



# We Are Australian **MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIANS**

Wendy Graham

## Contents

We are Australian	<b>4</b>
A nation of different people	<b>5</b>
A history of migration to Australia	<b>6</b>
Migrants and refugees	<b>10</b>
An Australian identity	<b>14</b>
Cultural diversity	<b>18</b>
Australian citizenship	<b>22</b>
Settling into Australian society	<b>24</b>
Celebrating multicultural Australia	<b>26</b>
We are all Australian	<b>30</b>
Glossary	<b>31</b>
Index	<b>32</b>

WARNING: Indigenous Australian readers are warned that this publication may contain images of deceased persons.

When a word is written in **bold**, click on it to find its meaning.



# We are Australian

Australia's identity has developed over time. People, historical events and the natural environment have contributed to the unique characteristics of this nation.

Australian is a proud and **patriotic** nation made up of many cultures, people and beliefs. The **diversity** and unity of its people are central to its identity as a nation.



Australian people celebrate their diversity.

# A nation of different people

Australia is a nation of people from many countries, cultures and backgrounds. These different people come together to form one **multicultural** nation. The first **migrants** to Australia were Indigenous Australians, who came to the land more than 40 000 years ago. About 230 years ago, more migrants began to arrive. Many other migrants worked hard to come to Australia. Australians now try to work together to celebrate their different backgrounds and live in harmony with each other.

Australians are one people made up of many individuals. Most Australians dream of a peaceful way of life and a shared sense of belonging.

Australians share many of the same values, such as having pride in and loving their country.



## aussie fact

A group of Australians from various backgrounds was asked, 'What does it mean to be an Australian?'. Some of the common ideas in their answers were:

- being willing to help others
- respecting other cultures
- loving Australia and having pride in the country
- being friendly and easygoing
- valuing mateship, having strong friendships and being loyal to friends and family.



# A history of migration to Australia

The first migrants to Australia were the people who walked across land bridges from Asia about 40 000 years ago. During the era of European settlement, from 1788 until World War II in 1939, most migrants came to Australia from Britain and Ireland. Since 1945, around 6.5 million people have migrated to Australia from many other nations.

## Migration after World War II

At the end of World War II, in 1945, the Australian Government believed that an increase in Australia's population was essential for the country's future. Millions of people in Europe had been **displaced** from their homelands because of war, and in Australia there was a shortage of workers. The Australian Government began a **campaign** encouraging people to migrate to Australia.

### aussie fact

Between 1945 and 1950, in the five years after World War II ended, almost 200 000 people migrated to Australia.

Boatloads of migrants began to arrive in Australia after World War II ended.



### Assisted passage

The Australian Government tried to encourage British people to migrate to Australia. It made an agreement with the British Government so it could meet its high immigration targets. The Australian Government promised to pay most of a British migrant's fare to Australia. This was called assisted passage.

