Students access diverse primary and secondary sources to develop understandings about post-war immigration to Australia.

**Teaching–learning strategies and activities**

1. **Teaching–learning strategies**

2. **Learning activities**

3. Before looking at specific texts, teacher frames the social and historical context of this particular period of history, using timelines, specific events, policies and statistics.

   - Activity sheets 11: Print source analysis
   - Web activity: Print source analysis

4. Students **read, discuss** and **respond** to primary and secondary sources to answer these focus questions.

   - Who were the post World War 2 immigrants?
   - How important were the identities and experiences of the immigrants in the development of a national identity during this period?
   - What roles did **racism, discrimination** and **prejudice** play in these experiences?

5. Students **closely examine** texts and **draw conclusions** about the way views of immigrants and Anglo-Australians were constructed in this period.

6. Teacher leads students through analysis of text by John Pilger with a focus on the question:
   - What were the experiences of the post World War 2 immigrants?

   - Activity sheet 12: Selecting supporting quotes
   - Web activity: *A Secret Country* analysis

7. Groups of students **identify** a line of argument presented by a writer and support views with evidence from the text. The class discusses how political assumptions of the time could be debated with alternate viewpoints.

8. Teacher highlights the value of immigrants’ own stories as a primary source and as another construction of history.

9. Students **read** and **discuss** texts presented by migrants to construct alternative versions of history).

   - Activity sheet 13: Interview content analysis
   - Web activity: Interviews with immigrants

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Lesson plan

Teaching/learning strategies and activities continued

Teachers use group work to:

- read and discuss interviews about immigrants’ own experiences
- compare and contrast experiences
- identify different perspectives about what ‘being Australian’ means through specific examples
- use texts/stories to support perspectives.

Teacher can use the video *The Australian Experience (Episode 2) They’ll be Just Like Us: Post WW2 Immigration* and supplementary activities provided in the video’s accompanying text (pp. 28–53 of Triolo, R., 1996.)

Teacher leads discussion on:

- important learnings
- perspectives expressed in sources
- the importance of supporting statements with evidence.

Language Focus

- Define key terms: inclusion, exclusion, discrimination, assimilation, refugees, displaced persons.
- Give historical recounts of immigration during this period.

Outcomes

Students will have:

- deconstructed texts to identify particular perspectives
- constructed various versions of the way immigrants were perceived
- defined what ‘being Australian’ means to different groups of people, including immigrants
- continued to develop understandings about racism, in particular discrimination and prejudice.
Arthur Calwell’s statement on immigration

If Australians have learned one lesson from the Pacific war…it is surely that we cannot continue to hold our island continent for ourselves and our descendants unless we greatly increase our numbers...

Our first requirement is additional population. We need it for reasons of defence and for the fullest expansion of our economy. We can increase our 7 million by an increased birth-rate and by a policy of planned immigration within the limits of our existing legislation.

Immigration is, at best, only the counterpart of the most important phase of population building, natural increase. Any immigration policy, therefore, must be intimately related to...stimulating the birthrate and lowering the infant mortality rate in Australia itself. It must, further, be related to the whole social service programme of creating greater economic security and a higher standard of living, as an inducement to young Australian couples to have larger families...

1. List Calwell’s reasons for increasing migration in the post World War 2 period.
2. Were they different from the reasons given after World War 1?
3. Why was it important for Australia to secure its coastline, according to this source?
4. Who is being included and who is being excluded out of these groups?

   - Aboriginal people
   - Anglo-Australians
   - English British
   - Early White settlers
For this task you have:

- a passage from John Pilger’s book, *A Secret Country*
- statements relating to the passage.

In your groups:

- **Read** the passage and statements.
- **Select** quotes from the passage which in your opinion **best support** the statements.

Select quotes from the text to support these statements.

Immigrants were treated as a form of slave labour and deprived of their basic rights.

The author sees immigrants as victims of an oppressive Anglo-Australian society.

Anglo-Australians are seen as racist in their treatment of and attitude towards European immigrants.

The text portrays immigrants as worthy of real admiration.

European immigrants had to endure great hardships.

Readers are encouraged to sympathise with the immigrants.

Immigrants were forced to reject their own cultural heritages and adopt the already established standards Anglo-Australian of society.
Passage from John Pilger’s book, *A Secret Country*

**Post-World War 2 immigrants**

The ‘poor devils’ and ‘reffos’ had to work where they were sent for up to two years. Australia wanted mostly labourers, so immigrants with skills had to lie and say they had none. The former New South Wales Labor leader, Jack Lang, called it ‘slave labour under the guise of immigration’. The newcomers were bonded to ‘dirty jobs’ which Australians would not do.

‘DPS TO HAVE ONLY UNATTRACTIVE JOBS’, said a headline in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the story had a reassuring tone. The unnamed source was Arthur Calwell. Fear not, it said, doctors were to dig roads, engineers were to scrub public lavatories, musicians were to collect garbage and nurses were to work on assembly lines; and their qualifications would not be recognized. They were to work unsocial hours and if redundancies were required, they were to be the first to be dismissed. And if they objected, the unions would not protect them. Indeed, the unions had insisted on these conditions. That was the good news.

The suffering of the ‘DPs’, or ‘Balts’, was generally kept secret. It was not known that people lived in fear of petty, often punitive officials, who controlled their lives and told them little; that mental breakdowns were common; that children grew up not knowing parents who were forced to work the night shift at some distant factory.

The policy then was ‘assimilation’. For the immigrants it was Catch 22. It meant that they were expected to become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population as quickly as possible, but that helping them to achieve this was anathema to the ideology of ‘sameness’. Hence the tortured logic that nothing was to be explained to people in a language other than English and that interpreter services and special programmes were ‘counter-productive’. The government had invented a perfect foil against demands that it should meet the needs of the people it had sponsored and labelled ‘New Australians’.

Apart from the departure home of a flock of ‘whingeing Poms’, or a shoot-out involving ‘gangs’ of ethnic origins, immigrants were not news. Like Aborigines, they were declared invisible; in this way traditional Australian life could proceed without its devotees being aware of or discomfited by the trials of the ‘New Australians’, and of the prospective seismic changes in their own society.

Perhaps the seeds of future ‘acceptance by default’ lay in this almighty ignorance; for the majority, becalmed in indifference, perceived no threat. It is not surprising that some ‘old’ Australians today cannot grasp that those who now represent almost half the population bore their hardships and sometimes broke their dreams, unseen and unacknowledged, and are the nation’s modern heroes.

1. In your group, look at 9 interviews from immigrants about their experiences in Australia.

2. In pairs, read at least 2 interviews closely and decide whether the text supports the perspectives listed below.

3. Find at least 1 quote from the texts to support your view.

4. Regroup and share your responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Interview text number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This text gives information about the life of the person in the country of origin.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants in this text endured a great deal of hardship and suffering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants were treated very badly in Australia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this text we can better understand their feelings and reasons for certain behaviours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all immigrants were treated the same way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia did everything it could to make the immigrants feel welcome and comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The text challenges the view that Australia was the lucky country for many immigrants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are in part to blame for their downfall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants experienced a lot of discrimination.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants have retained their cultural heritage as well as adopting other Australian ways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview 1

Name: Tam Thi Thanh Tran, CSM

Age: 33

Born: Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa, Vietnam

Year of Arrival: 1976

Husband: Ben (Born: Vietnam)

Children: Thu (5)

Occupation: Medical Practitioner

• Leaving Vietnam?

