coined the term 'New Australians' to describe displaced people from the Baltic States and Eastern Europe. They were often referred to derogatively as 'Balts' or 'Reffos'.



### Activity 6.3

- 1 Divide into two groups.
  - Group 1: Write a letter from a newly arrived migrant to their family back home about their experience in migrating to Australia.
  - Group 2: Write a report from an immigration official to his supervisor reporting on the difficulties of processing and accommodating migrants.
 Groups should present a role-play of their letter to the class, and elect a spokesperson to answer questions.
- 2 Look up the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights online at [www.cambridge.edu.au/history10weblinks](http://www.cambridge.edu.au/history10weblinks). Australia was one of the original signatories to this declaration. What impact do you think Article 14 might have had on immigration policy?

## *Times gone by ...*

We disembarked in Melbourne on 17 November 1948 and went by train to Bonegilla. We arrived at night. The air was crisp, the grass was tall and all the mosquitoes were out singing; we all had mosquito bites the next day. The Bonegilla huts were just open huts. When we heard the kookaburra we did not know what it was, then one man said, 'Look, even the birds cry here!'

**Source 6.16** Refugee Dragoslava Williams describes her arrival at Bonegilla

Read Source 6.16 and complete the following tasks.

- 1 In a short paragraph, describe the differences between Bonegilla and the parts of Northern Europe that individuals like Dragoslava Williams would have come from.
- 2 Do you think Dragoslava Williams would have been glad to reach Bonegilla? Give reasons to justify your answer.



**Source 6.17** Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre (near Wodonga in Victoria) in 1954, where many thousands of displaced persons stayed in basic accommodation until work was found for them

## *Times gone by ...*

One of the things we had to go through was a medical examination. We were put in line, one behind the other, stripped to the waist and a doctor looked at us. I could see him writing 'good for hard work'. I protested because I had been a student all my life and I had never done any physical work and I told him I was very slim for my height but he cut me short and said - I am the doctor, not you!

**Source 6.18** Svetoslav Jonkov, Bulgarian architecture student, describing his arrival at Northam Camp

[A]bsolutely soul destroying ... the barracks, the tin roofs, the mattresses, the grey blankets, the shower facilities, everything was open, the toilets were open ... oh ... there was no privacy ... you weren't like a human being really ... that was very hard to take and we wanted to get away away away.

**Source 6.19** Greta, a German woman, describing Northam Camp

Today a new camp came into being at the former (Northam) army camp - a town peopled by Czechoslovakians, Ukrainians, Poles, Yugoslavs, Russians, Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians, who will soon give a cosmopolitan atmosphere to Northam's shopping centre.

... From the station the new arrivals were conveyed to the camp in a convoy of buses which passed through the headquarters gate under a decorated archway, the word 'welcome' being picked out in green material and wattle blossom. Either side was flanked with Australian flags fluttering gently in the breeze of a perfect early spring day!

In six large dining rooms accommodating variously from 240 to 280 persons, continuous meals were served at attractively appointed tables.

All the beds in the many huts were made and identified. A few of the huts had been partitioned into rooms for larger family groups but families generally have been accommodated in huts that resemble American Pullman sleeping [rail] cars with blankets used as curtains between each groups [sic]. Other blocks of huts house single men, single women, and widows and mothers with children ...

**Source 6.20** Excerpt from an article in the *West Australian* newspaper, 25 August 1949

Compare and contrast the memories of people above who were housed at Northam Camp (Sources 6.18 and 6.19) with the newspaper article (Source 6.20).



**Source 6.21** Northam Camp, 1950; previously an army camp, it became the third largest migrant camp in Australia [State Library of Western Australia 061352PD]

## HISTORICAL FACT

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Some displaced persons were highly educated. But on arrival, because they could not pass the dictation test and their qualifications were not accepted, they had to take on unskilled or semi-skilled work. Engineers were employed as mechanics, nurses as domestic helpers, and lawyers as railway gangers.

In 1950 three of the DPs employed as orderlies at the hospital at the Northam Camp in Western Australia were actually fully qualified doctors. One had been a famous neurologist, another a paediatrician and the other had worked in public hospitals. A chef in the camp's kitchen was a medical specialist.

## The needs of industry

After World War II it was feared that, without significant population growth, Australia would not have enough labour for the economic development necessary to achieve a higher standard of living. By 1947 the need for an expanded workforce was becoming critical. Large numbers of tradesmen and industrial workers were necessary to restore essential services to pre-war levels, and expand

the growing **manufacturing** and construction industries.

This was the era of big engineering projects and many migrants were needed for major projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electricity Scheme. The Scheme was the largest engineering project ever undertaken in Australia. It took 25 years to complete – from 1949 to 1974 – and provided power for the Australian

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**manufacturing** an industry based on the creation of products on a large scale, using machinery

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Source 6.22 Displaced persons employed by the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electricity Scheme, in front of their demountable hut

Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria. Engineers and technicians were in short supply in Australia in 1949 and the Scheme employed people from 32 countries, many of whom were

DPs from Europe. Engineer Sir William Hudson, who managed the project, encouraged a feeling of fellowship among the workers, saying: 'You aren't any longer Czechs or Germans, you are men of the Snowy'.

In 1947, the census showed that, for the first time, more Australians worked in manufacturing than in **primary production**.

Migrant labour fuelled the expansion of manufacturing in the 1950s, especially the Australian automotive and iron and steel industries. It has been suggested that employers exploited mass

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**primary production** an industry based on the processing of natural resources for consumption; for example, farming or mining

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immigration to drive down wages of those working in manufacturing in the early post-war decades, particularly in sectors that employed many unskilled migrant workers. In the 1950s the motor vehicle companies, for example, are said to have used the mass recruitment of Southern European labour to stop wage increases for workers.



Source 6.23 Displaced persons working on the construction of the Eucumbene–Tumut tunnel, Snowy Mountains Hydro-electricity Scheme [NAA: A11016, 7924]

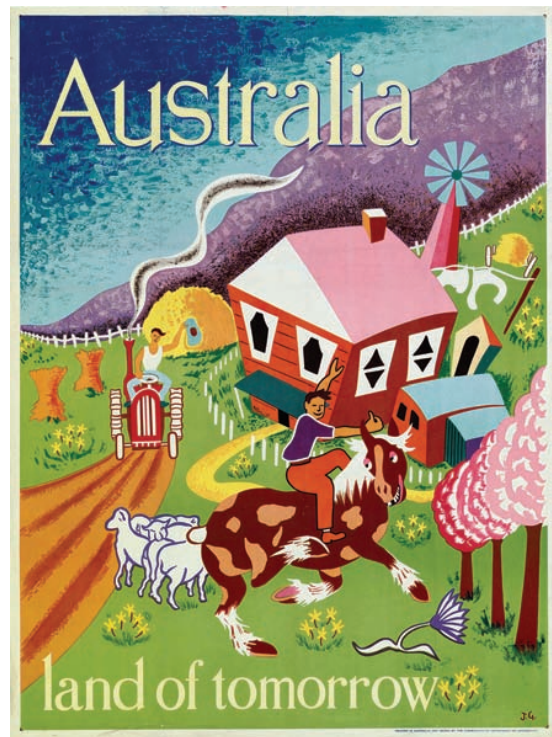
## European migrants

Australia still needed to attract more migrants, but the displaced persons assisted passage scheme was coming to an end. So the government embarked on a campaign to attract migrants from Northern, Western and Southern Europe, as well as Britain.

Migrants came from all over Europe. As a result, the population mix in Australia changed. In 1933, 12 per cent of people in Australia had been born in the United Kingdom or Ireland. This fell to around 7.5 per cent in 1947 and remained at roughly that level over a number of censuses.

People from non-Anglo ethnicities, although still representing a very small percentage of the population, increased. The Australian Government had permitted ex-servicemen from Poland, the United States, the Netherlands, Norway, France, Belgium and Denmark to migrate soon after World War II, and had signed bilateral immigration agreements with Italy (1951); Greece, Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany (1952); Spain (1958); and Malta (1965). Apart from the British, the largest numbers of Australian residents by 1966 had been born in Italy, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands.

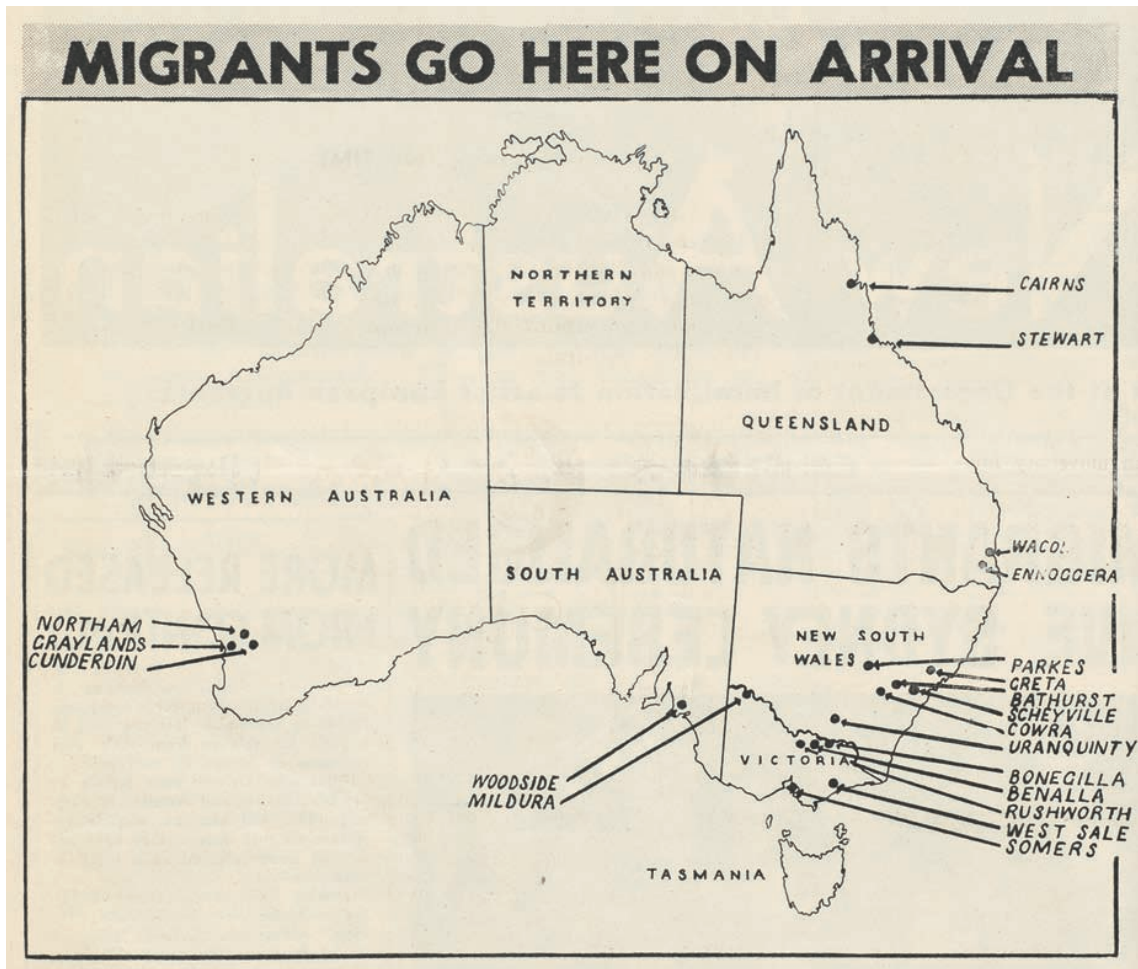
Immigration officials and publicity materials painted a glowing picture of life in Australia that