### Workers needed

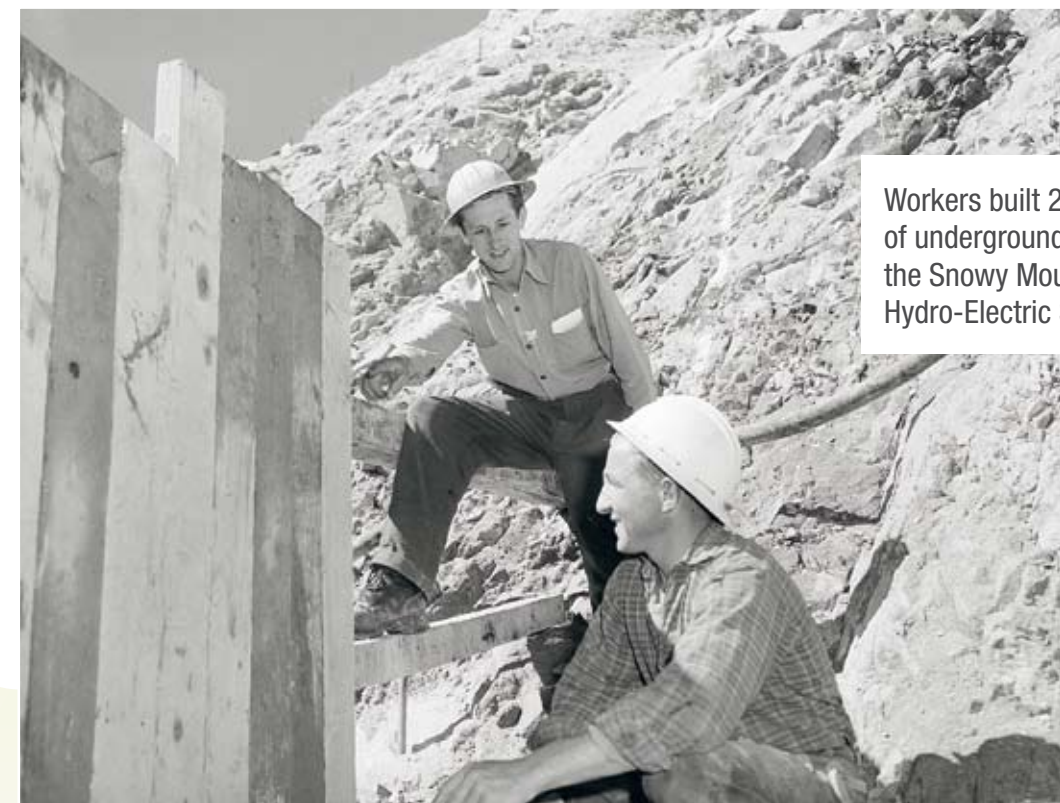
Australia had a severe shortage of workers after World War II. To solve this problem, the Australian Government began a large campaign to attract European migrants. Many migrants began working on the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. It was built by about 100 000 workers, most of whom were migrants. Work began in 1949 and was completed 25 years later.

### aussie fact

More than two million migrants came to Australia between 1945 and 1965.



Immigrants arrive in Australia by ship in 1949.



Workers built 225 kilometres of underground pipes on the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme.



## More migrants come to Australia

Events around the world began to influence Australia's immigration program and had an effect on which nations' peoples were coming to Australia.

### Migrants from all over Europe

During the 1950s and 1960s, many migrants came from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and other countries in Europe. Large numbers of migrants came from Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, following **unrest** in these countries.



This German man migrated to Australia in the 1950s and started his own auto electrical business.



A family of Greek migrants travels to Australia in 1955.

During the 1970s, Australia accepted many migrants who arrived on boats from Vietnam.



### Migrants from other countries

During the 1970s, Australia began accepting migrants from a larger range of countries. It removed the White Australia policy, which had made it hard for 'non-white' people to migrate to Australia.

In 1973, many people migrated from Chile following the overthrow of the government there. From 1975, Australia began accepting people from countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Australia received many Polish migrants in 1981, following severe unrest in Poland. Recently, many migrants have come from China and India.



## MY STORY

“I am Taghie and I am 14. I am from Sudan. The best thing about Australia is the electricity. In Sudan, we only had power once a week for two hours. This was not enough! I used to watch my little TV that I would run from a car battery, but there were only two channels.”



# Migrants and refugees

Both migrants and refugees come to live in Australia from other countries of the world. Refugees are often called migrants, but these two groups come to Australia for very different reasons.

## Migrants

Migrants are people who choose to migrate and live in another country such as Australia. They may migrate because they want a different lifestyle, to be near family members or because of job opportunities. They can learn about the country before they migrate. They may study the language and find out about job opportunities the country offers. If they wish, they can return to their home country at any time.

## Choosing to live in Australia

People migrate to Australia for many reasons. One of the main reasons is the opportunities people have if they live in Australia. Other reasons for migration to Australia may be:

- to have a better standard of life
- to join other family members
- to start a new job
- for educational opportunities
- to enjoy freedom and democracy
- to live in a peaceful nation, not a war-torn nation.

In 2002, Filipino woman Cristina Jurado became the six-millionth migrant to come to Australia since World War II.