My parents have often told us that their decision to leave was for our future. It was a hard decision for them to leave everything they had created and to arrive in a new country with no English. I was 12 at the time. I think for the kids – there were five of us – it was just an adventure, we didn’t understand very much.

• Getting to Australia?

I remember that none of the countries along the way wanted us so the boat just kept on going until we got to Darwin. It was pretty traumatic – and we encountered pirates in the Thailand area but fortunately no-one was hurt.

• Looking back?

In the first few years everybody was homesick. We didn’t know anyone when we arrived here – there were no relatives. We had a sponsor family who were Australian and that was a great help. I wouldn’t have got to where I have if we’d have stayed in Vietnam, so yes, for us, it a good decision.

• Settling in?

We were sent to Wacol Hostel where our life in Australia began – we were there for 12 months. Dad worked at the GMH factory in Acacia Ridge, my Mum went to work in a soap factory and we went to school.

• School?

Primary school was nice, all the kids were quite accepting of us and we enjoyed each other’s company. High school was different. There were many incidents when you knew people weren’t accepting of you just because you were an Asian kid. I remember being threatened with getting beaten up in Grade 8. On the positive side I had lots of Australian friends who stuck up for me. By Grade 11 it wasn’t much of a problem any more. You have more self-confidence and could stand up for yourself. University life was a lot better – people were more tolerant and I made lots of friends so I sailed through Uni.
Interview 1 continued

• **How did you react to the racist behaviour?**

You just learn to put up with it, turn the other cheek and go home and cry to your parents. They tried to encourage us to grin and bear it – along the lines of "You’ve got to accept it, this is not our country, the longer we stay here the better it will get”. They never took it up with the school or anything like that; they were concentrating on working hard and their English wasn’t too good. Sometimes the teachers would be helpful – you know, a shoulder to cry on, that type of thing. But I did a lot of crying and sitting all by myself in a corner – and so did my sister. Luckily it didn’t seem to affect our school work that much and I think that because of the nastiness that went on we got a lot of help and encouragement from the teachers.

• **Feelings about Australia?**

I love it. I love the openness. I enjoy the people, the country.

• **Where’s home?**

Here. I go to Vietnam for visits but I wouldn’t live there. It’s just not me any more. It’s funny – you go to Vietnam and you’re seen as a foreigner anyway, so you really don’t fit.

• **Ethnic identity?**

I still think of myself as Vietnamese. Our family life seems to reflect that. Our Australian friends come to us expecting that we are Asians – whether it’s the food or even things like celebrating the New Year and the festivals. I regard myself as quite successful in being able to integrate into the Australian mainstream life. I look after mainly Australian people and my receptionist is Australian. Some Vietnamese doctors work mainly with Vietnamese patients. But I steer right away from that. It’s been a deliberate decision in a sense: also – because I studied medicine here – my Vietnamese isn’t fluent enough for medical practice.

• **Australian citizenship?**

I’ve been an Australian citizen since high school – my parents applied for citizenship within two or three years of arriving.

• **Language use?**

We speak Vietnamese at home – and English when I can’t find the Vietnamese word. I’m a lot better in English than I am in Vietnamese, but for run of the mill day-to-day living I can speak quite fluently in both.

• **Community involvement?**

I was very active in the Vietnamese community when I was growing up. I think that was a bit unusual because most of the people that took up voluntary work were social workers or doctors and were older than me. After I graduated and had to join the Army and leave Brisbane it was a different lifestyle altogether for me.
Interview 1 continued

• **Career?**

I worked for the Army because I went to medical school on an Army scholarship. When the Gulf war broke out I was sent to Iraq for three months to look after the Kurdish refugees. After that the Army sent me to Thailand to do a postgraduate course in tropical medicine. When I came back, I ran a military hospital in Townsville until I left the Army and went into general practice in Townsville. Now I’ve got my own medical practice in Beenleigh.

• **Army life?**

I didn’t have any serious hassles. There was an incident in Iraq when a subordinate – he’d spent time in the Vietnam war – questioned my character, but he did it in front of an officer who stood up for me straightaway. I entered the Army as a lieutenant and when I left I was a major. I think it was quite normal progression for a doctor so there wasn’t any setback despite my being female and being Vietnamese.

• **Why did you leave the Army?**

The higher up you go the more paper work you do and I decided that I enjoyed seeing patients more than paper work. Also, by then we had Thu and general practice seemed to fit best into our lifestyle. I’m planning to cut back to working school hours so I can spend more time with Thu and get involved in school activities. That’s something I didn’t get, so it would be nice if my daughter could have that – mum helping with reading, helping with the tuckshop.

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1 Dr Tran was awarded a Conspicuous Service Medal for her tour of duty in Iraq during the Gulf War
## Interview 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Johanna (Hanny) Schwencke</th>
<th>Age: 72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Gerrit (Chris) Schwencke</td>
<td>Age: 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born: The Netherlands</td>
<td>Family: 3 children, 6 grandchildren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Arrival: 1951</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reason for migrating?**

A better future – the future didn’t look very good in those days. It was just after the war. There were jobs, but a lot of homes were destroyed. You could get a room with your mother or your mother-in-law, maybe a baby would come and you could ask for a little flat. And I wanted something different, a little bit of adventure.

**On arrival?**

Chris: First stop was Darwin. They wanted Hanny as a cook and me as a station hand. I had never sat on a horse! We got to Sydney and they wanted me to go to the Snowy Mountains or something like that but I wanted to use my mechanical engineering training. Hanny had a cousin in Brisbane – in Sherwood – and he had a room for us. I had only £5 left in my pocket and a big debt to my sister in Holland for the plane ticket to Australia.

**Settling in?**

We started off with wooden crates in a small bedroom and a little curtain in front of it, and a bench top of some old material, and that is way we did it. I had nothing but I have only got good memories about it. You would not want to do it now!

Chris: It was only a short time before I got a job.

**Discrimination?**

When I did market research – it was a long time ago – I sometimes wondered, as soon as my accent came out, if it was a case of ‘I don’t want to speak to you’. I had the door slammed shut on me on one occasion.

Chris: I have always had good jobs here. And I never had any problems with staff saying ‘Oh you foreigner’ or something like that. They might have said it, but they still accepted what I said. I had no troubles.
Interview 2 continued

**Socially?**

Socially we did not really get accepted – all those work social outings but we were never a part of that. That division has always been there; I feel it now, every now and again but I can’t say it comes from the Australians. We didn’t want that ‘boozing up’ culture. I had my own friends, not only Dutch friends, Australian friends as well, but from a different viewpoint, I suppose. You choose people from your own line of thinking. That boisterous, drinking ‘hello mate’ behaviour, we didn’t like it. But that brought back the other side, if people stopping inviting you, it is hard to judge whether it is discrimination or whether you are the cause of it in the first place.