**Source 6.25** An Australian Government poster that was displayed between 1949 and 1951 in reception rooms and dining halls at various migrant reception centres overseas and in Australia. The creator of this poster, Joe Greenberg, was told later by a Czech migrant that it had been displayed in all the migrant camps in Europe, and had influenced him to come to Australia.

Birthplace	1933	1966
England	486 831	681 526
Scotland	132 489	152 275
Wales	14 486	19 688
Ireland (Northern and Republic)	78 652	55 175
<b>Total for United Kingdom and Ireland</b>	<b>712 458</b>	<b>908 664</b>
Italy	26 756	267 325
Greece	8 337	140 089
Germany	16 842	108 709
Netherlands	1 274	99 549
Yugoslavia	3 969	71 277
Poland	3 239	61 641
<b>Total for listed European countries</b>	<b>60 417</b>	<b>748 590</b>

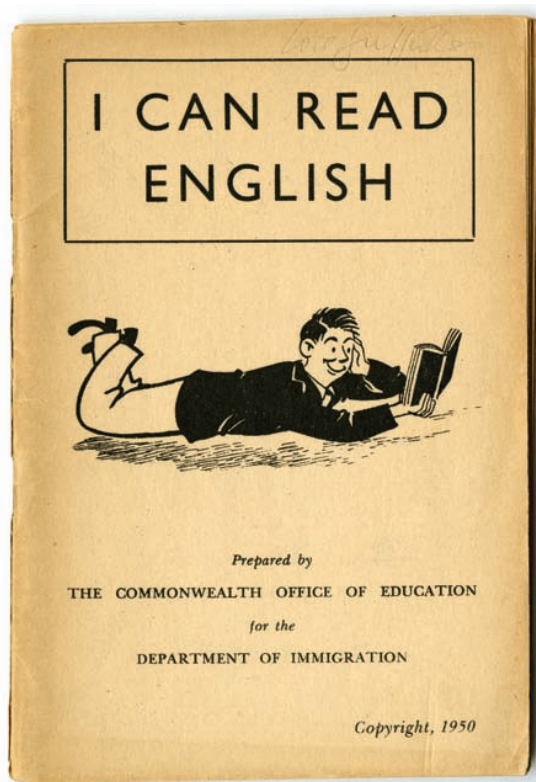
**Source 6.24** Commonwealth census figures showing the birthplaces of the largest migrant groups in 1933 and 1966



Source 6.26 This map shows the major migrant camps in Australia as it was originally published in *The New Australian*, 1949.



Source 6.27 An adult education class at Northam Camp, 1950; there was considerable emphasis on learning English in the migrant camps. [State Library of Western Australia, 005075D]



Source 6.28 Books such as *I Can Read English* were published by the Commonwealth Office of Education to use in adult education classes. This book is from 1950.

exaggerated the opportunities for prospective immigrants.

After the long sea voyage, the European migrants were accommodated in a variety of housing. Most sites had been former military camps, which the government leased from the army. Some camps still housed DPs when later waves of migrants arrived.

Among the largest camps for the new wave of European migrants were Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre in Victoria and the Northam Reception and Training Centre in Western Australia, which had also been used as DP camps. Camp conditions had not changed since the first DPs had been accommodated there. Conditions were basic and life in the camp was regimented.

### Italian migrants

Italians first came to Australia during the gold rushes of the 1850s. Most were single males who worked hard as miners, timber-fellers and sleeper-cutters, on railway construction gangs and as cane cutters in North Queensland. Often they were **sojourners**, sending money back home to Italy to support

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**sojourner** a worker intending to stay in a place temporarily

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Source 6.29 Migrant Italian workers picking apricots on a farm in Werribee, Victoria, 1953

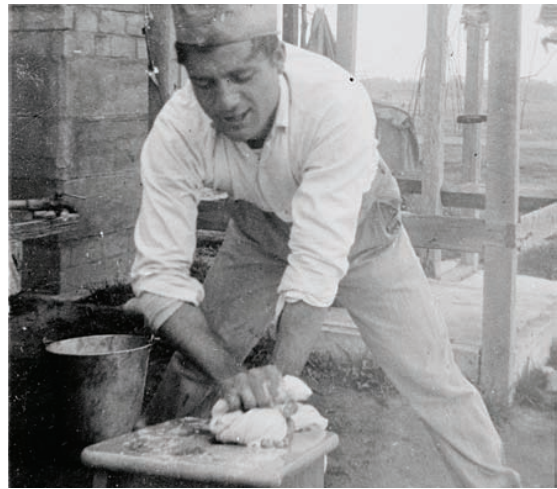
their families. Despite being taunted as ‘dagos’ or ‘dings’, many also settled, bringing family members and brides out to join them and setting up small farms and market gardens. Sicilians came to dominate the fruit and vegetable trade in many Australian cities and large numbers worked in the fishing industry.

During World War II, Italians had been classified as ‘enemy **aliens**’ because Italy fought with Germany in the war. Italian men (and some women) living in Australia were forced into prisoner-of-war and internment camps. It was not until 1947 that Italians were permitted to migrate to Australia again. In 1951 the Australian and Italian Governments signed

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**alien** someone who belongs to a foreign nation or country

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**Source 6.30** Italian migrant Marcello Ulgiati working at Northam Camp, 1953

## *Times gone by ...*

Italy after the war was destroyed and people fared badly. There wasn't much work so I thought of making a better life overseas, where there was more space ... You did what you could. There was no set plan, one didn't think, 'I'll migrate to be an entrepreneur, a merchant or a farmer' ... It was a matter of trying things out, seeing with your own eyes what was needed to get ahead ... In those days Italians took all the worst jobs and the Australians got all the best jobs. They needed us. I heard a hundred times, 'Why don't you go home, you ding bastard?' I always answered in English, as I was beginning to get by then, saying, 'I'm going to stay here and prove what a ding can do'.

**Source 6.31** Italian migrant Tony Fini explaining life after migration

Toni Fini migrated to Australia in 1951. He worked in labouring jobs, digging potatoes and laying concrete, until he obtained a job in the building industry as a plasterer and bricklayer. In 1956, he started his own business, Fini Homes. It became a large construction and property development company and he became a multi-millionaire. Not all Italian migrants fared so well, but his story is a post-war rags-to-riches success story.

Explain how migrants such as Tony Fini were able to create opportunity in Australia.

## HISTORICAL FACT

The lives of Italian migrants were sent up by John O'Grady in his best-selling novel *They're a Weird Mob* (1957), later made into a popular film, and its sequels *Cop This Lot* (1960), *Gone Gugin'* (1962), *Gone Troppo* (1968) and *Gone Fishin'* (1975). O'Grady wrote under the pseudonym 'Nino Culotta', the narrator of the book.

Nino is a journalist who migrates to Australia from Italy and gets a job as a brickie's labourer in Sydney. He is portrayed as a naive but lovable Italian migrant who has learnt English from a textbook and struggles to understand colloquial English, as spoken by workers of the 1950s and 1960s. He soon learns that a 'schooner' is not a sailing ship and a 'shout' is not a yell. His triumph is to be able to roar in a near perfect Aussie accent, 'Howyergoinmateorright?'

The book encouraged Australians to laugh at themselves, but at the expense of New Australians. It promoted **assimilation**; the ideal migrant merging and becoming indistinguishable from the host community.

**assimilation** to absorb and make alike; the process of cultural absorption

HISTORICAL  
FACT



**Source 6.32** A party in Brunswick, Melbourne, to celebrate migrant Maria Ruggeri's arrival from Italy and her proxy marriage to Ezio Ruggeri, 1957

a bilateral immigration agreement, similar to agreements signed with other European nations. Victoria and New South Wales attracted the majority of the 360 000 Italians who migrated to Australia between 1947 and 1976. The Italian Government, struggling to cope with high **inflation** and unemployment during post-war reconstruction, saw migration as a way to ease social and economic discontent.

**inflation** a general rise in the level of prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money

The majority of Italian migrants who came to Australia in the post-war years were sponsored migrants from southern Italy. Racist notions implicit in the White Australia Policy meant the Southern Italians, who had darker skin than those from northern parts of Italy, were low on the list of 'acceptable' European migrants.

