

# Sikh and Indian Australians

## OVERVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION

Welcome wall at WA Maritime Museum at Victoria Quay, Fremantle Harbour - M Southee

This resource includes some significant migration policies and practices from 1901 to 2015 when Australian policy moved from a white Australia, where immigrants were to be of the “right type” and quickly assimilate into the community, to the more inclusive multicultural nation. The historical concept of change is dramatically illustrated through Australian immigration during the twentieth century.

Activity: A class timeline on Immigration to Australia can be developed using the information provided here. The timeline could be broken into decades to enable groups of students to research and construct a timeline of the key events from 1901 to 2015 (and beyond). Students could use a template developed by the teacher or use A4 paper for each year or block of years, to write key information about Australia’s changing migration policies and the reasons for migration over the period. This information could be placed in chronological order around the room and used as a reference point for the duration of the study and the student inquiries on immigration.

1901 Immigration Restriction Act was one of the first laws passed by the new Commonwealth government.

1901 Pacific Islanders Labourers Act authorised that most Pacific Islanders were to be deported from Australia from 1906.

1903 Applications for Domicile (permanent residence) were approved if applicants were of 'good character' and had resided in Australia for five years. The local police officers checked on the applicant for a Domicile certificate, or after 1905, a Certificate of Exclusion from the Dictation Test.

1906 Commonwealth Government assisted passages for British immigrants began. Almost 600,000 immigrants arrived in Australia between 1901 and 1940, over two thirds were assisted.

1910 to 1913 British immigration increased as a Commonwealth decision in 1912 agreed to pay half the fare. Private schemes were also begun at this time such as the Dreadnought Scheme in 1911 which organised to bring British teenagers to New South Wales to work on the land.

1913 British youth were brought to Fairbridge Farm school near Pinjarra, Western Australia.

1914 World War One began. Immigration decreased.

1916 the Australian government introduced the War Precautions (Alien Registration) Regulations, which required aliens (non-British subjects or foreign nationals) to present themselves to their local police station to register.

1916 -1918 People born in Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bulgaria and Turkey were classified as "enemy aliens" and faced internment or general restrictions on their daily lives. Altogether about 7,000 people were interned in camps across Australia (such as Rottnest Island) and were banned from migrating to Australia for 5 years after the war.

1919 British Indians resident in Australia could apply to bring their wives and children to Australia to live. (This decision was linked to excellent effort by Indians in support of the British Empire during World War One)

1919-1922 British Government offered ex-servicemen free passage to Australia. 17,000 arrived in Australia up to 1922.

1922 Empire Settlement Scheme began with an agreement between the British Government, Australian Commonwealth and State governments. Approximately 221,000 new British settlers were assisted to migrate to Australia between 1921 and 1929. Another 100,000 immigrants paid their own fares.

1920s An increasing number of Greeks, Italians and Yugoslavs migrated to Australia.

1901 - 1939, Approximately 700, 000 new settlers arrived and Australia's population grew to about seven million.

1930 Assisted immigration ended.

1930s Jewish migrants arrived escaping Hitler's racist policies.

1939 -45 Germans, Italians, Japanese and Hungarians – were reclassified 'enemy aliens' and interned (placed in prison for the duration of the war) or kept under close police surveillance.

1945 The Department of Immigration was established with Arthur Calwell as the first Minister for Immigration. The "Populate or Perish" Scheme was developed aiming for 70,000 immigrants per year, preferably from Great Britain.

1945 The Australian Government Assisted Passage Scheme began which provided assisted £10 passages to British migrants, nicknamed 'Ten Pound Poms'.

1947 An agreement between the International Refugee Organisation and Australia to settle refugees (Displaced Persons) from the war in Europe. They would receive free passage to Australia but must agree to work for two years for the government. 171,000 refugees arrived between 1947 and 1954.

1951 The Commonwealth Government made a number of migration agreements with European countries, including the Netherlands and Italy.