Chris: It comes more from us that we don’t accept the beer-swilling parties; we’re not interested in that.

**Looking back?**

Things are very different. My first trip back was after 20 years. Now Holland as I had left it – although it was war-wrecked – was still sophisticated, a different culture, different thinking, different everything. I was very aware that I might be a little ‘greenhorn from the outback’ and I wasn’t going to have any of that. I loved Australia and really wanted to represent it. But I didn’t have to defend it; it had gone so much ahead and some things – like housing – were better!

Chris: Engineering here was very primitive: so it has been a long struggle to bring it to a much higher standard. I designed machines for the production of products – complicated machines, designed right down to the last nut and bolt. Here if they wanted something they would give it to the man in the workshop. He’d look at it and say ‘I think we can make that’ and when it was made, they would give it to me and say ‘Well, you draw it up’. It was back to front. Make it first – give it to the toolmakers and let them make it and the design came afterwards. They knew it was necessary but didn’t actually know why. It’s all right now but it took a long time.

**Things missed?**

Lots of our friends, particularly the women missed their family. Family life is different over there – there is often a togetherness you do not have over here. And at parties the women didn’t like how the men were in one group and the women were in another. It’s not like that so much any more but in those days there were always two groups, and it was not so in Holland. It was always mixed.

Chris: But the men drank gin and the women drank advocaat – and that was not for the men.

**Likes about living here?**

The climate and the surroundings in Brisbane, everything is so green. And the friendliness, people are very friendly.
Interview 2 continued

• **Ethnic identity?**

  I can’t explain it. I still say a mixture. Dutch-Australian. When we’re in Holland, don’t let them say anything about Australians or Australia. And it’s the same the other way around. In Holland you defend Australia, and in Australia you defend Holland. I don’t know that there is any consciousness about being Australian. I love Australia; I love living here. I feel myself to be me. We will never be Australians in the sense that we don’t want anything to do with the old country anymore.

  Chris: I think where Australians are concerned we are never Australians, we are still foreigners. They can still pick us out a mile. You have only got to open your mouth and they know you’re not born here. But it is not important. If we go to Holland we could almost say we are not accepted there because we are different.

• **Australian citizenship?**

  Yes – in 1970. I was going overseas, the Cold War was still looming and if something happened I would have been stuck because I was Dutch. So it was only for any patriotic reasons. But we would have done it at some stage. Voting wasn’t an issue. I don’t think we were really interested in politics at that time – I am now, but not then. We were too busy getting ourselves off the ground. Everything else was secondary. Getting the house, getting set up, that was everything.

• **Language?**

  We consciously decided to keep speaking Dutch to give our children the chance for another language.

  Chris: We still speak Dutch together. But you wouldn’t like to hear us, because all of sudden we go into English – an English word or a whole sentence – and then we go back to the other way. All the Dutch here do that we don’t even notice. But when you go home – back to Holland – they say, ‘Hey, hey, what are you saying?’

  Hanny: When we came, you were not supposed to speak your own language in public. We were then – that was the rules – to speak English within earshot of other people. For instance, you didn’t speak Dutch on the bus under any circumstances; you spoke English. That has gone by the way side completely.

• **Lifestyle?**

  We have our friends and we do our community work. We don’t have the Dutch way of life but we have a lot of Dutch that we don’t realise we have, a lot of things we do the Dutch way. We don’t consciously follow a Dutch way or an Australian way. We seem to have found a balance. The only thing I would like is more togetherness with the grandchildren – I suppose they have really ’gone Australian’, if you could call it that.

  Chris: We have changed our life to a more open style.
Interview 2 continued

- **Was it the right decision?**
  
  For me, yes.
  
  Chris: I’ve never regretted it.

- **Where is home?**
  
  Australia is home. We wouldn’t fit in any more in Holland – happy to visit – but I couldn’t live there now. If I had to live there again, it would have to be outside of the cities, in a bit of an area where I could just go barefoot when I wanted to and do things that I wanted to do.

- **If you’d stayed?**
  
  We would be a lot better off financially but probably would not have such a free and happy life. Chris: I wouldn’t have the beach home and the hobby farm in Mapleton wouldn’t have happened. It was a lifestyle choice, not a money choice for sure.
Interview 3

Name: Mila
Age: 53
Born: Bosnia (former Yugoslavia)
Year of Arrival: 1971
Children: 3
Occupation: Retired

• **When and how did you come to Australia?**

By plane in September 1971. I’m originally from a small village in Bosnia. It was the first time I’d ever seen a plane.

• **Why did you decide to move to Australia?**

We wanted to find a better life for our family more work and money. We were farmers and it was a hard life.

• **What did your family think about you leaving your home to start a new life in a new country?**

They weren’t too happy about it. They didn’t want us to go. I remember receiving a letter from the authorities giving us the details about this medical examination we had to take before we had to go, and my mother was crying, telling me to throw it away and not tell anyone about it.

• **What did they think of Australia? What image did you have before coming here?**

They said there would be nothing to eat, that it’s desert, barren, lots of snakes everywhere. It was all very negative but it was their way of saying, ’stay here where you know what it’s like’.

• **How did you migrate? What problems did you have?**

The Australian government at the time was paying for the flights so we flew for free. The flights were leaving from Vienna so we had to take a long train journey from Belgrade to Vienna. I remember it being very cold and my two kids were crying because we brought no food and no extra clothing with us. My daughter was 3 ½ years old and my son was 1. Nobody prepared us for the journey, no one told us anything. It was quite frightening. At the medical examination, Australian officers were doing all the checkups, but we of course didn’t know the language and didn’t get any help from anyone. We were all in the same boat. But there were some very kind people, I don’t know who they were, who offered us some help when they saw us struggling with two little children.
• **What was your first impression of Australia?**

At the airport, we were going through customs and had to open our suitcase but ours was totally empty because we didn’t think we had to bring anything, but that we’d actually be supplied with clothes and other things when we got to Australia. It was very embarrassing to see other people with something in their suitcases and us with nothing. We were taken to a hostel which consisted of army like barracks. I remember often walking to the wrong door because they all looked the same. It was all so overwhelming and a complete change in our lives. In the bus on the way to the hostel, one woman next to me said ‘Look Mila, they actually grow pumpkins here!’ We were really surprised at what Australia was like.

• **Was it difficult to obtain employment? Why/why not?**

My husband and I didn’t find work straight away. You really had to rely on people you knew to get you a job. My husband found work at a steelworks where a lot of other migrants worked but then he fell and broke his leg. He received workers’ compensation for it but back then it was a very small sum of money and we lived on potatoes, cabbage and bread. It was one of the toughest times of our life here. I stayed in the hostel and looked after the children. I fell pregnant and had a son but soon after found some work cleaning at a meatworks. It meant I had to take walk to the train station late at night and I remember being propositioned by many men while walking home. It was terrifying. I found another job at the local pickling factory. It was hard, fast work and the boss said to a lot of us then ‘If you don’t want to work, the doors and windows are big enough’. A lot of other Yugoslavs worked there so I had company and it felt good being able to talk to people in your own language. When I look back now, it was a very difficult time to learn English.