As in pre-war years, most Italian migrants were initially men. After a few years of hard work in Australia to set up a financial base, they would sponsor their wives, fiancées, mothers and

other members of their immediate and extended families to come to Australia. This was known as 'chain migration'.

Large-scale emigration out of Italy reduced in the late 1960s as the Italian economy recovered and its industrial cities of the north boomed.

### Greek migrants

There have been Greek migrants in Australia since the early nineteenth century – Greek Orthodox communities were established in Sydney and Melbourne by 1900. Their numbers grew rapidly during the inter-war years when ethnic cleansing occurred in the Balkans and Asia Minor, and the United States imposed strict immigration quotas. Many were sojourners; married or single poorly educated men who planned to stay only as long as it would take them to save enough money to go home and live comfortably in their home village. Like other Southern Europeans, all faced prejudice in a white society.



**Source 6.33** Single Greek girls, who have migrated to Australia to work in domestic service, enjoying a milkshake in a Greek cafe [NAA: A12111, 1/1961/16/54]



**Source 6.34** Photos such as the ones above were published in booklets provided to migrants to show the opportunities that migration offered. In the top photo, a young Greek woman, Vassiliki Dalfou, is shown in traditional dress cooking at her home in Epiros, Greece, in 1961. The bottom photo shows her cooking happily on a modern stove in her workplace in a Sydney hospital a year later. [NAA: A12111, 62/4/43 and 62/4/44 (1413)]

Many of the Greeks who came to Australia are associated with the emergence of a cafe culture. Milk bars, cafes and fish and chip shops enabled generations of migrants from Greece to establish themselves in cities and towns all over Australia. A shopfront and some basic provisions were all that was needed to set up a business, as well as the will to work long, punishing hours.

After World War II, large numbers of Greeks were displaced as a result of enemy occupation and civil war, and in 1952 they too became eligible for assisted passages to Australia. Those sponsored by relatives had arrived in small but increasing numbers since the late 1940s. More than 160 000 Greeks migrated to Australia in the post-war years, mostly to Victoria, where many found work in factories and farms.

By 1966, 1.2 per cent of Australia's population was Greek, and they lived mostly in major cities. This was especially noticeable in Victoria, which had slightly more than 64 000 Greece-born people, almost 95 per cent of whom lived in Melbourne.

The occupational profile for Greek-born people changed dramatically in the last quarter of the twentieth century. At the 1971 census, the vast majority of Greeks in Victoria, for example, were tradesmen, factory workers and labourers – very small numbers held clerical, administration, technical or professional work. By 2001, although the majority were still blue-collar workers, the proportion of Greeks in professional, managerial, administrative and clerical occupations had increased considerably. This was not an unusual pattern among post-war migrants from Europe and was mirrored by the Italian-born population.

## HISTORICAL FACT

For many years, Melbourne was said to be the fifth-largest Greek-populated city in the world, and today it is the largest Greek-populated city outside of Greece. The peak was in 1971 when nearly 80 000 Greece-born people lived in Melbourne.







Source 6.35 Greek migrants on the tarmac after disembarking from a plane, c. 1962 [NAA: A12111, 1/1962/4/83]

### German and Dutch migrants

German and Dutch migrations were the third- and fourth-largest migrant groups in Australia, respectively, at the 1966 census. In some ways they had an easier time on arrival in Australia than had Southern Europeans. Although they too met with a degree of prejudice, most Northern Europeans were fair-skinned and were able to merge more easily into white Australian society.

Despite Australia's involvement in two wars against Germany and the internment of Germans during both wars as 'enemy aliens', Germans were considered to be highly desirable migrants. There had been a long history of German migration to Australia and, until World War I, German Australians were the largest non-British ethnic group in Australia. After World War II, as a result of a 1952 agreement, over the next 20 years 150 000 migrants arrived from the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as about 30 000 Austrians and German-speaking Swiss. In 1966

there were nearly 109 000 German-born people living in Australia. However, the rising standard of living in their home countries led to a very high return rate and it is estimated that one-third returned to Europe.

By 1966 there were nearly 100 000 Netherlands-born people living in Australia. Many Dutch were eager to emigrate after World War II as the Nazi occupation had left many of their cities devastated. Mass unemployment, industrial stagnation and fear of overpopulation followed and the Dutch Government encouraged its people to move abroad. The massive floods of 1953 were a further blow to the country.

Nearly half a million people left the Netherlands after World War II, resettling throughout the world. Dutch people also migrated to Australia from Indonesia when it gained independence from the Netherlands in 1949.

From 1950 to 1963, the ship the *SS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* was a frequent sight in Australian



**Source 6.36** German migrants Theresa and Gertraud Liewehr board the MS *Nelly* at Bremerhaven, Germany, bound for Australia, October 1952

waters. On its 44 voyages to Australia, the ship carried many Dutch and European migrants to our shores.

One of the most well-known Dutch migrants to Australia is Johnny Young (born John de Jong), Australian singer and host of the first run of television series *Young Talent Time* during the

1970s and 1980s. He was born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and migrated with his family as a boy, settling in Perth in the early 1950s.

Tradesmen from the Netherlands and Germany were highly sought after, as their training was considered equivalent to Australian training. Nearly 42 per cent of the Dutch adult males who migrated to Western Australia, for example, were skilled as carpenters, fitters, painters, electricians, bakers and toolmakers. However, before their skills could be recognised, they had to produce documentary evidence of their training and experience in Europe and pass a trade test. Often they had to sit the test a number of times before passing, because it was conducted in English and their English-language skills were regarded as inadequate.

Generally, the Dutch and German migrants came from a society with high standards of education, so that even unskilled workers could aspire to becoming self-employed in Australia. Many became taxi drivers, operated a milk round or became contract cleaners; they also ran small grocery shops; grew flowers, fruit or vegetables; or ran dairy cattle.



**Source 6.37** Migrant ship SS *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* arriving in Sydney, 1958 [NA: A12111, 1/1958/32/2]

## British migrants: Ten Pound Poms

The Australian Government's priority was always to attract migrants from Britain. Australia had been built by Britons, had been a loyal child of the British Empire, and in 1949 had become an integral member of the newly created British Commonwealth of Nations. The loyalty that most Australians felt toward the monarchy in the 1950s and 1960s was expressed by Prime Minister Robert Menzies when he famously declaimed, in the words of poet Thomas Ford, 'I did but see her passing by, and yet I love her till I die', during Queen Elizabeth II's 1963 tour of Australia.

In the immediate post-war years Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, had declared that he hoped that for every 'foreign' migrant there would be 10 British migrants. Britain remained the source of about 50 per cent of migrants.

More than one million British migrants were assisted to come to Australia between 1945 and 1972. They were known as 'Ten Pound Poms' because adult migrants had to pay only £10 each to travel to Australia. Children travelled free. Those who were eligible for the scheme needed to be in good health and under the age of 45 years, and were required to stay in Australia for two years or refund their passage if they returned to Britain. People from other parts of the British Commonwealth were also eligible, although under the White Australia Policy people from mixed-race backgrounds found it very difficult to take advantage of the scheme. There were initially no skill restrictions, though mainly tradesmen and semi-skilled labourers were sought from Britain.

Those who arrived before 1951 had to be sponsored. Often they were sponsored by a government department, but they could also be sponsored by private Australian companies and by individuals, as long as those individuals were



Source 6.38 Migrants from the United Kingdom aboard the *New Australia*, 1954 [NAA: A12111, 1/1954/4/4]

permanent Australian residents. As time went on, migrants were often sponsored by family members who had arrived in Australia some years earlier, thus following the pattern of chain migration that was common among most migrant groups.

The ships brought into service after World War II to carry migrants to Australia had often been used as troop ships. The *Fairsea* was one. Initially used to carry displaced persons to Australia between 1949 and 1951, the ship was refitted and chartered by the Australian Government in 1955 to transport assisted migrants from Britain to Australia. The experiences of the journey to Australia for a DP and a Ten Pound Pom could be very different.

The *Fairsea* was huge, a converted troop ship with no cabins, just huge big open spaces with triple decked bunks, so cramped you couldn't sit up straight in them. Men were assigned to one section, women to the other. The toilet and shower facilities were one huge long one ... and everywhere you went there was an awful reek of 'White King'. People threw up because of the smell not just the swell!

**Source 6.39** An account from Frank Kriesl, a displaced person from Hungary, about his voyage on the *Fairsea* in 1951

Five years later, a Ten Pound Pom considered her journey on the *Fairsea* to be the 'best part of my early life' because of the 'lovely meals, dances, entertainment, deck games, swimming and many other pastimes'.

Immigration officials and publicity materials painted a glowing picture of life in Australia

to prospective migrants, and exaggerated the opportunities available. Migrants who arrived between 1947 and 1951 had little idea of life in Australia and some expected to see kangaroos in the main streets or thought they could make a fortune mining gold. Britons who complained that employment and housing was not as expected were labelled 'whingeing Poms' by Australians.

Like the DPs before them, the Ten Pound Poms found that their accommodation was initially in migrant hostels, many of which had been army camps. Conditions varied. As time went on and improvements were made, they were generally better off than the DPs had been, though their accommodation was still very basic.



**Source 6.40** A migrant family outside their hut at Graylands Migrant Hostel in Perth, 1953 [State Library of Western Australia, 061468PD]

## HISTORICAL FACT

Prime Minister Julia Gillard was a Ten Pound Pom. She migrated with her family from Wales to South Australia in 1966 when she was four years old, after her parents were advised that her health would improve if they lived in a warmer climate.

## *Times gone by ...*

The Barrie family was part of the first large government-sponsored group of British tradesmen and their families to arrive in Western Australia.

Archie (my husband) and I applied to Australia House in 1948. We were living in a small flat with our four children. Housing was very tight because of the bombing during the war ... So we went to Australia House to explain it was our living conditions that made us want to migrate. They told us how much better off we would be in WA. The government would pay our fares and give my husband a job for two years. We would stay in Point Walter Camp for two days, then have a state flat for six months, and finally a state house. So we decided to come.

