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| GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE |
| British Migration to Australia post WW2 |
| Research Task |
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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Name:** | James Macgillivray | | **Subject:** | Humanities | | **Topic:** | Migration Experiences | | **Teacher:** | PAPB | | **Due Date:** | Friday, 10th June (Week 8) | |

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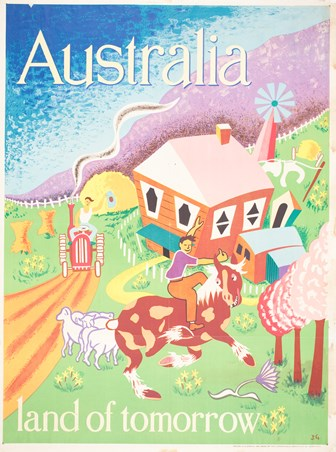
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**Migration Experiences – Britain**

## 1.0 Background / Introduction

After the end of World War II, many people in Europe became impoverished and went in search of a better life elsewhere, causing a large increase in migration during this time. At the same time, Australia’s first minister for immigration Arthur Calwell saw Australia’s military weakness after the bombing of Darwin from the imperial Japanese and devised a policy titled “Populate or Perish” (Carrodus et al., 2012). This implied that Australia was weak to a military invasion and that we must increase the population or face military takeover. Population increase would come in the form of the “Baby Boom”, a time when the birth-rates were exceptionally high with a substantially large increase in migration, where it was planned to increase the population by 1% through migration alone. This was thought to increase Australia’s odds of survival against military conflict similar to the bombing of Darwin. During this period of post World War II, Australia’s migration policies continued the trend of prioritising British citizens. However, the government, desperate for migrants and wanting to increase its humanitarian standing on the world stage, also started accepted refugees from European countries devastated by the effects of World War II. These British migrants who made up a majority of the total migrants and had a significant impact on the Australian workforce in post-World War II society and succeeded in fulfilling the “Populate or Perish” policy.

## 2.0 Factors that encouraged the British to immigrate to Australia

Figure 1: Australia: Land of Tomorrow (Greenberg, 1948)

During the time following World War II, British citizens interested in migrating had many choices as to where they would live. Popular Destinations included New Zealand, South Africa, Rhodesia–Nyasaland, the USA and Australia (Steeds, 2016). All these places were interested in receiving migrants from Britain. Australia, to maximise the amount who chose it as their destination, created many inventive campaigns to influence the potential migrant’s decision. These campaigns included “Bring out a Briton” (1957), “10-pound poms” (1945-1972) and other advertising in the form of posters placed in migrant centres (see Figure 1). There were many factors encouraging these people to want to migrate from Britain. This included loss of work causing financial hardship or generally poor living conditions. They were typically families who were experiencing the aftereffects of World War II and wanted to move due to financial difficulties or simply wanted to experience something different from Britain (Hammerton & Thomson, 2005).

## 3.0 Methods used by the British to Immigrate

Almost all migrants from Britain to Australia post World War II travelled by boat. Immediately after the war, many migrants travelled on repurposed warships which were very crowded with relatively poor conditions ("Journeys to Australia", 2022). Later an industry consisting of different companies competing to gain customers created better conditions as the migrants now travelled on commercial passenger liners. The route taken by these ships also changed throughout the years. Initially they travelled via the Suez Channel in Egypt, then through the Indian Ocean to land in Western Australia. Later, a second route going around Cape Town in South Africa was established. Finally, many passenger liners started returning to Europe through the Panama Channel, thus making the journey fully around the world furthering the tourist trade ("Journeys to Australia", 2022).

## 4.0 Events that represent changes and continuities for British Migrants

Life in Australia for British migrants differed greatly from life in their home country. Australia was less crowded, warmer and had many cultural differences from Britain. Although it had these differences, it was more similar to Britain socially than other potential migrant destinations. This was because it had been until recently a British colony and still had a heavy British influence and heritage. Initially, when migrants arrived in Australia, they stayed in hostels before the immigration office found them suitable housing and employment (Hammerton & Thomson, 2005). Although there was an abundance of work in Australia at the time, many skilled workers found it difficult to find work suited to their abilities ("Australia's Migration History Timeline", 2010). This was rarely a large issue because many migrants were usually unemployed when they left Britain, so having any employment meant a large increase in their and their families’ financial position. There was also a shift of who was preferred to migrate under the new minister of immigration, Harold Holt. Holt instead of wanting families to migrate, he encouraged unmarried men to migrate under the British Assisted Passage. He argued that these men would be more mobile in case of military conflict and be more willing to move around the country were work currently was (Daries, 1951). Like his predecessors he also wanted the Australian population to remain British and wanted minimal foreign influence from other countries in Europe and Asia.

## 5.0 Contribution and overall significance of British immigrants

Migrants from Britain and other European countries meant there were more people to fill jobs created by the government and jobs whose workers were lost fighting in World War II. This bolstered the Australian labour force (“Australia's Migration History Timeline”, 2010). Before they become citizens (which required staying in Australia for at least two years) most migrants worked in government projects or became factory workers. A large government project which gave many migrants work at the time was the “Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme”(Hammerton & Thomson, 2005). Without these migrants, the hydroelectric plant may not have been built nearly as quickly, if at all. After the two years these migrants spent in government programs, they beca me full Australian citizens and were free to work and live anywhere in Australia they wanted to. Just as Arthur Calwell’s policy stated, Australia was much better off after accepting these migrants, and the economy grew substantially as a result.

## 6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, British Migrants helped develop Australian society into what it is today and succeeded in fulfilling the “populate or perish” policy. They did this by bolstering the workforce during a time of worker shortage, helping build many government projects at the time.

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