• **What problems did you or your children face at school? Examples?**

The first problem they had was coping with English. They would come home crying because nobody wanted to play with them because they couldn’t speak English and were different. They used to get teased for the type of food they ate: salami sandwiches – so they threw them under the house and wouldn’t take anything to school. They would often be called ‘wogs’.

• **What efforts do you make to preserve your customs? Examples?**

We socialise a lot with other people from our background. We go to a church which holds a lot of festivals like Christmas and Easter and dances. Our children were a part of folkloric dance groups. The community is a very important part of our lives.

• **In what other ways have you changed your life to suit the customs/ways of this country?**

We have had to make a lot of changes to our lifestyle: the type of food we eat, our language has changed so that sometimes we now throw in English with our Serbian, going to the supermarket to do the shopping, catching public transport, getting paid weekly. Even little things like learning to drive which I would never have learned to in Bosnia. These are wonderful things and I have never regretted them in any way.

• **Have you ever experienced discrimination or racism? Examples?**

Not being able to speak and read in English would have to be one of the biggest issues I’ve had to face. People in the past have taken advantage of that, in shops, banks. At work, bosses would treat us poorly because they knew we needed the money. Everyone would assume that we were illiterate or stupid because we couldn’t speak English.
Interview 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Harry Jaeger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born:</td>
<td>Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend:</td>
<td>Cathy (Born: Fiji)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Arrival:</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation:</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Reason for migrating?**

  I came with my parents and two brothers. It was for a better lifestyle in the long run. There were a lot of problems with my dad’s work - basically a lot of problems there altogether. Our parents just said, ‘Right we’re going’.

- **What were your views?**

  Come here or stay there – it didn’t worry me. I’m pretty easy going and I was happy down here doing my schooling. I was 13 when I started at boarding school here and I went right through to Year 12.

- **Feelings about leaving?**

  Sad about leaving all the family. I was always sad coming back here after each school holiday, but this time I was going for a longer time.

- **Settling in?**

  We went straight to Maroochydore – my parents had already bought a house there. I live in Brisbane now.

- **Feelings now?**

  Once I was down here and got a job and all that, I was fine. Living on the coast, it’s a good lifestyle – I was pretty happy.

- **Likes?**

  The lifestyle. The people – everyone is pretty easy, pretty laid back. I think it’s not as fast as a lot of places, you can get a lot more done – there’s not as much stress I reckon.

- **Things missed?**

  Betel nuts. When my family visit, they bring supplies – they’re very expensive here, about $7 for four. Seriously? I suppose maybe just family – I can’t see them very often anymore and they’re getting older, especially on my mum’s side, and we’re not seeing them before they pass on.
Interview 4 continued

- **Social contacts?**

  My friends hail from everywhere. I probably don’t have many New Guinean friends.

- **New Guinea?**

  I shouldn’t really say ‘New Guinea’; it’s just sort of built-into me because the people I associate with say ‘New Guinea’. My mother is from Papua and I was born in Papua but everyone seems to say New Guinea. It’s like saying America or the US or the States instead of the United States of America. It is just the way some people speak.

  Therese: I suppose I use Papua New Guinea or PNG.

- **Ethnic identity?**

  I have to think about this one. Papua New Guinean – even though I live down here. But in terms of everything else? I love the Wallabies, so I think that I’m Australian too. I think in that sense, I love this country in that I support every sporting team in the country. My Dad is German and I don’t support anything from Germany. I don’t even support the New Guinea teams. I support the Australian teams because I live here – so I’m patriotic in that sense.

- **Australian citizenship?**

  Yes – at the same time my parents were naturalised.

- **Papua New Guinean way of life?**

  If I’m asked to help the extended family, I contribute and help out. That would be the main thing. That’s all from home: – part of the culture, part of the obligations. The request would always come via my mum and when she asks, I do whatever I can – there’s no question about it even if they are really distant relatives. It’s not only like immediate family they help. I lived there so I understand how they rely on everyone. They’re a close-knit society.

  Margaret: For example, if there is a death in the family and they need help with the funeral, it’s an obligation of the whole family to contribute. Another example is contributing to bride price. Or if someone comes here for medical reasons, we house them while they’re here. We are all expected by the family in Papua New Guinea to make a contribution. It’s just a part of family obligation – and it’s very strong. It is something we do from our heart and with respect because it is part of our culture.

- **Australian way of life?**

  ‘Go the Wallabies’. The easy laid-back lifestyle, I think.

- **Languages?**

  We spoke English at home in PNG – up there everyone pretty much speaks English – and a bit of Motu. I don’t speak it much now, but I understand it and I can get by with it. Dad tried to teach me German but that didn’t work. It just went out the door.

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2 Harry’s aunt who was present during the interview, along with Margaret, his cousin, and his girlfriend Cathy: some of their comments have been included in reporting.
Interview 4 continued

**Employment?**

I started my apprenticeship in 1989. I did a pre-vocational course and then decided to wait and see. At that time there was a boom in building on the coast and getting work in that industry was no problem. There were 15 that went for the job. They needed someone to start the next day in Noosa and I was the only guy with a car so I got the job and I’ve stayed in the trade ever since.

**Discrimination?**

No, I’ve never really found it. Maybe my footie coach but that’s just football – you keep dropping the ball and they may call you a ‘black something’. I don’t think they really mean it. You just come back with a comment to them and it’s forgotten. It just blows over my head – I don’t really care. I don’t let it get to me. Cathy: It’s just their ignorance but it’s still racism. We have differences in this because he will take it as a game – but it’s not just a game. Harry: In terms of my work and that, they don’t care where you’re from – as long as you can do the job that’s all that matters. There was an instance at a pub – in the Ipswich area. My cousin – who’s from the area – said that they’re a racist pub and it was because we’re darker that our change was placed on the counter when everyone else got theirs in their hand. I actually really didn’t notice it until he told me about it afterwards. I won’t go there again. Cathy: Harry’s attitude is fairly laid back – it’s his Aussie attitude.

**Plans for the future?**

I either want to start a plumbing business if that works out, maybe in three years time, or I will look into something else. Cathy and I both want to work and travel so we will see how it goes, play it by ear.

**Looking back?**

Had we stayed in New Guinea? I don’t know. I don’t really think about it. I’m not sure if I would have had more opportunities. Sometimes in a small town you can get ahead a lot quicker with all the contacts, or you don’t. In Moresby everybody pretty well knows each other, especially if you’ve gone to school down here. If you work for a company, selling Coca-Cola, for example you can work your way up quickly – here it would be a lot harder. So I’m not sure of the opportunities. I think that the opportunity I had here getting an apprenticeship was quite good. I’m pretty happy with myself.