**Source 6.41** An account from Beth Barrie, as told to Nonja Peters, 1995

- 1 Contrast the experience of the Barrie family with that of the earlier displaced people. Identify some points of difference.
- 2 Why did the Barries think they would be better off in Western Australia than in the United Kingdom?

### Activity 6.4

- 1 Summarise the differences in the ways that British and non-British immigrants were treated in the post-war years.
- 2 How did life differ for displaced persons, non-British migrants and British migrants?
- 3 Explain the Australian Government's main aim in encouraging immigration.
- 4 What is the difference between sojourning and chain migration?

### HISTORICAL FACT

Singer Kylie Minogue's mother, Carol, was a Ten Pound Pom from Wales.





## Changing government policies

### Populate or perish

During World War II, with the bombing of Darwin and north-west Australian towns, and the presence of Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour, there was a very real fear of a Japanese invasion. The old fears of Asian hordes invading Australia were reinforced, which led to a new immigration policy.

In 1945, the Chifley Labor Government established the first Commonwealth Department of Immigration and appointed Australia's first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell. Mass migration was the plan. According to Calwell, Australia would have to 'populate or perish'. The 'Ten Pound Pom' scheme was created as part of the 'populate or perish' policy to provide workers for Australia's post-war industrialisation.

### From assimilation to integration

In the immediate post-war decades, migrants were expected to **assimilate** into Australian society; to shed their cultures and languages and blend into the host population as soon as possible.

The government's assimilation policies were based on an assumption that assimilation would not be difficult for new arrivals. This assumption was challenged on many levels. The assistance that the government gave to immigrants was limited to accommodation in migrant hostels and some language tuition. British migrants were treated as equal to Australians, but migrants who were not British subjects were designated as 'aliens', and this reduced their legal and political rights, their entry into particular jobs and their access to social security benefits, even though the number of non-British migrants was increasing. This policy continued until the mid-1960s.

It was not easy for migrants to advance in their new country. The Henderson Inquiry of

**assimilate** when a minority culture merges into a dominate culture, with the minority being required to leave its own culture behind

## *Times gone by ...*

We must populate or we will perish. We must fill this country or we will lose it. We need to protect ourselves against the yellow peril from the north. Our current population of 7391000 (about one person per square mile) leave[s] a land as vast as Australia under-protected.

**Source 6.42** Excerpt from a speech by Arthur Calwell, after becoming Australia's first Minister for Immigration in 1947

- 1 Who made the speech in Source 6.42?
- 2 What position did he hold?
- 3 What was the 'yellow peril'?
- 4 What was the background to his views?
- 5 What was his goal?

1966 showed that people for whom English was a second language tended to be isolated from the community and were often living in poverty. Another report in 1968 showed that they also suffered difficulties at school and in the workforce, that their qualifications were not recognised, and that they suffered prejudice in the housing market.

There was also concern about the high rate of departure, as some migrants were returning to their country of origin, particularly as economic conditions improved in Europe. In 1973 the government held an Inquiry into the Departure of Settlers. It concluded that if the departure rate was to be reduced, then better services had to be provided for immigrants.

This was the beginning of a move towards the goal of 'integration' rather than 'assimilation'.

**integration** where a people is able to maintain its own basic culture and have it respected, while living within and respecting the values of another culture

Integration in this sense meant that people did not have to abandon their own culture and be absorbed by another, but it did suggest a merging of cultures where the non-dominant culture could exist, but exist discreetly.

The Department of Immigration expanded its language teaching, and established a Child Migrant Education Program, a Translating and Interpreting Service and a Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications.

By this stage the severity of the White Australia Policy had further weakened. As early as 1958 the infamous requirement for prospective immigrants to be able to pass a dictation test in a European

language, which had denied entry to many non-European applicants, was abolished by altering the *Migration Act*. Prime Minister Harold Holt extended the skilled migration program in 1966 to allow non-Europeans to apply, thus modifying the White Australia Policy. As well, the government established an immigration agreement with Turkey in 1967 to permit Turkish workers and their dependents to enter Australia. As a result of these changes, many Turkish, Lebanese, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Indian and other non-European workers migrated to Australia.

By the late 1960s, attitudes towards non-British immigrants were slowly beginning to change. British, Irish and New Zealanders still made up the largest groups of 'New Australians', but there was a slow intermingling of cultures and 'old Australians' were becoming accustomed to the millions of post-war immigrants that were now part of Australian society.

Despite this, many people still thought that immigrants should try harder to become assimilated into the 'Australian Way of Life'. Name-calling was still common and many Australians remained suspicious of newcomers. Public-opinion surveys, such as those undertaken in Melbourne in 1971, suggested that up to 90 per cent of Australians were opposed to multiculturalism.

Nevertheless, the assumption that everyone would and should assimilate into British–Australian culture began to dissolve. People gradually began to accept that migrants could speak their own languages, practise their own religions and follow the cultural practices of their homelands, but still be Australians.

## Activity 6.5

- 1 Why would migrants want to return to their homelands?
- 2 In groups, make PowerPoint presentations detailing some of the contributions that migrants of this period have made to Australian society.

## Abolition of the White Australia Policy

Immigration reform had started in the 1950s in various ways. The *Migration Act* had been amended in 1958 and in 1966 the Holt Coalition Government moved towards dismantling the White Australia Policy around the same time that Labor dropped its 'White Australia' **plank in the party platform**.

**plank in the party platform** an individual issue that a political party supports

In the late 1960s and 1970s, other factors came into play to change the immigration policy as the level of social activism rose dramatically in most Western societies. The peace movement flourished, with protesters intent on achieving

**conscription** the process of mandatory participation in war, where men and women are forced to sign up to serve their country at war

**equality** the same treatment and opportunities available to all, regardless of race, gender or religion

nuclear disarmament, and an end to the **conscription** of young men into the armed forces bound for an unwinnable war in Vietnam. ‘Stop the war’ became a catch-cry among protesters. A new desire for **equality** developed: the Women’s Liberation Movement grew, gay rights were championed, and concern for minority groups became widespread. Concern for

the environment also came to the fore. Groups that had previously gone unheard gained a voice; migrant groups among them.

In 1972, after 23 years of conservative rule, a new Federal Government under Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam championed equality. Changes to immigration policy included the removal of racial discrimination from immigration selection. This effectively abolished the White Australia Policy altogether.

Labor’s Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby, was instrumental in shifting the idea of migrants as just a source of labour, to one of migrants as central to the building of Australia as a country. This change in immigration policy, however, did not mean an increase in migrant intake; in 1973, migrant intake was cut by 30 000 places.

As a result of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1973*, which ruled that Australians were no longer British subjects, the official advantages for British migrants ceased, and the number of years required for British and non-British migrants to reside in Australia before applying for citizenship was made the same. This changed the idea of nationality in Australia.

The conservative side of politics was concerned that these changes were eroding the core of Australian identity. Although the majority of migrants between 1971 and 1976 – at around 40 per cent of the total – were still Britons, newspapers reported dissatisfaction. Many people

believed that Australia’s traditional ties to Britain should be maintained and that a common culture and heritage helped migrants to integrate into Australian society more easily, and maintained social stability.

The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, introduced by the Whitlam Government, outlawed discrimination based on race and ethnic origin. Equal treatment for migrants of any ethnic origin became official policy.



Source 6.43 An anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Sydney, 1972





Source 6.44 A Women's Liberation March, Sydney, 1970. Feminist and academic Germaine Greer is in the white dress, centre.

## *Times gone by ...*

British migrants have continued to be the cornerstone[;] the very real base of immigration to this country. The reason is not hard to ascertain; there is clear evidence that people from overseas who share with their new host country a common language, a common history, a common tradition and common institutions are very markedly advantaged in respect of integration.

Source 6.45 Excerpt of a speech made by Shadow Immigration Minister Phillip Lynch in parliament in 1973

Study Source 6.45 and complete the following questions.

- 1 What do you think of Lynch's argument?
- 2 Assess the degree to which Lynch's ideas would have been shaped by the then-dominant policy of integration.
- 3 Assess why Lynch thinks integration is the proper goal of immigration policy.

## Activity 6.6

How and why did migration policies gradually change in the late 1960s and 1970s?

## Multiculturalism

Alongside the abolishment of the White Australia Policy and removal of discrimination from the immigration process, the policy of

**multiculturalism** a policy that encourages migrant groups to embrace their ethnic culture, provided that they abide by Australian laws

**multiculturalism** was introduced. The most obvious reason for the shift to multiculturalism as a policy was the increasingly diverse immigration from Europe, and the failure of assimilation. The years of the Fraser Coalition Government,

and the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments – between 1975 and 1996 – were marked by the expansion of multicultural programs, with strong efforts to promote multiculturalism as part of a national identity in which cultural diversity and tolerance were valued; and by a focus on strengthening relationships between ethnic communities and the Commonwealth and State Governments.

The term ‘multiculturalism’ entered the Australian language on 11 August 1973, in a speech entitled ‘A multicultural society for the future’, delivered by Al Grassby, the Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Labor Government. Australia was the second nation in the world (after Canada) to introduce a policy of multiculturalism.

The Grassby version of multiculturalism referred to ‘a truly just society in which all components can enjoy freedom to make their own distinctive contribution to the family of the nation’. Ethnic groups were encouraged to maintain their cultural differences while working with all other Australians toward shared aims, in exchange for equal treatment. Both major political parties broadly agreed that the idea of a true multiculturalism was preferable to assimilation or integration. Multiculturalism was different from



**Source 6.46** Prime Minister Gough Whitlam at the proclamation of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* [NAA: A6180, 4/11/75/23]

integration because it *outwardly* encouraged cultural diversity; several cultures sitting side by side rather than necessarily merging. As a result, task forces were set up to identify problems facing migrants, and community relations councils were proposed to deal directly with racism and unfair treatment.

Multiculturalism as a policy was further developed in the late 1970s with the arrival of nearly 200 000 migrants from Asian nations, including nearly 56 000 refugees. This was a consequence of the abolition of the White Australia Policy, and the Fraser Coalition Government was the first to have to manage the results.