- 1952 Assisted migration agreements were made with the governments of Austria, Belgium, West Germany, Greece and Spain.
- 1954 Further Australian Government agreements were made with the United States, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland to support migration.
- 1954 The Australian Government signed the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.
- 1950s Immigrants began to be accepted from the Middle East
- 1956 Non-European residents were allowed to apply for citizenship
- 1957 The decision was made to allow non-Europeans with 15 years residence in Australia to become Australian citizens.
- 1958, under the Migration Act of 1958 the dictation test was removed and a new visa scheme (or entry permits) introduced. This allowed non-Europeans to immigrate. Their entry was now based on what they could contribute to Australia and if it could be shown that they could integrate into Australian society. This attracted many professionals and highly qualified people who added to Australia's service industries.
- 1961 Census results: eight per cent of the population was non-British in origin with the largest group being Italians, Germans, Greeks and Poles.
- 1966 Restrictions on 'non-European' immigration were reduced after the review of the policy
- 1967 Australia entered into its first migration agreement with a non-European country, in this case Turkey.
- 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act allowed British subjects from the former colonies, mainly from the West Indies, India and Pakistan to migrate to Australia.
- 1972 Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister
- 1973 Whitlam's Government announced all racial discrimination had been abolished. Multiculturalism was adopted which supported the idea that many cultures could live together peacefully and continue with their traditions.
- 1973 The Australian Citizenship Act declared that all migrants were to be given equal treatment.
- 1975 The Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act made it illegal to treat people unfairly because of race, colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status.
- 1975 End of Vietnam War. Indo Chinese emigrated to many countries including Australia.
- 1975 Indonesians took control of East Timor; many Timorese sought refugee status in Australia.
- 1975-1990 Civil War took place in Lebanon. Australia accepted many refugees.
- 1970s Political refugees come to Australia from South American countries Chile, Argentina and Uruguay.
- 1979 and 1982 20,000 Indo Chinese arrived each year under the new Humanitarian Program.
- 1981 The assisted passage scheme ended and only refugees were given support on their arrival in Australia
- 1982-1983 Asian immigrants were the largest group for the first time - accounting for 36 percent of net settler gain compared to 26 percent from Britain.
- 1989 Political crackdown in China, many Chinese students were granted residency in Australia.
- 1988 - 1990 Refugees arrived in Australia from Cambodia, Vietnam and Southern China.
- 1991- 2001 The war in the Balkans. Australia accepted as refugees Muslims, Croats and Serbs from Albania and Bosnia.
- 1993 The Keating government separated the Humanitarian migrants from the general migrant programme.
- 1996 The Howard Government introduced separate identification of refugees granted protection within Australia as 'onshore', from those accepted 'offshore'.

1996 For the first time in Australia's migration history, the number of British immigrants fell to second place behind New Zealand.

2001 John Howard emphasised the importance of 'border protection' at the 2001 federal election.

1996 - 2006 More than 20 000 settlers born in Sudan moved to Australia to escape the civil war.

1999 -2001 Australia accepted asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

2003 USA led invasion of Iraq as part of the "War on Terror" increased refugees from Iraq.

2011 The Syrian war began creating a refugee crisis.

2015 After New Zealand, people from China, South Africa and India were the main arrivals to Australia.

2015 Australia accepted 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq, making a total of 25,750 refugees coming to Australia during 2015.

Note also, the study of immigration integrates well with the English curriculum. There are many novels, picture books and films which support the study of migration and refugees. A list of suggested resources can be found below.

### **Useful resources for History**

Write the following in your search engine:

"Migration Heritage NSW, Belongings, Australia's migration history".

Write the following in your search engine to download a useful PDF on stages of immigration to Australia.

"A History of the Department of Immigration, Managing Migration to Australia, Commonwealth of Australia 2015."

Download the PDF from Global Words by writing the following into your search engine:

"Global Words Year 6 Timeline of Migration"

"LISWA settlement, Populate or perish" for information on immigration to WA after World War Two.

The National Museum of Australia has a scroll entitled "Harvest of Endurance" which covers Chinese immigration to Australia.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-29/fact-check-syria-largest-refugee-intake-julie-bishop/6786074>

Compares refugee intake during 2015 to other post-war statistics.

### **Some Resources for English**

Shaun Tan *The Arrival*

Jackie French *Refuge, Many Dreams, One Land*, Harper and Collins, 2013.

Ahn Do *The Happiest Refugee*

National Treasures Cuc Lam's suitcase. (video clip). Type the following into your search engine:

ASO Documentaries Cuc Lam's Suitcase Clip 1

See classroom activities on Cuc lam's story at

<http://dl.nfsa.gov.au/module/1425/>