**Where is home?**

At the moment here – where I am. I’m pretty content. It depends on what opportunities I come across. If offered a $100,000 a year job, I’d go back. I’d go anywhere to better myself or broaden my horizons. At the moment I’m not looking that hard.
Interview 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Tony Gladstone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born:</td>
<td>Dunedin, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Arrival:</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation:</td>
<td>Maintenance and Cleaning Crew – Golf Course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Reason for migrating?**
  Basically I was looking for somewhere to set up again after my marriage broke up and everything sort of fell apart.

- **Why Cairns?**
  At that time I realised I couldn’t stay in New Zealand and with that in mind I’d gone to Indonesia on an extended holiday to sort myself out and work out a new direction. On my way back I stopped off here and I just felt comfortable. It was big enough and small enough. I went back to New Zealand, tied up all the loose ends, threw the car on the boat and that was that. Actually I did look around at a few other areas in Australia – places where I’ve got family, but they weren’t right for me.

- **Likes about living here?**
  I love it. I love the openness of the country and the people. You find a bit of ‘two facedness’ but you find that in any society and on the whole I find people here are quite frank and very approachable. It’s very laid back, people accept you for who you are, not what you are.

- **Doubts about moving?**
  No, none. Right from the word ‘go’ I’ve felt comfortable, absolutely comfortable. I’ve been back to the family home once, to visit, but I just haven’t had that ‘itchy feet’ type of feeling.

- **Any negatives?**
  Off hand – no. I suppose because I didn’t have any real expectations in coming here. I could see what the city was like and it was obviously going through quite a boom period. Things were very buoyant even though it was just after the airline pilot’s strike.

- **Lifestyle differences?**
  I don’t think I would have had the opportunity, not to re-invent, but to re-establish myself, had I remained in New Zealand. I think I would’ve been influenced by my family! ‘Do you think I am doing the right thing? What am I doing wrong?’ All that sort of stuff. You tend to listen to the advice that people give you and sometimes it can be quite negative. By getting away from all of that, I got through all of that. I think to do it in Cairns, making yourself establish contact with a different community – you actually grow up, become your own person. I don’t think it’s so much a New Zealand thing, but a family thing – my family in particular. My father is a New Zealander and my mother is Italian.
• **Ethnic identity?**

    I now consider myself Australian, but I’m very proud of my New Zealand heritage and equally proud of my Italian heritage – I do a lot of things with the Italian side. You can’t categorise because you’re granted the citizenship of a country and you assume that nationality. By the same token, you can’t discard your New Zealand upbringing.

• **Citizenship?**

    I became a citizen in 1995, three years after coming here. Voting rights had a lot to do with it, but actually I’d made up my mind that this is where I’m staying. It was more to do with making a commitment to becoming part of society rather than ‘fitting in’. I don’t think you fit into society in many ways. There are things that I say now that people comment on – things like New Zealand colloquialisms, and Maori phrases, that are used in everyday New Zealand parlance.

• **Employment?**

    I had enough to get by on for starters and it wasn’t difficult to find a job. The difficult part was finding out about the conditions. Because I’d had a long career in New Zealand I’m reasonably secure in anticipation of retirement but I still like to be fully occupied. The jobs that I’ve had here are probably ones that would be considered as ‘short term’ or ‘between jobs’ occupations by most Australians – jobs they would leave to other people.

• **Hurdles?**

    Getting used to the political system. That was one of the reasons I took out Australian citizenship – to be able to vote. The thing that would have helped at the time would’ve been information about the political system, about where councils fit in, what they’re responsible for. And just how things are set up – from local to State government, to the federal side of it where you’ve got the two houses. But the hardest thing to understand is preferential voting and sorting out where your vote is going. Many people that come here don’t have a clue. A simple précis, even a diagrammatical one, would go a long way to helping newcomers understand the complex and unusual political system that operates in Australia.

• **Socialising – meeting people here?**

    It’s similar to New Zealand but I am out of that particular scene. I’m not a pub person: not here, nor in New Zealand – not even in the army which was my main career. The socialising I did was more the typical thing. You had friends over for a meal or they had you over for a meal or you met at some place for a picnic or BBQ. Which I think is indicative perhaps of the Italian side – the family get-together and the family members bringing things. You go and enjoy the company of other people, the conversation and so on. I do that here but to a lesser degree – I’m on my own and getting out and getting to know people takes time.

• **Difficulties?**

    The larrikin element – being seen as a wowser if you refuse a drink – ‘you can’t be a good bloke mate if you don’t drink the beer’ – or a prude if you don’t swear in every second sentence.
• **Social contacts?**

Most seem to be other new migrants – people from France, people of Italian origin, people from Indonesia and the Philippines – very few Australians. That larrikin element has a lot to do with it – not going along with the swearing and drinking sets you apart. I think that larrikin element comes out because people are afraid, it’s the fear of the unknown. This is where I think immigration will eventually change things.

• **Are you established now?**

Very much so – it was hard work but you’ve got to get other people to accept you for who you are. Generally Australians do that, they don’t give a toss what you do or how much money you’ve got.

• **Where is home?**

This is home. The ties aren’t lost though. I visit my family and they visit me and we stay in contact by telephoning each other.
Interview 6

Name: Bianca Mazarroli
Age: 65
Name: Antonio Mazzaroli
Age: 74
Born: Friuli, Italy
Family: Robert (37) and Mark (31)
Year of Arrival: 1957
Occupation: Retired

- **Reason for migrating?**

At that time there were not many jobs and we applied to come to Australia. We didn’t really want to go at first and my family didn’t want us to go. The third time the immigration office contacted us they said they really wanted us here, so we came. We thought it would be for a few years.

Antonio: We were seeking a better life.

- **Deciding to stay?**

You find friends, and this and that. My mother kept saying two years have passed, then three years, then four years, then five…and now it’s 42 years.

Antonio: By the time our second child arrived, we accepted we weren’t going back.

- **Hardest thing?**

Missing the family. When I come back from visiting them I really feel it. You feel – not sorry – but you miss them. It wears off, but it’s something you feel when you leave them – not knowing if you’ll see them again or not. I think it’s the same for everyone; we all talk about it the same way.

- **Feelings now?**

I’ve still got that feeling for there. I’ve got family there, my sister, my brothers; I’m the only one here. Antonio is the same – he’s one of 12 brothers and sisters; two are here. Not a day passes that you don’t think of them. My sister rings once a month and I ring once a month. I think of them all the time but this is my home – I don’t think to live anywhere else.

- **Would you go back?**

You can’t change now, because you’ve got children here. But a piece of you is there and it’s lovely to go back on a holiday. You are here but a piece of you can’t forget. It’s a different life there now, too many years have gone by.

Antonio: It’s nice to go, even to go for a year is good but you always come back.
• **Arrival in Australia?**

The ship was supposed to go to Melbourne but the weather was too bad, so we stopped in Fremantle and they sent us to Woodside – to the immigration camp – in South Australia. Antonio was contracted for grape picking for four weeks and while he was away I worked at Onkaparinga, the wool factory. When we left Italy they promised Antonio a job, but when he finished the contract to pick the grapes he had to find a job himself.

• **Why Brisbane?**

We had friends here who told us that there was plenty of money in cane cutting. But we stayed in Brisbane.