In 1977 a clear definition of multiculturalism was provided in the report *Australia as a Multicultural Society*, which identified three aspects of successful policy: social cohesion, cultural identity and equality. This was to remain the overriding description of multiculturalism for the next two decades. In this report, Jean Martin and Jerzy Zubrzycki concluded that: ‘What we believe Australia should be working towards is

## HISTORICAL FACT

The term 'multiculturalism' is used in two ways. The first acknowledges the everyday reality of the diversity of cultures within Australia. The second refers to official policies on migrant settlement and integration, which support cultural diversity and help different cultural groups to maintain distinct identities while still living together within a single society.

not a oneness, but a unit; not a similarity, but a composite; not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure'.

The 1978 Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services (commonly referred to as the *Galbally Report*) recommended implementation of more migrant services. It emphasised the need for equality of opportunity, special services, self-help for migrants and cultural diversity. This was to be a cornerstone in directing the Fraser Government's implementation of services, with 57 recommendations costing \$50 million to be carried out over three years. This included the

transfer of funding from British migrant assistance to non-British migrants and ethnic community welfare organisations.

Multiculturalism gained a very public face in response to the *Galbally Report*. Most notable was the establishment of SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) radio (1975) and television (1980) by the Fraser Coalition Government. SBS explicitly aims to 'provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society'. The first program shown on SBS television was a documentary called *Who Are We?* By the mid-

## Times gone by ...

We are convinced that migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and that it is certainly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do so if they wish. Provided that ethnic identity is not stressed at the expense of society at large but is interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood by the process of multicultural interaction, then the community as a whole will benefit substantially.

**Source 6.47** An extract from the *Galbally Report*, 1978

Analyse the text from the *Galbally Report*. Compare this with previous policies on ethnic diversity in Australia, such as the White Australia Policy.

1980s, SBS radio was broadcasting in 47 languages and SBS television was broadcasting across Australia.

In the 1980s multicultural policies and institutions were consolidated. In 1982 the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs published a policy paper entitled *Multiculturalism for all Australians*. This paper recognised that there was still much community uncertainty about what multiculturalism meant for Australian society. It argued that multiculturalism meant more than providing special services to minority ethnic groups: it should mean that all Australians had a shared responsibility for living together with ‘an awareness of cultural diversity’. This expanded the principles of

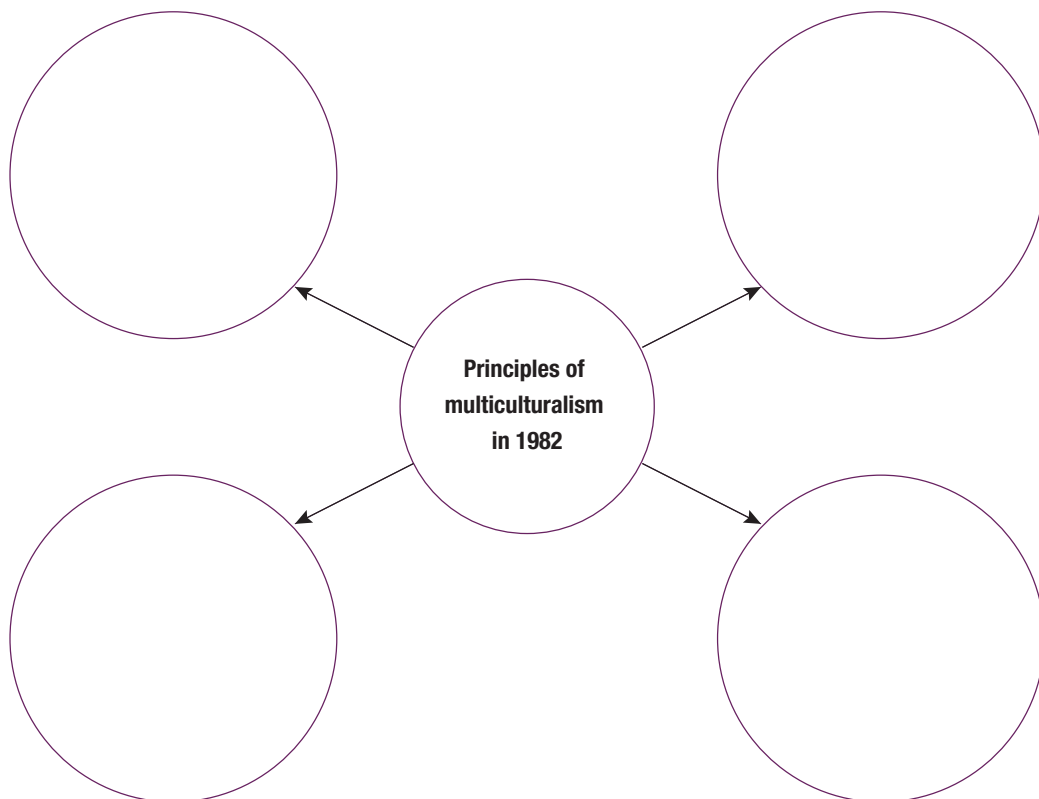
multiculturalism established by the Ethnic Affairs Council in 1977.

At that point multiculturalism was based on four principles: social cohesion, cultural identity, equality of opportunity and access, and equal responsibility to commit to and participate in Australian society.

With the election of the Hawke Labor Government in 1983, there were a number of new initiatives in the area of multiculturalism. A Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services, chaired by James Jupp, led to the establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1987 within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to act as a central coordinating agency for multicultural policy.

### Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the principles of multiculturalism in 1982.



## Activity 6.7

- 1 Multiculturalism is a complex term, the meaning of which has shifted over the years.
  - a Analyse the differences in the meanings of 'multiculturalism'.
  - b Which do you think has most relevance today?
- 2 Identify some of the key initiatives of the government's multicultural policy. Explain which one you think has had the greatest effect on Australian life.



## Immigration: 1980s onwards

Australia had a high immigration intake in the late 1980s, but the number of immigrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand had been slowly falling since 1975. By the 1991 census, the number of people born overseas had increased to approximately 22 per cent of the population and approximately 58 per cent of the overseas-born people were from non-English speaking countries. Asian countries such as China, Vietnam and the Philippines were among the top 10 countries of birth for overseas-born people in Australia at the time.

By the 2001 census, the numbers of people in Australia born in the United Kingdom, Ireland or New Zealand had dropped to about 25 per cent of all foreign-born people. This was a major change from 1966, when the arrival of the Ten Pound Poms had swollen the percentage of people from the United Kingdom and Ireland among the overseas-born to more than 50 per cent.

Some people thought that these changes, coupled with the heightened visibility in the press of Indo-Chinese refugees, as well as Australia's commitment to multiculturalism, were a deliberate move by the government to change Australia.

Partly as a result of immigration after the Vietnam War, 27.6 per cent of all migrants entering Australia in 1982–83 were from Asia. Asia had become the largest source of migrants to Australia for the first time in more than a century. This figure was repeatedly used in arguments against Asian immigration, despite the fact that 30 per

cent of immigrants in 1982–83 were also from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and a further 21.3 per cent were from continental Europe.

In 1984, Professor Geoffrey Blainey proposed that immigration from Asia should be limited. Although approximately 90 000 Indo-Chinese (South-East Asian) refugees were accepted into Australia between 1975 and 1984, they, together with other people in Australia who had been born in Asian countries, represented less than 2 per cent of the Australian population.

Blainey argued that the pace of Asian migration was too fast, that the numbers were too high, that it threatened social cohesion in Australia by reducing job opportunities for Australians, and that racial conflict and violence might follow unless there were major changes to immigration policy.

Many other historians and social scientists, as well as politicians and public figures, refuted Blainey's views, but they hit a chord among some Australians. The outrage that was sparked by Blainey's words kept his ideas in the media for some time and they led to a major public debate on immigration policy in the '80s.

The issue of Asian immigration became the subject of debate once again in the mid-1990s when Pauline Hanson was elected as an independent member of the Federal Parliament. She protested against Asian immigration and multiculturalism and, in the process, stirred up intense waves of both support and opposition.

But Australia in the 1990s was quite different from the Australia of a century before. Asian immigration since the 1970s had had a substantial

Eligibility category	1990–91	1996–97	2003–04	2004–05
Family	53 934	36 490	29 548	3 182
Skill	48 421	19 697	51 528	53 133

Source 6.48 How the government’s migration program has moved from encouraging family migration to skilled migration

effect on Australia and its influence was now part of the everyday Australian lifestyle. Hanson’s arguments did not see a return to the White Australia Policy, although they did show that there were pockets of support for such ideas.

In the late 1990s under Prime Minister John Howard, there was a shift to a reaffirmation of ‘Australian values’, which emphasised unity above diversity. This idea was reflected in a citizenship test instituted in 2007 that required prospective citizens to demonstrate ‘adequate knowledge of Australia’, including knowledge of history and culture as well as rights and responsibilities.

In the 2000s, under the Labor Governments of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard, there was a revival of multiculturalism. The citizenship test was revised to make it less ‘intimidating’ and ‘discriminatory’ and more educational, and an Australian Multicultural Advisory Council was established.

However, in recent years there have also been concerns about **population sustainability**, with debate on the level of population that can be sustained on the Australian continent, especially at a time of climate change. Federal Minister Chris Bowen discussed this in a speech on ‘The Population 2050’ at the national summit in June 2010. Expressing pride in Australia’s immigration history, he pointed out that in 1945 Australia was the first country in the world to establish a government agency dedicated wholly to immigration and that, since then, seven million people had migrated to Australia. He argued that because the numbers of Australians aged between 15 and 65 is projected to fall, and the fertility rate is expected to remain below replacement level, Australia’s immigration programs ‘will assist us to meet such challenges’.