## Sponsored migration

The Australian Government allows employers to sponsor skilled migrants. This means migrants with skills, such as mining or plumbing skills, are allowed to come to Australia to work for a particular employer. These migrant workers have skills that are in short supply in Australia. In Western Australia, the mining boom has created a great need for skilled migrant workers.



## MY STORY

“I’m Sammy and I am twelve. Both my parents are from China. The thing I like about Australia is the houses. In China where my dad lived, there are mostly buildings with no backyards. I like having space and a backyard here in Australia. We still celebrate traditions even though we are living in Australia. Each year we go to a kind of cemetery and pray for three days in a row to relatives who have passed away.”



Australia benefits from migrants who have skills that are in short supply.



Dentists from overseas may be sponsored as skilled migrants.



**aussie fact**

In 2007, Australia was one of 14 countries that resettled refugees in **humanitarian** need through the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees. Australia resettled 9600 people. Resettling refugees means that Australia allows them to stay permanently.



Refugees, such as this Sudanese child, often live in refugee camps before they are able to resettle in a new country.

**Refugees**

Australia grants protection to refugees, who are people who flee their country. They may flee in fear of **persecution** because of their race, religion, nationality or political views. They may fear for their lives because of war or violence in their country.

Often, refugees must leave their country quickly, without any belongings. They may have little knowledge of their new country. Many refugees have experienced suffering and cannot return to their home country. Refugees need help to settle in a new country.

**Arriving as a migrant or refugee**

The Australian Government gives booklets to new arrivals about ‘Beginning a Life in Australia’. The booklet has practical information about education, family life, health, housing, law, recreation, transport and work. It also contains information about organisations that help newcomers. The booklet is available in 38 languages.

The Australian Government encourages new arrivals to apply for Australian **citizenship**. Those who apply for citizenship need to learn about the country and its history, customs and values.

**Top 5 countries of birth for migrants to Australia arriving 2001–06**

Country	Arrivals	Proportion of arrivals
England	89 700	11.9%
New Zealand	82 200	10.9%
China*	71 700	9.5%
India	59 900	7.9%
South Africa	32 700	4.3%

\*excluding Taiwan and Special Administrative Regions such as Hong Kong



**MY STORY**

“My name is Semi. I was born in Auckland, New Zealand. We came to Australia when I was in Grade 4. Now, I am in Year 8. I like living in Australia because I can always play sport with my friends. I also love to draw.”



# An Australian identity

An Australian identity has developed over generations. In **colonial times**, most Australians were descendants of the British and Irish. Since 1901, however, Australia began to separate from its British ties. Australia's people began to gain a sense of pride in their own national identity.

## Building an Australian identity

Australia's people, its history and its environment have all contributed to a national character. The continuing cultures of Indigenous Australians, the **pioneers** who forged new lives in Australia's harsh environment, and the migrants and refugees who have come to Australia to start their new lives have helped build an Australian identity.



Together, the diverse people of Australia form a national identity.



## MY STORY

“My name is Ghadeer and I am in Year 8. Everyone calls me “Lil G”. I am from Bagdad in Iraq. I have been in Australia for only one year. My family left Iraq because of the fighting. I like Australia because of the people here. Everyone takes everything easily – life is easy. In Iraq, I had to work. My job was fixing cars.”

Bushranger Ned Kelly was declared an outlaw by police but he is admired by many Australians today.



## Australian characteristics

Australians are often thought of as friendly, loyal, relaxed and good-natured. They are known for disliking too much formality. Some other Australian characteristics are supporting the underdog, valuing mateship and enjoying sport.

## Supporting the underdog

Traditionally, Australians are inclined to support and have sympathy for the underdog, or the person with little chance of winning. Australians also sometimes support antiheroes, such as the bushranger Ned Kelly, and notable failures, such as the explorers Burke and Wills.





Australians who work as volunteers for organisations such as the State Emergency Service show mateship.