Antonio: I didn’t come here to work as a cane cutter. Why go there when I’ve got my trade as a plumber?

• **Employment?**

A friend found me a job cleaning the City View Hotel, in Spring Hill. It was run by Italian people, very nice people. I left there when we went to live in East Brisbane. After my youngest son went to college I got a job at Mount Olivett Hospice in Kangaroo Point and was there for 15 years until I retired. I didn’t like to retire – I liked my job very much and they treated me very well, but Antonio had retired.

Antonio: It took me a while – the language was one thing. A friend was leaving his job with the railways and he told them about me. I had my trade certificate from Italy but I had to go to the Technical College for a couple of years to get a licence for here. I stayed in that job until I retired. I didn’t really want to retire. It was a good job.

• **Family life?**

We lived in East Brisbane – in our own house – until about 1981 when we moved here to Carindale. In between jobs I stayed home when my children were young and at school. I helped with the tuckshops as much I could and with fundraising things. Both my sons have got good jobs and they’re happy. They’ve been overseas and like it there but they like to come back.

• **Ethnic identity?**

I describe myself as an Australian now. But with my accent people know that I am not originally from Australia. If they ask where am I from, I say Italy. I don’t feel out of place when talking English and people accept me quite well. However, when I go to Italian functions I talk Italian and English.

• **Citizenship?**

Australian. Because we’re here now, if anything happens, you are an Australian – and to be like everybody else.

• **Social life?**

We mix more with Italians because we’ve got the Italian Club at Newmarket – I’ve got my second home there. We’re always there for one thing and another – and the Giuseppe Verdi Choral Society. Antonio has been singing with the choir and very involved with it for more than 30 years now. He’s been on the committee for a number of years. But we also

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3 The Giuseppe Verdi Choral Society celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 1998. It has grown over the years to become a significant part of Italian cultural heritage in Queensland, performing to a wide range of audiences.
have good friends who are Australian, some of them are in the choir and come to the Club too.

• **Differences?**

When we arrived, everything was closed early during the week and on Sunday. In Italy, shops and cafes were open on Sunday and you could meet family and friends there. Now, life is very similar here. We now have cafes with outside dining and shops that open late at night and on the weekends, just like in Europe. Life here is much better due to less pollution and the cities, not as crowded as in Italy. When I came here I was not even 23, I’m 65 now, so my life has been here – I am used to here. My sister thinks I’m lonely, but I’m not. She loves to come for a holiday but she’s used to there, to that life. I’m used to here.

Antonio: It’s different but you get used to it. I grew older in this country, so I’m used to this life.

• **Language?**

We speak Italian mostly. And I speak Italian to my sons. I’m proud to say that because I wanted them to know the language, I don’t want them to forget. They are very interested in the Italian culture. They don’t understand everything but it’s good that they are interested – I’m very proud of that.

• **English?**

We didn’t speak English at all when we came here and I’m a big talker, so it was very hard. We went to English classes at Spring Hill. But because we were with a group of friends it was more of a good time and not much English – we had a lot of laughs. The when we were in East Brisbane it was all Italians there – the corner shop was Italian – so how could you learn English? You learned the most from work, mixing with other people.

• **Discrimination?**

No – I’ve always been treated equally.

Antonio: Yes, no problem. I treat people well, they treat me well.

• **Looking back?**

Would we have been better off staying in Italy? I don’t know. When we left Italy, it was not the best. But I’ve got to say my brothers and sisters – and Antonio’s – they’ve done very well. They’ve worked hard but they have all done well. There’s no one in poverty. So it’s a very hard question.

Antonio: It’s hard to say no and it’s hard to say yes. But we are happy here now. We don’t have any problems.

• **Lifestyle?**

We keep busy. We travel a lot. We’ve been overseas twice and we visit Antonio’s sister in Victoria. We go around the State – and New South Wales – with the choir. The choir is still a big part of our lives, we sing every week for church services, wedding, funerals and things like that. And we play competition bocce. So it’s quite busy. If we’ve got nothing else, we just go up to the Club, find friends there and we have tea or lunch or whatever. We’re not rich but we’re comfortable.

• **Where is home?**

Home for me is here. I’m happy here. We like to go overseas for holidays – we’d like to go there tomorrow, but you know we like to come back home.
Interview 7

Name: Herbert (Herb) Mohr
Age: 25
Born: Mannheim, Germany
Year of Arrival: 1984
Occupation: Businessman

• **Reason for migrating?**

My parents decided in their mid-forties to move to a warmer country for my mother’s health. We came here in 1983 to visit friends on the Sunshine Coast. They were our former neighbours from Germany who raved about the wonderful climate and what a wonderful country this was. The next year we came back as permanent residents. I was nine years old at the time.

• **How did you feel about it?**

Not very enthused. All of a sudden it was ‘no more soccer, no more weekend sport, you’re going for private tuition to learn some English’. It was a rather daunting prospect moving to another country where I had no family, other than my parents, and no friends. Keeping in contact with my best friend in Germany suddenly became very important.

• **Settling in?**

It was hard at first – I didn’t have any friends except for our German friends’ son who is about a year older than me. We ended up going to the same school and I hung out with him a lot for the first 12 months or so. For the first few years we would return every two years while my grandfather was still alive, and I visited all my friends.

• **Hardest thing?**

I think the hardest thing was to leave my friends. Being in a country where you didn’t speak the language and you had no friends was the hardest thing at the time. Now I don’t think it was a hard thing at all. I don’t think there is anything really hard about here.

• **School?**

I went to the Sunshine Coast Immigration School in Nambour – 30 km away from home. I started off going for four days a week and eventually went down to one day a week. In between I went to the local primary school. I got to the stage when my English was good and I wanted to spend more time in Buderim and just be treated like everyone else and fit in, like most kids do, I guess. The teachers made an incredible effort helping me to integrate into classes, taking special time out to explain things to me. After two years I was the same as any other kid, getting good grades in English.
• **School life?**

Overall I was quite quickly accepted. There were no real problems. They looked at me a bit funny with my sourdough bread and wurst and wondered why I didn’t have ham, cheese and tomato or vegemite sandwiches with white bread like everybody else. But the soon understood we came from a different background. I made a lot of close friends and took up soccer and tennis again half-way through Grade 6 – I didn’t play sport for the first 12 months because of the language barrier.

• **Problems?**

Only in primary school really. I got called ‘Kraut’ and ‘Nazi’ and things like that and I copped a few hidings from two guys whose grandfathers had died in the war – they’d say ‘Your grandfather shot my grandfather.’ It wasn’t widespread and no girls. I still remember that. No girls were nasty to me; it was just the boys, probably half a dozen or so. I think they were just followers of those two guys. So it was harsh at times. I didn’t cry but I felt sad a lot of the time and just wanted to be back with my friends. But overall most of the kids were really very good and I made a lot of friends. And I’m grateful to the teachers who tried to help and support me.