**population sustainability**  
the capacity of a country to support the number of people living within it

## Skilled migrants

Australia has welcomed migrants who have the skills to aid Australia’s economic and industrial needs. Despite cutbacks to immigration programs during the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments (1983–96), Prime Minister Paul Keating believed Australia should look to new alliances and attitudes that would create an economic, strategic and cultural future in its Asia-Pacific neighbourhood.

Unlike the approach of Australian governments in the immediate post-war years that focused on bringing in labour for industry and ignoring the skills of non-English speaking displaced people and migrants, the focus in the late twentieth century was on how a skilled workforce from many countries could benefit the economy.

A change in the focus of migration patterns over the last few years has been from permanent settlement to temporary migration to Australia, particularly by business and skilled migrants. More recently, skilled migration has been directed toward the needs of specific regions of Australia where skill shortages are evident. However, many regional areas are still desperate for skilled workers and tradespeople, and there has been some community debate on how effective the regional migration schemes actually are.

## Refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants



‘Asylum’ means refuge or protection. An **asylum seeker** is an migrant who arrives in a foreign country seeking refuge. An asylum seeker has to be formally assessed by the country they have arrived in before he or she

**asylum seeker** a person who has fled their own country and applies to the government of another country for protection as a refugee

## *Times gone by ...*

By the year 2000 we should be able to say that we have learned to live securely, in peace and mutual prosperity among our Asian and Pacific neighbours. We will not be cut off from our British and European cultures and traditions or from those economies. On the contrary, the more engaged we are economically and politically with the region around us, the more value and relevance we bring to those old relationships. Far from putting our identity at risk, our relationships with the region will energise it.

**Source 6.49** An excerpt from a speech by Paul Keating at his election campaign launch, 14 February 1996

What was the significance of Paul Keating's speech about being 'part of Asia'?

can be judged to be a refugee. They will then be given a visa to allow them to remain legally in the host country for a certain period of time. Since 1991, asylum seekers in Australia have been held in detention centres while their claims to

be refugees are processed. This **mandatory detention** of asylum seekers has attracted criticism from humanitarian groups and others.

We briefly mentioned refugees earlier in this chapter. A refugee is a person who, 'owing to a well-

founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is

outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling, to avail himself of the protection of that country'.

An illegal immigrant is someone who arrives unauthorised in a country (and is not an asylum seeker), or stays longer than their authorisation has allowed. Most of the estimated 60 000 illegal immigrants in Australia are *not* asylum seekers who arrive by boat hoping to be assessed as refugees. Most illegal immigrants actually arrive by air and overstay their visas. They are generally tourists, students or people who have been granted temporary-residence permits. They do not get much media attention and the government does not appear to consider them a serious threat.

**mandatory detention**  
an Australian Government policy whereby all people thought to have entered the country illegally are compulsorily detained

### Activity 6.8

- 1 Summarise the differences between asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants.
- 2 Imagine that you are an asylum seeker and it is your first day in detention. Write a diary entry describing your experiences.

HISTORICAL  
FACT

In 1979, Australia increased its annual refugee resettlement program to 14 000 people. The following year a Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) for people in need (suffering human rights violations or serious discrimination, but not strictly refugees under the UN definition) was also introduced. This was open to people from places such as the Middle East, Africa and South America. In 1981–82 the number of refugees and those accepted under SHP was 21 917. The number reduced to 17 054 persons in 1982–83. This was around a quarter of the then overall immigration intake of around 70 000 per year.

## Impact of the Vietnam War on immigration and refugee intake

As well as immigrants, Australia has accepted refugees for many years in response to various international crises: displaced Europeans at the end of World War II, Hungarians after the Soviets crushed the Hungarian Revolt in 1956, Czechs after the Soviets suppressed the Prague Spring in 1968, Indochinese after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, Chileans after the army-

backed **revolution** that overthrew the Allende Government in 1973, and Polish after martial law was declared in Poland in 1981.

Australia also signed the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (developed in 1951, though Australia signed in 1954). However, there was no obligation to stop the entry of refugees being determined by race, so Europeans still tended to dominate this selection process in Australia.

The Vietnam War lasted for 20 years, from 1955 to 1975; Australia's involvement began in 1962. Australian troops had played an integral part as allies of the United States, supporting South

Vietnam against the **communist** rebels from the north. The war cost the lives of 500 Australian soldiers and wounded 3000. But millions of Vietnamese had lost their lives and millions more were made

refugees. Australia felt an obligation to assist these refugees, and a refugee program was established to process them.

The Australian Government's position in the late 1970s is summed up by a statement made by Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Minister Ian Mackellar in 1977. The four key principles of the policy, described by Mackellar, were:

- Australia fully recognises its humanitarian commitment and responsibility to admit refugees for resettlement.
- The decision to accept refugees must always remain with the government of Australia.
- Special assistance will often need to be provided for the movement of refugees in designated situations or for their resettlement in Australia.
- It may not be in the interest of some refugees to settle in Australia. Their interests may be better served by resettlement elsewhere.

There had been Vietnamese in Australia since the 1950s, when the Colombo Plan allowed thousands of Asian students to study at Australian universities. While a few of these students stayed, most returned to Vietnam after finishing their studies. During the Vietnam War, more than half the population was displaced and millions were killed; there were more than 800 000 orphans in South Vietnam as a result of the war. Australian families adopted nearly 600 orphans between 1972 and 1975.

The Vietnam-born population in Australia grew rapidly, from less than 2500 at the 1976 census to around 150 000 in the 1996 census. These numbers then began to level out, so that in 2006

**revolution** the overthrowing of a government in favour of a new system

**communism** the political practice of Marxism in which the state or government controls most of the nation's wealth and private property is restricted





**Source 6.50** South Vietnamese refugees fleeing from the North Vietnamese Army and being transported in a RAAF 36 Squadron Hercules transport aircraft in April 1975

there were around 160 000 Vietnam-born people living in Australia. Not since the migration of large numbers of Chinese during the nineteenth-century gold rushes had there been such an influx of Asians into Australia. As a percentage of the population, Indo-Chinese refugees were not a large group, but they were new and they were visible. Small areas of Australia's major cities, such as Sydney's Cabramatta, were dramatically changed by their presence.

### Beginnings of post-war Vietnamese migration

Refugees escaping from Vietnam left in secret, often after a number of attempts and at great expense. They risked jail and re-education (prison) camps if they were caught. Often people couldn't say goodbye to family for fear that their plans would be sabotaged by informers. Thousands died of exposure, drowning, or as victims of piracy in rickety boats at sea.

The first boat carrying asylum seekers from Vietnam arrived on Australia's northern shores in

April 1976 and, in the next five years, more than 50 more boats carrying more than 2000 people arrived. This was part of a vast outflow of people from Vietnam, most travelling by boat to nearby Asian countries from where they were resettled in third countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia. A small number of asylum seekers came directly to Australia. All of these asylum seekers were detained so that their eligibility as refugees could be assessed, and some were **repatriated**.

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**repatriate** to send someone back to their country of origin

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What was significant about the intake of Vietnamese, and later more broadly Indo-Chinese refugees, was that a comparatively small number actually arrived by boat. However, these boat arrivals attracted most of the attention by the press and the refugees were called '**boat people**'.

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**boat people** refugees and asylum seekers who flee from their native country by boat

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The urgent need to resettle the large numbers of Vietnamese refugees led to international discussions and agreements. Australia began to develop its own refugee policy in conjunction



**Source 6.51** Two of several small wooden fishing vessels in Darwin Harbour on 2 November 1977. These vessels brought 259 Vietnamese refugees to Australia – 126 men, 44 women and 89 children. [NAA: A6180, 8/12/78/24]

with the United Nations. Between 1975 and 1981, 43 393 Vietnamese refugees were resettled in Australia. Overall, the Fraser Government's response to Vietnamese and other refugees was humanitarian, and seen as generous.

Australia also developed an Orderly Departure Program with the Vietnamese Government in 1982, through which Vietnamese could apply to migrate to Australia. A similar program had been developed between Vietnam and the United States in 1979.

Australia accepted its first Vietnamese migrants through the Vietnamese Family Migration Program in 1982. This enabled those with relatives in Australia to migrate directly from Vietnam. It became the main means of migration from Vietnam, so that gradually refugees who were accepted on humanitarian grounds were replaced by settlers with relatives in Australia. This followed the pattern of chain migration established by many migrant groups.



**Source 6.52** Vietnamese refugees await processing at Melbourne Airport in the late 1970s



Source 6.53 In 1979 when these Vietnamese refugees arrived in Canberra, the government was becoming concerned that too many refugees were arriving in Australia.



Source 6.54 The Vietnamese community holds an Open Day, Perth, 1979 [State Library of Western Australia, 000977D]

## Times gone by ...

**CONG D TRAN:** We left with small boat, carried 60 people that Friday on the sea. After [19]75, it's hard, very hard. Everything hard. My family lost everything. After five years living, then there's, you know, a new regime. And we have to decide to escape from Vietnam.

**MECA HO:** I can remember when I was on a boat, Mum was carrying me. And my grandma was holding my hand and she was crying as the boat started quietly moving, slowly drifting away. I see a lot of people on the boat. But they're always cramped in just one boat and underneath of the boat.

**MECA HO:** Mum and Dad started to build up some money and save. And then our first restaurant ever was down here, in Richmond back in '84, I remember. Mum was a jeweller in Vietnam – she was always business-oriented. Dad was an educated person. He was never into business as much as Mum.

Well, my skin colour is Oriental, Asian. But because I live here so long, I have adopted the Australian culture. So I consider myself as an Australian citizen now. And I'm Australian, but an Australian in Vietnamese way.

**CONG D TRAN:** Like, my kids, you know – not Australian, not Vietnamese. Their minds are different. They grow up here, their education here. So they are Vietnamese, but they are not Vietnamese. Australian. Australian teen, yeah.

**Source 6.55** The stories of Vietnamese refugees Cong D Tran and Meca Ho

- 1 Explain some of the dangers that immigrants from Vietnam would have faced in their journey from Vietnam.
- 2 What do you think Meca Ho's statement 'I'm Australian, but an Australian in Vietnamese way' means?