### Valuing mateship

Australian mateship, or friendship, is a very important Australian characteristic. Mateship can be seen throughout Australia's history. It was valued on the goldfields during the gold rush era, on the battlefields during World War I and World War II, and during the hardships of the Great Depression. Today, mateship can involve caring for family, friends and the wider community.

### aussie fact

Some of the best examples of mateship were shown by those who fought in World War I and World War II. Their courage, good humour and loyalty towards each other and their country symbolise Australian mateship.



The relationships between Anzac soldiers symbolise Australian mateship.



### MY STORY

“My name is Ryan and I am twelve. My parents come from Cebu in the Philippines. What I love about Australia is the sports. I love AFL. I barrack for St Kilda. I’m always sure to watch the Saints play when I can. I play footy myself, for the Under 13s.”

### Enjoying sport

Australia is seen as a nation that loves the outdoors and sport. Sport of all kinds is a significant part of Australia's identity. Since 1882, when Australia first beat the English at Test cricket, sporting success has given Australians a sense of pride, confidence and equality.

Today, many Australians play sport or barrack for a favourite sporting team. Cricket, soccer, rugby, surfing and Australian Rules football are just some of the many sports played and enjoyed around Australia.

### aussie fact

Swimming and surfing at the beach is a large part of many Australians' lives. About 80 per cent of Australia's population lives within 50 kilometres of the coast.



Australian and English cricketers play each other in a Test cricket match in 1886.



# Cultural diversity

Australia is a culturally diverse nation. Cultural diversity describes the variety of cultural characteristics, such as language and religion, found within a community. Other cultural characteristics may be the foods people eat, the way they dress and the traditions they keep.

## Multiculturalism

Australia is a multicultural nation. Multiculturalism is based on accepting, respecting, appreciating and understanding different cultures. Multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity.

### aussie-fact

Advancing Australia Fairly is an essay-writing competition held each year. Students are invited to think about their contribution towards shaping Australia's future.



Australia's multiculturalism can be seen in its many types of restaurants.



## MY STORY

University student Abhishek Verma was born in Australia to parents of Indian origin. Abhishek says, 'the richness of Australia's multicultural heritage makes it one of the best countries in the world to live in.' In his winning essay for the Advancing Australia Fairly competition, Verma wrote, 'Perhaps the true nature of being Australian lies in the acknowledgment that despite the multicultural nature of Australian society, the two significant characteristics that unify this nation are generosity and standing up for the underdog.'

## Enriching Australia's culture

People from nations around the world bring unique skills, talents and experiences to Australia. The cultural practices they bring also enrich Australia's multicultural identity. Different foods, beliefs and pastimes contribute to Australia's cultural diversity.

### Food

Australians eat a combination of foods from many different cultures. New migrants have introduced new kinds of foods and many international foods are now common in Australia.

Country or area	Foods
Italy	pasta, risotto, olive oil, espresso coffee
Greece	calamari, souvlaki, gyros
South-East Asia	jasmine rice, noodles, laksa,
Mexico	enchiladas, salsa, guacamole
India	curries, basmati rice, pappadams
Japan	sushi, wasabi, pickled ginger, tofu
China	stir-fried dishes, dumplings, green tea, bok choy