• **Dealing with it?**

The beatings stopped after mum came to the school and the principal called the parents in and the teacher ran a lesson on Germany that gave us more understanding of World War 2. The verbal abuse and pestering went on until the end of primary school. I found that the best way to deal with it was to ignore it. If I got angry and retaliated, they would be on me. So I stopped trying to retaliate, to get one over on them and after a while they got bored and it stopped. Most of it happened before and after school. If the teachers saw it they certainly got punished but there is only so much they could do. Basically I developed quite a thick skin. I was lucky in high school that most of those who were nasty to me didn’t go to the same school.

• **Did you think about going back?**

I guess that through all my early teenage years I expected I would. I went back in 1994 to work for three months as part of my university degree. I had a job offer at the end of that time but I didn’t want to go back. Germany had changed a lot in all those years and I guess it would’ve meant leaving all my friends behind to go to another world again. Also my parents – they’re all the family I basically have and I’m all the family they have. I had a great time, a great learning experience but I was sure then that I didn’t want to stay.

• **Ethnic identity?**

I think I view myself as Australian, although I can’t get away from my German background. So much of my life, largely due to my parents, revolves around German culture and their home is very much German – the way it’s decorated and built. In my heart I’m happy enough to be considered German, but if you ask me ‘What do you feel?’ I would have to say Australian, because the majority of my life has been here. Most people wouldn’t know I’m German unless I told them.

• **Australian citizenship?**

No – I’m not entirely sure why not. I consider myself an Australian, but don’t feel the need to have it on a piece of paper. I guess there is no real reason at this stage and I guess if I ever had to work in Europe it would be a lot easier as a member of the EEC, so I don’t want to cut those ties, as yet. Ideally I would like dual citizenship but I don’t think that will happen in my lifetime; the German government is adamant – you are either German or you are not.
• **Language use?**

I speak German with my parents. We started speaking English at home back in 1984 or 1985 so I could learn English faster. They soon noticed that my English was getting better and my German was deteriorating. So we made a pact that at home we would speak German – of course when we have guests it’s English, but otherwise it’s still generally German.

• **Lifestyle?**

I think if you asked my parents – and most people – I live a true Aussie lifestyle. I don’t think there are many things that would be typically German. Certainly my diet has changed. I eat much more fruit, cereals and that kind of thing than I did growing up when it was heavy bread with jams for breakfast, hot lunches and a meal at night. When I’m not at work I do relax. Australians can let go after work, relax and socialise – Germans seem to struggle more with that. I think living the Australian way of life, I live to the fullest. I’m an outdoor person and I make the most of the little time I have away from the shop.

• **Employment?**

I have a pretty successful business here – we are looking to expand and I am quite excited at the prospects, so I certainly think there is potential in Australia.

• **Where is home?**

I would say Australia – Brisbane – certainly is now. I have a successful business, I thoroughly enjoy my work and I’m dedicated to having a nice home. I live with my girlfriend. I have a really fulfilled, happy life and wouldn’t want to be anywhere else right now.

• **Looking back?**

I have thought, ‘Did they do the right thing’? It’s hard to say what would’ve happened if we had stayed there, but I’m certainly satisfied with the way things have turned out in my life. I think this is a wonderful country and if I had the choice again I wouldn’t change a thing. The teething problems – those hard times in the schoolyard – are pretty much forgotten now.
Interview 8

Name: Quang Nguyen-Do
Age: 27
Born: Saigon, Vietnam
Year of Arrival: 1986

• Leaving Vietnam?

I escaped in 1984 when I was 12. I went with my older brother and an uncle. My parents and younger brother stayed behind – mum was pregnant and it was too dangerous to travel.

• Feelings on leaving?

Sad to leave but eager to go – I wanted to see what it was like outside. It was especially hard saying goodbye to my grandmother because I knew I would never see her again.

• Journey to Australia?

We were seven days on the sea – 256 people on a 17m by 4m boat and not enough food or water. We got to Indonesia and stayed in a refugee camp there until March 1986 when an aunt and uncle sponsored us to come to Australia.

• Feelings now?

I feel at home – I’ve taken on the culture and way of life here and I feel very at ease with it. I enjoy watching football and playing outdoor sports. At the moment I play tennis, occasionally a bit of squash and a bit of touch footy.

• Lifestyle?

Vietnamese life is very family orientated. You sort of live within your family and most of your activities are directed towards the family. Security is very important and so is responsibility to help out with the family and the younger children when we’re grown up. It’s different to the Australian way: when you get a job, you start to look after yourself mainly and you help your family if you want to. For us it is more that you have got to help – it’s a sort of built-in thing.

• Things missed?

So many years. My parents are here now; they arrived in 1991 with my two younger brothers. It was very emotional. A lot of catching up to do.

• Where is home?

At the moment, here. My thinking is home is where you are welcome, where you are comfortable, where you like to stay and you are happy.
• Ethnic identity?

Vietnamese-Australian.

• Citizenship?

I’ve been a citizen since 1988. It was useful for us to sponsor my parents but the main reason is that we are here now, we might as well be citizens.

• Racism?

It’s been a topic, especially with One Nation. You hear of people experiencing racist behaviour. I haven’t encountered any violence but there was an incident and it gave me a shock. My brother and I were looking at a car and we asked how much it was. There were a couple of other people nearby and the dealer pointed to one of them and said loudly ‘For that guy it’s $3,000, for you it’s $5,000.’ I said ‘Are you joking’ and he said ‘No, I’m not joking, I’m serious’. We asked ‘Why?’ and he just repeated that it was $5,000 for us and $3,000 for the other person and walked off. It just kills your self-esteem and you wonder if you are doing something wrong. We walked out straightaway and yes, we were angry, very angry – but we took the attitude that he’s the person with the problem, not us and it’s not worth it to go back and argue or take it to court.

• Language use?

Sometimes Vietnamese, sometimes English, sometimes a mix.

• Learning English?

I didn’t have much English when I arrived. We went to Milpera and spent about nine months there learning English. Then I went to Woodridge State High for Years 10 and 11; there weren’t many migrants there and so there was no ESL teacher. It was difficult but by Year 11 it started getting easier – my English still wasn’t that good but when you’re talking to a person for a longer period of time you get used to the accent and better at guessing what they’re saying. Then I went to Sunnybank and had to start that again so Year 12 was hard.

• Schooling?

I was in Year 7 when I left Vietnam. I did cram courses, they were crammed into three months, for Years 8 and 9 while I was in Indonesia – they were run by some of the refugees who were teachers.

• Friends?

There were some up and down experiences. First of all we look different and second the language barrier has a lot to do with it. You would say one thing and people would take it in a different way. Sometimes I was afraid to talk to them and they’d think “You’re not trying to mix in”. They didn’t realise I was afraid they wouldn’t understand what I am talking about. So it was hard because making friends at high school was very important and if you don’t have many friends it makes life a little bit harder, especially if you want to play sport or something like that. I don’t think there was any racism, the language barrier was the main thing – trying to communicate. Sunnybank had lots of migrant students – from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Eastern European countries, South Africa. So we were mixing well with that sort of group because we had the same experience and we knew what it was like.