## HISTORICAL FACT

Immigration historian Nancy Viviani has described Vietnamese immigration to Australia as occurring in four waves:

- 1 those who left Vietnam in 1975 directly following the end of the war
- 2 a second small wave between 1976 and 1978, who left after the new regime came to power
- 3 the largest number, after 1978, comprising mostly ethnic Chinese
- 4 the so-called economic refugees – those seeking a better life, who arrived in 1989.

HISTORICAL  
FACT



Source 6.56 A shopping arcade off John St, Cabramatta

### The Cabramatta story

The suburb of Cabramatta in Sydney has been noted for the ethnic and racial diversity of its population. Since the 1950s, a migrant hostel has been situated in the suburb alongside Cabramatta High School. Large numbers of the children of post-war European immigrants attended the school and, later, large numbers of children of Vietnamese refugees did the same. A study showed that, in the 1980s, only 10 per cent of children at the school had both parents born in Australia and it was the most ethnically and racially diverse school population in Sydney.

According to the 2006 census, Cabramatta had a population of 19812. There were more residents born in Vietnam (31 per cent) than in Australia (28 per cent) and the percentage of people speaking Vietnamese at home (34 per cent) was three times higher than the percentage that spoke English only (11 per cent). Other languages commonly spoken in the area included Cantonese, Thai, Khmer, Laotian, Mandarin and Serbian. Buddhism and Catholicism are the main religions of people living in Cabramatta. At nearly 16 per

cent, the level of unemployment in Cabramatta in 2006 was considerably higher than the Australian average of 5.2 per cent. Most people in Cabramatta who were employed worked in blue-collar jobs: labourers, machinery operators and drivers, and technicians and trades workers. The median weekly income for households (i.e. the midpoint of all household incomes) was only half the Australian median.

Although Cabramatta is noted for its diversity and has one of the largest multicultural restaurant and shopping precincts in Sydney, it has a longstanding image problem. This is because of its reputation for drug dealing and a number of drug-related deaths in the 1980s and '90s. This was fuelled by sensational media stories with headlines such as 'Asian gangs spread fear in Cabramatta' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 1988) and the use of phrases such as 'street warfare', 'gang-land shoot-out' or 'organised crimes', even when it was clear that only one or two people were involved.

In early 2012, SBS television broadcast a documentary series titled *Once Upon a Time in Cabramatta*. It explored Vietnamese settlement

in Cabramatta and traced how the suburb has grown into what it is today under Vietnamese influence. It also explored the history of racism in the area.

## Non-Vietnamese refugees in Australia: 1970s and 1980s

Although the Vietnamese still made up the largest number of refugees arriving in the 1970s and 1980s, they were not the only refugees arriving in Australia in these years. Between 1975 and 1981, Australia resettled a total of 5050 Laotians and 3276 Kampucheans. Most were selected from camps of first asylum in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, with smaller numbers coming from Hong Kong, the Philippines and other countries.

Different international instabilities led to specific intakes of other refugees. In a virtual roll-call of the world's trouble spots during the 1980s, Australia also received refugees from Afghanistan, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Hungary, Iraq, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Yugoslavia. Soviet Jews from Eastern Europe and White Russians from China also came to Australia as refugees.

## Refugee policy after the 1990s

During the 1990s, significant changes occurred in government responses to refugees as the numbers of unauthorised arrivals by boat increased. Legislation enacted in 1989 centred on mandatory detention and the return of unauthorised boat arrivals to their home country. However, it was in

1991 and 1992 that this policy was cemented. In 1991 it was announced that a new facility would be built in Port Hedland, Western Australia, to process arrivals. This ushered in a new era of policy where asylum seekers would be detained and processed in remote areas of Australia.

The *Migration Reform Act* was passed in 1992, which made Australia the fourth Western nation to have mandatory detention for all unauthorised arrivals. Mandatory detention did not deter boat arrivals: 2000 mostly Cambodian refugees escaped the horrors of the Pol Pot **regime** and arrived by boat between 1990 and 1995.

**regime** an oppressive and undemocratic government

Between 1992 and 2002, 70 per cent of refugees to Australia came from the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East, of which 60 per cent were Iraqis fleeing Saddam Hussein's regime and the Gulf War.

Wars in the Balkans prompted the establishment of 'Operation Safe Haven' in 1999. This was the largest single humanitarian evacuation ever undertaken in Australia and set important precedents for the future. It offered temporary rather than permanent protection to refugees, and included a 'reintegration package' that provided financial incentives for refugees to return home as soon as stability was regained in their homeland.

In 1999 there was once more an increase in unauthorised arrivals by boat. In response, the Howard Government set up a Coastal Surveillance Task Force to review illegal immigration issues. This resulted in legislation aimed at deterring **people smugglers**, though the number of arrivals by boat were still relatively small: 4000 in 2000–01.

**people smuggler** someone who organises the illegal passage of an asylum seeker to another country

### HISTORICAL FACT

Between 1972 and 2002, more than 320 000 refugees arrived in Australia. The vast majority were actually processed offshore and arrived by plane, not by boat. Between 1976 and 1989, only 2059 refugees arrived by boat. No boat arrivals occurred at all from 1982 to late 1989.



## 2001: a pivotal year in refugee policy

There were three pivotal events in 2001 that contributed to asylum seeker issues in Australia: the ‘*Tampa* incident’, the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September and the ‘children overboard’ affair. These events shaped a growing antagonism and anxiety surrounding ‘boat people’ and national security.

### The *Tampa* incident

The event that has now become known as the ‘*Tampa* incident’ was a defining moment in the shift in policies about asylum seekers in Australia. On 26 August 2001 a Norwegian freighter called the MV *Tampa* rescued 438 asylum seekers from a fishing boat in distress in international waters off Christmas Island, one of Australia’s Indian Ocean territories. The captain

of the *Tampa* was told he was not permitted to enter Australian waters. When he attempted to bring the *Tampa* to Christmas Island, Prime Minister Howard ordered members of the Australian Special Forces to board the boat and take control of it.

The Australian Government tried to convince Indonesia to accept the asylum seekers. Indonesia refused. The government also introduced an emergency Border Protection Bill on 29 August 2001 but, although passed by the House of Representatives, the bill was rejected in the Senate. Eventually the asylum seekers, a number of whom were ill, were transported by a navy vessel to Nauru as part of the Howard Government’s new **Pacific Solution**. Most were held in detention camps on Nauru, but some were accepted by New Zealand.

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**Pacific Solution** an Australian Government policy between 2001 and 2007 of transporting asylum seekers (who reach Australian territory) to Pacific island nations such as Nauru and Manus Island for detention and processing

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Source 6.57 The Norwegian freighter MV *Tampa* with an Australian naval ship in the background

## Activity 6.9

- 1 **a** What was the Australian Government's reason for not allowing the *Tampa* to enter Australian waters?
  - b** Develop some arguments for and against the government's decision.
- 2 **a** How would you characterise Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock's statement that the asylum seekers had thrown their children overboard?
  - b** How does the finding of the Senate Committee on this issue affect your judgement of his actions?

The *Tampa* incident was broadcast around the world. It caused a diplomatic dispute between Australia and Norway and frosty relations with Indonesia. Many countries accused Australia of evading its human rights responsibilities.

### September 11

The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 were events of global significance that completely altered foreign relations. On the morning of that day, the al-Qaeda organisation hijacked commercial aeroplanes in the United States and crashed them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, with the White House a potential target of another hijacked aircraft that crashed in Pennsylvania. One of the specific effects was that Australia, as a United States ally, chose to commit to waging a 'war on terrorism' in Iraq and Afghanistan alongside the United States and Britain.

### 'Children overboard'

On 7 October 2001, a boat carrying Iraqi asylum seekers was intercepted off Christmas Island by an Australian navy vessel. Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock made the statement that these asylum seekers, desperate to force Australia to accept them into the country, had thrown their children overboard. Ruddock argued that these were not the types of people we wanted in Australia, and that this was a 'clearly planned and premeditated attempt to force their way into Australia'. A later Senate Committee, composed mainly of non-government senators, concluded that no children were actually thrown overboard.

### The fallout

These three events – *Tampa*, September 11 and the 'children overboard' allegations – occurred in the context of a looming federal election. Media and political debate became heated as the issue of border protection and national security became central to election campaigning.

One of the primary measures that the government had taken in response to these events was to enact what was to become known as the Pacific Solution. This relied on neighbouring Pacific island nations, such as Papua New Guinea, Manus Island and Nauru, taking asylum seekers intercepted in Australian waters, and detaining and processing them there. It also denied permanent residence to asylum seekers arriving by boat and denied them resources provided to other refugees.

This was thought to be an effective deterrent to potential 'boat people', as people smugglers would quickly learn that Australia was tough on border security. But the Pacific Solution was problematic, both in terms of the constitutions of the countries it affected, and also because it was seen as a rejection of the United Nations obligations towards refugees, by which Australia was supposed to abide. It was also extremely expensive, costing millions of dollars to process all the applicants off-shore, as well as providing all the resources to house and support them.

The Gillard Labor Government's 2011 proposed **Malaysia Solution** was an attempt to develop a new solution to the problem of

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**Malaysia Solution A** proposed Australian Government policy to transport asylum seekers (who reach Australian territory) to Malaysia for detention and processing

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### Activity 6.10

What are the differences between the proposed Malaysia Solution and the Howard Government's Pacific Solution?

### Research 6.1

Undertake research to find out why the High Court ruled that the Malaysia Solution was invalid. Do you think this was a good decision?

unauthorised asylum seekers arriving by boat, by establishing an agreement to process them in Malaysia. The deal was struck down by the High Court and the government was unable to pass new laws to resuscitate it.

jobs, they had to learn English and adjust to a different culture, and many Australians were suspicious of them and called them names because they came from a different culture. Little has changed.