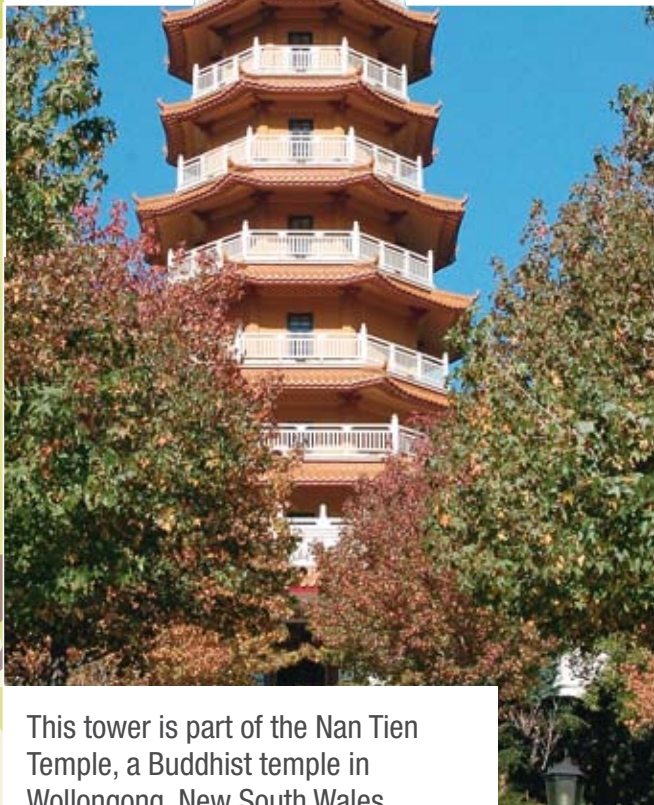
## MY STORY

'My name is Husaam and I am twelve. At school I just get called Sam. I was born in Australia but all my other brothers and sisters were born in Lebanon. I love Lebanese food such as tabouli, falafels and kebabs. Luckily, I still eat those things here in Australia because my mum cooks them at home.'

Sushi is a food that comes from Japanese culture.







This tower is part of the Nan Tien Temple, a Buddhist temple in Wollongong, New South Wales.

### Religion and beliefs

There are many religions and belief systems in Australia. Religion may play a small or large role in a culture. Different religions have different places of worship.

### Music, dance and entertainment

Many cultures have strong traditions of music and dance. Many different styles of music are found in Australia. Italian opera, traditional Irish folk music and American rap music are all popular.

International dance styles and performances are also popular in Australia, such as the Argentinean tango and traditional Polish dancing.



## MY STORY

‘My name is Divya and I am in Year 7. I am from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Even though we no longer live in Malaysia, I still continue with certain customs such as “Deepavali”, which is a kind of Hindi dancing. I’ve been dancing since I was little.’



Kostya Tszyu is of Russian, Korean and Mongolian descent.

### Sport

Australians support many different kinds of sports. Sport can cross **ethnic groups** and social classes. It allows people from many cultures to come together. Supporting a local or Australian team gives people a sense of belonging.

Some well-known Australian athletes have originally come from other countries. Australian boxing champion Kostya Tszyu was brought up in Serov, Russia, before moving to Australia.



## A TEAM STORY

Josh Pinnuck, top left, is the goalkeeper in this team of young Shepparton soccer players. The other boys are from Afghanistan, Sudan, India, Turkey and Iraq. They are united in their love for soccer and respect each other’s cultures.



# Australian citizenship

Today, any child born in Australia is an Australian citizen by birth if at least one parent is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident. People not born in Australia, such as migrants to Australia, need to apply to become Australian citizens.

## Citizenship test

Migrants must pass a citizenship test to become citizens. The citizenship test helps migrants learn more about Australia and understand the responsibilities and privileges that citizenship brings. The test is about Australia's democratic values, beliefs and laws. People under 18 years old are not required to sit the test.



People who are granted Australian citizenship receive a certificate at a special ceremony.

## Aussie fact

Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders are the only Australians whose family histories are not connected to any other country. They are Indigenous Australians.

## Loss of citizenship

People can give up their citizenship through renunciation or lose it through revocation. Both renouncing and revoking citizenship are serious matters.

Renunciation means choosing to give up Australian citizenship. A person may give up their citizenship to become a citizen of another country. Revocation means citizenship is taken away from a person. Citizens by birth cannot have their citizenship taken away.

## Dual citizenship

People can become dual citizens, which means they are citizens of two countries. This is usually their country of birth and another country.

An Australian might apply for another country's citizenship because:

- a parent or grandparent was born there
- they marry someone from that country
- they are living and working in that country.



A citizen of a country can apply for a passport to travel freely in and out of the country.



## MY STORY

“My name is Forouzan. I lived in Tehran in Iran. My family came to Australia for a good life. The best thing about Australia is democracy. In Iran, films and music are censored – you can't say what you want. In Australia you can say what you want, and what you think.”