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4 Milpera State High School provides intensive English language tuition for newly arrived students.
5 English as a Second Language
• **Later on?**

University was a bit easier. And I enjoyed the time when I was working up north at Biloela – that was in 1996. There were hardly any migrants there and it was fun mixing in. I enjoyed going to the pub for a beer on Friday afternoon and joining in the sports – I played a fair bit of cricket up there.

• **Employment?**

I started work in 1996 with AustraElectric while I was studying for my Masters degree. I worked with Austra until 1998 and got the opportunity to form a company or take up another job offer – I decided to form this company N & N Power Engineering with my fiancée. It’s quite good so far. We’re very busy – plus I’m back at Uni doing my PhD. There’s a lot of work and we employ a couple of people. We’ve got plans but we’re going step by step – we’re still on a learning curve.
Interview 9

Name: Margaret Bull
Age: 64
Born: Middlesex, England
Husband: Maurice
Children: Frances (39) and Howard (36)
Year of Arrival: 1974
Occupation: Administrative assistant

• **Reason for migrating?**

  My husband’s career. Maurice wanted to teach full-time but in Britain instrumental experts are only employed on an ad hoc basis. Initially he was recruited for two years so we could have stayed and joined him later if he decided to stay on – the Education Department would have made that available to us – but I made the decision that we would stick together as a family.

• **Feelings on leaving?**

  Dreadful. It meant I couldn’t pursue my training as a legal executive – Queensland had no equivalent qualification. Our daughter didn’t speak to her father for about six months. She was at that age, 13 coming up to 14, when she had a boyfriend and didn’t want to leave him. Our son, who was 11 or 10 at the time, was a bit ambivalent but as long as he could play soccer out here, well then, it really didn’t matter.

• **Coming to terms with it?**

  As soon as I got off the plane I told myself ‘This is going to work.’ We had come 13 000 miles and here we were – no other family except a cousin at Petrie whom we didn’t know too well. So it had to work, there was to be no looking back, no homesickness, that was to be put aside, and only perhaps dwelt upon in solitary moments, when nobody else was aware of it.

• **Looking back?**

  It was just as well that we did leave together. There was nothing for Maurice to work with – not one instrument, no music available, no students organised for him. He took classes in empty swimming pools, in pool change rooms, underneath schools and in storerooms. So he really did need somebody at home to be able to share the frustration with and to sound off to really. It wasn’t a democratic decision but it became acceptable.

• **Feelings now?**

  We feel we more or less made the right decision and we like the lifestyle here. I would find it very difficult to live back in Britain. We have become accustomed to living with everything wide open and the outdoor style of living has become very appealing to us. We visit Britain and we feel very shut in, and that is just one of the things.
• **Likes?**

The people. The incredible range of fruit and vegetables available to us all year around. The proximity to the coast. The climate – I even like the rainy season. Most of our English friends that come here on holiday envy us this way of life, in that it is far more open and relaxed.

• **Dislikes?**

Compulsory voting. The way Australians use the language – the nasal vowels are an offence to my ear but it is my choice of being here and I have to put up with it.

• **Things missed?**

My family. Not so much now that we are starting to broaden our own family because both children are married now and having their own family. But I still feel the absence of my three sisters and a brother.

• **On arrival?**

We were met at the airport by a nice young gentleman from the Education Department who took us to Yungaba Hostel at Kangaroo Point. We were brilliantly looked after there for three weeks. Then we lived in a school house at Goodna for a couple of years until we got a place of our own at Kenmore.

• **Settling in?**

I think, by the time we left Yungaba we were already a part of Brisbane life. We’re members of the Salvation Army so one of the first things we did was catch a ferry to Edward Street from Kangaroo Point and walked up Ann Street to the Brisbane City Temple. The young people were wonderful with our two children and the adults were great with Maurice and me. Before we knew where we were we were involved in that church life.

• **Where is home?**

Australia. There is no way I would go back to England to live. Brisbane is home and England is a great place to visit. We have established our family here and they’re spreading out their roots here. We have become the grandparents, and now we want to be as important to our grandchildren, as our parents were to our children.

• **Ethnic identity?**

I view myself as an Australian now – unless the Aussies are playing England in cricket, then I might be English. No, seriously – I am an Australian. But I don’t want to renounce my British citizenship, that is my background, my heritage. I have not been asked to renounce it and I think that is a very mature way to go.

• **Citizenship?**

I was working for the Salvation Army in Canberra at the time. The national secretary was pointing out to a group of visitors that everything in the new offices was Australian – the pictures, the wood, the carpet, the staff. The next day I told him, ‘You know, what you said isn’t true, I am still English.’ ‘Right’ he said, ‘we’d better get you naturalised, you can’t make me out to be a liar’. It wasn’t an issue and I hadn’t really thought about it but I’m glad it happened because it’s important.

• **Life here?**
When we came there was an expectation that people immediately adopted the culture, the language and everything about Australia. There isn’t that expectation anymore – nowadays they want you to be comfortable. Nobody asks me to stop speaking the way I do. People tease me about it because I haven’t given it up yet, but they don’t want me to either. I think they are quite happy for me to be the Australian that I am – probably because, ‘what is an Australian?’ I am not sure what a typical Australian is. An Australian is a potpourri, in a way, of all the different immigrants and I don’t think there is anyway in which I don’t consider myself and Australian.

**Australian lifestyle?**

I suppose my outlook is much more outward than it was. That may be coming from one country to another – whatever country you went to or from – you would have a much more open mind. I think it is the open mind you get coming to a country that is so mixed culturally and so outgoing really.

**Problems?**

There was quite a bit of anti-British feeling at the time and there was a lot in the paper, about how the Poms only bathed once a fortnight, and that sort of thing. We had been warned, ‘Don’t take any notice, it is only a minority and they don’t mean it.’ But it wasn’t the problem it was made out to be. There were only two things really. A particular teacher at our son’s school was not kindly disposed to the English, and there was a bit of a problem there but the situation was resolved through discussion. And I was told by an employment agency, ‘Oh you will have quite a bit of difficulty getting a job because of the way you speak.’ Well within a week I had temporary work, and from that I was offered permanent work in a legal office. They quite liked the way I spoke and thought it would be quite nice to have somebody that spoke like that, so it wasn’t a problem.

**Employment?**

I definitely think I would have been better off financially had I stayed in Britain. But as it turned out, once my employers got to know me they gave me their conveyancing work – they hated it anyway – and I did everything except sign the documents and that sort of thing. So ultimately I got what I wanted, although financially it remained a disadvantage. But then, I gave it all away to work for the Salvation Army.
1. When and how did you come to Australia?

2. Why did you decide to move to Australia?

3. What did your family think about you leaving your home to start a new life in a new country?

4. What did they think of Australia? What image did you have before coming here?

5. How did you migrate? What problems did you have?

6. What was your first impression of Australia?

7. Was it difficult to obtain employment? Why/why not?

8. What problems did you or your children face at school? Examples?

9. What efforts do you make to preserve your customs? Examples?

10. In what other ways have you changed your life to suit the customs/ways of this country?

11. Have you ever experienced discrimination or racism? Examples?