## Challenges of refugee policy

It is clear that the problem of asylum seekers and refugees is not just something that occurred many years ago after World War II, when displaced people from European countries had been forced from their homes by war. Today a major challenge for Australia, and for the world as a whole, is finding a way to protect refugees who have been forced by war, conflict and human rights abuses to leave their homes. The UN estimates that there were nearly 44 million people forcibly displaced in the world in 2010.

Australia helps to alleviate their plight through its Humanitarian Program, but accepts very small numbers of refugees compared to other countries. Today's refugees face similar problems to the displaced persons of the post-war years. They were accommodated in camps with the most basic facilities, their qualifications were not accepted, they had to work in unskilled

## Impact of migration on Australian national identity



Australian society is comprised of people from a rich and complex variety of racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Most Australians, except those of fully Indigenous descent, are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

Migration has had a major impact on Australia's national identity, both internally and internationally. This can be seen by examining its demographic impact, its economic impact and its social and cultural impact.

While it should be remembered that natural increase has been the main source of population growth in Australia over the past 100 years, contributing two-thirds of the increase between 1901 and 2001, immigration has also been a significant contributor to Australia's population growth. The government expects that

	1933		1971		2006	
	Number	% of total pop.	Number	% of total pop.	Number	% of total pop.
<b>United Kingdom and Ireland</b>	712 458	10.7	1 088 210	9	1 084 009	6
<b>Europe*</b>	95 181	1	1 108 268	9	993 910	5
<b>Asia*</b>	24 840	0.4	167 226	1	1 208 742	7

\* Includes all countries in continent

**Source 6.58** Numbers of Australian residents born in the United Kingdom/Ireland, Europe and Asia at the 1933, 1971 and 2006 censuses

immigration's contribution to population growth is likely to increase during the next 30 years as the ageing of Australia's population means that deaths will increasingly catch up with births.

Source 6.58 shows the broad demographic shifts that have occurred those Australian residents born in the United Kingdom/Ireland, Europe and Asia since the 1933 Census.

The post-war immigration to Australia of displaced people and immigrants from continental Europe changed the balance of the population significantly.

The percentage of the total Australian population born in the United Kingdom and Ireland fell from 10.7 per cent in 1933 to 6 per cent in 2006. At the same time the percentage of people born in continental Europe increased from 1 per cent in 1933 to 5 per cent in 2006.

The abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973, and then increasing numbers of refugees from Asia, also had a major impact on the balance of the Australian population. People born in Asia made up 0.4 per cent in 1933 but by 2006 had risen to 7 per cent.

More broadly, 25 per cent of people living in Australia in 2006 had been born overseas (and not only in those countries/continents shown in Source 6.58), compared with only 14 per cent

Birthplace	% of Australian population
Australian-born	75
Total overseas-born	25
Oceania and Antarctica*	3
United Kingdom and Ireland	6
North-west Europe	1
Southern and Eastern Europe	4
North Africa and the Middle East	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	1
South-East Asia	3
North-East Asia	2
Southern and Central Asia	2
The Americas	1

\* Excluding Australia

**Source 6.59** Birthplace of Australia's population by region, 2006 Census

## Research 6.2

What types of situations turn people into refugees? Choose one group of refugees and research the situation in their homeland prior to their departure. Present your findings as a poster.

in 1933. The development of policies such as multiculturalism was a response to this shift.

Source 6.59 shows that, at the 2006 census, the Australian population was made up of about 75 per cent born in Australia and 25 per cent born overseas. Of the overseas-born, 6 per cent were born in the United Kingdom and Ireland, 5 per cent in European countries and 7 per cent in Asian countries. Another 3 per cent were born in Oceania (primarily New Zealand), 2 per cent in Africa and the Middle East, and 1 per cent in the Americas.

Australia has remarkable linguistic diversity as a direct result of immigration. In 2006 there were 210 languages spoken in Australian homes as well as 130 Indigenous languages. Foreign languages are taught in most Australian schools and universities, as well as in community ethnic schools. There are now more than 100 metropolitan and regional TV and radio stations

in Australia broadcasting in 100 languages, and more than 100 ethnic newspapers published in more than 40 languages. The 10 most commonly spoken languages other than English are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Spanish, German, Hindi and Macedonian.

This diversity can also be seen in many aspects of Australia's social and cultural life. The changes in Australian cuisine provide an example. Immigrants have introduced the cuisine of many nations into Australia and have greatly enriched our food culture.

Australia's diverse multicultural society links us to the world. Many Australians have family members in other parts of the world and travel between continents is becoming common. Australia is now part of a global world and the movement of people and capital is a key aspect of a globalised society.

### Activity 6.11

How many different food dishes can you identify that have been introduced to Australia by migrants since World War II? List them, detailing which country they came from and in which decade they are likely to have been introduced. Compare your list with that of your classmates – are there any dishes that you haven't tried yet?

### Research 6.3

Use the internet to research one of the following people and their impact on immigration policy in more detail.

- Al Grassby
- Malcolm Fraser
- Paul Keating

Be sure to research the major achievements of the person you choose and to use reliable websites. Present your findings to the class as a PowerPoint presentation.

## Chapter summary

- British migrants dominated immigration patterns to Australia prior to World War II, but this has now changed.
- Since World War II there have been waves of immigrants to Australia: displaced people from war-torn Europe, immigrants from Britain and Europe, immigrants with skills needed in the Australian economy, and refugees from Asia and other parts of the world.
- Immediately after the war, government policies were dominated by the White Australia Policy, the idea that Australia must ‘populate or perish’ and that migrants should assimilate into Australian society.
- At the end of the Vietnam War many thousands of people, who faced persecution in their homelands, sought asylum and were accepted as refugees in Australia.
- In the 1970s the policies of assimilation and integration were replaced by the policy of multiculturalism as a reflection of the changing racial and ethnic composition of the Australian population.
- Australia has become one of the most multicultural countries in the world. Its many ethnicities contribute to its national identity and link the nation to the global society.

## End-of-chapter questions

### Multiple choice

- Which one of these events didn't prompt significant migration to Australia in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s?
  - the end of the Vietnam War
  - the declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981
  - the Chilean revolution
  - the end of the Falklands War
- Why did Australia want European migrants after World War II?
  - to provide workers for industry
  - to prevent the ‘yellow peril’ from invading Australia
  - to provide a home for refugees
  - because it couldn't get migrants from anywhere else
- The Snowy Mountains Hydro-electricity Scheme is recognised as a great civil engineering triumph. Which of the following statements is not true?
  - The workers on the project forged a bond through working together.
  - It provided a new source of power for the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales.
  - It was built in five years.
  - The workers who built it came from more than 30 different countries.
- After the war, the Australian Government followed a policy of assimilation. This meant that:
  - immigrants of all races were treated equally
  - people for whom English was a second language prospered
  - many immigrants eventually returned to their native countries
  - all immigrants had access to the same jobs and government benefits
- Italian immigrants:
  - first came to Australia in the 1880s
  - have never been subject to immigration restriction
  - increased in number during the late 1960s
  - were encouraged to come to Australia after the end of World War II

## Short answer

- 1 Explain why Australia encouraged immigration after World War II.
- 2 How did Australia help settle its migrants?
- 3 Migration to Australia has been based on three overarching government policies. What were they and what impact did they have?
- 4 Describe how the Hawke and Keating governments' policy of multiculturalism rejected the assimilation policy of prior governments.
- 5 Why have Australian people been fearful of immigrants? How have they displayed this fear?

## Source analysis

Strong opposition to foreign immigrants being allowed to enter Australia was voiced at the fourth annual conference of the State branch of the Australian Legion of Ex-service Men and Women in Perth on Saturday. Members referred particularly to immigrants who arrived recently in the *Misir*. It was said that there were thousands of British ex-service men waiting to come to Australia and that they should be given preference. The conference agreed to the following motion: That conference expresses extreme disgust at migrants of 17 nations who arrived in the *Misir* being granted landing permits, while British ex-servicemen are still waiting to enter this country. It was agreed that the resolution should be sent to the Minister for Immigration (Mr Calwell).

**Source 6.60** Excerpt from an article in the *West Australian*, 21 April 1947

Press reports criticising the migrant passengers who arrived on the *Misir* last month were grossly misleading, unfair, and entirely unwarranted, according to a report tabled in Parliament today by the Minister for Immigration, Mr Calwell.

The report was compiled by two migration officers who travelled on the *Misir* from Fremantle to Melbourne to investigate conditions. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Menzies, had asked Mr Calwell for a report.

Mr W. Weale, one of the officers, said that some of the passengers who travelled first class made complaints obviously to impress that they were used to 'only the very best'.

The lavatory accommodation was not adequate for mixed passengers. Many passengers had never known Western sanitary conditions, and stewards had to be constantly on duty. By the end of the voyage, however, sanitation was good.

The ship had fountains of iced water and a canteen for the purchase of cigarettes, sweets and soft drinks. The food was good, ample and well cooked, and the service excellent.

Mr Weale said he had investigated many complaints about the food in the third-class dining-room, but had had to dismiss them all.

Some of the British passengers complained that it was an insult to have to eat with foreigners, and asked for a separate dining-room, but they had no complaints against the food.

Mr Weale added that the alien passengers were not undesirable types to be allowed to settle in Australia, and no exception could be taken to any of them.

**Source 6.61** Excerpt from an article in the *West Australian*, 15 May 1947

- 1 Identify the main issues surrounding the SS *Misir* controversy in the newspaper articles.
- 2 Analyse the differing points of view in these articles.

- 3 What was Mr Calwell's goal in arranging for a report?
- 4 Search Trove (National Library of Australia) at [www.cambridge.edu.au/history10weblinks](http://www.cambridge.edu.au/history10weblinks) for other articles about the SS *Misir's* arrival in April 1947.

## Extended response

Describe and analyse Australia's response to the needs of refugees in the 1950s or the 1970s. Take into account the different government policies of the time and the impact they had on who was offered refuge in Australia. Also consider the different ways in which asylum seekers and refugees arrived and were processed in Australia.