# Settling into Australian society

The process of adjusting to a new environment is called settling in. Some migrants become settled within months, but others might take years to feel comfortable in Australia.

## Information for new arrivals

When migrants arrive, they often need a place to live, as well as information about schools, transport and medical services. They may also need information about employment and community services.

When migrants arrive in Australia, they may:

- apply for a Tax File Number, so that they can start work
- open a bank account
- register with Medicare, a government scheme that helps with medical expenses
- register with Centrelink, a government agency that provides **welfare services**
- register for English classes, if they have little or no English skills.



Starting a new job is often part of the process of settling in.

## Challenges faced by new arrivals

Migrants to Australia are confronted with many challenges. Some of their main challenges may be language barriers, finding a job, finding housing or health problems.

### Language barriers

New arrivals may feel isolated if they cannot speak English and cannot communicate with local people, banks and government agencies.

### Finding jobs

Some new arrivals may find it hard to get a job because their qualifications from their home country are not recognised in Australia.

### Finding housing

High rental costs and the lack of a banking record in Australia may make it hard to rent or buy a home.

### Health problems and counselling

Some new arrivals, particularly refugees, may have health problems. Some refugees may need counselling if they have come from traumatic situations.



## MY STORY

“My name is Emina and I am twelve. I was born in Tuzla in Bosnia. Six years ago, my family and I left Bosnia because of the war. We lived in Sweden before we came to Australia. On Saturdays I go to Bosnia school where I learn the language and more about the culture. I miss my family who are still in Bosnia. I am lucky to have lots of family in Australia too though.”



# Celebrating multicultural Australia

Today, more than 43 per cent of people in Australia were born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas.

Australian attitudes towards migrants have not always been positive. The White Australia policy discriminated against 'non-white' migrants who wanted to come to Australia. It was only overturned in 1973. Immigration detention centres in the 1990s and 2000s locked up people who arrived in Australia without permission, including children and **asylum seekers**.

## aussie fact

Australia and Canada are the countries with the highest percentage of residents born overseas. Both are among the world's most peaceful and prosperous countries.

When migrants and refugees settle in Australia, their experiences are not always positive either. Sometimes people in a community have objected to new migrants settling in their area. People from different cultural backgrounds have sometimes clashed, but communities try to work together to celebrate multiculturalism and to promote harmony for all Australians.

Young Australians celebrate multiculturalism on North Cronulla beach in New South Wales.



Chinese New Year is the most important of the traditional Chinese holidays.

## Multicultural festivals

Australian States and Territories hold various multicultural festivals throughout the year. The National Multicultural Festival is the largest. It is held in Canberra each February. Other multicultural festivals celebrated in Australia are:

- Chinese New Year festival in January or February
- Vietnamese Tet (New Year) festival in January or February
- Holi festival in February or March
- Vesak, also called Buddha's Day, in April or May
- Australian-Italian festival in May or June
- Festival Malaysia in August
- Vietnamese Children's Lantern Festival (Mid-Autumn Festival) in September
- German Oktoberfest in September or October.



## MY STORY

'My name is Zeph and I am 12 years old. My parents are from Cambodia but I was born in New Zealand. I like celebrating Cambodian New Year at the temple. There are fireworks, dancers and singers. They also have rides. The whole family gets together to celebrate.'



## Living in harmony

The Australian Government has started a program called Living in Harmony. It is designed to draw attention to cultural issues encountered by Australians. It encourages Australians to reduce racism and **prejudice** against others. It also hopes to build a positive future for all Australian children by showing them how all Australians can live in harmony.

## Harmony Day

Harmony Day encourages Australians to strengthen relationships in their communities. It gives people the chance to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity, too. Harmony Day promotes respect, participation, acceptance, and belonging among all Australian people. It promotes values such as justice, fairness and mateship.

### aussie fact

Harmony Day first began in 1999 and is now held on 21 March each year.

People celebrate after an international fashion show held as part of Harmony Day.



School students work together to make a Harmony Day banner.

### Harmony Day celebrations

Australians celebrate Harmony Day in many ways. Some people decorate public spaces and release balloons containing messages of hope. Other people take part in cultural activities such as dancing, art and sports. International food stalls are set up so people can sample food from around the world.

School students also participate in Harmony Day in many ways. They might:

- design a Harmony Day flag
- design postcards with Harmony Day messages
- make large jigsaw puzzles about harmony
- make long paper chains, representing the people in their school community
- produce a Harmony Day book with messages of hope.



### MY STORY

‘My name is Elias. My family left Kabul, in Afghanistan, in 2004 because of the war. The best thing about living in Australia is the water. In my country, we would always run out of water. I also love to play soccer in Australia. I never played in Afghanistan. Now, I play for a team.’



# We are all Australian

Australians come from different countries all over the world. Australian children are taught to celebrate diversity and recognise and accept differences in people's backgrounds.

Most Australians celebrate the country's cultural diversity and agree with its nickname, the 'Lucky Country'. They believe in an overall Australian identity, but also the importance of individual differences. We are all different, but we are all Australian.



A group of Australian children work together as a team.



## MY STORY

“I’m Brett and I’m 13 and have lived in Australia all my life. My Dad is an Australian Aboriginal. He has black skin. I’m half Aboriginal but not very dark. I’ve been to festivals where there are Aboriginal dance performances. Everyone wears face paint and uses the rhythm sticks. We get to have a go at playing the didgeridu.”



# Glossary

**asylum seekers**

people who have left their country as refugees and who are seeking a nation's protection

**campaign**

organised actions taken to achieve a goal

**citizenship**

having the rights of a citizen to live in a country and vote in government elections

**colonial times**

time when Australia was made up of colonies under British control

**displaced**

removed from one's home

**diversity**

wide range of different types of people or things

**ethnic groups**

groups in a society that are identified by shared cultural characteristics, such as race or religion

**humanitarian**

helping human welfare

**migrants**

people who move from one country to live in another

**multicultural**

having many cultural groups within one society

**patriotic**

expressing pride in one's country

**persecution**

harassment, teasing or harm committed towards someone because of their beliefs or race

**pioneers**

people who lead the way forward for others

**prejudice**

unfair treatment due to a person prejudging another person

**unrest**

disturbance within a group of people, possibly involving riots and protests

**welfare services**

government services that protect citizens' health and wellbeing, such as medical care and unemployment payments



# Index

## A

Anzac soldiers 16  
assisted passage 7  
asylum seekers 26  
Australian characteristics 15–17  
Australian identity 4,  
14–17, 19, 30

## B

beliefs 20  
British migration 6, 7

## C

citizenship 13, 22–3  
citizenship test 22  
countries of birth 13, 23  
cultural diversity 18–21,  
28, 30

## D

dance 20, 27, 29, 30  
detention centres 26  
dual citizenship 23

## E

entertainment 20  
ethnic groups 21  
European migrants 6,  
7, 8

## F

festivals 27, 30  
food 18, 19, 27, 29

## G

Great Depression 16

## H

Harmony Day 28, 29  
health 13, 25  
housing 13, 25

## I

Indigenous Australians  
5, 14, 22

## J

jobs 10, 25

## L

language barriers 25

## M

mateship 5, 15, 16, 28  
migrants 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,  
10–13, 14, 19, 22, 24,  
25, 26  
migrant workers 7, 11  
migration history 6–9  
mining boom 11  
multiculturalism 18, 26,  
27  
music 4, 20

## N

new arrivals to Australia  
13, 24, 25

## P

persecution 12  
pioneers 14

## R

reasons for migration  
10  
refugees 10, 12, 13, 14,  
25, 26  
religion 12, 18, 20  
resettlement 12

## S

skilled migrants 11  
Snowy Mountains Hydro-  
Electric Scheme 7  
sponsored migration 11  
sport 15, 17, 21, 29  
supporting the underdog  
15, 18

## U

United Nations High  
Commissioner of  
Refugees 12

## W

White Australia policy  
9, 26  
World War I 16  
World War II 6, 7, 16